



U.S. Department of Health
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Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012

Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:

Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools

August 23, 2012

Moderator:

- Dennis Bega, Acting National Director of Regional Operations, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education

Presenters:

- J. Michael Hall, Strong Fathers - Strong Families
- Betsy Landers, National PTA®
- Philip Jackson, The Black Star Project

Facilitator:

- Patrick Patterson, NRFC Manager

Webinar Transcript (Provided by PGI Global)

Operator: Please stand by. We're about to begin.

Good day and welcome to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Webinar. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time I would like to turn the conference over to Mr. Patrick Patterson. Please go ahead sir.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you Chris. Good afternoon everybody and welcome back to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse's August Webinar entitled Fatherhood Goes Back to School Initiative, effective strategy for increasing fatherhood involvement in schools.

We all know this is the time of year that our kids go back to school. One of the things we want to really highlight today are effective strategies from some of the nation's best experts on engaging dads in school. My name is Patrick Patterson. I'm the manager for the Fatherhood Clearinghouse and will be facilitating today's webinar.

For many of you, you know that the resource center Clearinghouse has been very strong in engaging via social media. And during this webinar we'd love for you to join our conversation on Twitter by tweeting us at fatherhood.gov using a hash tag, fatherhood.gov.

Before we get started today I want to invite our fellow project officer Ms. Lisa Washington-Thomas to provide a few opening comments. Lisa.

Lisa Washington-Thomas: Thanks Patrick. And I want to thank everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules and participating in our webinar. We think the topic of encouraging fathers with involvement as children go back to school is extremely important. We've learned from the research that girls who have involved fathers are better at mathematics, that boys who have an active involved father have better grades and perform better on academic achievement tests,

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NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



that preschoolers have stronger verbal skills and also that children display less behavior problems in school.

And because of that we want the experts to be able to tell you how important it is as well as encourage you to encourage your fathers whether they are in your programs or your colleagues to spend more time with their children and in their at school to increase their child's academic success.

I also want to thank Ben O'Dell who has worked with us to work with the government to have a strategic force talking about the same message. We are pleased to have Denis Bega from the Department of Education as well as, not necessarily participating in the call but the Department of Housing and Urban Development has developed a toolkit that they're distributing to their public housing authority to encourage fatherhood involvement as children go back to school.

So I want to thank you and encourage you to spread the message and thank those who are doing it.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you Lisa. With this being only our third webinar we'd like to just welcome some of our return visitors but also new visitors to this webinar process. At the Clearinghouse we are very proud of our work. We are very focused on becoming a national resource for fatherhood and families across the country. So I want to orient you guys to the Clearinghouse.

The Clearinghouse is federally funded. We are a national resource for fathers, practitioners, programs whether they be non-funded or federal grantees, states and the public at large who are serving or are interested in supporting strong fathers and strong families.

We are directed by Mr. Kenneth Braswell and I am the manager for the project. On the screen now you see both of our email contact information. We are always trying to make sure that this resource center, this Clearinghouse, is a resource that reflects the field. And so we list both of our email addresses to invite you guys to send us information, resources, tips that you think would help us in advancing the field of responsible fatherhood.

Our goals for the Clearinghouse are to provide, facilitate and disseminate current research proven in an evident strategy that will encourage and strengthen fatherhood families and providence of services via the following priorities. And there are a few so I'm just going to go through them real quickly.

Our major interface with the public is our website, fatherhood.gov. Many of you have visited our site. It again is our major point of contact with you guys and we want that to be as robust as possible. So if you visit our website, the goal is for whatever is current going in the field to be present on our website pending approval from our fellow partners.

Our second priority is social media. Some of you know that Clearinghouse has been around for a number of years. In this new year we have been able to engage via social media. So you can contact us, you can follow us on Twitter at fatherhood.gov or like us on Facebook at fatherhood.gov as well. Again, during this webinar we would love to hear from you and hear your thoughts about what you get from our presenters by tweeting us at fatherhood.gov.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Our third priority is the development and dissemination of written products that highlight responsible fatherhood research and advance the products internationally. If you go to our website you'll see there is a lot of products that have been developed by researchers but also practice based documents that help practitioners on a daily basis in supporting observing fatherhood in families.

That's a priority for us. In this year we released several new products and we continue doing that in the future. Hopefully through outreach, training and presentations it's getting better. We find ourselves being helpful to practitioners in the field but also sharing what we hear from you guys as well. And you see us in a number of venues across the country doing presentations and or training.

And then last but not least, under the clearing house is our calling center. In the past the call center was a 1-800 number that's toll free devoted to practitioners. In this iteration of the clearing house it's also a resource now for dads to call. They can call directly with issues around child support, visitation, custody, a number of issues that men bring to programs or normal family life can be addressed in these programs.

Last but not least, go to a training is a priority for us like today's webinar. We do a number of these through the course of the year. In this year we've done three. This is our third and final and we'll be looking forward to doing more of these in the future.

And then last but not least, our annual media campaign. This is for us very exciting. Many of you guys have heard about or seen our work around the father buzz. This is very new to the field. When you actually engage barber shops and you are sending the information directly to fathers in their centers.

You have also likely seen our PSAs. Some of them have reflected the cheerleader dad. You've seen the military video that we've done but also the dad that is getting his bangs done with his daughter and so we try to promote the work of fatherhood programs nationally and also on local levels.

That's the clearing house. Again, we'd love for you to visit our website but also while we're talking today to tweet us at fatherhood.gov using the hash tag fatherhood.gov.

A few housekeeping notes before we get started -- this webinar is being recorded for those of you taking notes. The recording of all the presentations and an epilogue from this webinar will be posted on our website between seven to nine business days after today. While you are hearing the presentation today you can submit questions via the webinar technology. And to get a sense of how you do that I want to invite Jen McHenry to give us a one on one on submitting questions. Jen.

Jen McHenry: Thanks Patrick. So as Patrick said - we'd like you to send all of your questions to us as you can think of them and, you know, please don't hesitate to send more than one. And the way to do that is not by speaking up on the phone. While we are sure you have lots of questions to ask, we won't be able to hear them if you don't un-mute them. But if you send them to us via the



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Q&A function we will select them online. And once our presentation has ended we will come back and address the questions in person.

And the way that you ask is you click on the Q&A button. You'll get a popup box and that's what you're screen here. You will be able to type your question in. Once you have got everything you would like to ask, just hit the ask button to submit it to the moderator. We'll send you back a message that we received your question and again we'll hold those.

And also a couple of other technical issues. If your screen appears to be too small, on your screen you can hit the F5 button. That will take your presentation slide full screen and you'll be able to see all the material. If you would like to ask a question and your screen is in full screen mode, you can hit the F5 again or the escape key which will bring you back to that small screen and give you that little bar at the top to ask questions.

If you are interested in presentation slides and you didn't receive a link to them ahead of time you can email us at info@fatherhood.gov. And as Patrick said earlier, all of the materials from the webinar will be posted online. So if you have any questions specifically about accessing that please feel free to email us.

I'll turn it back over to Patrick.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you Jen.

As a quick reminder, at the end of today's webinar, all of our presentations again will be posted on our website but we're also going to at the very end leave time for Q&A. So you can send your questions during the webinar, you know, just rapid fire ask questions about presenters or expert presenters at the very end. So I'm looking forward to getting questions from you guys. And also I'd just remind you to tweet us. We'll take your questions via Twitter as well if you have comments or questions, using the hash tag [fatherhood.gov](https://twitter.com/fatherhood.gov).

For today we are very honored to have a guest moderator for this webinar. From the US Department of Education our guest moderator is Dennis Bega, Acting National Director of Regional Operations in the US Department of Education.

Some of you may know Dennis. He's been in the field for a number of years. So in my introduction I'll just share with you what we have on his bio. Mr. Bega served as the department representative for the education provision of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA, education and business partnership and initiative to grow student learning with post secondary education and career acceleration.

In addition Mr. Bega provides aid to federal, state, local, community and school districts on matters related to educational reform inclusion of all youth, technology and other religion education initiatives embedded in federal indication statutes including future quality, accountability and student achievement.

He represents the department of national and regional state forums. He speaks on priorities of the department and is the education liaison to a number of federal, regional and state



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



educational and post policy initiatives. Mr. Bega completed his undergraduate and graduate studies at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois.

Please join me in welcoming our guest moderator, Mr. Dennis Bega. Dennis.

Dennis Bega: Thanks Patrick and good afternoon everybody.

You know, I should put in my bio the two most important things that give me relevance to be on this call today. One, I'm a former teacher. I guess, once a teacher always a teacher. And I'm also a father. I have three lovely daughters that went through all the early cuddly years in elementary school, the exorcist years in middle school and then the challenging years in high school. So I come at this not just from an academic background but also from the experience of being a dad and a member of the PTA and in the schools and in the classrooms and in the sporting events and every place else.

So it's an issue that's close to my heart because education if it's going to succeed in this country, it has to succeed at the local level. And it can only succeed if we have the involvement of everybody in the community including parents and most importantly both mothers and fathers feeling empowered to be part of that dynamic so that kids sense that it's a valuable accomplishment that means something to both moms and dads.

The first slide I have up here is a quote that my boss Arnie Duncan who is also a father of two and a member of the PTA and an active parent in his children's school, made it a recent conference that was hosted for the Mom Congress if any of you are familiar with that.

We often talk about parents being partners in education. We say that we are usually talking about the healthy and productive relationship that can develop between the adults in a child's life at home and the adults who work with that child at school. I can't overstate how important this partnership is.

So what my boss is basically saying is we love when the cookies come and we love when the parents come on days of recognition. It is vitally important that parents are known faces in the school, that kids see that their parents care about what happens to them and their education. We face a challenge in this country. Right now we've got close to a 27% drop out rate where kids don't complete high school.

If we break that number down in terms of young African American children and Latin children, that number approaches 40 to 50%. And that's a generation we can't afford to lose. And it happens in education and it starts and perhaps ends in education.

So I'm happy to join with our partners in HHS and ACF and particular HUD and the other federal partners to make certain that fathers feel welcome. And I guess we're all fathers whether we have children or we're uncles or we're big brothers, grandfathers or men of character in the community where we represent a role model. We represent a voice. We represent a value to education.

May I have the next slide?

And this is why it's important. Some of you may have this at home or your parents may have it. We are at that time of year again where a whole new class of kids is getting ready to start school. They will come in with - now I'm in this picture somewhere. I don't expect anybody to find me but I'm in here. But you can see the look of expectation and promise and adventure on the faces of these children.

Some of us have on our new bow ties. That was popular in 1956. Some of us have our new lunch boxes. Some of us are following in the paths of our older brothers and sisters. But we all come into the education adventure expecting to be excited, expecting to be taught, expecting to be challenged. And we have every year we have a chance to do this over and continue to get it better and better. Each time it's a new opportunity for parents, moms and dads to be part of that excitement.

And this is a critical time for kids to see that education matters in their lives. I don't think there's a prize if you guess which one I am but maybe we can do that during the question and answer session.

Can I have the next slide please?

Often this is what we experience in education where parents don't feel where they fit in and schools have an exciting program and they're waiting for parents to participate and they're waiting for dads to come. And we end up having the best plans, the best ideas and the best tools and we end up not connecting the two tracks so kids have as seamless a ride toward educational achievement as possible.

And to be honest with you while I value and I value everything that's being done through the clearing house through HHS or other partners in the federal system. My job is to make it easy for parents to feel engaged in education. What happens when our kids are in school whether they start in preschool or go on to post secondary education. It is that group that I am most interested in making certain the tracks connect with. So our partnership with HHS and the other federal partners is to make certain that our voice is heard. And we're able to amplify that voice on behalf of kids and their parents around the country.

May I have the next slide please?

So we need men of character. We need dads, uncles, grandfathers, grandparents. Last June in Chicago we had over 300 men gather for a Saturday discussion on the role of man in education. It had a powerful presence of fathers, grandfathers, uncles, the wide diversity of men that can stand up and speak to the value of education. In Atlanta coming up in September we expect to have close to 500 men engaged in these same discussions. And we intend to continue this outreach to men in particular so they see their role in education as empowered, as important and as critical to the success of education for their sons or daughters.

I'll give you an example. In advance of our Atlanta conference we had a one day planning session where we had about 50 men gather then we had a panel of middle school youth, three or four young men that we asked to talk about the value of men in their lives. And two of them



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



said something which stunned and silenced the audience. And that was that one thing from my dad to come to my sporting event to see me play basketball, to see me play football, to see me at the swim meets, to see me run track but I never see my dad when I'm in the chorus or the parent teacher conferences or when I'm doing something in school that I'm proud of.

Kids don't miss anything. They may not remember the events that we attend but they always remember the ones that we miss. And as a father I've seen that first hand when I've seen the look of disappointment on my daughter's face when I missed an event at her school. And it didn't matter how many I had attended. It was the ones I missed that caught her attention.

So the more we can engage men in this discussion, the more we can engage men as active partners in the success of education, the better off our children will be and we can impact this generation of education success.

So I have at the top of our, of each of these slides, our new website address for parent and family engagements. If you go to ed.gov you will see on the panel of subdirectories ed.gov/parentandfamilyengagement. It is our newest addition to our website which will provide you with updated information on where the secretary is going to be. He speaks often on issues of parent and family engagement and as a father he speaks very passionately about his role as a leader in this discussion.

So I would ask you to visit that frequently, take advantage of what we're doing and we will be adding other cities to this list in the coming months as plans are finalized for some additional father outreach.

With that brief introduction I want to really get into the meat of our discussion. We've got some very strong participants this afternoon that can bring some additional insight and some energy to this discussion. I want to start first with Mike Hall from Strong Father Strong Families. Mike is a special education teacher, teacher of the gifted and talented and our intermediate and middle school principal. That's part of his background.

In his current position he has worked with more than 110,000 fathers and parents at local schools, head start programs, regional and national conferences. He also started the radio on the Bam internet radio network and has written magazine articles for the national PTA, the southwestern education laboratory and the national head start association's children and family magazine.

Mike has had the privilege of presenting many workshops and has spoken at numerous conferences and events. He is the father of two sons, 16 and 20 and a husband to a beautiful middle school teacher. He also let us know that before this call began that he spent the morning working with his cattle. I guess that's what all people in Texas do and that he used hand sanitizer before he got on the phone.

So, Mike it's your program now so take it away.

Mike Hall: Alright we can get started with the slides. And be glad that it is a phone call because this morning was a little different than being at conference. But it's good to be on the phone. My



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



dad had a heart transplant and is in the hospital so I have to let him be gone. He didn't think I was old enough to work cattle yet. So one of these days when I grow up I'll be able to farm. So he was out and taking care of business, I had my help there as you can see on the slide. But my sons are - I have two sons and they are both very busy in their school activities. I was able to use the younger son today and then I sent him off to his band and stuff, so.

Many days around here it's just me and the dog while everybody else is at school. And we're actually starting up. I've been doing some end services both in head start and in public schools and we're looking forward to a great year.

You all have looked at me enough. We'll go to the next slide.

You know when we talk about our work we have - Jen could you go to the next slide real quick? You know, we have worked with 110,000 dads face to face as we say from the woods to the hood and in all kinds of environments. And the one thing we want to remind you of and the one thing we want to bring to you is not that we're just so smart and we've been so blessed to find what's working in schools.

And when we talk about these programs, understand when people follow these recipes and when people do these techniques and best practices they just work. I mean, it really makes our life easy to be able to stand flat footed, look people in the eye and say - look, if you'll do these things, this many dads will show up and this is how your program will go and it's just happening like clockwork across the country.

I put in about 25,000 miles this summer on planes, trains and automobiles. One of the reasons I sound like I'm hard traveled, I'm just getting over some illness from probably all my travel catching up with me. But we want you to, you know, we facilitate these programs that are built for schools to do themselves. It's grass roots programming. It's strength based. We always talk about what dads can do.

Many of you in the fatherhood field have heard about all this stuff about what happens when dad is absent. We get that. Educators get that, they see it every day. I tell people as a recovering middle school principal, you know, I understand where they're coming from. But we want to talk about the power of presence.

So if we go to the next slide, you know, looking at my calendar for September, we've already got quite a few reading nights and we usually start to fall out in many of the schools that we work with, with our bring your dad to school day. The Texas PTA will be doing a statewide bring your dad to school day on the 28th of September. We expect that will bring 10 to 12,000 dads in the schools around the state of Texas. And that's really with minimal involvement. We'd love to have a lot more schools.

Our calendar is showing that we probably should see anywhere from 16 to 1800 dads in just a handful of programs. We average about 180 to 300 dads a day coming to the schools. They come in and they go to class, spend time with their kid in class, watch that child in the natural habitat and see what's going on in those classrooms. And so our bring your dad to school day is kind of like dads and doughnuts on steroids and getting them to see what's going on.

So you see there on the slide we have a science night, we have a math night a reading night and then our kick off really is typically the bring your dad to school day. We provide staff training. We've taken all the programs that we have found to be successful and given it a manual format. So we have a curriculum built for head start. We work with head start in about 32 states right now and then also public schools. And then we're always consulting with folks when they need the extra step.

And we've got several exciting pilot programs going on this year. We've got one on electronic parent leadership. We're going to put iPads in the hands of parents and get them to teach their kids using the technology and then also use the technology to reach out to other parents. So we're arranging five leaders up on each of these ten campuses. We're working with South Dallas and we can't wait to see what they're going to do to shine. And it empowers them to reach out to other parents.

So that's kind of our, you know, day to day work. I'll probably, looking at a calendar right now we're going to see, you know, face to face with about 12 to 15,000 dads in the greater Dallas Fort Worth area. And so as we look at that that's where our experience comes from.

Lets go to the next slide.

And we want to talk about what our programs are. And the reason I want to tell you this is not just to tell you about what we're doing but to tell you what works. We find if we train people as we go to conferences, a lot of times people are over thinking this. We're finding that in African American communities, Latino communities or low income where its mainly a title one school. So in low income communities, title one schools head start, the dads come out in bus loads because they are invited.

And our programs are child focused just like the dads. They are academic based which goes back to your comments earlier about how they, you know, the kids not only want to see that but that's what the dads need to see. And so that's why you don't, we're not having a juggling night. We're not going to basketball games or races. We're having the dads sit in and work with their kids because that's what schools need.

Interactive, everything we do is - if we meet with dads and put the dads with kids so that they can interact and also the dads interact with each other and learn from other fathers, everything we do in Texas and almost everywhere else we go is English and Spanish. We don't have a choice.

And also we're reaching out to parents so we are going to have to use that native language. My native language is red headed Spanish I guess, so we'll use that. And I say tri-lingual for a couple reasons. One is we have several schools where we have English, Spanish and Vietnamese and some of my schools around Texas were English, Spanish and Redneck. I guess I have to change my tone every once in a while so people can understand me and I am quite versed in that as we talked about where I was attending this morning.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



The other thing too is we built these programs to be affordable and replicable. This program is not based on, you know, my personality or someone else's personality. It's based on practices that other people can do, you know, with a basic skill set. And so as we develop these programs, these are programs we develop to put in the hands of other people because we can't be everywhere. So we want to do things that practitioners can pick up, that volunteers can pick up, that our PTA folks can pick up and they are quite simple. All of our math programs are either with decks of cards or dominoes.

And so it's things they have in the home that we teach them to use to teach the kids math. Science is junk drawer science where its mouse trap catapults throwing marshmallows and paper airplanes and film canister rockets and two liter bottle rockets. And it's things where parents don't have to find new resources, they already have them in their home. And they're also things because we are working with such large crowds of parents, where people are instantly successful.

You know, there's some really cool stuff you can do in science. I'm a former science teacher but if parents don't feel that success it's not going to be a great program. And then the other thing is and this is pretty important for those of you who are looking towards a new school year. I talk to a lot of people that say, you know, by the end of the year we don't have the dads coming like we maybe did at first. We only prescribe three to five father specific programs for year because we don't have a separate fatherhood program.

You have to have father specific events but we've had in the past both with head starts and public schools, we've had almost like an auxiliary PTA. PTA does their things and they brought in dad and they had their own dad programs. We know we do specific fatherhood programs to bring the fathers out but we want to integrate them into our PTA meetings. We want to integrate them into our booster club. We want to integrate them into the way we communicate with parents overall.

And so we have found and we have done one program per year and we have done 10 programs per year and we found over our, you know, almost ten years of doing this that three programs a year is typically what we do with three to five father specific programs, academically based focused on kids is really helping. So let's talk about how those programs look as we go to the next slide.

As we mentioned - every time I talked to educators the very first question is people say well what about these kids without a dad. If I can give you one statistic today, this is probably the most important. 100% of the kids in our country have a father. I'd like to soak that one for a minute. Now they don't all have a dad and they don't all have an involved father but what we find almost on a daily basis is we go in the schools and do these programs, schools are telling us we're bringing in guys they didn't know existed.

And so what we have found by focusing on fathers instead of male engagement, we have dads and granddads and uncles and, you know, guys dating mom and pastors and coaches all standing in for kids. We always let moms and anybody else that wants to come in. We're not going to keep anybody out. The programs are unapologetically for fathers. And the reason I say

that is if we are trying to engage fathers, we don't need to apologize to everybody else for having that program.

And we do believe that it's important to have male teachers and male role models in the lives of these kids. But kids are looking for men to either be their father or fulfill that fatherhood role. And these kids also know where to find them. And so when the kids are the ones to take the flyer home and they're the ones that color the picture and the teachers have been trained to talk to these kids about who would you like to bring to our upcoming father event, you can bring anybody you like, that not only helps us do things better but, you know, get things started.

Lets go to the next slide.

We're going to unapologetically do these things for fathers. It's always going to be dads and kids. We don't just meet with the dads. We always have the kids involved. That's what gets the dads out.

Let's go to the next slide.

We also - one of the things that makes it work is that we are giving it plenty of notice. Our most effective is bring your dad to school day which is in the morning during a workday which makes no sense except for the fact that when you give dads enough notice, they can make work arrangements. Our programs are only usually from 7:30 to 9:30.

Dads come in and eat breakfast, they go to class, they spend time with the kids, they spend time with other dads in our dad session. And they are gone and out and on to work by 9:30. They've seen a good part of the school day. They've gotten the gist of what's going on. We haven't taken too much away from them. And so that's what gets them out.

That flyer right there, that example right there is what our flyer looks like, that blank spot up in the light where the kid colors that flyer and that's what gets it home.

Lets look at the next slide.

And so when you reach out to other, you know, we always reach out to fathers and families. Everything we do is daddy did math night, daddy did science night, daddy did reading night and bringing that to school. We want everybody to know who we are reaching to. As we said earlier we do everything in both languages, English and Spanish, all of our handouts and stickers.

Lets go to the next slide.

We always want to have fun. We always talk about doing interactions. Dads learn way more from doing than they do being taught. The other thing is they will come because they are doing things with their kids and they will come back because it was interactive and so we teach with that.

Lets look at the next slide.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



You know, to make this work focus on the challenge and how that outcomes. It's going to get your teachers behind you, it's going to get your moms behind you. I already mentioned, don't over think this. We talked about expecting the dads to show up. I will see in the next month, I'll have about six programs. And between those six programs we'll see almost 2000 dads because we'll go anywhere from 120 dads to 400 dads that come out for these programs on an average basis.

And so, you know, we've got things to help you do this. And I'm telling you when you invite the dads, be ready for them to show up and they'll come out.

Lets go to the very last slide here, I think.

That's our contact information. I was on Twitter earlier Patrick. And so we have posted some of the resources on our website, you know, put that up. Its strongfathers.com/webinarresources. We put the short link to the fatherhood.gov and I'll do that one in just a minute. But we're so excited for you guys to be able to listen to this.

I was at a housing conference this week, been working with teachers this week and we're really excited about the upcoming school year. Do not hesitate to contact us on our website. My email and phone number is there, anything that we can do to help. Phone calls and emails are free. I'll ask them if I leave here I'll need to bring the check back. But other than that while I'm here we can help or do anything we can to help you.

And before I get off here, it is an honor to be on this webinar particularly with Mrs. Betsy and Phillip and all of the great people that are doing work around the country. We appreciate your time.

Dennis Bega: Thanks Mike very much for that. And Mike hit on a couple of the primary goals we have for this webinar. One is the importance and impact of father's involvement in school. And I think what Mike stressed is it's not an either or, it's a both and. The dads have a role, moms have a role, parents have a role.

We also presented some strategies that fatherhood practitioners like all of us on this call can use to engage with local schools and districts to increase father involvement in schools and improve the educational outcome for kids. And he provided as well, our subsequent speakers, resources and tips for how fathers can become more engaged, more involved in schools and contribute to their son's and daughter's education.

Our next speaker is Betsy Landers from the National PTA. Betsy has been involved with PTA work since 1989 and became the National PTA President in June 2011. She has also served as National PTA President Elect and Secretary Treasurer. As President she has been actively involved in negotiating new partnerships and alliances to increase the PTA's role in serving diverse families and improve the financial strength of the association.

While serving as Tennessee PTA State President, Betsy received the Shelby County School's board of education community service in 04 and was name one of the 50 women who make a difference by Memphis Women's magazine in 2002.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Betsy and her husband Ben have three children and live in Germantown Tennessee. Betsy, welcome to the webinar.

Betsy Landers: Thank you Dennis. It's exciting to be here. We're really excited to participate and thank you Michael for the shout out. It's always good to be on a call with Michael and with Patrick and with Phillip as well.

So why is this so important to the National PTA? Jen if you will go to the first slide?

National PTA encourages male involvement in a number of different ways. We have seen an increase in male involvement in education on a national level and it continue to be the highest its ever been in history of National PTA. But there's still so much work to do.

Even with record breaking involvement by men, men still only make up a little more than 10% of PTA membership. So why do more men need to get involved? Well, member involvement benefits our kids and it sets them on a path to success both in school and in life. Simply put, research show that the greater involvement of men in the lives of their children, their children achieve success socially, intellectually and academically.

National PTA is a leader in promoting and accomplishing male involvement for our students and their academic and their social lives. Now, more than ever, we see the need.

So how do we remain committed to insuring that men get more involved in their student's life? Well we continue to grow male alliance through our work with more alliance. Men organize to raise engagement. We also have our naturally focused male engagement committee which focuses to helping insure that we are on the right track moving forward. And we have our annual male engagement summit which can be thousands of men every year to encourage them, celebrate their achievement and engage new men that are looking to man up.

And each year at our annual convention, we present to a state who has achieved success and male engagement across their state, the National PTA MT3 award. This year's winner was Nevada which was very exciting. They've done tremendous work over this past year.

Jen the next slide please.

What are the numbers? Well when men aren't engaged, children are two times more likely to drop out of school. Students are two times more likely to repeat a grade in school. And only 35.2% of students with fathers absent from the household reports getting mostly A's through the 12th grade.

So research really does point to the overwhelming importance of men being engaged and, as it was pointed out earlier, in a way that really encourages children to participate in school and really highlights the importance of education and their academic success.

Our next slide Jen.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Speaking of data impact, let's go over a few of how does a father or a male adult being involved impact a child's life? We begin with role modeling. Fathers demonstrate to their children that male adults can take responsibility, help establish appropriate conduct and provide a daily example how to deal with life, how to dress, how to regulate closeness and distance and the importance of achievement and productivity.

Making appropriate choices - children learn from their fathers a wide range of choices about everything from clothing to food to devotion to what makes up a great cause. This promotes positive moral values, conformity to the rules and a development of a conscious.

Then there's improved problem solving abilities. Research shows that even very young children who have experienced high father involvement show an increase in curiosity and in problem solving capacity. Father's involvement really seems to encourage a child's exploration of the world around them and gives them confidence in their ability to solve problems, providing financial support.

Economic support is one significant part of a father's influence on his children. Providing emotional support - fathers provide emotional support to their children's mother. That support truly enhances the overall quality of the mother, child relationship. For example, I know when my husband helped ease my workload by getting involved with our children's homework it truly made such a difference.

Fathers can also contribute to mental dexterity in their children. Increase empathy as well as less stereotype sex role models just by getting involved. It also helps children understand greater self control. And when dad's more actively involved, our kids are more likely to have a solid marriage later in their lives.

And finally one of the most important things is student's performance, something we are all talking a lot about today. When both parents are involved, our kids truly enjoy school so much more. It truly enhances their education experience. They are more likely to get top grades. In general, our kids have better educational outcomes with one involved parent but they do their very best when both of their parents are involved.

Next slide Jen. Jen let's go onto the next slide. Thanks.

So what are some quick tips to getting more men engaged at your school within your PTA. We're just going to cover a few and I truly encourage you to go on the website, National PTA's website at pta.org to find out more tips. But let's just cover a few.

Youth seek specific messaging from men. Men really do want to be involved but we need to make sure that our communications are very clear about how to get involved. And then finally, I mean another tip to give is - many times we hear that men aren't involved because no one really asked them. So simply asking can make a huge difference and it can pay off big dividends, not only in membership recruitment but in the difference it will make in the children's lives at your school.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Creating special events for dads, uncles and grandparents, Michael kind of touched on that as well but it's really making sure that they have special opportunities. We find men really prefer hands on projects and events such as dad-only. Events that can include school carnivals, sports activities, father daughter and father son activities. And of course the all important going back to school. That important first day where dads need to be involved and show their children how important their academic success is.

Give it to them straight. We need to, again, making sure that your message is clearly defined. Letting them know what volunteer roles they can participate in and what your expectations are. Be sure to tell them the what, the when, the where, why and how it can make a difference for them to volunteer.

Seek male members in the community. Don't just wait for men to come to you. Reach out to other groups in the community. Take your message out to where men gather and to meet and greet and encourage them to participate, the rotary, the kwanes, the lion's club. Make sure you are getting your message out. And so importantly, make sure you recognize and celebrate. Publicize your successes. When you start getting more men involved, let the community know. That's how you grow male engagement from success.

Next slide Jen.

Our commitment as National PTA and engaging and empowering men begins with making certain that every place, every school is welcoming to all men whether it be fathers or dads, grandparents or uncles or positive male role models. It is a welcoming environment.

We are also committed to increasing male membership in PTA. As I mentioned earlier we're right at 10% of our membership is men and we want more and our message is clear. We also are committed to providing training opportunities on strategy for increasing male engagement, something that again is stamped on our website and that we teach throughout the country and our state congresses as well as our local units.

And finally and very importantly, creating those strategic partnerships. Like men, organized to raise engagements, our alliance is a group of like-minded associations coming together in a strategic way to increase male involvement and to really highlight the importance of men being a part of their children's lives. From the time they get up in the morning to the time they go to bed at night and every minute in between. And it's only working together that we're going to continue to make family engagement and education one of the nation's top federal policy priorities as we lean forward to benefit all of our children across this country.

And at PTA we certainly stand ready to do anything and everything that we can do. Jen if you want to go to the next slide?

And on the next slide you're going to see contact information for National PTA. Be sure to reach out and contact us if you have any questions or if we can help you in any way to increase male engagement in your community and your school. Be sure to visit the website, pta.org for even more information and more tips on how to increase male involvement.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Dennis that does it for me. Thanks very much.

Dennis Bega: Betsy, thanks very much. And I think both speakers so far have mentioned a point that I think needs repeating. And that is - this is not a one shot invitation. To engage men in a serious way we have to be consistent with the message, be proactive, meet them where they are and get them where they need to be. And it may not be the first invitation or the second. It may be the third or fourth that gets their attention.

And I'm part of that 10% Betsy that's a member of the PTA as is my boss Arnie Duncan and we had the privilege of having Thorton your colleague at the PTA leadership at the Chicago conference who spoke just as eloquently about the leadership of the PTA in reaching out to fathers and engaging them in the education of their sons a daughters.

And we want to follow with our final speaker of this segment and that's Phillip Jackson with the Black Star project. Phillip founded the Black Star project in 1996 to address the racial academic achievement gap in schools and has become a national leader advocating for community and parental involvement in education.

Black Star school motivation program has served close to 100,000 students in over 175 schools and between 3 and 4000 parents in its parent outreach programs. Most recently Phillip and the Black Star project had been leading the nation back to school with million fathers marches in cities across the US. In his divorced career, Phillip has been Senior Vice President of Crock and Brontono's and Assistant Budget Director and the Chief of Education at the city of Chicago, my hometown, Deputy Chief of Staff, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Chief of Staff for Chicago public schools and the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Housing Authority.

Please welcome Phillip to the webinar.

Phillip Jackson: Thank you. Thank you very much. Next slide please.

The Million Father March. I am happy to say that last year was the first year that we actually met a million fathers marching and let me tell you how we did it. Next slide please.

The Million Father March. It's about fathers accompanying their children to school on the first day of school. It's a beginning of a yearlong commitment of men to children to schools to their communities to society. That's what the Million Father March has become. What you're looking at there - that's actually Miami, Florida. And they do the Million Father March in many, many cities. And you've got pictures of fathers taking their children to school all over the country and that will be in our presentation. Next slide please.

The Million Father March started in Chicago, Illinois in 2004 in a church basement. Men had come together and there was actually nine African American men and one Latino man. And they said - you know what, school is starting in a couple of weeks. We want to do something but we want to do something that's going to be meaningful, that's going to be lasting. And so they came up with two ideas. One was an idea by the honorable minister Louis Farrakhan. That was the million man march.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



In 1996 Minister Farrakhanedi took one million men to Washington, DC and they paraded on the green or the ground and that was a big thing. The second thing - in South America in many small villages on the last day of school, fathers go up to the schools to thank the principals, to thank the teachers, to thank the janitors, to thank anybody who had anything to do with educating their children.

And so we came up with this idea of the Million Father March. Instead of it being on the last day of school it would be on the first day of school. And the Million Father March was born in a church basement with ten men on the south side of Chicago in 2004. Next slide please. Next slide please.

The first Million Father March, we had 25 cities. We thought we were doing big stuff in 2004. Remember, we only had two weeks to really jump this thing off but even in that two weeks, mostly in the state of Illinois, we got about 40,000 fathers to participate. In 2005 we had a lot more lead time, we were up to 83 cities and started to take a national presence rather than a regional one. We had about 150,000 men and every year we were able to increase the number of cities.

In 2007 and 2008 we started going international - Canada, Mexico, the Virgin Islands. We even had cities in Spain and Germany participating in the Million Father March. In 2011 last year was the first year that we actually broke the one million father barrier with 767 cities participating we had an estimated 1,050,000 fathers take their children to school.

The young man that you're looking at there, those are our brothers from New York City in the Bronx taking their children to school. We are at a million fathers. So far this year we've got about 550 cities that have signed on and we are expecting to possibly get up to about 650 or 700 this year. So we expect at least a million fathers again this year to participate in the Million Father March.

Next slide please.

We exceeded the Million Father March point in 2011 for the first time with 767 cities participating. Now this is what the Million Father March is. It's not going to Washington, it's not going to your state capital. It's not even going to your city hall. It's men getting up in the morning and taking their children to school all over the country.

And so this year, we've got - Idaho is heavily involved, Vermont, New Hampshire, Texas, Florida, California, New York, Illinois, countries, I'm sorry, states. A lot of these states think they're countries. But states from all over the United States are participating in the Million Father March from Alaska to Hawaii. All 50 states are participating in fathers taking their children to school.

Next slide please.

We have made this easy. We made it easy for people to get involved with the Million Father March and to manage the Million Father March. And so the people who are actually managing and organizing the Million Father March - school districts, government agencies, businesses, not



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



for profits, churches, community organizations. Anyone can be the driver of the million dollar march. And we make it so easy because we have a toolkit that gives you everything that you need in order to manage a successful Million Father March.

And we're getting lots and lots of emails back in and quotes back in from schools that have already participated saying this has been one of the best things that has ever happened to my school. The Million Father March is a rolling event. Schools start at different times around the country. So when the south schools start earliest - Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana and then we go out to the Midwest - Nevada, New Mexico. And then we go to the west coast and to Texas and Oklahoma and then we come back to the Midwest.

Now schools are starting every week from August, the first of August through the 15th of September, schools are starting. So the Million Father March is not really a one day. It's on whatever day your school starts. And so the Million Father March has taken place in a lot of cities already but there is still a lot of cities left. And so in the Midwest, schools don't usually start until the first week of September. And we have found in the Northeast, schools start the first week and even the second week of September.

So the Million Father March is a coordinated rolling march rolling across the United States of America whenever school starts. And we have also created something. It is called fathers take your children to school day. It is a national day for any father who wants to take his child to school to take him to school. And we have chosen September 4th as being that day. So any father in the country is encouraged to take his child to school on September 4th. Or if schools want, we encourage schools to plan any day in September for them to have their national fathers take your child to school event.

And so the Million Father March while it begins the first week of August with actually taking their children to school, it actually roll through September 30th with fathers taking children to school. Next slide please. Next slide please.

Participants in the Million Father March. Everybody participates. Fathers, grandfathers, foster fathers, stepfathers, uncles, cousins, big brothers, significant male caregivers. We even want women to participate in the Million Father March. The picture that you're looking at is in California. It's in Inland Empire California down by San Bernardino. And California, all the major cities in California are participating in the Million Father March - Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Sacramento. And so California is a very strong state for the Million Father March.

Hollywood has gotten involved with the Million Father March. They're actually working on a movie, a documentary movie for the Million Father March. It's important that communities embrace the Million Father March. We're looking at the Million Father March as being a national holiday. The whole community, we are encouraging to shut down. Shut down the banks, shut down the government buildings and on that day, Million Father March day in your community, the only thing we want smoking are men taking children to school.

And at those schools we want women to be there, we want children to be there, grandmothers, aunts, we want everyone to be at those schools to receive the fathers, to cheer the fathers and the



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



men on for bringing their children to school. We have had great success with businesses all over the country giving fathers two hours off in the morning to take their children to school.

So it is something that businesses find they get a great benefit out of because after the fathers come back their morale is sky high. It's a very good thing. Next slide please.

Research shows that having fathers take their children to school is a huge big benefit. These are just a few more factoids. Children and fathers or children with fathers who are involved are 40% less likely to repeat a grade. And all of these are resourced quotes. Children with fathers who are involved are 70% less likely to drop out of school. They are more likely to get A's. They are more likely to enjoy school and extracurricular activities. And when fathers are involved with children in their schools, crime in their communities goes down. Children are less likely to become engaged in bullying and violence and drug related things.

And so fathers are like magic. The more you get fathers involved in the educational and social development lives of children, the better your schools become. The better your communities become. The less your taxes are going to have to go to paying for incarceration and negative things and things that destroy communities. So the question becomes, why haven't we done more to get fathers involved. Next slide please.

So at the Black Star project, the Million Father March is not just a one day thing. And so at all the schools across the country where we had the Million Father March we encouraged them to do what they do in Brautworf County Florida they count the fathers. They make the fathers sign in. Last year in Brautworf County 36,000 fathers took their children to school, signed in and now those fathers are being asked to provide community service, to provide volunteer hours, to be tutors, to be mentors, to be coaches for basketball and baseball teams, to help clean up the schools on the weekend, to become council members and board members.

That's the Million Father March. It's not a one day a year event. It is an all throughout the year event for fathers to be involved with their children. Lunchroom monitors, chaperones on fieldtrips, et cetera. Next slide please.

And so we want fathers not just to take their children to school on the first day. This is a way for schools to tap into fathers for their PTAs, for their school boards, for their school consults, for safe passage programs. You probably know here in Chicago we have a little problem with violence. We have found - in fact if I can tell you this story.

Million Father March started in 2004. The first day of school in Chicago was one of the most violent, one of the most chaotic days of the school year because 425 children would be descend upon the schools and there wouldn't be enough guidance. There wouldn't be enough support and it would be the first day of school. And that day was a day of chaos and a day of violence. But now because the fathers are at the schools the first day in Chicago which is violence and you know unfortunately cities in America for children. The first day of school is the safest day of the school year. It's the calmest day of the school year because fathers are at the schools on that day.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



And so the question isn't - well, why do they come on the first day. The question is how do we get them to come every day? And the answer is - we've invented programs - next slide please.

We've invented programs in here in Chicago. We've invented the million father club and so schools are organizing million father clubs to pay homage to the first day. But then during the rest of the school year, they involve men as readers in their real men read program. They have involved men as volunteers in what we call our men in schools program where we have men volunteer as tutors, mentors, coaches, et cetera.

Here in Chicago we hope to launch a father's only PTA, the Black Star Project. We've got a PTA and it's doing well but now we're looking at establishing a father only PTA that will absolutely deal with the issues of fathers. We do a lot of other programs. We do a fathers club program where fathers take children to zoos, to circuses. Last month the first place Chicago White Sox - no offense to those Texas Rangers fans or the Yankee fans. But the first place Chicago White Sox gave us 300 tickets to bring out fathers and their children to a White Sox game.

We get tickets from the Cubs. We get them from the Chicago Bulls. They give us the fathers club, the million fathers club. They say if you can get fathers and their children to come out, we will give you the tickets. And so last month we took about 400 fathers and their children to the zoo and to the museums and to circuses and to rodeos. All kind of events in your town, whatever town you're in, they are willing to give you free tickets if you are simply willing to organize fathers to bring their children to where you are.

And so that's the Million Father March. In those systems that support it, they get fantastic results. And actually there are some school systems that are resistant to fathers bringing their children to school. You know, one school system, Gary, Indiana - they are mandating that before fathers can even bring their children to school that they have to have TB tests and criminal background checks. And that's unheard of, that's unfair. But that's what they are doing.

And so we're trying to convince Gary and other school systems that fathers add value to the educational proposition. Fathers will make your job easier. And if you want to make it harder for fathers to participate, you're going the wrong way. In most school districts and ((inaudible)) we will call you out. But most school districts are welcoming of us all over the country. School districts are saying please help us get our fathers involved. We know what you know that whenever fathers are involved, children will do better, our school will do better, the family will do better and the community will do better.

And so our motto - any man. It doesn't have to be a biological father. It can be a stepfather. It can be a grandfather. It can be a big brother. It can be an uncle. It can be a next door neighbor who cares about the children. Our motto is any man. Our motto is any school. And so if a man wants to support education, he doesn't have to have children in the school. He can go up to any school, the school down the street from his house, the school down the corner. And then our motto is, any child.

So, any man, any school, any child, every child needs to be supported with a strong father or surrogate father's presence. Be there for the Million Father March the first day of school wherever you are. And I'm Phillip Jackson from the Black Star project. Thanks. Take it away.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Dennis Bega: Thank you Phillip. I want to just point out on that last slide. That was my boss there with the blue shirt and the yellowish tie. So we're engaged. I think one of things that came through in the three presentations is that none of us are asking fathers to do teachers jobs. Nor should teachers have to do parents jobs.

This is really a true partnership that is based on what is in the best interest of kids and how both parties, parents who are our sons and daughters first educators and teachers who continue that through the instruction of the classroom can work together to make certain that their sons and daughters see and achieve the value of education.

With that we are going to take some time for questions. I'm going to turn it back over to Patrick who will guide us through that process. And I think we've got a number of questions so Patrick, it's all yours.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you Dennis. Again, excellent presentation.

I'm going to get as many of these posed to you guys. We've got a number of questions and comments. I'll start with the first question and I'll direct it to Michael and Betsy. How do you or others use social media to engage fathers in schools and in their children's education. How do you or others use social media to engage fathers in the schools and their children's education.

(Crosstalk)

Patrick Patterson: Lets start with Michael.

Mike Hall: One of the things we have found is Twitter is a great tool. We also working with title one families and low income families, people don't think they have access. And we found that most families have access typically through their phone. And so we mostly use Twitter. The challenge we have had though is just getting everybody into the Twitterverse out there.

We have a calendar that we call our check in calendar. And it's a question to ask your kid every day after school instead of - what did you do at school today. Because the answer to that question always is nothing. And we know that they do more than nothing so we have questions that we actually send out on Twitter.

We send out flyers. We send out stickers. But the social media has helped on Facebook and on the Twitter. What you have to do though is educate parents. One of the projects that we are excited about this year is instead of us trying to do the heavy lifting, we're bringing five ((inaudible)) for campers in this project.

And they're going to be providing the content and the connection on the social media. And they will also be - part of the reason they have an iPad in their hand is to be able to teach parents how to access and use the technology. So we think we're going to make that exponentially better this year with that project. We're looking forward to bring back what we learned from that as well.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Patrick Patterson: Betsy?

Betsy Landers: Well, again, it's all about delivering the message. And we've utilized such a media just for that purpose whether it be through Twitter or Facebook, email, we absolutely send out that message loud and clear in every way that we can. We utilize YouTube. Everything can be found on our website obviously but any way we can get the message out on the importance of men being involved in their children's lives, particularly in their children's education, we're going to take advantage of that.

And it's also a great way for us to direct communities, PTAs as well as interested fathers to our website, to how to contact us for more information on how to become a part of your child's education, or how to establish a male focus engagement program. So, definitely, social media is the way to go. Much like Michael talked about, we have 12 social media ambassadors who that is their focus is to be sure we get that message out every way we can so that we can touch as many people as possible.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you Betsy.

Our next question for you Phillip - a number of folks have asked how do they sign up if there is a Million Father March in their local area. And if not, how do they join you?

Phillip Jackson: Thank you.

They can call the Black Star project at 773-285-9600. They can email us at blackstar1000@ameritech.net. They can go to our website, www.blackstarproject.org. And we keep a list of all of the organizers, all of the national organizers. There are certain cities like Washington, DC for instance. We've got about ten different organizers in Washington, DC who we have connected to each other. So they didn't know until before this or maybe one or two did. But now these ten people are working together to pull off a Million Father March in Washington, DC.

They've brought together their resources, their talents, their rolodex's. And now Washington, DC and once again, you know, no offense but this is without very much support from the school district there. But Washington, DC is going to have a fabulous Million Father March driven by community people.

And we would love to have that school district as a part of the process. But they elected not to be, not a problem. These people have contacted every school in Washington and Washington is going to have a fantastic Million Father March. And we are hoping that the school district is going to see it and say - wow, that was a missed opportunity by us. It's time for us to get on board.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you. Can we get that number again Phillip, one more time?

Phillip Jackson: Oh, absolutely. The number and this is Million Father March central. All you have to do is call the number 773-285-9600. We keep number at that number 10, 12 hours a day to take



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



calls on the Million Father March or they can email us at blackstar1000@ameritech.net and we will send them a kit lickity split.

So a lot of people say, well our schools have already started so we won't be able to do the Million Father March until next year. That's not correct. You can do the - it only takes a week. These kids are so precise and so right on, it will only take a week, everything that you need to organize a successful Million Father March and we can get them to you through email within ten minutes once we know that you want to participate in the march. So there is still plenty of time for cities all over the country to participate in the Million Father March. 773-285-9600.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you Phillip. We had a couple of questions come in for Dennis. Many of our folks on the line are either currently doing this or seeking to do this work in school districts. What's your advice around engaging school districts in male involvement activities?

Dennis Bega: Well there are a couple of ways to engage. One is through - most school district offices has an individual who is designated as the parent coordinator. Now this person may wear more than one hat in some of the larger districts. It is someone whose primary job it is to coordinate parent engagement. And they are always looking for energetic people who are willing to carry part of the message. It's not a simple matter but it is a matter of contacting the local school district through the superintendent's office and taking advantage of their outreach.

Another strong partner that can provide additional access to schools is the local PTA or local parent organizations in middle and high school where I must say its particularly important for parents to be involved. Everybody wants to be involved with the kids in elementary school. By middle and high school it gets a little bit more difficult but it's even more important for parents to be involved at that level.

So it's not just a call to the local school district. It may be a conversation with the principal. It may be an opportunity to work through the local organizations that have a relationship, faith based and community based organizations that already have an established relationship. Most of you are probably too young to remember a former speaker of the house, (Temple Neal) who made the famous comment that all politics is local. And I would suggest that all education is local.

We can talk a lot about the importance of national leadership but it's at the local school district, it's the local school building where parents impacting energy is really felt to the greatest extent. So the kids see that input and they see that empowerment in a way that changes their lives. So it may be one or two or three calls. And that's what I meant earlier by the consistency. It may be on us to make certain that the phone is answered so that our involvement and our invitation is taken seriously.

Patrick Patterson: Excellent. There's a follow up question while you were talking that came in Dennis. Is there title one funding nationally devoted to supporting male involvement?

Dennis Bega: We have national title one funding that supports parental and family involvement. It is at the state and local level but there is nothing in the statute or in the regulations that says - but none of this money can be used for fathers. In fact it is at the local district where districts have



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



the flexibility to use a portion of their funds to designate outreach specific to men. I might say that we've asked congress for a doubling of our budget for parent and family outreach. That's not happened yet but the secretary has gone on record and in writing asking for congress to double the amount of money we can set aside for parental and family engagements along with a number of other things.

So he has definitely put his resources where his commitment is. But with the resources we have now, title one programs at the local level and at the state level can use a portion of their money for parent and family outreach and that includes special programs to outreach to men.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you.

One of the major questions that we have had a couple of times come in - this is for Phillip, Betsy and Michael. I'll read it as its stated. When encouraging fathers to monitor the school, how do you address the issue of clearances? When encouraging fathers to monitor the school how do you address the issue of, I'm thinking, security clearances?

Michael, do you want to start?

Mike Hall: Yes. You know, I definitely felt what Phillip was talking about earlier. When we go into a school that is new to the idea, the challenge is not just that you do have parents and you've got to have security clearance but men are almost always first seen as perpetrators instead of parents.

You know, when you have a school carnival and you have a field day when it's not, when it's just bring parents to a program, we don't do background checks. But when we talk about bringing them in specifically a lot of schools throw their red flags in. And I'm all about being secure but most of the time like with our programs, the dads are there with their kids and they're not volunteering to work with other kids which is a security issue so you want to make sure you handle that.

But there are always those things in place that dads can fill out. The other thing is sometimes it's a legal issue that schools are not familiar with. Most of the time and this is coming from a principal's background, school policy says unless they are violent, felon or sex offenders they can, you know, pass the background check even sometimes with a felony. There is different school policies that has that.

If they are a sex offender, sometimes depending on school policy they can visit their child in class under the supervision of another adult. And, you know, we have some gentlemen that are considered sex offenders on paper that are not pedophiles or not predators but had something go on in their past and, you know, they pled out. But the problem is, that's not the majority of our guys.

And so the first thing I would say is make sure you understand what you're trying to be secure about. You know, you want to do the background checks for your volunteers, you want to manage that well, you want to protect children. But the idea seems to be that all of the sudden we have to protect children from men and that's not the case.



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Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



You know, again, we want to be resourceful. By putting the word out early, we have a lot of people that have to check in. You know, they fly their license as they check in. Dads are fine with that. Dads have actually become quite well trained to go through the security process because it's been in place for a while.

But the thing I would warn against is for schools to be so hard headed about it, not to not have their security, but to assume that the men coming in need to be checked so much. You know, we need to check all parents, we need to have good security clearances but a lot of that goes back to communication, you know, with the parents and let them know what needs to happen before they become volunteers.

But every school has something in place. And I would invite parents in to practitioners who are supposed to be familiar with what the policy is and what's acceptable and not to make it as welcoming as possible. And I also spoken to, you know, how everybody's got to have a TB shot. They don't, not everybody has to have a shot to come to the football game. Not everybody has to have a shot to come to the, you know, the carnival. And yet when we're doing something of a large nature on campus, we kind of overdo it sometimes. And I think that understanding comes into play. And I'll let the other ones answer.

Patrick Patterson: Well I'll ask if Phillip and Betsy will allow me to prepare to close us out. We are at the very end of our webinar. We got a number of questions. I just want to remind folks that we are going to do a frequently asked questions document. We're going to give it to our presenters along with Dennis to give comments and response to the number of questions we received. And we are going to put it on our website following today's webinar.

I mean, this has obviously been a topic that is very timely as we all are going back to school. But we heard three different distinct approaches to engage in that and have worked across the country and beyond.

So for our next few minutes I want to just got through speaker feedback and ask the folks to just give us a few more minutes. We want to raise a few questions to help us understand how we did on today's webinar.

The first question - I have a better understanding of the impact of fathers involvement in schools. And you can see the options there you can vote. I have a better understanding of the impact of father involvement in schools.

Next question - I have a better understanding of strategies that I can use to engage the local schools and school district in order increase father involvement. I have a better understanding of strategies that I can use to engage the local schools and school district in order to increase father involvement.

And our last question - I have a better understanding of where to find resources and tips for fathers to help them increase their involvement in school and their children's education. I have a better understating of where to find resources and tips for fathers to help them increase their involvement in school and their children's education.



NRFC Webinar Series August 2012:
Fatherhood Buzz - Back to School Initiative:
Effective Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement in Schools



Finally I would encourage you beyond today's poll to tweet us at fatherhood.gov, hash tag fatherhood.gov. This last slide shares with you our contact information and how to get us on Facebook and Twitter.

And again, after today's webinar if you have other feedback I'd invite you to email myself or Kenny Braswell our Director with any comments or feedback.

Dennis any last words before we close out?

Dennis Bega: I think I would simply thank you all for taking the time out of your schedules to join this important discussion. Your voices matter, your participation matters. Your passion matters not just to us but to your kids whether they are your natural kids or the kids in your neighborhood. We all happen to be parents when it comes to children's success and I applaud you for your leadership in your local communities to make certain that father's voices matter.

Patrick Patterson: Thank you Dennis.

And with that, we'll say thanks everybody and have a great weekend.

Operator: This concludes today's presentation. Thank you for your participation.

END