

ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

AAHMI MISSION

The mission of the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative (AAHMI) is to promote and strengthen the institution of healthy marriage in the African American community.

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AAHMI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2

MARCH—APRIL 2010

Black (Marriage) is Beautiful!



On May 13, 2010, Herbert and Zelmyra Fisher will hold the world record for life in wedded bliss—85 years! Mr. Fisher is 104 and Mrs. Fisher is 101. They credit their wonderful marriage to “faith in God, a loving family, and few big fusses over their long marriage.”



Regional Administrator Leon R. McCowan (Region VI, Dallas, TX) and his beautiful wife, Curtistene will be married 44 years this June. Through their strong belief in God and their commitment to each other, they have built many legacies, the most important of which is their two successful sons and three beautiful granddaughters. They say, “Never stop having fun!”



Rosalyn Wilson (ACF—Children’s Bureau Regional Manager, Region VII) and husband Robert of Kansas City, MO have been married 40 years. According to Ros, the secret to a happy marriage is “communication and commitment!”

If you are an African American couple (or someone you know) and would like to share the “secret of a healthy and happy marriage,” send a photo of you and your spouse along with your name, location, years married and your “secret” to: Darlene.Tart@acf.hhs.gov. Include a sentence or two about your family, if you’d like. Please note, **you must indicate your permission to use your likeness and quotation in the AAHMI Newsletter!**

2010 Black Marriage Celebrations in Region II

Celebrating Real Family Life and Every Lasting Marriage Ministry, in cooperation with **Wedded Bliss Foundation, Inc.**, hosted its fourth consecutive Black Marriage Day celebration in Staten Island, NY with a movie screening of *Happily Ever After: A Positive Image of Black Marriage*.

The **WISOMMM African Cultural Center** in Newark, New Jersey was the site for a Black Marriage Day Marriage Hall of Fame and Vow Renewal Ceremony, "*A True Celebration of Love!: Marriage Hall of Fame & Vow Renewal Ceremony*." The event featured a celebration of marriage, love and life through poetry, music, dance and reflections (open mic) of husbands and wives who have found true joy in each other.

Spotlight on Health: Why Diabetes? Why Now?

By: Barbara Andrews

National Diabetes Awareness Month is November, so why am I writing this column now? Diabetes is having a huge impact among African Americans, so this is a topic that couldn't wait! It is estimated that 13.2 percent of all non-Hispanic Blacks ages 20 and older have been diagnosed with diabetes. That's more than twice the rate of diagnosis for non-Hispanic White adults. In terms of numbers, that means more than 3 million people—more people than the City of Chicago—are affected! In addition, it is estimated that many have the disease and don't know it.

Diabetes is a group of diseases characterized by high levels of blood glucose or "blood sugar." There are three main types of diabetes. Type 1, formerly referred to as "juvenile onset," results from the body's failure to produce insulin, a hormone that is necessary to convert sugar, starches and other foods into energy. Type 2, which is the most common form of diabetes, occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin or when the body does not properly use the insulin that is being produced. Gestational diabetes develops during pregnancy.

There are several factors that may put you at greater risk for developing Type 2 diabetes including obesity and overweight, hypertension and high cholesterol. If you have "pre-diabetes," defined as having blood sugar levels that are above normal, but below the level of diabetes; research indicates that you can delay or prevent the onset of diabetes by losing weight, being physically active and eating a healthy diet. The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), part of the National Institutes of Health, developed a curriculum, **Power to Prevent: A Family Lifestyle Approach to Diabetes Prevention**, to help bring diabetes prevention and control to African American communities. **Power to Prevent** is available at <http://ndep.nih.gov/medial/power-to-prevent.pdf>.

African Americans are also more likely to suffer complications from diabetes than many groups. The complications can be serious—kidney failure, blindness, amputation, a higher risk of stroke and even death. Adults with diabetes have a two to four times higher death rate from heart disease than adults without diabetes. Diabetes is a disease that has an impact on the entire body. There is no cure for diabetes, but many people can reduce complications by managing their disease with healthy eating, being physically active, taking medication as prescribed and testing blood glucose.

You can help yourself and others. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, take control to manage the disease! If you have a pre-diabetes condition, take action to prevent or delay diabetes. There is reliable information available from the U.S Department of Health and Human Services' diabetes site at <http://www.healthfinder.gov>, the Office of Minority Health at <http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov>, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at <http://www2.niddk.nih.gov> and the American Diabetes Association at <http://www.diabetes.org>.

Focus on Fathers: The Street Stops Here

Retrieved from the *National Fatherhood Initiative* website



The National Fatherhood Initiative has partnered with the inspiring documentary **The Street Stops Here** to bring fathers this message: Good Dads have what it takes to step into the lives of our nation's 24 million fatherless children. They can be the mentors—the father figures—that can make a difference in our nation's communities.

The **Street Stops Here** tells the incredible story of Jersey City, NJ's Saint Anthony High School basketball team, coached by the legendary Bob Hurley, Sr. It is the portrait of teenagers fighting their way out of "the hood," armed with little more than a basketball and the hard wisdom of a fierce, demanding coach. It is also the story of Hurley, an uncompromising teacher who demands perfection from kids who have known little discipline growing up in Jersey City. Against the toughest of odds—crime-ridden neighborhoods, poverty, incarcerated parents, and widespread father absence—Coach Hurley guides his players to glory on the basketball court...and in life. Not only have his teams won 24 state championships in 32 years, but all but two of his players during that time have gone on to college.

To view a clip of this remarkable documentary, visit <http://www.fatherhood.org/streetstopshere/index.asp>.

Spotlight on Region VII: A Look at *Black Marriage Day* in Wichita, KS

By: Chris Seifers

Wichita, Kansas – Black Marriage Day was celebrated in Wichita last Sunday evening at Tabernacle Bible Church with over 550 people attending. Mayor Carl Brewer issued a proclamation setting aside March 28, 2010, as a day to celebrate Black marriages in the city. Tabernacle Bible Church, St. Mark United Methodist Church, Dellrose United Methodist Church and St. Mark Cathedral joined in a collaborative effort with Catholic Charities' Marriage for Keeps and Newman University to host the event.

Black Marriage Day has been celebrated across the country since its inception in 2002 and first time that Wichita has participated in the national event. Organizers said they wanted to shed light on the low percentage of Black couples who get and remain married.

"High rates of divorce, high rates of out-of-wedlock births. All of those negative statistics that we hear from around the country, it happens right here in Wichita, Kansas," said Annie Montgomery, one of the event organizers.

"Go back to 1961 and 80 percent of the families in the Black community had a husband and wife, they were a nuclear family," said Sherdeill Breathett, another organizer. "Today that marriage rate is about 30%. It's a sad commentary." He also said that out of all the cultures in the United States, African Americans have the lowest instances of traditional families. He contributes this, in part, to a barrage of negative images on TV and in the music industry.

Organizers said they wanted to convey to those present the importance of getting married and staying married and to celebrate those who have been role models for lasting relationships. "It's very important to me that we get across to our young people that you establish a relationship, a friendship, and then you come together in a committed relationship," added Montgomery.

Tabernacle Bible Church came alive on Sunday evening through song, interpretive dance, a viewing of the documentary film "You Saved Me," a thought-provoking discussion about the institution of marriage and a vow renewal for the married couples in attendance.

The event served to inspire those who are in healthy marriages of the importance of maintaining those relationships and for those with trouble marriages in attendance they found a renewed hope that they can make it work. Single and engaged attendees were encouraged that a healthy marriage can happen and not to give up hope.

"I was struck by the number of people that came together and for their gratitude related to this most worthy event," said Mike Duxler PhD, Program Manager with Marriage for Keeps at Catholic Charities and Newman University associate professor. "It is abundantly evident to me that we touched a very meaningful chord in the community and perhaps will have prompted a powerful and unified force to support Black marriages and families."

Breathett said that the event was "a tremendous success" and that the state of Black marriage is a "work in progress with great hope!"

"We set an example and established a legacy for the single and young Black men and women in our community," Montgomery said. "I believe we ignited a fire among those in attendance with a passion for healthy marriage and family and fueled a community-wide initiative filled with promise and possibilities for restoration, reconciliation, renewal and recommitment of marriage."

"It was interesting to talk with several participants after the event and to hear how even the most basic information that uplifts marriages was greeted with sincere appreciation," said Duxler.

Organizers say this was only a beginning and they plan to schedule more events in the future.

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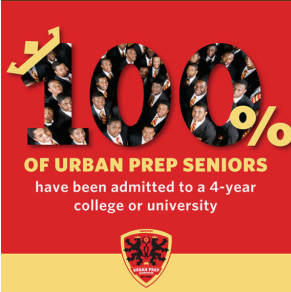
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Youth Insights!

College-Bound: Urban Prep Announces 100 Percent of First Graduating Class Accepted to a Four-Year College or University By: Elma Goodwin



Students have received more than \$2.2 million in scholarships and grants to date

(Ward-20) congratulated the 107 seniors on their achievement and encouraged them to continue to succeed through college and beyond.

According to Mayor Richard M. Daley, "Urban Prep is an example of public education that works. The school's curriculum engages students to learn and, as a result, students graduate with the tools needed to succeed in college. Congratulations to Urban Prep's senior class for meeting their goal of 100 percent of students being accepted to college."

Seniors, dressed in their uniform of black blazers and khaki pants, exchanged their red ties for a special red and gold striped version as they received college acceptance letters over the last few months. At the ceremony, the seniors most recently admitted to college were presented with their new red and gold striped ties.

"When these students entered Urban Prep as freshmen in 2006, only four percent were reading at grade level, and according to the statistics, they faced low graduation rates and even lower college acceptance levels. But, at Urban Prep "We Believe" that all our students are college bound and never doubted this day would come. We are so proud to announce that all students in our first senior class have been accepted to a four-year college or university," said Tim King, founder and CEO of Urban Prep Academies.

Urban Prep, the AAHMI commends you for your stellar performance.

More information on Urban Prep can be found at <http://www.urbanprep.org/>.

Send your positive youth gossip to elma.goodwin@acf.hhs.gov for consideration in the AAHMI newsletter.

Please send comments or questions to Darlene Tart
Darlene.Tart@acf.hhs.gov

All Around ACF

Region VII: Networking Within Works! By: Karen Elliott, PhD

Region VII staff from all programs involved with fatherhood are networking and sharing information with their other regional colleagues! This exciting venture started as the result of Roberta Coons, Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), hosting a Regional Office/Central Office (ROCO) call for all Child Support Enforcement Staff across the nation informing them about the various fatherhood endeavors occurring in Region VII. During the call Region VII staff from OCSE, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Dan Houlahan), Head Start (Raymond Hicks), Child Welfare (Jason Bohn), Child Care (Betty Lamle), Tribal (Neil Lawhead and Willow Jack) and Healthy Marriage/Responsible Fatherhood (Karen Elliott) shared information about fatherhood programs and resources available in their region. This call was so well received that Pat Brown, Regional Administrator, requested the information be shared at an all-staff meeting. Mrs. Brown and the leadership team decided that the fatherhood material should be presented in three parts: panel presentation from the OCSE ROCO call, Young Fathers Lunch and Learn and a simulation. All staff were encouraged to attend to learn of opportunities to enhance their knowledge about the importance of father involvement and available resources. Roberta Coons hosted the panel discussion; Karen Elliott facilitated the Young Fathers lunch and learn showing clips of the training video with directed discussion, and Kathleen Holt, Child Welfare Training Network, University of Kansas, School of Social Welfare (a prior Child Welfare grantee) was brought in to conduct a condensed four-hour simulation. Dr. Holt ended by assisting attendees to understand how to apply what was learned to practical scenarios.

The results of this regional level cross program collaboration were many. Staff learned about other programs within the region and broadened their knowledge base on the importance of fathers. The latter information can be applied to the work place and to personal interests outside of the job. Also, staff can now go to colleagues to share resources and to collaborate so efforts are not duplicated and are more efficient. This process was so well received that the Region VII leadership team will continue this format with other topics to include homelessness and others.

SAVE THE DATE!
12th Annual International Fatherhood Conference
June 16-18, 2010
Sheraton Metairie
New Orleans, LA
"Parents and Communities Working Together to Ensure the Academic Success of Children"
Visit the National Partnership for Community Leadership (NPCL) website at:
<http://www.npclstrongfamilies.com>

President's Proposed FY2011 Budget Would Invest in Families

On February 1, 2010 President Obama proposed a FY2011 budget that includes modest increases (or at least level funding) for many programs under ACF administration. Highlights of the impact of the proposed budget for children and families include:

Expansion of quality child care and early education opportunities. The budget calls for a \$1.6 billion permanent increase (the largest increase in more than 20 years) to the *Child Care and Development Block Grant*, a fund that assists more than 1.6 million children. Of that amount, \$137 million is slated for activities that improve the quality of infant/toddler care. In addition, if the budget passes *Head Start* and *Early Head Start* would see an increase of \$989 million; programs under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* would get an increase of \$3 billion. Almost \$9 billion over a ten-year period would be allocated to the *Early Learning Challenge Fund*.

Opportunities for disadvantaged youth and postsecondary education aid. President Obama's budget proposes an 11% increase for *Workforce Investment Act* youth activities (to \$1.025 billion) and creates a \$154 million *Youth Innovation Fund* for pilot programs to deliver comprehensive services to disadvantaged and disconnected youth (youth 14-19 who are not in school). *Youth Build* would receive an additional \$17.5 million to expand green construction projects.

A substantial increase for support for students in postsecondary education is contained in the budget. This would mean that the maximum *Pell Grant* would increase from \$5,550 in 2010 to \$5,710 in 2011 and increase each year by a rate of 1% plus inflation, to \$6,900 in 2019. In addition, the budget proposal would allocate \$10.6 billion over ten years for the *Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act's Graduation Initiative* and \$3.5 billion over five years for the *College Access and Completion Fund* whose goal is to increase the graduation rate of low-income students.

Workforce Innovation. Level funding for adult and dislocated worker employment and training under the *Workforce Investment Act* is proposed as is an additional \$108 million in new funding for a newly-created *Workforce Innovation Fund*. Combined with other funding sources, the *Workforce Innovation Fund* would total \$321 million and

would be administered by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor. The budget also calls for the reauthorization of the *Workforce Investment Act*, a key goal of which is to overhaul the performance accountability system and remove disincentives for those most in need of assistance. Other goals of reauthorization are to streamline service delivery, improve access to one-stop career centers and promote innovation and replication of best practices.¹

Investing in the most vulnerable children and families. The FY2011 budget has two proposals that would be of particular interest to organizations that serve low-income children and families: the *Promise Neighborhoods Initiative* and the *Fatherhood, Marriage and Families Innovation Fund*. Both of these proposals recognize that more comprehensive approaches are necessary for the most vulnerable populations who are further hindered by the current economic crisis.

The *Promise Neighborhoods Initiative* would be funded with \$210 million to help empower distressed neighborhoods by linking together school reform, family supports and community services within the neighborhood.

The creation of a \$500 million (over a three-year period) *Fatherhood, Marriage and Families Innovation Fund* would be used in the areas of comprehensive responsible fatherhood and improving child outcomes by utilizing innovative and holistic approaches to the provision of such services as home visiting, subsidized employment and transitional jobs, substance abuse and mental health treatment. These grants would build on and replace the current \$150 million healthy marriage/responsible fatherhood grants.

Other Impact. The FY2011 budget also proposes: raising asset limits for low-income, working age, non-disabled individuals and their families for federally funded programs; establishing \$50 million for the State Paid Leave Fund, \$2.5 billion for the TANF Emergency Fund and a one-year extension of the TANF block grant (rather than a full five-year reauthorization). Read the full budget proposal at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Overview/>

SAVE THE DATE!

African American Healthy Marriage Initiative
Administration for Children and Families
Co-Sponsors
Hampton University, National Center
on African American Marriages and Parenting (NCAAMP),
and the Annie E. Casey Foundation

5th Annual Connecting Marriage Research to Practice Conference:
Preparing Resilient Families for the New Decade
June 22 - 24, 2010
Location: Hampton University
Hampton, VA

Visit www.AAHMI.net to view the proceedings from the 2009 conference and additional information on the initiative.
Online registration Coming Soon to this Site!

Youth & Young Adults Explore

LIFE Empowerment Health
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