

Collaboration Network Calls Document
April 26, 2005: Teen Parents

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Vicars, Region V Child Support and Kathleen Penak, Region V Head Start welcomed all on the call, after which Jennifer Gardner, Region V, introduced Rodney Prunty and Lois Rakov, Booz Allen Hamilton. Ms. Rakov then introduced Jan Hayne.

Region V:

Bishop, Geneva - Child Support
Erb, Heather - Head Start
Gardner, Jenny - Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY)
Miller, Gena - Head Start
Penak, Kathleen - Head Start
Smyth, Joseph - TANF
Vicars, Mike - Child Support
Yamagata, Hich - Child Care

Illinois:

Brown, Nancy - Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Springfield
Dunlap, Brian - Aunt Martha's, Forest Park
Garvey, Donna - Illinois Department of Public Aid, Child Support, Chicago
Hall, Bobby - Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Springfield
Harris, Kirk - Family Support America, Chicago
McFarland, Carlos - Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Springfield
Prunty, Rodney - Rockford MELD, Rockford
Steele, Chris - CEDA Maywood Head Start, PLCCA, Maywood
Wells, Leigh Ann - C.E.F.S. Head Start, Effingham
Wieneke, Jeffrey - Two Rivers Head Start, Batavia
Williams, Zeophus - Cook County State's Attorney, Chicago
Wilson, Anneta - Sankofa Initiative, Chicago
Woods, Bill - Wabash Agency Development, Inc., Enfield

Indiana:

Moore, Thelzelda - Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Indianapolis
Mouson, Mary - CAN I, Fort Wayne

Michigan:

Fort, John - Wayne County Dept. of Health and Community Services, Detroit
Goorhouse, Ruth - Early Head Start, Saute St. Marie
Wilson, Duane - Michigan Fatherhood Coalition, Detroit

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Minnesota:

Hayne, Jan - Dad's Make a Difference, St. Paul
Oberweiss, Molly - Dad's Make a Difference, St. Paul
Titcomb, John - OTWCAC, New York Mills

Ohio:

Bishop, Mary - Akron Summit Community Action, Inc., Akron
Jackson, Tommy Rae - Wayne Medina Head Start, Wooster
Killpack, Steve - Community Endeavors Foundation, Cleveland

Booz Allen Hamilton:

Baker, Dean
Rakov, Lois
Welch, William

II. Presenters

- **Rodney Prunty**, Supportive Services Director, Rockford MELD
- **Jan Hayne**, Program Director, Dads Make a Difference

Mr. Rodney Prunty is the Supportive Services Director for Rockford MELD (www.rockmeld.org). He has worked in Social Services for 18 years and has extensive knowledge with case management, group facilitation, family development, and working with fathers. He worked as a Family Resource Worker for Head Start for three years. For the past five years, Mr. Prunty has taken an integral role in the development of fatherhood programs at Rockford MELD, which focus on support groups, case management, workforce development, and educational programs for fathers 25 years and under.

Mr. Prunty discussed characteristics about the teen fathers that experience the Rockford MELD Program. He also talked about some of the initiatives that Rockford MELD provides to help teen fathers have a more vital role in the lives of their children.

Some characteristics of Teen Father at Rockford MELD include the following:

- Come from low income families
- Have limited education
- Either little or no experience with male role models
- Limited knowledge of pregnancy or what is needed to raise a child
- Experience low self esteem
- Have little or no relationship with child's mother or her family
- Do not have knowledge of fathers' rights
- 65 percent are on or have been on parole
- 80 percent of teen couples end their relationship after two years

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Rodney Prunty also discussed many programs that Rockford MELD have implemented to help teen fathers. These programs have included the following:

- Peer support systems that are facilitated by former teen fathers;
- Employment services to help teen fathers find jobs;
- Information sharing for teens on the importance of fathers in a child's life; and
- Incentive for fathers, such as "Baby Bucks", which can be redeemed for diapers and other child necessities.

Mr. Prunty introduced two young fathers who are part of the Rockford Meld program, Mr. John Love and Mr. Brandon Bell. Mr. Love and Mr. Bell are both fathers of five children, who have benefited from the programs at Rockford MELD. They both explained their personal situations and how Rockford MELD helped them with issues like court help to building relationships with their children.

Ms. Jan Hayne is the Program Director for Dad's Make a Difference (www.dadsmakeadifference.org). The program moved to Concordia University, Saint Paul in February 2003. Dad's Make a Difference developed an interactive class, which focused on preventing teens from becoming parents. The first step in developing the curriculum was to listen to teens. Eight focus groups of 55 high school teens, both male and female participants, were formed to determine knowledge about paternity, attitudes toward fathers, interest in a program like this, and how to deliver the information. Teens suggested targeting teens between the ages of 12 to 14-years-old and having them taught by teen peers between the ages of 16 to 18-years-old, who, in some cases, are teen parents.

With Child Support funding, the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General sent the Dad's Make a Difference curriculum to every public, private, and alternative middle schools statewide in January 1995. The State Attorney General's office also funded the first statewide training in March 1995. Since it's formation in 1994, the program curriculum has trained two, 361 high school teens, who have in turn, educated an estimated 40, 000 middle school teens.

The program is now funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Support Enforcement Division and is managed by Concordia University. The Dad's Make a Difference program is also funded by a grant from the McKnight Foundation for work with urban and incarcerated youth.

The Dad's Make a Difference program has worked with the Central Minnesota Legal Services which aided the program in child support and paternity establishment issues. The program has also established similar initiatives in other states such as Massachusetts, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

Jan Hayne introduced Molly Overweiss, a co-worker who has presented the Dads Make a Difference Curriculum, in juvenile detention centers, so that the young people learn about the importance of fathers. Ms. Overweiss explained that most teen fathers she

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has encountered assume that their part is over after conception. The following are two issues that have been addressed in the training program:

- Explanation of what fathers can do if they feel that child support is being abused by the mother; and
- The need to work with mothers and explain the benefits in having an active father involved in the lives of the children.

III. Possible Topics for future Collaboration Network Calls

- Rural Fatherhood Initiatives
- Computer Literacy for Fathers and Children
- Funding Resources: Public and Private
- How to Measure Success in Fatherhood Initiatives? Evaluations and Outcomes
- Re-entry of Incarcerated Fathers
- Roles of the Mothers and Female Staff in Fatherhood Initiatives
- Collaboration in Fatherhood/Male Involvement Programs to Enhance Funding
- In-Service Training and Staff Roles in Father/Male Programs
- Revisiting Fatherhood Curriculum
- Fathers as a Resource
- How the Fatherhood Initiative Empowers Women
- How to Continue the Momentum of Partnerships and Collaborations after Funding Stops
- Grandparents and Kinfolk
- Access and Visitation: What Dads and Moms Want to Know
- Healthy Marriage Initiatives

Call participants discussed various topics and then agreed that they would like to have the following topic for the next call: "How to Measure Success in Fatherhood Initiatives? Evaluations and Outcomes."

IV. Discussions

Kathleen Penak concluded the meeting by asking the participants to determine the topic, date, and time for the next Collaboration Call. The participants set the date and time for the next meeting as **July 19, 2005, at 10 AM CT, 11 AM ET**.