



Ohio Practitioners' Network
for Fathers and Families

SPECIAL EDITION: The Ohio Commission on Fatherhood

A Message From OCF Founder and Chairman, Cuyahoga County Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones

Like the proverbial Phoenix, the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood (OCF) has, as a result of Governor Ted Strickland's leadership, risen from the ashes of partisan politics and is poised, once again, to positively impact the lives of Ohio's children.

What a difference a year (or so) makes! Following his election in November 2006, Governor Strickland established a transition team to review the status and future of the Commission. In January 2007, the transition team issued its report, calling for the reestablishment and funding of the OFC. The Governor then recommended and the Ohio General Assembly approved a \$4 million budget for the Commission for state fiscal years 2008-2009. Subsequently, the

OCF was empanelled, then released the Ohio Fatherhood Initiative Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) and, in April, selected its first executive director from a field of well over 100 applicants. Fueled by passion, excitement and commitment, the rebirth of the Commission has been breathtaking.

The newly appointed OCF executive director is J. Tracey Robinson. Mr. Robinson, the married father of two teenage sons, was most recently the membership director for one of the state's largest churches and has worked as a grant writing consultant, with the Ohio Judicial Conference and in the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. He earned a B.A. from Oberlin College and an M.A. in Education and Policy Leadership from The Ohio State University.

The members of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood are: State Senators Ray Miller and Tim Schaffer; State Representatives Kevin Bacon, Eugene Miller, Allan Sayre and John White; Cleveland City Councilman Kevin Conwell, Dr. Diane Karther, Steven Killpack, Joseph Maiorano and yours truly – the public members appointed by Governor Strickland; Adrian Allison (representing the Ohio Department of Education), Robert Chilton (Supreme Court of Ohio), Cedric Collins (Ohio Department of Youth Services), Rose Haddon (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services), Thomas Joyce (Ohio Department of Health), David Kantur (Ohio Family and Children First Council), Scott Neely (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction) and Angela Woodson (Office of the Governor).

"Father's Weekend" (June 13-14). We no longer restrict our salute to dads in Cuyahoga County to a single day!

Perhaps, most importantly, responses were due to the RFGA on May 2nd. We fully anticipate that communities throughout Ohio have taken full advantage of this opportunity to create robust coalitions of public and nonprofit organizations committed to establishing effective fatherhood programming across the state. The crafting of the next biennial budget will commence this fall. We must clearly demonstrate the need for continued and increased funding of initiatives in Ohio that strengthen families through engaging and supporting fathers. This is the moment for which we have waited. We dare not let our children down.

The months of May and June will prove quite eventful for dads in Ohio. The Ohio Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families will convene in Cincinnati on May 30th for the Advance Fatherhood Ohio! Summit, and the Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative will hold its fourth annual celebration of Fatherhood Conference in Cleveland on



Peter Lawson Jones,
Chairman, Ohio Commission
on Fatherhood

Created by Ohio State Statute in 1999, the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood is charged with the following:

- (A) Organize a state summit on fatherhood every four years;
- (B) Prepare a report each year that identifies resources available to fund fatherhood-related programs and explores the creation of initiatives to do the following:
 - (a) Building the parenting skills of fathers;
 - (b) Provide employment-related services for low income, non-custodial fathers;
 - (c) Prevent premature fatherhood;
 - (d) Provide services to fathers who are inmates in or have just been released from imprisonment in a state correctional institution, so that they are able to maintain or reestablish their relationships with their families;
 - (e) Reconcile fathers with their families;
 - (f) Increase public awareness of the critical role fathers play.

The mission of the Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families is to enhance the outcomes of children, families and communities by providing information, training and encouragement to father and family-serving practitioners.

OPNFF

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JOIN US today!

In 1999 the Ohio General Assembly created the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood (OCF). In 2007, then Governor-elect Ted Strickland began the process to reestablish the Commission after it had been defunded years earlier. The Governor set aside \$4M of the appropriations provided to the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and

OCF and GOFBCI Launch the Ohio Fatherhood Initiative

By Greg Landsman, Director, Ohio Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Community Initiatives (GOFBCI) for the Commission's operations and programming.

OCF held its first meeting since it was reestablished in November of 2007 and elected Cuyahoga County Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones as its Chair. The Commission has met several times since with a primary focus on the selection of a new Executive Director, which will be announced soon.

GOFBCI also released the Ohio Fatherhood Initiative (OFI) grant opportunity earlier this year with an application deadline of May 2, 2008. This new grant program will fund organizations that work to build and enhance parenting skills of fathers, provide employment-related services for low-income noncustodial fathers, prevent premature fatherhood, provide services to fathers who are inmates or have just been released

from imprisonment and to increase public awareness of the critical role fathers play in the lives of their children. The OFI collaborative awards will be announced in June after the review process has concluded.

The OCF and GOFBCI have prepared the way to give the required attention to the issue of paternal involvement to ensure that the best interests of Ohio's children and fathers are served.

2008-09 Members of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood

Public Members

- Dr. Diane Karther, 1325 Carriage Hill Court, Ashland 44805; 419.281.1212; dkarther@ashlandfcfc.org
- Steve Killpack, 2012 West 25th St, #202, Cleveland 44113; 216.502.4795; communityendeavors@earthlink.net
- Joseph Maiorano, 113 Parkdale Rd, Stuebenville 43952; 740.264.2212; maiorano.2@osu.edu
- County Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones, 1375 E 9th St, 9th floor, Cleveland 44114; 216.605.4829; pjones@ralaw.com
- City Councilman Kevin Conwell, 10647 Ashbury Ave, Cleveland 44106; 216.791.6642; kevinconwell@sbcglobal.net

House of Representatives

- Representative Kevin Bacon, 77 South High St, Columbus 43215; 614.644.6030; district21@ohr.state.oh.us
- Representative Eugene Miller, 77 South High St 11th floor, Columbus 43215; 614.466.4954; district10@ohr.state.oh.us
- Representative Allan Sayre, 77 South High St, 10th floor, Columbus 43215; 614.466.8035; district96@ohr.state.oh.us
- Representative John White, 77 South High St, 13th floor, Columbus 43215; 614.466.6504; district38@ohr.state.oh.us

Senate

- Senator Ray Miller, Senate Building #223 Second floor, Columbus 43215; 614.466.5131; rmiller@maild.sen.state.oh.us
- Senator Tim Schaffer, Senate Building #142 First floor, Columbus 43215; 614.466.5838; SD31@mailr.sen.state.oh.us

Office of the Governor

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- Rehabilitation & Correction—Scott Neely, 1050 Freeway Dr, Columbus 43229; 614.752.1150; scott.neely@odrc.state.oh.us
- Youth Services—Cedric Collins, 51 North High St, Suite 300, Columbus 43215; 614.466.8657; cedric.collins@dys.ohio.gov
- Health—Thomas "Eddie" Joyce, 246 North High St, Columbus 43215; 614.471.5592; thomas.joyce@odh.ohio.gov
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Executive Director

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