



Parenting Our Children – Is in the Best Interest of the Nation -

Stoneleigh Foundation Senior Fellow Father Integration Project Comes to an End



On Tuesday, April 5, 2016, Dr. Darlyne Bailey, Dean, Graduate School of Social Work & Social Research, at Bryn Mawr College, led the closing exercise for the Stoneleigh Foundation Senior Fellow Project ("The Integration of Responsible Fatherhood within Foster Care Service Delivery and Other Children and Youth Servicing Systems."); while at the same time welcomed The Strong Families Commission Incorporated ("The Commission"), as the sustaining entity for championing the conversation and building the awareness of the value of Responsible Fatherhood in the lives of children.

The day's event was highlighted with brief comments by the Stoneleigh Fellow (Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch) regarding his initial project findings. Other program activities included panel discussions with agency representatives from Catholic Community Services, Episcopal Community Services, and Progressions Behavioral Health, Inc. Lynette



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- **quote adapted from the title of the 1996 U.S. Commission on Child and Family Welfare Report to Congress**

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Medley, Founder of No More Secrets, reminded us all to be sensitive to one's sexual identity when engaging Fathers. Dr. Carol S. Larach, Director of Program Integration, Department of Health, Division of Maternal, Child and Family Health, City of Philadelphia lectured on the Infant Mortality rate in Philadelphia and explained the Division's mission to empower mothers and fathers to take care of themselves, as well as their babies.

Notwithstanding the formal program, the highlight of the afternoon was the closing exercise for 23 participating children, youth, and family-focused agencies that met the requirements for certification as a 3FA (Father Friendly Flagship Agency).

Each of the agencies received a plaque, recognizing them as an inaugural participant completing the requirements for initial certification as a Father Friendly Flagship Agency. Additionally, 3FA agencies received an initial 15 month certification, with the opportunity to become nationally certified by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), if they continued to meet the initial 3FA criteria and continue to actively participate in a community of learning process that meets formally at least quarterly-annually, and meets the remaining four criteria as follows: 1) provide proof of Board Endorsement of Father Integration as an organizational priority within service delivery to children and families; 2) commit to the implementation of the strategic plan as proposed in the 3FA initial certification process; 3) commit to work with The Strong Families Commission Incorporated ("The Commission") and CWLA on the development of criteria for final certification, and related educational products to ensure that these criteria can be met; and 4) commit to share what is learned with the broader community through CWLA webinars, conferences, or various publications.

The program ended with acknowledgements of thanks to **Ms. Fran Gutterman** and the Casey Family Programs, as well as to Philadelphia **Commissioner Dr. Arthur C. Evans, Jr.**, and the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services for their dedicated support of the Project "The Integration of Responsible Fatherhood within Foster Care Service Delivery and Other Children and Youth Servicing Systems."

A special thanks and public acknowledgement was given to the **Stoneleigh Foundation** for supporting and providing a safe space and platform for exploring the integration of "Responsible Fatherhood" within children, youth, and family-focused systems of care.

Last but not least, Dean Bailey was acknowledged and credited with being a champion of the Project and supporter of the Senior Fellow, throughout the four years of study, helping to manage his feelings ranging from joy, disappointment, anger, fear, disgust, and ultimate belief that it would all work out, like any dissertation process.

Listing of Philadelphia's 3FA Award Recipients

- Bethanna
- Carson Valley Children's Aid
- Catholic Social Services
- Children Services, Inc.
- Christ's Home for Children
- El Concilio of Philadelphia
- Congreso (de Latinos Unidos, Inc.)
- Delta Community Supports
- Episcopal Community Services
- Institute for the Development of African American Youth, Inc.
- Jewish Family and Children Services
- John Marshall Elementary School
- Lutheran Children and Family Service
- Mayor's Reintegration Services – Fatherhood Enrichment Program
- Northeast Treatment Centers
- Northern Children's Services
- Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center
- Presbyterian Children's Village Services
- Progressions Behavioral Health, Inc.
- The Bridge Intensive Prevention Services
- Turning Points for Children
- Vision Quest
- Wordsworth

News from the Nation's Capital



House Ways and Means Committee Convenes Hearing on Moving America's Families Forward: Setting Priorities for Reducing Poverty and Expanding Opportunity

On May 24, 2016, the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing to discuss options for "reducing poverty and expanding opportunity" in America. It was apparently the first time in 10 years that the full committee has met to discuss these issues.

Listed below is an excerpt of Ways and Mean's Chairman Kevin Brady's opening statement:

"Today, we're holding our first full committee hearing on America's welfare system in 10 years. We're doing this because the current system is failing to deliver results for those that need it most, and it is our responsibility to be part of the solution.

Today's hearing is about people, and right now there are more than 46 million in our nation who are living in poverty.

Decades of experience tells us the most effective anti-poverty program is a job. Yet of those who are working-age and in poverty, nearly two in three are not working, many of them not by choice, but in large part because of the welfare system.

The current system is a disjointed maze of more than 80 different programs that have been layered on top of one another with little regard for coordination, duplication, or purpose.

For decades, money has been thrown blindly at this system, without a genuine regard for effectiveness in actually delivering real results. This approach lacks compassion and respect for American families trapped in poverty.

We need a system that provides more Americans with personalized solutions, real paths out of poverty, and better opportunities to realize their potential.

A critical step to achieving that is to define a clear set of principles to guide our work and we believe we have four that do just that.

First, we will expect work-capable adults to work or prepare for work in exchange for receiving benefits because it helps to set individuals on a path to long-term employment.

Second, we will strive to get program incentives right. If we can do that, recipients, taxpayers, employers, states, and nonprofits will all be better off when someone moves from welfare to work.

Third, we will focus on results of welfare programs and do everything possible to ensure they are actually helping individuals and families.

And fourth, we will seek to improve integrity of programs to decrease fraud and preserve welfare benefits for those most in need.

Streamlining and better coordinating the disjointed maze of anti-poverty programs will not be an easy task. These programs span the welfare system as well as the jurisdiction of several congressional committees – including ours."

"I believe our committee needs to do all it can to advance targeted solutions. I know our members have bold, innovative ideas based on solutions being used in their own backyards. And, most importantly, we all believe everyone should have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

The Committee heard from a panel of experts including:

Former Michigan Governor John Engler
President, Business Roundtable

Ms. Karin VanZant
Executive Director, Life Services, CareSource

Ms. Olivia Golden
Executive Director, Center for Law and
Social Policy

Mr. Tarren Bragdon
President and Chief Executive Officer,
Foundation for Government Accountability



For a copy of the written testimonies of the expert witness panel, go to:

<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/event/hearing-on-moving-americas-families-forward-setting-priorities-for-reducing-poverty-and-expanding-opportunity/>

National Responsible Fatherhood Roundtable to Continue

For the past four years, the Responsible Fatherhood Roundtable ("The Roundtable") was comprised of experts and leaders of various fatherhood organizations who met quarterly in Washington, D.C. to discuss national policies and programs affecting fathers and their children.

The Roundtable was an off-shoot of the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) – an initiative funded by Open Society. Due to the success of this initiative, the CBMA became an independent and free-standing organization last fall with a concentrated focus on supporting and strengthening the leaders and organizations advancing Black Male Achievement. This concentrated shift in focus left a void at the Roundtable. In that regard leaders around the country were supportive of Debra Pontisso's pursuit to keep the Roundtable active and her choice for Chair, Dr. Ronald B. Mincy, Professor of Social Policy and Social Work Practice, at Columbia University. Ms. Pontisso is a retired program specialist with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. Dr. Mincy serves as Chair, Ms. Pontisso serves as co-Chair.

A quarterly meeting of the Roundtable was held this month in Washington, D.C. at the Offices of Open Society. Highlights of the meeting included a discussion of various federal policies and programs that support and/or enable fathers to become emotionally and financially more involved in the lives of their children. The continuation of these efforts in the future is dependent upon a number of factors including the upcoming Presidential election and congressional intent.

The Roundtable identified 5 policies/programs that it intends to track and monitor such as:

1. Child Support Proposed Rule Change (pending finalization);
2. Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Marriage Grants;
3. Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act programs;

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4. Expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit; and
5. Criminal Justice Reform.

Roundtable participants also discussed the impact a change in Administration could have on current federal agency commitments of supporting the integration of a "father factor" into mainstream programs and policies. The Strong Families Commission Incorporated is an active participating member of the Roundtable.

Family Strengthening in Pennsylvania

Juvenile Justice, a "Continuum of Prevention"

By George D. Mosee, Jr., First Assistant District Attorney in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. For 13 years he served as the Deputy District Attorney for the Juvenile Division. Mosee is one of the founding commissioners of The Strong Families Commission, Inc.

The very best approach to public safety is prevention. When crime is prevented, no one is injured, no property is damaged or lost and there is no victim. Moreover, there is no defendant. When more people make the right choices we all benefit.

There are different degrees of prevention. The first degree is what I call pure prevention. Pure prevention means the person never makes the bad choice that would get them into the system in the first place. Education, support, mentoring and effective parenting prepare people to make good choices thereby preventing crime.

However, even when people make bad choices, we need to prevent their further penetration into the system. Interestingly, the same factors that produce pure prevention (education, support, mentoring and effective parenting), also prevent further penetration into the system.

Optimally, the prevention perspective should be ongoing. In Philadelphia's juvenile justice system we have created a continuum of prevention.

Pure Prevention

Our Department of Human Services has devoted considerable resources to what they appropriately refer to as Prevention Services. Programming that includes mentoring, wholesome activities, family engagement and academic support is available to young people and their parents before an arrest, which is what usually has to occur to trigger intervention. In Philadelphia, at risk youth can get help before the police need to be called.

Juvenile justice stakeholders work collaboratively to reach out to young people in the schools and the community to improve their relationships with the police. Negative interactions can result in young people being arrested and police officers being assaulted. Philadelphia's nationally recognized approach includes a curriculum taught to every class of recruits at our Police Academy.

Preventing Further Penetration Through Diversion

In Philadelphia, we have developed an extensive network of diversion programs. When diversion works properly it ensures that non-violent offenders are expeditiously held accountable, supervised and effectively treated. Accountability is achieved through victim restoration and/or community service. Restitution teaches responsibility while making victims whole.



Report & Article on Incarceration

Parents Behind Bars: What Happens to Their Children?

By David Murphey and P. Mae Cooper, October 2015, Child Trends

<http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2015-42ParentsBehindBars.pdf>



“States Move Toward Treating 17-Year-Old Offenders as Juveniles, Not Adults”

By Erick Eckholm, New York Times, May 13, 2016

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/14/us/states-move-to-treat-17-year-old-offenders-as-juveniles.html? r=0>

Through diversion, victim restoration can be accomplished without a trial and the many related court listings. Appropriate charges can be disposed of without burdening the already strained resources of our justice system. Rather than waiting to testify in court, police officers can spend more time on the streets keeping us safe and courtrooms can be reserved for only those cases that require the full legal process. Regarding juveniles with special needs, it benefits everyone when their needs are immediately identified and they are diverted into an appropriate treatment program as quickly as possible. An example of this is our Juvenile Treatment Court where substance abusing adolescents are quickly afforded clinically prescribed treatment.



Because diversion allows the juvenile to stay in the community, families are left intact and academic progress at the student's home school goes uninterrupted.

Finally, all of Philadelphia's diversion programs offer expedited record expungement. Successful completion not only means there will be no adjudication of delinquency (conviction), but the record of the arrest and court involvement will be expunged. Hence, there is no further penetration of the system and the young person has an opportunity for an immediate fresh start.

Preventing Penetration into the Adult System

Even when a case requires an adjudication of delinquency and maybe even placement, the goal is to make sure the juvenile experience marks the end of any court involvement. Philadelphia's excellent juvenile probation department provides case management, mentoring and supervision. The myriad of residential programs in Pennsylvania address academic, vocational and criminogenic needs and our highly structured reintegration services promote successful re-entry. The goal is to provide treatment, supervision and rehabilitation while insuring competency development that prepares our young people for life in the 21st Century.

Family Engagement to Facilitate Prevention

Every point on the Continuum of Prevention must emphasize family engagement. Providing families with the resources they need to prevent delinquency or to address it when it manifests simply takes advantage of the institution that was meant to have those responsibilities in the first place. Given the number of families with at risk children or children already involved with the justice system,

improving the quality of available programs, policies, and services can significantly impact the health and safety of our community. Preventing children from entering the system or from further penetrating the system helps us all. When prevention is the focus of our approach, families stand to greatly benefit and when families are strengthened we all benefit.

Funding Opportunities

Children's Wellbeing Initiative

Application due Date: June 22, 2016

Ashoka Changemakers and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have launched an initiative to promote children's wellbeing in the United States. The Children's Wellbeing Initiative is designed as a leadership development network for people who nurture the building blocks of wellbeing in kids.

Whether you are a social worker, educator, community member, or parent, Ashoka and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are eager to offer you the recognition, support network, and visibility you need to power your project. The Children's Wellbeing Initiative gives you opportunities to present your unique approach, secure peer feedback, and shape a cross-sector, practitioner-led vision for children's wellbeing that debuts at a culminating network event this October. And at the October meeting, these two organizations will also recognize 10 Champions of Children's Wellbeing as the most compelling representatives and storytellers from the network. Champions will tap a funding pool of \$48,000 and showcase their initiatives as we work to drive a broader, cultural mindset shift. For information on eligibility and application criteria go to: <https://network.changemakers.com/challenge/childrenswellbeing/brief>

News Tips

Lynn Fields Harris Appointed to the National Council on Aging

In a March 29, 2016 press release posted by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) three new members were appointed to its Board of Directors and one of them was Philadelphia's Lynn Fields Harris, Executive Director of Center in the Park. The mission of NCOA is to improve the lives of millions of older adults, especially those who are struggling.

Center in the Park is a nationally accredited senior community center in Northwest Philadelphia primarily focused on the needs of adults 55+ with programs and services in lifelong learning, creative self-expression, health promotion and evidence-based programs, social services, and housing and community connections. Center in the Park was one of the original pilot sites providing essential assistance in the development of NCOA's Aging Mastery Program®.

Harris is a versatile, results-oriented executive with extensive experience in government and community relations, intergovernmental affairs, and public relations and marketing communications in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. In addition, Harris is a certified master trainer of the Stanford University Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and holds a certificate in senior center management. She was a delegate to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging and appointed twice as a member of the Pennsylvania Council on Aging, which she chaired. Harris also serves on the executive committee of NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers.

Ms. Harris also serves on the Board of The Strong Families Commission Incorporated.

A SHARED SENTENCE: The Devastating Toll of Parental Incarceration on Kids, Families and Communities

Published by: The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Date of Publication: May 2016

More than 5 million of today's children have had an incarcerated parent with the vast majority of those parents being fathers and it is the presumed intent of this Casey Foundation Report to focus on the impact on children's lives and future prospects.

As the title of the Report infers and states in the preface, *"incarceration" breaks up families, the building blocks of our communities and nation. It creates an unstable environment for kids that can have lasting effects on their development and well-being. These challenges can reverberate and multiply in their often low-income neighborhoods, especially if they live in a community where a significant number of residents, particularly men, are in or returning from jail or prison. And different obstacles emerge once parents are released and try to assume their roles as caregivers, employees and neighbors"*.

The Casey Report reveals quite a few staggering statistics including the fact that:



"...from 1980 to 2000, the number of kids with a father in prison or jail rose by 500 percent. Now more than 5 million children have had a parent incarcerated at some point in their lives, including 503,000 in California, 477,000 in Texas and 312,000 in Florida. The situation is even worse in many other states, especially Kentucky, which has the highest rate of children — 13 percent — who have had a parent incarcerated" – pg. 1 of the Report.

Even more astounding is the Report's assertion that "if incarceration rates hadn't increased during a 24-year period, the U.S. poverty rates would have fallen by 20 percent, rather than remaining relatively steady" – pg. 4 of the Report.

The Report includes a state-by-state table of Children Who Have Experienced Parental Incarceration: 2011–2012 by number and percentage – pg. 5

And it is not a stretch to understand that kids with incarcerated parents are significantly less likely to live in neighborhoods that are able to be supportive of families. The Report elaborates on the impact of incarceration on communities by taking a close look at Atlanta, Georgia; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Providence, Rhode Island. The up-shot is that there is a strong correlation between child poverty and communities with high incarceration rates. The encouraging news is that the Report offers concrete policy and program changes that could potentially ensure that:

1. Children are supported while parents are incarcerated and after they return;
2. Parents who have returned to the community are provided with pathways to employment; and
3. Communities, particularly those disproportionately affected by incarceration and reentry, are strengthened in order to promote family stability and opportunity. The high-poverty neighborhoods that are home to many kids and families dealing with incarceration lack quality affordable housing, access to jobs, good schools and key resources

To obtain a full copy of the report, go to:

<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-asharedsentence-2016.pdf>

Training Webinar and Conferences

National Partnership for Community Leadership's 18th Annual International Fatherhood Conference

"Strengthening Parenting Relationship Assets to Improve the Well-Being of Children"

When: June 14 - 17, 2016

Where: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, Kansas City, MO

A growing body of research indicates that children fair better on a variety of well-being indicators when both parents are actively involved and engaged in their lives. The 2016 International Fatherhood Conference will engage attendees in reflective yet forward looking discussions and workshops on evidenced based and evidence-informed practices, and, policies and research findings that are leading to advances in the responsible fatherhood field. To register go to: www.fofnetwork.org/

Program Evaluation 101: Designing, Implementing and Sustaining Your Work

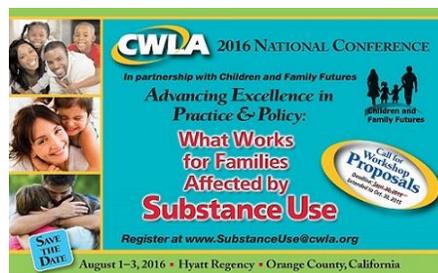
The **Fatherhood Research & Practice Network** will host a one-day certificate workshop at the National Partnership for Community Leadership's 18th Annual International Fatherhood Conference in Kansas City, Missouri on June 14, 2016.

Designed for practitioners, program managers and researchers, the FRPN's **Program Evaluation 101** provides tools for strengthening fatherhood programs and boosting their potential for future funding. Participants will receive a Certificate in Evaluation Practice from Temple University. Licensed social workers will receive 5 social work Continuing Education Units (CEU). Breakout sessions include:

- Establishing partnerships with programs and researchers
- Recruitment and retention for effective fatherhood evaluation
- Selecting outcome measures
- Proposals and logic models
- Types of evaluations: What is your program ready for?
- Data: Collecting, managing and presenting results

2016 NATIONAL SUBSTANCE USE CONFERENCE: Child Welfare League of America

This conference will focus on efforts to enhance cross-system collaboration for the benefit of children and families affected by Substance Use. The conference will afford the opportunity to discuss and disseminate important information on trends in policy and practice in this field. The conference will be held on [August 1-3, 2016](#) at the Hyatt Regency, Orange County, California.



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The Strong Families Commission

Vision

- Children and youth in Philadelphia, across the state of Pennsylvania, and around the country will benefit from and grow up with the emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and financial support of both parents in a healthy and supportive environment

Mission

- To strengthen families and improve child well-being through advocacy designed to affect child and family policy and programs, leverage resources to contribute to the well-being of children and families, and to encourage collaboration among Philadelphia organizations and beyond that are family-focused and inclusive of fathers

Goal

- Model Philadelphia as the most Father Friendly City in America, by eliminating the systemic barriers that work against increasing father inclusiveness in all systems of care that address the well-being of children, youth, and families. Achieving this goal can propel The Philadelphia Model of Father Integration into a successful example for the rest of the nation to emulate

Strategy

- Partner with children, youth, and family-focused agencies and systems of care to increase their capacity to include fathers in their service delivery models that are designed to improve the well-being of the children they serve

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A SPECIAL THANK YOU to everyone who made a tax deductible gift to The Commission in 2015.....

...and we *invite* anyone who wishes to support the work of the Commission to give generously and securely online -- www.thestrongfamiliescommission.com - via PayPal and/or you can mail a check to:

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Lynn Fields Harris, MPA,
Commission Treasurer

A Note from the Editor:

If you have information on best practices, research and other topics that you think readers would be interested in, please contact me – Debra Pontisso --at dpontisso@aol.com.



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