



# NYC DADS

MAYOR'S FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT  
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FATHERHOOD WORKING GROUP

**ALAN S. FARRELL**  
FATHERHOOD SERVICE COORDINATOR

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## **Executive Summary**

Across our nation, more than 24 million children are growing up in homes without a father. In New York City, approximately 33 percent of children under the age of 18 are growing up in fatherless households.

As Father's Day 2010 approached, the Mayor challenged City agencies to do all they could to counter this dangerous trend. NYC Dads – the Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative launched with four goals:

- Uncover and remove any barriers that fathers may face in interacting with City agencies;
- Make all City agencies as "father friendly" as possible;
- Assist in the creation of memorable moments between fathers and their children; and
- Support fathers as they increase their capacity to be good dads.

To make these goals a reality, over a dozen City agencies conducted an extensive review of their programs, policies and frontline practices to ensure that fathers were not being unintentionally excluded from or missing opportunities to engage in their children's lives. Working with the newly appointed Fatherhood Services Coordinator, these agencies then prepared plans for how they would make their operations as father friendly as possible. This report offers highlights of their progress to date.

**Department of Correction (DOC)** – DOC, in conjunction with the New York Public Library, launched the Daddy and Me Storybook project for both sentenced and detainee inmates who are parents. Through the Daddy and Me Storybook project, adult inmates who are parents participate in a four-session program that provides parenting and literacy instruction. Fathers create an audio recording of them reading a book to their child. Each child is presented with the book and the recording from their parent.

**Department of Education /Living for The Young Family through Education (LYFE)** – LYFE's mission is that student parents graduate from high school and are college/career ready by providing both high-quality child care and academic, social/emotional, and referral support services. Prior to its involvement in NYC DADS -The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative much of the LYFE culture revolved around moms, including defining their work as providing services to student moms. With the launch of the Initiative, LYFE has intentionally embraced the call to supporting fathers. In addition, LYFE now has committed to training staff to more clearly communicate with fathers during face-to-face interactions, such as daily health checks and parent-teacher conferences.

**Department of Health Mental Health/Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)** – NFP has developed a scoring system that will provide a more holistic picture of father involvement in NFP. As NFP transfers its data to a new clinical information system, it will continue to analyze its data to measure father participation and family outcomes over time.

**Department of Homeless Services (DHS)** – The Adult Services Division at DHS is offering parenting classes for expectant fathers and fathers of children ages two and under. Classes cover how to change diapers, hold a baby, feed a baby and appropriately discipline children.

**New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks)** – Parks launched the “Daddy and Me” Adventure pilot program. This eight-session outdoor adventure program, which began in October 2010 and ended in May 2011, is designed to provide unique bonding and engagement opportunities for fathers and their children. Daddy and Me Adventure provided opportunities for hiking, fishing, orienteering, team-building games, and wilderness survival.

**Department of Probation (DOP)** –DOP’s Division of Staff and Organizational Development partnered with the Fathers Working Group Sub-Committee on Training to deliver training to probation officers on how to create a more father-friendly environment for their probationers. This effort takes advantage of the unique opportunity front-line staff have to be part of the process of dads reconnecting to their families, children and communities.

**Administration for Children’s Services (ACS)** – ACS is ensuring that fathers of children in foster care receive information regarding available services for their children and families. Case managers in the Division for Youth and Family Justice are identifying residents who are fathers and, where possible helping them to reconnect to their own dads. In addition, now, when young men arrive at a DYFJ facility, staff use orientation sessions to inform residents who are fathers about the importance of their role in the lives of their children.

**Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)** – In an effort to increase the effectiveness of DYCD’s Fatherhood Initiative, which helps fathers reconnect with their children and develop essential parenting skills, DYCD has launched a new database to monitor increases in each father’s emotional engagement and financial responsibility.

**Health and Hospitals Corporation** – As of January 2011, all ten of HHC’s Family Planning Programs are in different stages of planning and providing hours exclusively dedicated to male patients. The Family Planning Program Title X has as part of their objective to engage men, particularly young men, are recruiting them into the healthcare system. The availability of the service hours and days are promoted through community newspapers, monthly health fairs, printed flyers, and word of mouth.

**New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)** – In response to NYC Dads – The Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative, NYCHA launched its own fatherhood initiative in community centers in Brooklyn, The Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. Staten Island will follow in June 2011. As the first-ever fatherhood initiative launched by a public housing authority, NYCHA’s Fatherhood Initiative is quickly becoming a model for the nation. Through its Fatherhood Initiative, NYCHA provides a safe and child-friendly space for dads and their kids to interact while connecting fathers with agencies that can help them to improve their own lives.

**Human Resources Administration (HRA)** – HRA has worked to reduce non-cash assistance arrears for non-cash assistance families. This initiative is a partnership with Safe Horizon (soon to be the NY Peace Institute). It creates a safe environment for fathers who are low income and owe a high amount of child support debt to talk directly to the custodial parent to meet through a mediator about reducing the debt. It is expected that the discussion will also include issues around co-parenting and healthy relationships between mothers and fathers.

**New York City Police Department- Community Affairs Bureau (NYPD)** – NYPD Community Affairs Bureau is encouraging fathers, mothers, grandparents and/or other guardians to connect with their children through programs such as Explorers, Police Athletic League (PAL), Cricket leagues, Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.), National Night Out, (NNO) Domestic Violence (DV) awareness and preventive Domestic Violence initiatives and Youth Services Section.

NYC Dads-The Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative has made progress in its efforts to increase and improve father engagement and involvement in the lives of their children in New York City. However, we know that there is so much more to accomplish.

The Initiative is taking this moment in our City’s history to make lasting and measurable positive impacts upon the next generation of children and families by increasing opportunities for fathers to be involved in their children’s lives— from the moment of birth onward.

## Introduction

*“Strong families make a strong New York. But too many children in this city are growing up without their fathers...We want more children in our City to experience the encouragement, support and love of their fathers. And that’s why all City agencies will work to seize every opportunity to help fathers be a part of their children’s lives.”*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, June 17, 2010

With those words, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg launched NYC Dads-The Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative. This citywide multi-agency initiative is designed to strengthen New York City’s families by helping fathers be more active in their children’s lives. Research shows when children are raised with the physical, emotional and financial support of two parents and fathers are actively involved in their lives, children and youth are more likely to perform well in school, achieve economic stability, and avoid premature pregnancy and involvement in the criminal justice system.

Across our nation, more than 24 million children are growing up in homes without a father. In New York City, approximately 33 percent of children under the age of 18 are growing up in fatherless households. This crisis disproportionately impacts New York City’s black and Latino children. Fifty-one percent of black and 46 percent of Latino children in New York City under the age of 18 are being raised in fatherless households, compared to 11 percent of white children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

NYC Dads-The Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative has four goals:

- Uncover and remove any barriers that fathers may face in interacting with City agencies;
- Make all City agencies as “father friendly” as possible;
- Assist in the creation of memorable moments between fathers and their children; and
- Support fathers as they increase their capacity to be good dads.



The Mayor's vision is one where every child can have a meaningful and supportive relationship with his or her father and where men and their families are thriving. Considering the social and economic obstacles and challenges many fathers in New York City face, it will take all hands on deck to realize this vision, from non-profit organizations and churches to the media and local government. As a City, we know that father absence is a crisis that is decimating our families and communities. We also know that many fathers want to be involved in the lives of their children. The City of New York can play its part by making sure that fathers who want to engage in the lives of their children have improved access to City resources and services.

The Mayor believes that New York can become a national model for how city agencies can partner to more effectively serve fathers and families. In fact, the Initiative has already received national attention from President Obama's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative. Both efforts seek to shift our nation's culture towards greater father involvement and "encourage individuals, especially fathers, to be involved in the lives of their children, and to be positive role models and mentors for other children in their lives and communities" (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, 2011). The President's federal inter-agency workgroup on responsible fatherhood is looking to New York City as a model for how government can leverage existing resources and remove barriers to father engagement so that fathers are ultimately more connected to their children and families.

### **Fatherhood Working Group**

As Father's Day 2010 approached, the Mayor asked City agencies to conduct an extensive review of their programs, policies and frontline practices to ensure that fathers were not being unintentionally excluded from or missing opportunities to engage in their children's lives. In addition, agencies began to explore how, in a time of budget constraints, they could leverage existing resources to provide fathers more access to City services and to help children develop to their full potential. This review was formalized in the creation of agency goals for the following year.



These fourteen City agencies came together to discuss these plans in what has become the Fatherhood Working Group. The Fatherhood Working Group is the heart of NYC Dads - The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative. The collaboration provides a space to discuss how to best serve and engage fathers and their families, discover shared vision among its members, inspire new ideas and approaches to engaging men and dads, revise front-line worker practices as it relates to father engagement, and leverage existing resources to launch cross-agency initiatives.

The Fatherhood Working Group includes the following City agencies:

- Department for the Aging (DFTA)
- Administration for Children's Services and Division of Youth and Family Justice (ACS-DYFJ)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- City University of New York (CUNY)
- Department of Education (DOE)
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)
- Health & Hospitals Corporation (HHC)
- Department of Homeless Services (DHS)
- New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
- Department of Probation (DOP)
- Human Resources Administration (HRA)
- Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks)
- Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD)
- NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau (NYPD)

NYC Dads – The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative draws from the important work that a number of agencies have undertaken over the past several years to promote father engagement. These efforts include but are not limited to: the Human Resource Administration's provision of resources that help fathers and communities gain employment so they can care for their families and successfully navigate the child support system; the Department of Youth and Community Development's Fatherhood Initiative that facilitates the re-establishment of a father's relationship with their children and helps them to develop skills that equip fathers to succeed as parents and co-parents; and, the Department of Parks and Recreation's Parks Opportunity Program that prepares fathers for the world of work while also providing them with the opportunity to gain entry-level work experience and earn their General Equivalency Diploma.

In September 2010, New York City hired its first Citywide Fatherhood Services Coordinator. The Coordinator is responsible for planning and implementing the Fatherhood Initiative, meeting and communicating regularly with the Fatherhood Working Group, and supporting and informing agencies' efforts as they move forward with their plans to serve fathers. Working with the Fatherhood Services Coordinator, each agency has solidified their initial goals into specific plans for the coming year.

The Fatherhood Services Coordinator has also facilitated the development of new and exciting cross agency collaborations that will result in better services and more opportunities for fathers and their children.

For example, the Department of Probation's partnership with the Mayor's Office, Human Resources Administration, Department of Youth & Community Development and the state's Office of Children and Family Services has resulted in a training that prepares probation officers to be more sensitive to the challenges fathers face. This effort takes advantage of the unique opportunity front-line staff have to be part of the process of dads reconnecting to their families, children and communities.

Another example is the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) launch of its own fatherhood initiative. For the first time, during selected weekdays and weekends, NYCHA is utilizing its community centers to provide safe and child-friendly spaces for dads and their kids to interact while increasing the capacity of dads to be good fathers through parenting classes. CUNY Prep, The Department of Education's Living for the Young Family through Education, The Department of Youth and Community Development, The Department of Parks and Recreation and the Human Resource Administration are partners in NYCHA's Fatherhood Initiative, sharing information about their educational, employment and recreational resources.

The City is committed to doing what it can to create an environment in our agencies that takes the specific concerns of fathers into account as it shares information, develops policies and ultimately improves its day-to-day delivery of services. Through these steps, fathers are sent the message that the City believes that they are crucial components in the strengthening of our families and the nurturing and development of our children.

The City's success in this work can lend to decreasing the collateral consequences caused by father absence. New York City's championing of the message that "dads matter" has the potential to shift the culture of our City and the nation towards one that increasingly sees fathers and men as essential to the development of our families and communities.

## Agency Reports

The Fatherhood Services Coordinator began meeting with member agencies of the Fatherhood Working Group in January 2011 to gather updates on how agencies were moving forward to engage with fathers and provide them with services. This report captures the progress agencies have made since the June 2010 launch of the Initiative. Each agency update includes the following:

***About the Agency*** provides a basic overview of the agency and the nature of their interactions with fathers.

***Progress during 2010 - 2011*** describes what the agency has done to advance its plans since the June 2010 launch of the Initiative.

***Next Steps for 2011 -2012*** describes what the agency will do (policies, programs and metrics and data) to identify and remove barriers and transform agency practice to the end that fathers are increasingly involved in the lives of their children.



## **New York City Department of Correction**

### ***About the Agency***

The New York City Department of Correction is the second largest municipal jail system in the United States. It provides for the care, custody and control of adolescents, 16 to 18 years of age, and adults, 19 years of age and older, accused of crimes or convicted and sentenced to incarceration for one year or less. The Department consists of 14 jails, including ten detention centers on Rikers Island and four borough houses of detention, and in addition, two hospital prison wards and court detention facilities in the city's five boroughs. The Department handles approximately 100,000 admissions and releases each year and manages an average daily population of 13,000-plus inmates.

The Department understands the complex nature of the impact incarceration has on families. Children and their incarcerated fathers are able to access services that enable them to maintain and strengthen their relationships during their incarceration and upon reentry to the community. DOC has advanced initiatives to create opportunities for positive family engagement that includes fathers, including:

- Operating a visitation program for inmates five days a week with both daytime and evening visiting hours. Nearly 1,500 people visit family and friends in DOC facilities daily and 56.3 percent of all visits include children. Visitors are allowed direct contact with the inmates they are visiting except in circumstances where this would threaten security operations or the wellbeing of a present child.
- Since 2000, DOC has coordinated with ACS to provide special parent-child visits, sibling visits and case conferences for children in foster care or with an open preventive case.
- The jails' visit houses feature children's visit centers/areas. Inspired by the Osborne Association's efforts in prison settings upstate, DOC has developed child friendly spaces in their visiting areas that encourage family engagement between incarcerated parents and their children. These spaces are decorated with murals, and have child sized furniture, games and books. Currently, there are Children's Centers in three facilities on Rikers Island - the Eric M. Taylor Center (opened March 2010), the Robert N. Davoren Center (opened October 2010), and the Rose M. Singer Center (opened April 2011). In addition, the Manhattan Detention Complex has a children's corner that features children's books (opened September 2010). Working with their community partners, the Department's goal is to expand this initiative to additional facilities in the near future.
- Since 1988, the Osborne Association has offered parenting classes, including Fresh Start, a reentry preparation program that provides inmates with instruction on parenting, culinary arts, computer literacy, job readiness and relapse prevention.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

Responding to the Mayor's challenge to promote father engagement, DOC developed the following strategies to increase programming opportunities for parents in the Department's custody:

- Starting in October 2010, DOC, in conjunction with the New York Public Library, launched the Daddy and Me Storybook project for both sentenced and detainee inmates who are parents. Through the Daddy and Me Storybook project, adult inmates who are parents participate in a four-session program that provides parenting and literacy instruction. The end product of the inmates' participation is an audio recording of them reading a book for their child. The culminating event includes a special visit day for the participants and their children. Each child is presented with the book and the recording from their parent. This program started in October 2010 in the Eric M. Taylor Center and has taken place in five other facilities since then including the Rose M. Singer Center, the women's jail. DOC expects this program to continue operating until at least December 2011. To date, 61 inmates have participated. The Daddy and Me Storybook project has received national attention and was profiled in The New York Times in December of 2010.
- In March 2011, DOC piloted the Human Resources Administration Office of Child Support Enforcement's pregnancy prevention program, "No Kidding: Straight Talk from Teen Parents," with male and female adolescents. To date, 65 inmates have participated. Over the course of four sessions, peer educators who are themselves teen parents share their experiences, facilitate interactive exercises, and educate participants on establishing paternity for a child and obtaining a formal child support order. The peer educators encourage participants to make responsible choices and delay parenthood until they are emotionally and financially stable adults in a healthy, committed relationship.

### ***Next Steps for 2011-2012***

- The DOC relies on volunteers, community-based organizations and external funding to meet the goals listed under its fatherhood plans. Delayed funding affected projected timelines and pushed back the completion dates for some of the goals listed under the Department's fatherhood initiative plan however, with the recent approval for a no cost extension on "Prisoner Reentry Initiative" grant funds, the DOC will have additional time to implement the Family Law Resource Centers (see below) and additional parenting classes.
- In collaboration with the Osborne Association, the first Family Law Resource Centers are expected to be operational by fall 2011. These centers will develop family resource sites in each of the DOC Law Libraries for the inmate population. These centers will provide a variety of legal advocacy information for inmates including family law, parental rights, and child support. Additional centers should open by spring 2012.
- Continue researching evidence-based practices for parenting programs. The DOC continues to seek guidance from experts in the field such as the National Fatherhood Initiative regarding curriculum development and resources. DOC and its partners will utilize the "Inside Out Dad" curriculum for parenting programs. This curriculum is a nationally recognized resource designed specifically for incarcerated fathers and reentry planning.

## **Department of Education Living for the Young Family through Education**

### ***About the Agency***

Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) is operated by District 79 in the Department of Education (DOE) in 38 centers across the City. LYFE's mission is to guarantee all student parents graduate from high school and are college/career ready by providing both high-quality child care and academic, social/emotional, and referral support services.

LYFE social workers conduct individual and group counseling sessions to identify student parents' roadblocks to attending school daily and graduating from high school. They work proactively to increase student attendance by collaborating with students to develop action plans and identify Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) goals. The LYFE social worker is also expected to build relationships with the student parent's family and community networks to assist in the removal of roadblocks to attendance at school, development as a parent and ultimately graduation.

Prior to the launch of NYC DADS - The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative, LYFE social workers, conducted parent groups. Depending on the make-up of the student parent body at each site, the groups would be comprised of fathers only, fathers and mothers or in the event that there was only one dad on site, regular individual counseling sessions for the purpose of academic, social, and emotional goal-setting.

LYFE's involvement in the Initiative has helped to support the mandate that staff commit to the empowerment of student fathers and that effective father engagement efforts are woven into all professional development efforts.

As LYFE embraces dads and these student fathers earn their HS diplomas, they are breaking the cycle of academic underachievement and laying the foundation for the social and economic growth for their children and future generations.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

LYFE has always viewed supporting fathers as a core part of their mission. However, these efforts were secondary to supporting student mothers. Much of the LYFE culture revolved around moms, including defining their work as providing services to student moms. With the launch of NYC DADS -The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative, LYFE has intentionally embraced the call to supporting fathers.

Although participation in the LYFE program is voluntary, LYFE's strategic outreach to fathers will result in more dads getting the critical supports they need to finish school and develop into men and parents, breaking the cycle of poverty in their lives as well as their children's.

LYFE's efforts at facilitating a father-friendly environment have grown since joining the Fatherhood Working Group. Their efforts at engaging and serving their 216 fathers now include:

- LYFE has committed to training staff to more clearly communicate with fathers during face-to-face interactions such as daily health checks and parent-teacher conferences. Daily health checks provide the opportunity for babies to be checked by the parents and the primary care giver at the LYFE site (teachers or para-professional) at the beginning and end of each day. Not only does this ensure that the baby arrives to and leaves the site healthy but gives LYFE staff an opportunity to model good parenting practices for young parents while using supportive and parent-friendly dialogue. In addition, this year for the first time, protocols for parent-teacher conferences have been instituted for LYFE staff. Specifically, teachers and social workers have been tasked to actively engage all student parents, including fathers in this part of the educational process.
- All LYFE documents now use terminology that is inclusive of both parents. For example, enrollment forms previously only had space for the mother's name. Now there is also a space for the father's name. This move is seen as a starting point that prompts all social work staff to have a conversation with the mother and/or her family at the start of enrollment about the father's involvement or lack thereof. This process also provides the opportunity for an initial assessment of existing family dynamics that could support or hinder the student-parents and child's progress and development. Additionally, all promotional and informational materials about LYFE focus on mothers and fathers. It is now clear from LYFE's documents that mothers and fathers are served by this program.
- LYFE has leveraged relationships with member agencies of the Father's Working Group. For example, they are partnering with HRA's Office of Child Support Enforcement to train staff about current child support laws and resources available to families. They have informed the program staff of DYCD's young father's programs in The Bronx and Queens of their available services and resources. Similarly, LYFE's fathers have also begun to take advantage of the services in these responsible fatherhood programs. Also, the NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau was essential in serving as a bridge between school safety agents and DOE staff to ensure that children and staff at a LYFE site were safe and secure

### ***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- Through continued site-based and program-wide professional development and accountability efforts, LYFE will strengthen the shift of the culture at the district and citywide level from seeing it as a teenage mother program to a student-parent program.
- In Fall 2011, LYFE will establish regular peer-mentoring support groups that include mothers and fathers.
- LYFE will develop and employ marketing strategies to intentionally target student fathers for entry into the program.
- LYFE will identify or develop research-based, father-specific parenting curriculum to be used across the LYFE program throughout the school day – typically during student’s lunch periods when they meet in parent groups or individually with the LYFE social worker.
- LYFE will use survey and focus group data from social work staff and student parents to identify indicators that measure the rate and frequency of father involvement in their children’s education (including the number of fathers served). They will measure the effectiveness of the means employed to connect fathers to the LYFE program and upon enrollment outside fatherhood resources.
- LYFE will continue to meet with HRAs Office of Child Support Enforcement and No Kidding: Straight Talk from Teen Parents program, to develop tailored programming for the student-parents at LYFE.

## **Administration for Children's Services & the Division of Youth and Family Justice**

### ***About the Agency***

The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects New York City's children from abuse and neglect. The Division of Child Protection (DCP) is the division primarily responsible for investigating all allegations of child abuse and neglect. Each year the division investigates over 60,000 reported cases. DCP's various operations constitute the front end of ACS' child welfare system. The investigatory side of DCP is largely based out of borough offices across the city. These borough offices house teams of child protective specialists who investigate reported cases of abuse and neglect, as well as, administrative and clinical support personnel who provide assistance throughout the course of an investigation.

Family Support Services (FSS) is the division within ACS that provides preventive services and support to families throughout New York City through a network of community-based non-profit organizations. These services are designed to strengthen and stabilize families, prevent the need for out of home care, expedite permanency and prevent the replacement of children into foster care.

ACS seeks to ensure the safety of the child and when appropriate, preserve the family. ACS provides preventive services that are family-focused and informed by the needs and culture of the community. These services address the individual needs of the child and the needs of the family members residing with the child, including fathers, while recognizing the socio-economic realities which impact their daily lives.

Along with its preventive services and foster care provider community partners, ACS provides neighborhood-based services to help ensure children grow up in safe, permanent homes with strong families.

At the end of 2010, the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) merged with ACS to create the Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ) responsible for overseeing the City's juvenile detention operations and coordinating comprehensive services for youth involved with the juvenile justice system.

DYFJ provides detention, aftercare and preventive services to juveniles, ages 7 through 15, in New York City. Youth detained in the division's facilities include alleged juvenile delinquents, juvenile offenders whose cases are pending, and those whose cases have been adjudicated and are awaiting transfer to State Office of Children and Family Services facilities. The division operates two secure detention and fifteen non-secure detention facilities located throughout the City that admit more than 5,000 youth each year.

Because of ACS' unique role in working with families, there has been a longstanding commitment to ensuring that each child in their care has the opportunity to connect with a loving and supportive family and that every effort is made to help establish or re-establish connections between children and their fathers or paternal families.

To that end, ACS is committed to identifying strategies that minimize barriers to engaging fathers in their children's lives. When fathers are included in more meaningful and ongoing ways and at critical points in time in their children's lives there will be an improved likelihood of child safety, permanency, well-being and the identification of a stable living environment for the child.

The following is an overview of ACS' current father engagement efforts:

### **Case Work Practice**

- Child Protective Specialists participate in professional development opportunities that prepare them to more effectively engage fathers. Tools such as the ACS Casework Practice Guide are regularly reviewed and updated as needed to ensure that staff members are actively engaging not only mothers but fathers and paternal family members in children's lives.

### **Conferencing**

- Family Team Conferences allows family, youth and communities to have a voice in making critical decisions about children in the child welfare system.

### **Training**

- ACS' James Satterwhite Academy's Family Team Conference Training Department utilizes one of its eight "Core Tenets," that "both fathers and mothers should be included in the conference process" to direct trainers to emphasize not just fathers but paternal family members and other resources such as clergy and service providers as sources of ongoing support to assist with family reunification and stability. All DCP line staff have received this training.
- The James Satterwhite Academy in collaboration with the ACS Division of Permanency Services and the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies has begun to offer a two-day training entitled "The Case Planner's Role in the Family Team Conference." In this training, Case Planners receiving relevant resources that weave in messages regarding the importance of father involvement and learn to
  - 1) Prepare and encourage family members to attend the Family Team Conference and gain additional perspective on how critical a father's involvement is to a child's development placement in a permanent home with a strong family.
  - 2) Prioritize the value of the father and his family's involvement as a placement resource for the child/youth;
  - 3) Talk to family members, specifically fathers, about safety and achieving stability for the child.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

- Division of Family Permanency Services. Foster care providers are key partners in ACS' work to engage fathers as part of their casework practice. The Office of Family Permanency Team Conferencing (OFPTC) has held Borough Forums in May of 2010 on Permanency and Concurrent Planning and in September 2010 on Family Engagement, both of which included discussions and strategies on engaging various members of the family, including fathers and paternal kin. The forums were developed for and offered to Provider Agency Facilitators, Supervisors and Case Planners.
- The Division of Child Protection monitors how fathers are identified and engaged on new child protective cases and open child welfare cases. DCP staff and their supervisors currently receive a two-day training in effective father engagement practices from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Biases that frontline staff (the majority being female) bring to their work are addressed using their "Locating and Engaging Fathers Tool Kit." By the end of 2010, approximately 65 percent of the Division of Child Protection's Child Protective Service, supervisors, Conference Facilitator Specialists and managerial staff received the training.
- Family Support Services has developed a demonstration project that will look to increasing number of fathers and community partners who attend preventive family team conferences. FSS will work with a select number of preventive contracted providers to develop a working tool and guiding principles for father and community engagement strategies that can be shared with all preventive agencies, a well defined integrated community based model in IOC/FTC's service delivery practice, and strategies to increase the number and skill of preventive case planners on how to have conversations with families about who they want to invite to the Family Team Conferences. We will also measure family satisfaction with the family team conference within his demonstration project with the aim of expanding in the future. Ultimately, we will look at conference attendance data to measure the outcomes.
- Preventive family team conferences bring together families, youth and the community members who care about them to ensure that the best decisions are made to maintain the stability and safety of the child who are living at home. To help ACS and preventive providers understand and support increasing father participation, the Office of Family Team Conferencing measured father participation at ACS attended conferences at select times during 2010. Fathers only, or mothers and fathers were at approximately 16 percent of ACS attended conferences. This baseline information will be used to drive future strategies for program development and increased outcomes for the future. Over the last several months, New York State Center for the Development of Human Services Fatherhood Initiative professional development staff has trained provider agency staff and ACS Family Team Conference (FTC) facilitators on engaging custodial and non-custodial fathers.

- Through the Teen Age Services Act program, ACS contracts with two providers who offer preventive services (i.e. public benefits, health services, abstinence and family planning, parenting and job skills training and educational services) geared towards young fathers -- New York Youth at Risk, a national model and Claremont Neighborhood Center, a community based-organization located in a Bronx New York City Housing Authority housing development. Both programs serve approximately 70 new fathers annually.
- ACS is strategically distributing information to fathers of children in foster care regarding available services for their children and families. DYFJ Case Managers are identifying residents in secure and non-secure detention who are fathers and whose fathers are connected to their lives. DYFJ uses orientation sessions to inform facility residents who are fathers about the importance of their role in the lives of their children and conducts conferences that provide residents and their family members the opportunity to meet with facility staff to address concerns and develop plans that help prepare residents to return to the community.

### ***Next Steps for 2011-2012***

#### Resource Development & Information Sharing

- Continue to revise the ACS Casework Practice Guide to include specific language about ways to engage fathers and resources that workers can utilize to enhance their practice in this area.
- Collaborate with child welfare advocates and Legal Aid to develop a Best Practice Guide for Pregnant and Parenting mothers and fathers in Foster Care. ACS is finalizing the Best Practice Guide and desk aid as a supplement to the Guide. Pending review and final approval by Legal Aid Society, a roll-out plan is in draft form to share the guide with ACS staff, its provider agencies and stakeholders.
- Encourage Head Start delegate agencies to create Fatherhood Advisory Groups as a vehicle to share program ideas and approaches with one another that will further support fathers' engagement in their children's lives.
- Develop guiding principles that inform ACS' contract agency practice, based on input from a range of stakeholders, i.e. men involved with ACS's services, fatherhood programs and other stakeholders.

#### Training

- By the end of 2011, train all Child Protective personnel using the Office of Children and Family Services' "Locating and Engaging Fathers Tool Kit."
- Assess the feasibility of making "Fatherhood: Working with Men and Paternal Families," an elective offered to Division of Child Protection staff between 2004 and 2006, a required training.

- ACS' Task Force on Racial Equity and Cultural Competence will develop strategies for discussing the role of race as a barrier to effective engagement between workers and fathers.
- In collaboration with the Fatherhood Working Group, DYFJ will develop a pilot training that prepares Ombudsmen, Case Managers and Juvenile Counselors to use the intake process to employ effective approaches to father engagement and facilitate environments where residents may be more likely to surface and discuss their status, experience and role as fathers.
- The Division of Family Court and Legal Services (FCLS) will design and offer focused training on who is a father under NYS law, for ACS' Child Protective Specialists (CPS) through the Core CPS training program; Foster Care Agency Case Planning staff; and all FCLS attorneys as part of their initial training.

#### New Programs & Resource Development

- ACS is partnering with the Mayor's Office, Human Resources Administration, the Department of Education and the City University of New York to design a program model that will train men, several of them fathers from New York City's neighborhoods, to work within the early childhood sector. The model has the potential to reduce the shortage of men entering the field, encourage men to explore a non-traditional employment path and improve parenting skills as fathers gain the skills necessary to help develop and nurture young children.
- Create a literacy program for Head Start and Child Care fathers that will support child literacy development and create opportunities for family bonding.
- Emphasize to foster care agencies the importance of recruiting black and Latino fathers as foster parents or as mentors to young men in foster care.

DYFJ will expand how it serves residents who are fathers in the following ways:

- Establish a regular schedule of special visits so that family members can bring children to the facilities to visit their fathers.
- Explore how ACS' Teen Age Services Act program can serve young fathers in custody.
- Develop father support groups comprised of residents and their fathers to discuss the important roles fathers and men play in the lives of children.

### Measuring Success

- Develop a method of measuring specific father engagement outcomes in the Teenage Services Act programs.
- ACS will develop a method to measure the number of prospective black and Latino foster fathers identified through the 10 churches that are part of their Faith-Based Initiative.
- Develop staff self-evaluation and management tools that measure how line staff and supervisors incorporate training strategies into their daily practice.



## Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Nurse Family Partnership

### ***About the Agency***

Within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the Bureau of Maternal, Infant, and Reproductive Health runs two home visiting programs: the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and the Newborn Home Visiting Program. Through ongoing home visits by registered nurses, NFP helps transform the lives of vulnerable, first-time moms and their babies by imparting them with the knowledge and resources they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their children, and become more economically self-sufficient. From pregnancy until the child turns two years old, NFP nurse home visitors form a much-needed, trusting relationship with the first-time moms, instilling confidence and empowering them to achieve a better life for their children – and themselves. NFP's outcomes include long-term family improvements in health, education, and economic self-sufficiency, which led the Mayor's Commission for Economic Opportunity to name NFP as a key program for children under five in 2006.

Although NFP is known as a maternal and child health program, and mothers are the primary recipient of intervention activities, the program has recognized the importance of father involvement from the start. In fact, research has shown that fathers participating in NFP have higher levels of involvement and support with their children compared to non-NFP fathers (Kitzman et al., 2000).

Throughout the program, NFP nurses encourage expecting and parenting fathers to be involved in home visits whenever possible (though it is always up to the mother if she desires this involvement). To facilitate father involvement, the program developed a special curriculum designed to encourage thoughtful involvement and support. Content for fathers parallel many of the lessons mothers learn during home visits such as promoting physical health, describing the baby's growth during pregnancy, childbirth, child development and milestones, and healthy parent relationships. Program content also encourages fathers to set their own life-course goals and to work with their partners to agree on family planning.

Studies evaluating NFP have shown fathers/partners to have higher levels of involvement and support as compared to non-NFP fathers/partners. In the NFP trial in Memphis, NFP mothers reported a 46 percent greater presence of their children's fathers in the household compared to non-NFP mothers 3 years after the program ended (Kitzman et al., 2000).

Furthermore, compared to non-participants, studies indicate NFP families have:

- Higher rates of interest during pregnancy by fathers (Olds, Henderson Jr., Tatelbaum, & Chamberlin, 1986).
- Increases in cohabitation between father and child (Kitzman et al., 2000).
- Increases in cohabitation between father/partner and mother (Kitzman et al., 2000).
- Increases in father/partner's length of employment (Olds, Henderson Jr., Tatelbaum, & Chamberlin, 1988; Kitzman et al., 2000).
- Increases in rates of marriage among mothers (Olds et al., 2010).

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

- NFP has become even more mindful of father involvement in its program and has looked more closely at data on the number of fathers participating in NFP and developed a “scorecard” to assess father-related outcomes, including cohabitation, time spent with the child, and monetary contributions to the family.
- To better support fathers in NFP, as well as to create father awareness of NFP services, NFP has forged partnerships with DYCD’s responsible fatherhood providers throughout the city, partnering each NFP site with a fatherhood group.
- NFP has also recognized the potential roles fathers may play in generating new client referral sources for the program. To that end, it has presented NFP to, and is partnering with, the NYC Department of Probation and the NYC Department of Corrections.
- In collaboration with HRA’s Office of Child Support Enforcement, NFP has coordinated presentations to train its nurses on how NFP mothers can apply for child support and the ways in which the system works with non-custodial parents, who are most often fathers. The presentations also cover the rights of custodial and non-custodial parents, supports available to parents who are in need of mediation and/or employment support, and the importance and implications of acknowledging paternity and paternity testing.
- Additionally, NFP has partnered with HRA’s Office of Child Support Enforcement to distribute informational materials on the NYC child support program directly to NFP sites, deliver workshops to NFP custodial and non-custodial parents, and provide ongoing staff trainings

### ***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- By enhancing NFP nurses’ knowledge of services available to fathers, NFP will further integrate the referrals of fathers to training and employment resources into their core services to mothers.
- NFP will continue its innovative research as it refines a scoring system for measuring biological and/or social father involvement using these six data points:
  - How frequently the father plays with and/or cares for his child;
  - How frequently the father is in contact with his child’s mother;
  - The degree to which the father makes financial contributions to the child’s care;
  - Whether or not the father is partnered with the mother of his child;
  - Whether or not the mother’s current partner lives with her and her child; and
  - Whether or not the mother is married.
- This scoring system will provide a more holistic picture of father involvement in NFP. As NFP transfers its data to a new clinical information system, it will continue to analyze its data to measure father participation and family outcomes over time.

## **Department of Homeless Services**

### ***About the Agency***

The mission of the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) is to overcome homelessness in New York City. DHS prevents homelessness whenever possible and promotes self-sufficiency among clients through a focus on employment and links to resources that will yield long-term stability. DHS reduces street homelessness, provides short-term, emergency shelter and assists New Yorkers to transition from shelter into permanent housing. These goals are best achieved in partnership with the individuals and families DHS serves, other City agencies, and the business and non-profit communities.

### ***Approach to father engagement***

DHS provides temporary, emergency shelter to homeless individuals and families. Although most of the families served are single-parent households headed by females, there are also families headed by males, as well as households that include both a mother and a father. In addition, DHS acknowledges that while fathers in the families system may reside with their children, this is often not the case for fathers in single adult facilities. The agency's approach to promoting fatherhood must consider and address both sets of circumstances.

Although DHS is unable to monitor the total number of fathers within the shelter system, the families system includes approximately 2,200 males. As of June 8, 2011, DHS had a total of 8,015 families with children in shelter.

DHS recognizes that, while staying in shelter may be a confusing and sometimes upsetting time for a child, having involved and supportive parents can lessen the anxiety and fear that may come from such a monumental life change at an early age. To this end, DHS encourages and expects fathers to play an active role in the strengthening of their families. This requirement is reflected in the development and implementation of clients' Independent Living Plans (ILPs), which assist them to outline goals and return to the community. Required by the New York State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA), these written service plans incorporate milestones and/or tasks that households must accomplish in order to regain self-sufficiency and move to permanent housing.

As mentioned above, fathers who are receiving shelter from the single adults system rarely reside with their children. In these cases, DHS' Division of Adult Services focuses on reestablishing father-son/father-daughter relationships. Although existing safety policies do not allow non-shelter residents into adult facilities (thereby making it impossible to facilitate visitations between fathers and their children on-site), DHS encourages clients to utilize the New York City Housing Authority's Fatherhood Initiative sites currently in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx to spend time with their children. Furthermore, the Division of Adult Services has implemented a series of workshops in selected facilities to address the absence of fathers/men in households and in the wider community. Reaching men ages 18 and older, the workshops cover topics such as self-respect, self-awareness, self-improvement and responsible behavior— as clients are challenged to take responsibility and become accountable for their lives.

Currently, DHS has approximately 10 sites that support and celebrate fathers through both on-site “fatherhood groups” and participation in outside programs.

No matter what a family’s composition, DHS will continue to encourage parents– both mothers and fathers– to play an active role in the lives of their children. DHS’ involvement in NYC DADS – the Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative has directed the agency to increase its focus on father-child relationships, place more emphasis on father-related activities (both on and off-site) and encourage adult males to be a consistent source of support for their families. By forming good habits for daily living and solid relationships during their time in shelter, families may be more likely to reenter the community as an intact unit, and remain that way for years to come.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

By offering a series of workshops and seminars on-site, DHS’ Division of Adult Services has aimed to engage and educate fathers, provide encouragement and empowerment, and equip them with a network of peer support. Through the workshops, the agency directly addresses many topics that may have hindered clients’ abilities to interact with their children before the Initiative.

The following is an overview of how DHS has enhanced its delivery of services to fathers and their families:

- Adult Services have offered parenting classes for expectant fathers and fathers of children ages 2 and under. Classes cover how to change diapers, hold a baby, feed a baby and appropriately discipline children. At times, attendance was low, depending on the number of clients in residence who have children in that age group staying in adults’ facilities. The division has also distributed educational materials regarding effective parenting and the negative effects of a father’s absence to clients at the Kingsboro Star and Barbara S. Kleinman facilities.
- In an effort to help fathers become more involved in the education of their children, DHS has collaborated with the Department of Education’s Students in Temporary Housing program to offer off-site workshops where fathers can learn how to access DOE’s (ARIS) Achievement Reporting and Innovation System, which provides information about their child’s academic performance.
- Where fathers were willing, the Division of Adult Services aimed to facilitate bonding experiences with clients and their children through the organization of field trips. Some clients declined participation because they do not want their children to know they have been living in shelter.
- Adult Services has created informal peer counseling and mentoring opportunities where older more experienced fathers shared their parenting and life experiences with younger fathers.

- DHS piloted a bi-monthly mentoring group at a shelter on fatherhood beginning in June to discuss different topics pertaining to the value of fathers engaging in the lives of their children. Mentoring groups began at Kingsboro Star in September, 2010 and at the Barbara S. Kleinman shelter shortly thereafter. Average attendance is about 20 clients per session.
- This year, DHS has promoted an agency-wide Father's Day celebration, where DHS service providers have encouraged fathers to take advantage of free recreational activities with their children on the holiday. Informational flyers were distributed to shelter providers announcing events and their locations.

***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- Moving forward, the Division of Family Services will include additional facilities to pilot efforts related to engaging fathers. In the months ahead, DHS aims to further implement support groups for fathers throughout the shelter system. These support groups will emphasize the important role fathers play in their children's growth, seek to promote the development of life skills related to achieving self- sufficiency, decrease incidents of domestic violence and child abuse and increase the school attendance of children currently residing in DHS facilities.
- In addition, the agency seeks to standardize the use of the "Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum" among all DHS service providers. To achieve this aim, DHS will contact local accredited schools of social work to identify interns to employ the Manpower Development Research Corporation's (MDRC) "Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum." In addition to guiding men through interactions with other men who have similar situations, the curriculum presents information about the roles men fill as fathers and their relationships with others. The emphasis on the program is peer support, which can be demonstrated through DHS' offerings of fatherhood support groups and workshops.

The curriculum includes topics such as:

- Introduction to Responsible Fatherhood;
- Noncustodial Fathers: Rights and Responsibilities;
- Coping as a Single Father;
- Dealing with Children's Behaviors;
- Understanding Male-Female Relationships;
- Managing Conflict and Handling Anger; and
- Managing Your Time and Money;

DHS understands the importance of utilizing all existing resources and regularly looking for ways to improve implementation of the Fatherhood Initiative within the shelter system.

To this end, DHS also plans to:

- Build relationships with community-based organizations such as Catholic Charities, the Puerto Rican family Institute, Mount Sinai Medical Center’s Young Father’s program, and the Center for Employment Opportunities– all of which will offer workshops on parenting skills, developing healthy family relationships and independent living skills and what it means to be a responsible father.
- Measure the effectiveness of efforts to connect fathers to their children by tracking the following:
  - Number of father support groups established throughout DHS’s shelter system;
  - Number of workshops offered by community-based organizations;
  - Number of fathers attending support groups and workshops; and
  - Number and category of referrals to community-based organizations for services
- Continue to explore alternate ways for Adults Services to facilitate visitation between fathers and their children, while maintaining safety protocols within shelter facilities. At the same time, the adults system strives to address its previous barriers to serving dads in shelter by equipping them with peer support/mentoring, encouragement and information.

## **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation**

### ***About the Agency***

New York City's Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) is the steward of approximately 29,000 acres of land — 14 percent of New York City — including more than 5,000 individual properties ranging from Coney Island Beach and Central Park to community gardens and Greenstreets. They operate more than 900 athletic fields and nearly 1,000 playgrounds, 550 tennis courts, 66 public pools, 32 recreation centers, 14 nature centers, 13 golf courses, and 14 miles of beaches. They care for 1,200 monuments and 23 historic house museums. They look after 600,000 street trees, and two million more in parks. NYC Parks is New York City's principal provider of recreational and athletic facilities and programs, and the home of free concerts, world-class sports events, and cultural festivals.

Additionally, since 1994, NYC Parks has provided workforce development services to public assistance recipients through its welfare-to-work transitional employment program, the Parks Opportunity Program (POP). Job Training Participants (JTP) working for POP range in age from 18-58 and 26 percent are male; many of these men are balancing their employment at Parks with navigating their pathway to permanent employment and the responsibilities of fatherhood.

POP holds a unique position on the transitional employment landscape for its dual approach. As a program, POP assists trainees with the professional development and supportive services needed to achieve a permanent transition from public assistance; as an employer, NYC Parks encourages responsibility, professionalism and commitment from its employees. As fathers engage in POP's services, the importance of their role as provider and employee is emphasized, building a stronger connection to their family, community, workforce, and the city as a whole.

POP has also developed a variety of services and programming to engage and assist fathers, including parenting workshops, child support case management to ensure that custodial fathers are receiving the support and services they require, and adult education. Community partners are actively recruited to provide workshops to trainees on a variety of topics, and frontline POP staff members receive regular training to ensure that information related to fatherhood programming and services is up-to-date.

In 2006, POP became a GED Proctor Site, enabling trainees to take classes and sit for the GED exam. In 2010, POP expanded upon these educational services to offer a Fatherhood component.

POP has also used the Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum (RFC), developed and evaluated by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC). The RFC was developed from the perspective that most individuals want to behave responsibly but may not know how to face life's challenges.

NYC Parks has taken many steps to take fathers into account in its physical spaces. A good example is the installation of changing stations in all new and remodeled men's restroom facilities.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

Since its involvement in NYC DADS-The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative, NYC Parks has taken a number of steps to develop new initiatives and enhance current services. NYC Parks' participation in the Initiative has provided them with additional insight on how they can improve their engagement of and services to dads. NYC Parks has:

- Revised POP's initial intake form to make it easier to identify fathers upon hire. Between January 1, 2011 and June 10, 2011, 171 were hired and self-identified as fathers. Of these, 112 do not have their children living with them, while 59 have custody.
- Initiated a stronger relationship with HRA's Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to help fathers in need of case management and assistance in this area. This stronger connection with OCSE has resulted in on-going case management meetings with POP Works trainees providing information directly to the trainees so that they can better manage their child support orders. This close and dedicated support has already benefited 25 fathers.
- POP disseminated information regarding HRA's dad-child engagement events (Halloween and Winter Holiday parties).
- Launched the "Daddy and Me" Adventure pilot program. This eight-session outdoor adventure program, which began in October and ended in May 2011, is designed to provide unique bonding and engagement opportunities for fathers and their children. Daddy and Me Adventure provided opportunities for hiking, fishing, orienteering, team-building games, and wilderness survival. Sessions were scheduled once a month during the weekend and ran for approximately two hours. These sessions provided 38 dads and their children an introduction to parks and outdoor recreational experiences, while offering structured activities that provide an opportunity for real connection. All activities were led by the Urban Park Rangers, a division of New York City Parks and Recreation. Daddy and Me Adventure culminated with an overnight camping experience in Central Park. This pilot program has symbolically opened up the Parks system to many of the participants as currently engaged families report that they had no previous experience with many of the offered activities prior to their involvement with the program. Anthony Waller, a former Job Training Participant and Daddy and Me attendee is one the recipients of the 2011 NYC Dads Matter Award.
- In the summer of 2010, POP launched "Dads to Grads" which offers fathers the resources and opportunity to earn their GED, removing a significant barrier to their professional goals, and offering the potential of increased financial stability.

As they pursue this important goal, fathers in Dads to Grads also participate in fatherhood workshops receiving peer support, buoying their efforts in the traditional classroom. To date, 29 fathers have signed up for the program, with nine taking the GED exam and three earning their degree.

- Improved their marketing strategies to target young Hispanic and black fathers. Specifically, NYC Parks is promoting programs to fathers through the NYC DADS website, the New York City Housing Authority and the Department of Youth and Community Development. For example, all were asked to disseminate information about NYC Parks Junior Ranger Summer Day Camp, a low-cost camping opportunity hosted at four parks. Additionally, NYC Parks is now using key terms on their website and promotional materials to ensure that young fathers see parks as a place to have great bonding experiences with their children. NYC Parks also sent representatives to each of the New York City Housing Authority's Fatherhood Initiative kick-offs to provide materials about outdoor adventure and recreation services. These child and father friendly events took place in NYCHA community centers in four boroughs around the City.

#### ***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- While funding is a concern in this current fiscal climate and NYC Parks does not run separate programs for fathers, it is strategically identifying areas where service to families (including fathers) could be improved and sustained without additional funding. NYC Parks will continue to offer existing family programming and encourage more fathers to participate.
- To determine the impact of initiatives to fathers in POP, NYC Parks will use the following metrics:
  - Number of fathers identified (further tracked by age and custodial status)
  - Number of participants who attend workshops offered by OCSE
  - Number of participants enrolled in the RFC workshop
  - Number of participants who complete the RFC workshop series
  - Number of participants enrolled in Education classes
  - Number of participants who take the GED Exam
  - Number of participants who earn their GED
- Parks will explore how they can further engage fathers in environmental and recreational programming from the dads who participated in the Daddy and Me Adventure pilot program.
- Parks will continue to increase awareness of their offerings by sharing information with organizations that work with young fathers.

## **Department of Probation**

### ***About the Agency***

The Department of Probation (DOP) helps build stronger and safer communities by supervising people on probation and fostering opportunities for them to move out of the criminal justice system through meaningful education, employment, health services, family engagement and community participation.

DOP is intentionally focused on empowering communities, families and fathers. Among the key elements of the agency's strategic plan are the enhancement of their approaches to community engagement and the development of an array of services, resources and opportunities for their clients, many of whom are fathers. DOP recognizes the unique set of challenges that their client-fathers face and seeks to adequately address those concerns. DOP also realizes that father engagement might help in reducing recidivism. As part of this effort, several probation officers and supervisors have been engaged in discussions and trainings related to empowering fathers. Prior to the launch of the Initiative, while there were examples of probation staff who consciously worked to help empower fathers, DOP did not have a clear definition of father friendliness that guided policy and practice on an agency-wide basis.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

- The DOP's Division of Staff and Organizational Development (DSOD) partnered with the Fatherhood Working Group Sub-Committee on Training (comprised of HRA-OCSE, DYCD and the State's Office of Child Family Services) to develop a pilot training that prepares probation officers to create a more father friendly environment for their probationers. The trainings consist of drawing out probation officer attitudes and perceptions about fathers on probation; describing barriers to involvement of fathers in their children's lives; facilitating discussions among staff on engaging fathers on probation; sharing current referral listings and resources for fathers; and providing an overview of child support and resources to assist fathers to navigate the program.

Thus far DOP has conducted three sessions and 72 probation officers have received the training. Given the positive response, additional trainings with other probation officers will be scheduled. Officers trained have expressed that incorporating the engagement of fathers and addressing concerns related to family involvement and parenting as part of their case management practice is invaluable to their service to the probationer.

- While there are many probation officers that were already working diligently with fathers to engage them in the lives of their children, DOP has institutionalized the practice. Now when an officer meets with a probationer who is a father they must specify in the DOP database the topics they covered in the discussion, describe what matters related to fatherhood were discussed and indicate that appropriate referrals that were made. These entries will be reviewed and confirmed by senior staff. As a result of this system-wide practice, probation officers now share information and services with fathers in a more coordinated and systematic way. In the past, DOP depended on the conscientiousness of individual officers to ensure that fathers were engaged.

- In partnership with the Fatherhood Working Group, DOP referred nine clients to NYC Parks to participate in the “Daddy and Me Adventure” Program.

***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- DOP will train and educate the entire probation staff on the significance of engaging fathers in their children’s lives. The training process will explore how father involvement or the lack thereof impacts recidivism.

## **Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD)**

### ***About the Agency***

The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) was created in 1996 to provide the City of New York with high-quality youth and family programming. DYCD supports New York City youth and their families by funding a wide range of high-quality youth and community development initiatives, including: Beacon Community Centers; Cornerstone Community Centers; Immigrant Services; Summer Youth Employment Program, Adult Literacy ; Adolescent Literacy; Out-of-School Time ; Young Adult Internship Program; Runaway and Homeless Youth Outreach and the Fatherhood Program. DYCD provides these services through contracts with community-based organizations (CBOs), using City, state, and federal funds.

DYCD is also the designated Community Action Agency for New York City; the local grantee for the Federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program. The purpose of this program is to provide a range of services and activities that address the causes of poverty and promote self-sufficiency, implement innovative and effective community-based approaches that address the causes and effects of poverty; and, promote maximum participation among residents of low-income communities.

Beginning in 2003, DYCD's has spent \$3 million annually in CSBG monies to fund a citywide Fatherhood Initiative. The Fatherhood Initiative helps fathers reconnect with their children and develop essential parenting skills. DYCD offers fatherhood programming in three distinct categories: Young Fathers (16-24 years-old), Older Fathers (over the age of 24), and fathers with prior involvement in the criminal justice system. This Initiative is committed to enhancing children's development through programs that encourage fathers to become personally involved with their children emotionally and financially, and help fathers relate to their co-parents.

Specific support services include:

- Individual and family counseling
- Mediation & conflict resolution training
- Parenting skill classes
- Assistance with issues of child support and arranging child visitation
- Peer counseling and father-to-father mentoring
- GED and/or ESOL classes or referrals
- Employment counseling and referrals
- College preparation

Since 2003, this Initiative has served approximately 2,000 fathers a year. In FY 2010, DYCD allocated \$3.9 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to create the Fatherhood Reentry Jobs Program, which assisted 600 fathers with transitional jobs, and placed 179 of these fathers in full-time unsubsidized employment.

***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

Motivated by their partnership with the Fatherhood Working Group, DYCD has made improvements in their program quality monitoring tool. This monitoring tool assesses the performance of CBOs who have contracts with DYCD and allows for monitoring of:

- Parenthood status of program participants at intake;
  - Program linkages for participants to resources for child/family planning and support;
  - Provision of workshops related to healthy sexuality - opportunities for participants to discuss dating, healthy relationships, safe sex, and pregnancy.
- 
- DYCD's new database, Capricorn, will track the number of fathers served annually, and monitor increases in each father's emotional engagement and financial responsibility. The database will also allow DYCD to tally the number of children each father has and sort by several demographic characteristics (income, race, age, zip code). Data gathered will also include: formal child support payments made and gifts given, time spent with children, increases in income, and other data that can show increased stability on the part of fathers.
  - DYCD's Fatherhood Director presented an overview of NYC Dads- the Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative at the quarterly provider meetings of numerous DYCD units. As a result, there is greater attention across units to engage in father-friendly projects at DYCD. For example, on September 8 and 13, 2010, DYCD participated in the statewide Dads Take Your Child To School campaign via the agency's Fatherhood, Beacon, Cornerstone, Out-Of-School-Time, Immigrant Services, and Healthy Families portfolios. On October 23, 2010, DYCD's Halloween event included fathers and children from the Fatherhood, Beacon, Cornerstone, and Out-Of-School Time programs. And over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, units shared information about provider celebrations, extending invitations to Fatherhood participants to visit other programs.
  - DYCD's Healthy Families and Housing providers have participated in the Department of Education (DOE)'s Office of School and Youth Development, Students in Temporary Housing pilot program serving fathers who are displaced or in temporary housing. Last year, DYCD's Fatherhood Initiative and the DOE forged a closer relationship, equipping fathers to better support their children's education, and pursue their own educational opportunities. In partnership with the DOE's Office for Family Information and Action (OFIA) DYCD's Fatherhood providers will be advised on ways to educate their participants on how to successfully support their children's

education by, for example, understanding the “blue card” (parent contact form) and the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) system. The Principal of DOE’s Living for the Young Family through Education program, designed to guarantee all student mothers and fathers graduate from high school and are college/career ready, has presented their program to DYCD Fatherhood providers to establish cross referrals.

- To assist a new effort by the Department of Probation (DOP) to re-train probation officers to consider fathers’ challenges and needs, case managers from DYCD’s Fatherhood programs developed case studies that highlighted positive outcomes when their agencies collaborated closely with DOP. In addition they identified individual probation officers who currently engage in “father-friendly” practices. These officers can later be tapped by DOP to bring a peer-learning component to their training.
- The DYCD Fatherhood Initiative has established a closer relationship with the Human Resource Administration’s (HRA) Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). Several providers now host OCSE to deliver presentations to participant fathers concerning establishing paternity and pathways for non-custodial parents establish and maintaining child support payments. In addition, when non-custodial fathers are unsure of their current child support obligations, programs now contact OCSE and discuss the findings as part of their case management practice. DYCD modified their Fatherhood RFP to ensure that in FY ’12 all providers will work with OCSE to provide these parent resources as well as information concerning how to establish paternity.
- HRA Employment Services has recently provided an opportunity for TANF-eligible non-custodial parents in DYCD Fatherhood, Young Adult Internship Program and Out-of-School-Youth portfolios to be referred for job opportunities.
- Several Fatherhood providers have formed community partnerships with Small Business Services’ Workforce One sites, directing their work-ready fathers seeking to enhance their careers to job interview opportunities.
- When nurses from the Nurse Family Partnership meet with a first-time mother and the child’s co-parent, the nurse can now refer that father to Fatherhood providers for career/education advice, exploration of healthy co-parenting roles, etc.
- DYCD service providers made referrals for fathers to participate in Department of Parks and Recreation’s “Daddy & Me Adventure” program. A representative from the Urban Park Rangers presented to DYCD Fatherhood programs about scheduling father-child group activities in the City’s Parks.

### ***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- Beginning July 1, 2011, all DYCD-funded Fatherhood programs will:
  - Host support groups for past and present participants, a program feature included by DYCD after reviewing anecdotal feedback that some participants periodically return to the programs after having experienced them as a place where their needs and concerns as fathers can be met.
  - Using a new parenting skills curriculum to be used by all providers, all programs will receive technical assistance and training on how to apply the curriculum to serve low-income non-custodial fathers.
  - Contract agencies will employ case managers and a life/career coach, and will have someone on staff with appropriate clinical expertise to appropriately address prospective participants who present with myriad challenges. Case management will, cover five life domains: employment & education, parenting skills, child support, child visitation and effective co-parenting.
  - Address child-centered co-parenting and the need for non-custodial fathers to avoid attempting to exert power and control over custodial moms and children.
- The DOE's Office for Family Information and Action (OFIA) is scheduling listening stops with select DYCD Fatherhood providers to hear non-custodial fathers' concerns about their children's education.
- DYCD's Fatherhood Initiative and the Administration for Children Services (ACS) Teenage Services Act program (TASA) will schedule joint provider meetings periodically to enhance resource sharing.
- The Healthy Relationship Training Academy of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence is scheduling free workshops at DYCD fatherhood provider sites to provide information to young fathers about health co-parenting and dating relationships.
- DYCD is collaborating with DOE's OFIA, HRA's OCSE, ACS' Office of Community Partnerships and Advocacy, the Mayor's Office, as well as the state Office for Children and Family Services and state Office of Temporary Disability Assistance to develop Dads Take Your Children To School on September 20, 2011.
- DYCD is collaborating with HRA's OCSE, OCFS, the US Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and several CBOs to increase the information received by human service professionals (e.g. social workers) throughout New York City concerning locating, engaging, and working with fathers.

## **New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation**

### ***About the Agency***

The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) is a \$7 billion integrated healthcare delivery system with its own 410,000 member health plan, MetroPlus. HHC is the largest municipal healthcare organization in the country. HHC serves 1.3 million New Yorkers every year; more than 450,000 patients are uninsured. HHC provides medical, mental health and substance abuse services through its 11 acute care hospitals, four skilled nursing facilities, six large diagnostic and treatment centers and more than 80 community based clinics. HHC's Health and Home Care provides in-home services for New Yorkers. Each year, HHC staff provides care to approximately 28,000 male adolescents (ages 12 through 19) in outpatient primary care clinics.

HHC regards fatherhood and the development of fathers' skills as essential to the overall health and well-being of the patients and communities we serve. Work with fathers is an increasingly important component of its adolescent health programs. HHC providers, particularly those in the areas of obstetrics, pediatrics and adolescent health, encourage participation of all family members. HHC continues to develop, enhance, and augment programs and services that will support fathers and young men in general.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

The following are in the development or pilot stages:

- Each HHC acute care facility accommodates an Adolescent Health Clinic. In addition, there are 10 Family Planning Programs represented throughout HHC acute care facilities. The Family Planning Program Title X has as part of their objective to engage men, particularly young men, and recruit them into the healthcare system. As of January 2011, all of the Family Planning clinics are in different stages of planning and providing hours exclusively dedicated to male patients. The availability of the service hours and days are promoted through community newspapers, monthly health fairs, printed flyers, and word of mouth.
- HHC worked with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services to develop an adolescent pregnancy pilot protocol that, while specifically preparing young mothers for birth and the months that follow delivery, also offers programmatic features that involve and support young fathers at every stage of the process, and that address the medical, social, and other issues that young parents-to-be face, while strengthening their trust in the healthcare system.

- In a novel development in the pilot program at Jacobi Medical Center, fathers-to-be are encouraged to participate in highly experiential Labor and Delivery simulations, and attend medical appointments and classes before and after their children are born. Overall, the facility fosters an inclusive atmosphere that welcomes male participation as integral part of prenatal care. Messages are communicated through brochures, videos, and posters.

### ***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- Develop an intergenerational mentoring pilot designed to support new fathers and encourage their active involvement in the lives of their children. This program will pair grandfathers or mature men with new and/or young fathers to engage and guide men as they prepare for and experience fatherhood for the first time.
- Expand hours dedicated to serving male patients at Family Planning Programs to full days. Today, some of HHC’s Family Planning Programs are providing half-day service slot to male patients. Expansion to full day service in all Family Planning Programs is expected to be fully implemented by 2012.
- Track data from Adolescent Health clinics regarding usage by young men during days set aside to provide focused services to men. The data will be used to identify opportunities for improvement in the provision of services and reproductive health education, e.g., determining type of services needed, preferred days for service, and staffing patterns needed to enhance services.
- A five-day, Adolescent Health provider training program (offering Continuing Medical Education credit) will launch in the first quarter of 2012. The training program will be targeted to HHC providers, including, but not limited to, physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, midwives, social workers, psychologists, HIV/AIDS counselors, health educators, and dietitians that provide healthcare services and education to adolescents – with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive health as part of a comprehensive healthcare delivery system.
- Devise an effective way to track the number of fathers who accompany partners to appointments.
- Identify indicators and develop mechanisms to measure father involvement, and engagement at HHC hospitals. The indicators will include:
  - Number of fathers seeking contraceptive services.
  - Number of fathers provided health education including reproductive system.
  - Number of fathers accompanying partners to appointments.
  - Number of fathers in attendance at prenatal visits and involvement at “Lamaze Class or Child Birth Education Class” throughout the course of the pregnancy.
  - Number of fathers present at the delivery.
  - Number of fathers participating in breastfeeding and child rearing classes.

## **The New York City Housing Authority**

### ***About the Agency***

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) provides decent and affordable housing in a safe and secure living environment for low and moderate- income residents throughout the five boroughs. To fulfill this mission, NYCHA must preserve its aging housing stock through timely maintenance and modernization of its developments. NYCHA also administers a citywide Section 8 Leased Housing Program in rental apartments. Simultaneously, NYCHA works to enhance the quality of life at NYCHA by offering its residents opportunities to participate in a multitude of community, educational and recreational programs, as well as job readiness and training initiatives.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

In response to NYC Dads – The Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative, NYCHA launched its own fatherhood initiative (NFI) community centers in Brooklyn, The Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. Staten Island will follow in June 2011. The first-ever fatherhood initiative launched by a public housing authority, NYCHA’s Fatherhood Initiative is quickly becoming a model for the nation. Through its Fatherhood Initiative, NYCHA provides a safe and child-friendly space for dads and their kids to interact while connecting fathers with agencies that can help them to improve their own lives. NYCHA Social Services conducts pre-assessment surveys to learn the needs of the participants. NYCHA Community Operations provides education, cultural and recreational opportunities to the participants of the program. For the first time, NYCHA community centers that host the Fatherhood Initiative are open on designated weeknights and weekends for fathers and their children to participate in activities. While the NYCHA program is targeted to fathers and children who live in NYCHA, the programs are open to all New York families and fathers.

NYCHA Fatherhood Initiative Partners include but are not limited to the following:

#### **Internal**

- NYCHA Community Operations
- NYCHA Resident Employment Services
- NYCHA Social Services

#### **City Agencies**

- City University of New York –CUNY Prep
- Department of Education (LYFE)
- Human Resource Administration
- New York City Department of Parks and Recreation

### **Community & Private Sector Organizations**

- Coalition for Hispanic Family Services (DYCD)
- Claremont Neighborhood Centers, Inc. (DYCD)
- Friends of Island Academy (DYCD)
- Forestdale, Inc. (DYCD)
- Visiting Nurses Services of New York (DYCD)
- Scholastic, Inc.

Services provided through the NYCHA Fatherhood Initiative include home visiting, case management services, father and child outings, individual, marital or family counseling, a father's support group, parenting workshops for fathers and a series of other parent education workshops. In addition, NYCHA has also facilitated the offering of financial aid and college admissions workshops through CUNY. Workshop content includes information on how to navigate challenges with child support orders and arrears through HRA's Office of Child Support Enforcement and information on how student fathers and mothers earning their high school diploma through the Department of Education's LYFE program. NYCHA has partnered with Scholastic, Inc. to train NYCHA staff in early literacy training/techniques. In turn, staff instruct NFI parents on how to engage in their child's literacy development.

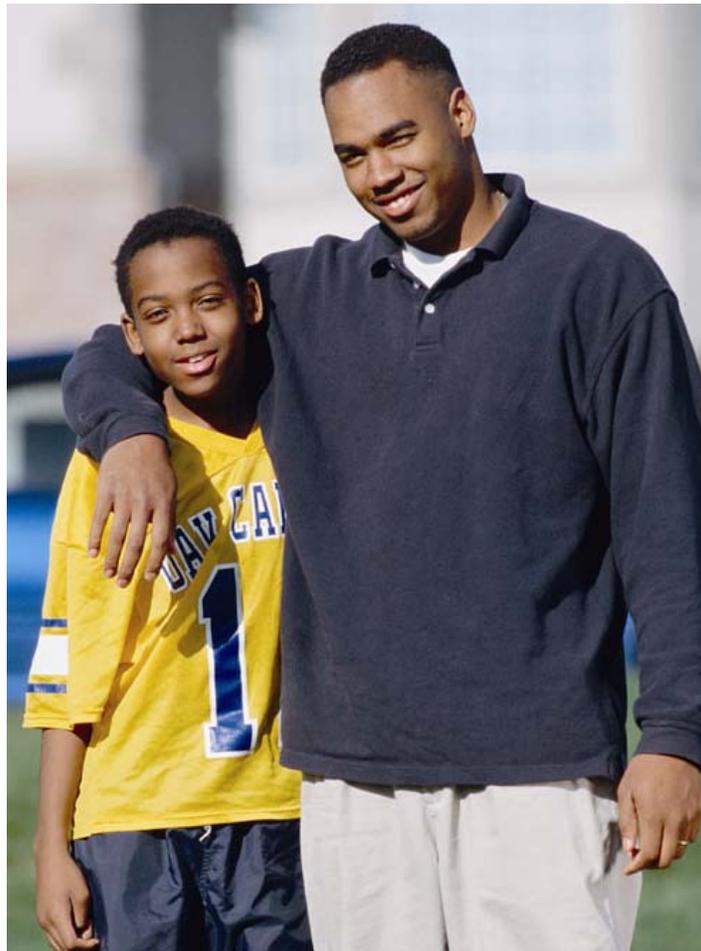
NYCHA's Fatherhood Initiative model has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). NYCHA staff have developed a toolkit and conducted a national webinar that is posted on the HUD website and being used as to equip public housing authorities as they prepare for the event. HUD has since asked other public housing authorities nationwide to collaborate with local community partners on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> to host what they have called "Father's Day 2011." The purpose of this national effort is to strengthen the bonds between fathers and their children and to make education, healthcare and employment resources available to fathers, helping them move towards economic self-sufficiency.

NYCHA's fatherhood initiative is promoted through members of the Fatherhood Working Group, the NYCHA Journal and website as well as through flyers and Community Operations presentations and community meetings.

NYCHA faces some challenges as they seek to grow its fatherhood initiative including the need to hire and redeploy staff to facilitate the effort, the need for resources beyond the operating budget of Community Operations, and as well as additional programmatic incentives to offer participants.

### ***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- Develop a tool that captures the pre-assessment data collected at Fatherhood initiative kick-off events and measures the frequency of positive engagement between fathers and their children over time.
- Continue to assess where the greatest needs and opportunities for father engagement and services lie throughout the five boroughs and expand the initiative across NYCHA developments.
- Identify new community, agency and private sector partners to facilitate NYCHA Fatherhood Initiative programs and services.
- Increase the number of dedicated staff, trained to facilitate the NYCHA Fatherhood Initiative.
- Develop a brochure that publicizes the times and locations the NYCHA Fatherhood Initiative is offered.
- Identify additional funding to expand services.



## **Human Resources Administration**

### ***About the Agency***

The Human Resources Administration (HRA) provides temporary help to individuals and families with social service and economic needs to assist them in reaching self-sufficiency. HRA serves more than three million New Yorkers through essential and diverse programs and services that include: temporary cash assistance, public health insurance, food stamps, home care for seniors and the disabled, adult protective services, domestic violence services, energy assistance, HIV/AIDS support services and child support enforcement.

HRA's commitment to move cash assistance recipients to employment has resulted in the lowest cash assistance caseload in more than 40 years. By providing essential work supports such as food stamps and public health insurance, former cash assistance recipients have a greater ability to stay employed and out of poverty.

Traditionally, social service agencies have seen their role as serving mothers and children or serving individuals. Across the social work field, the concept of treating the family does not include asking about the father, beyond financial and legal obligations. Thinking about the father is relatively new and a shift in how social workers think about serving families. This change will come with time as the importance of fathers to the family unit becomes better understood and accepted in the field of social services. HRA has already made significant progress towards this end since the appointment of Commissioner Robert Doar.

HRA has implemented a number of policy and procedural changes intended to assist fathers fulfill their responsibilities to their children and assist staff in recognizing the importance of fathers. HRA created NYC Dads in 2007, which helps low-income dads connect to the children while promoting responsible fatherhood. Through NYC DADS, HRA has held large-scale events, created a website and Facebook page, and launched a citywide subway campaign entitled "10 Ways to be a Great Dad." The campaign depicted 14 real New York City fathers with their children and highlighted simple ways fathers can be an important part of their children's lives. Additionally, internal communication from the Commissioner to staff has conveyed the importance of fathers in the lives of their children. Initiatives to assist fathers have included: the Low Income Dads program, funding of parenting classes, expanding fathers' access to employment programs, implementation of programs to reduce child support debt owed to the government, promoting the EITC for non-custodial dads, and expanding and upgrading the role of Office of Child Support Enforcement's (OCSE) Outreach Division.

HRA recognizes that social services over the years had been largely concentrated on mothers and children with little attention to fathers. Additionally, HRA recognizes the fact that thousands of children are growing up without a father in their life which has several implications to their development. Children who grow up with fathers actively involved in their lives perform better on every social indicator. Moreover, children who receive financial

support from both parents are less likely to require cash assistance and less likely to grow up in severe poverty.

HRA views its role as it relates to fathers first and foremost to connect them to employment. This will place them in a position to financially support their children. HRA seeks to connect fathers to the formal child support program and for those already attached, assist them in ensuring their orders are reflective of their income and in reducing arrears that could serve as barriers to paying child support. More than 750 non-custodial parents, all fathers, have taken advantage of HRA's arrears and order reduction programs since the program started.

HRA knows that when fathers pay child support they are more likely to be actively involved in their child's life. Therefore, connecting fathers to work and to the child support program will lead to improved outcomes for children.

### ***Progress over 2011***

Three new initiatives underway in OCSE include:

- 1.) Reducing non-cash assistance arrears for non-cash assistance families. This initiative is a partnership with Safe Horizon (soon to be the NY Peace Institute). It creates a safe environment for fathers who are low income and owe a high amount of child support debt to talk directly to the custodial parent to meet through a mediator about reducing the debt. It is expected that the discussion will also include issues around co-parenting and healthy relationships between mothers and fathers.
- 2.) Cash Assistance Pilot. This pilot allows custodial parents, applying or receiving cash assistance and residing in Manhattan, and noncustodial parents to establish paternity and a child support and medical support order without having to appear in court. The expectation is a friendlier non-adversarial environment will lead more parents to establish child support orders and comply with those orders.
- 3.) Problem Solving Court. This initiative is to determine whether a case management approach and more intensive court monitoring will result in improved compliance with child support.

HRA's Back to Work (BTW) employment program has incorporated services for fathers into their daily service delivery model. The vendors have hired Child Support Specialists who have an expertise in the rules governing the child support program and understand the importance of helping fathers support their children financially and emotionally. The Child Support Specialists provide counseling and information to non-custodial dads in an effort to help them manage their child support order. Prior to HRA's increased focus on responsible fatherhood, the Agency missed these opportunities to engage fathers at BTW sites. These programs are studied regularly and their performance is discussed and analyzed for the promotion of best practices

and systems that can improve child support policy and outcomes overall. This organized and structured approach improves the overall well-being of children and their families.

Another new initiative in HRA's employment services division includes the "Promoting Men as Care Providers" initiative. HRA is working with the Mayor's Office to implement a pilot program that creates jobs for men interested in working in the early childhood development field. The pilot aims to change the perception of men as care providers and address the lack of men working early childhood education. Through this initiative men will be encouraged to gain employment in an industry that lacks positive male role-models and positive symbols of manhood for young children.

The following describes on-going efforts to serve fathers and families at HRA:

- To date, there are 280,447 non-custodial parents in the child support program and child support collected \$699.9 million last calendar year.
- In partnership with the court, 5,000 non-custodial fathers were referred to HRA's Back to Work employment program last calendar year. In addition, OCSE collected over \$24 million from all NCPs who ever received a referral to HRA's employment program. This is up from \$20.4 million in 2009. OCSE expects the CY 2011 figure to exceed the CY 2010 amount.
- As part of OCSE's arrears reduction initiative, it reduced \$6.3 million in arrears owed to the government and reduced child support orders payable to the government by an average of \$288 per month, from \$332 to \$45.
- OCSE staff meet with non-custodial parents at Riker's Island, Department of Homeless Services' veteran shelters, and community-based organizations. OCSE Customer Services Walk-in Center assist fathers decrease arrears and reduce orders payable to the government. OCSE provided multiple community-based organizations with child support information for the fathers they serve, including child support trainings for staff and parents.

- Fathers receiving cash assistance, food stamps, or participating in the Support Through Employment Program were connected to employment. They receive parenting classes and child support information. HRA has 3,385 of fathers who are head of households with children receiving cash assistance
- HIV AIDS Service Administration (HASA) caseworkers receive the child support status of the fathers they serve and continue to connect them with OCSE programs available to assist them or provide them with information that will help them manage their child support responsibilities. HASA works with 843 fathers who are head of household with children.
- HRA provides workshops to many City Agency staff and the fathers they serve and also issues a quarterly newsletter targeted to community based providers alerting them to the programs and services OCSE offers.
- HRA continues to refer mothers and fathers receiving cash assistance to NYC Parks' Parks Opportunity Program, a 9 month job-training program and employment readiness program.

Because many fathers are reluctant to engage with the child support program, they may not take advantage of the information available in multiple mediums. It can be challenging to engage and outreach to fathers. HRA is seeking to remove those barriers through education. The child support program has expanded its outreach efforts to other programs within HRA, other city agencies, and to the provider community through providing workshops, individual consultations, developing informational videos, participating in media campaigns, and sponsoring events. These efforts promote the benefits of the child support program to reducing child poverty, correct many misconceptions of the program, review the programs available to assist fathers, and provide general information about the child support program.

### ***Next Steps for 2011 -2012***

- Continue to modify HRA computer systems to provide staff in the various programs within HRA (food stamps, cash assistance, HASA, WeCARE) of whether a participant is a father and if so, whether he is engaged in the child support program and information on the status of his child support case. This information would allow caseworkers to know who is a non-custodial parent and connect them to the programs OCSE has to obtain employment, reduce arrears and/or orders payable to the government, connect them to employment, or provide them with information to avoid the accumulation of arrears in the first instance. By helping non-custodial parents reduce child support debt and obtain orders consistent with their income, OCSE believes this will lead to increased compliance with child support and improved outcomes for children.

- Continue to help mothers understand the important role of fathers in a child's life. Educating mothers on the role child support plays in helping them financially, and that their children perform better on all social indicators when a father is actively involved in their lives, will lead to better overall outcomes for children and increased connection with the child support program by families living at or below federal poverty.
- Continuing to stress that fathers matter and educating staff to recognize that assisting fathers obtain employment, establish paternity, and obtain child support orders is consistent with the broader HRA mission of helping families achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency.

## **The New York City Police Department (NYPD) – Community Affairs**

### ***About the Agency***

The NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau was established to foster positive and productive police-community relations. They accomplish this by providing different interactive community participation programs.

Community Affairs' mission is to establish communication with community leaders, as well as neighborhood leaders, to hear their concerns and answer any questions that may arise.

Community Affairs also gathers intelligence, dispels rumors, disseminates accurate information to the community pertaining to safety and quality of life concerns and establishes liaisons with other agencies in order to improve the quality of life in all neighborhoods.

Community Affairs' outreach units offer family and community events and programs at convenient times for working parents. This includes invitations for parents to participate in existing programs such as the Explorers, Police Athletic League (PAL), Cricket leagues, Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.), National Night Out, (NNO) Domestic Violence (DV) awareness and preventive Domestic Violence initiatives and Youth Services Section. The Youth Services (YSS) works with the youth population of New York City through existing programs and collaborates with other city agencies, community groups and neighborhoods to improve relations.

### ***Progress during 2010 - 2011***

- Community Affairs has continued to engage all families with Courtesy, Professionalism and Respect, encouraging fathers, mothers, grandparents and/or other guardians to connect with their children in the various program offerings mentioned above as well as through, community council meetings and backpacking information to parents and sharing information with parents through the Department of Education's Parent Teacher Associations and Community Education Councils.
- The Department has also collaborated with other city agencies, such as the Department of Education's Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) where it brokered the relationship between NYPD School Safety Agents and Department of Education leadership to ensure the safety of children and staff at a LYFE program.
- The Community Affairs Bureau sought to engage and enhance awareness among fathers by responding to requests for presentations from community groups to inform them of NYPD current events and initiatives. Agencies, community groups and those in the business community are encouraged to target fathers to be part of the audience.

### ***Next steps for 2011-2012***

- Consider establishing a fatherhood initiative within the NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau.
- Create opportunities for children to observe their fathers engage in positive interactions with the police through participation in events such as National Night Out, an annual event, held at every precinct, citywide, to enhance the partnership between the community and police.
- Promote current programs such as the Explorers Program, Police Athletic League and the Youth Police Academy to more fathers, thus creating awareness regarding existing programs designed for child and fathers involvement.
- Expand the use of the NYPD website, Precinct Community Council Meetings, outreach units and their relationships with community-based organizations and the business community to expand father awareness of available NYPD programming and create an awareness of the Fatherhood Initiative among participants of existing Community Affairs programs. Create a website link on the NYPD website that refers fathers to events for them and their children.
- Establish a phone line within the Community Affairs Bureau that would be used for responding to questions regarding current and future events for children and fathers.



## Conclusion

NYC Dads-The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative has made progress in its efforts to increase and improve father engagement and involvement in the lives of their children in New York City. However, we know that there is so much more for us to accomplish.

The Initiative is taking this moment in our City's history to make lasting and measurable positive impacts upon the next generation of children and families by increasing opportunities for fathers to be involved in their children's lives— from the moment of birth onward.

The Mayor, the agencies that comprise the Fatherhood Working Group and the City's community partners remain determined to see more of our children experience the encouragement, support and love of their fathers. The City will continue to work from the assumption that many fathers want to be involved in the lives of their children. The 2011 NYC Dads Matter Awards illustrates that there are fathers who are forging ahead through life's obstacles to strengthen our families and City. New York City is making every effort to discover and remove barriers at the city agency level to make this an increasing reality for the fathers we serve. We believe that improved and strategic service of fathers will strengthen families and that wherever possible celebrating their involvement in the lives of their children will send the message that dads matter and are critical parts of what it will take to fortify our communities, cities and ultimately our nation.

We plan to achieve this long term goal by:

- Raising the awareness of fathers from every borough and socioeconomic background, especially low-income, non-custodial parents, of the diverse ways they can connect with their children and how those relationships will strengthen their children's lives and their own.
- Developing, disseminating and promoting the principles of "father friendliness" at the policy, program and front-line levels of our City agencies, as well as reducing barriers to father's access to and their participation in existing services and programs that support their development as individuals and their efforts to be engaged long-term in the lives of their children.
- Developing and utilizing rigorous evaluation tools to measure the progress of individual and citywide responsible fatherhood efforts, documenting challenges and successes in implementation and the overall advancement of the initiative.
- Positioning New York City as part of the statewide and national conversation on responsible fatherhood through the establishment of partnerships with local and national responsible fatherhood practitioners, community-based organizations and philanthropic and government entities to gain federal, state, city and private funding.

The Mayor believes that the presence of a loving and involved father has the power to transform the lives of children, families and communities, both now and for generations to come. New York City is dedicated to doing everything it can to realize this vision.

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