The Children, Youth and Family Consortium

A University and Community Collaboration

Consortium Connections

Volume 3, Number 3, Fall 1994

In This Issue — The Role of Men in Children's Lives

On July 11, 1,000 program leaders, researchers and policy makers gathered in Nashville, Tennessee for Family Reunion III: the Role of Men in Children's Lives. The third of a series of family policy conferences hosted by Vice President Al Gore, this year's conference was sponsored by the Consortium in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Human Services. The purpose of the conference was to explore factors that support or hinder men's involvement in the lives of children, to share effective strategies for engaging men more positively, and to identify related policy issues. To give you a sampling of the ideas that emerged from the conference, we have asked some participants to share their observations and experiences. Dwaine Simms of MELD challenges some stereotypes about so-called "deadbeat dads." Oliver Williams, a professor in the School of Social Work, calls us to confront domestic abuse and recognize issues that it raises related to father involvement. As an example of effective father involvement strategies, Ed Pitt, director of the Male Involvement Project at the Families and Work Institute in New York, describes the work of his organization in Minnesota and other parts of the country. And Neil Tift of the Father's Resource Center summarizes issues and insights both from the conference and from pre-conference activities in which he participated.

For further exploration of these issues, look into FatherNet on the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse, a rapidly-growing collection of resources and ideas on this critical topic. If you join Vice President Gore and others in a conversation on FatherNet's electronic bulletin board, your ideas can help shape the national Father to Father Initiative that is being developed as a follow-up to Family Reunion III.

DEADBEAT DADS — Another Voice for Another Label

Dwaine Simms, Program Replication Manager, MELD for Young Dads Program

Labels are necessary. They help us to make sure that we don't confuse things that are similar. Ever mix paprika in your oatmeal thinking it was cinnamon? However, some labels should be viewed in another way. For example the term "deadbeat dads" is often given to men who won't pay child support, men who elude the system that requires them to take responsibility for their children. The label has been extended to too many fathers who shouldn't come under its characteristics and stereotypes. Let's look more closely at an individual case:

> Minneapolis Man is a twenty-eight year old father of a brand new baby girl. Less than an hour after Baby Girl was born, the mother was heard saying how much she wanted to "get out from under the responsibility of being a mother, 'I am not ready for this.'" Two weeks later she is telling the father that it's his baby and he should take care of her . . . "after all I've got another kid anyway." Father takes care of Baby Girl for months. He tries to access the AFDC system for support for himself and his daughter. Ramsey county tells him that while he has a legal right to file for paternity and seek support from the mother, that the system just isn't set up for him. The Ramsey County attorney's office

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Mission Statement

The Children, Youth, and Family Consortium was established in fall 1991 in an effort to bring together the varied competencies of the University of Minnesota and the vital resources of Minnesota's communities to enhance the ability of individuals and organizations to address critical health, education, and social policy concerns in ways that improve the well-being of Minnesota children, youth, and families.

Consortium Connections

Consortium Connections is published three times a year (Winter, Spring, and Fall) by the Children, Youth, and Family Consortium: A University and Community Collaboration.

Publication Staff: Martha Farrell Erickson, Michael Brott, Deborah Fravel, Marian Heinrichs, Jan Joannides

Children, Youth and Family Consortium
University of Minnesota
12 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
612/626-1212 Fax 612/626-1210
email: cyfstaff@maroon.tc.umn.edu

Partner Abuse and Fatherhood: Some Considerations

Oliver Williams, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota

Concern over what prevents men from fulfilling their role as fathers was a topic explored at Family Reunion III. The CYF Consortium co-sponsored the event and assisted in assembling a group of learned respondents in the field of fatherhood.

Forum respondents shared insights concerning what they believed prevented men from being better fathers. Among the themes to emerge were the erosion of marriage as a norm in the U.S.; legal and national policies that are not gender neutral and may be male hostile; and the lack of male parental role models for teenage males.

Another topic which received some attention was the issue of partner abuse. It is essential that Americans understand the effect that partner abuse has on families and on fatherhood. Such insight frames the context for considering the other themes.

For example, two-parent families have more potential resources and other kinds of support for children. Higher divorce rates may be due to different societal norms than in the past, but too often couples separate or divorce due to physical and emotional victimization of one partner and/or the children. A partner may leave the relationship not due to moral decay, but because she or the children are not safe. The battered women's movement helped to confront the conventional wisdom of the past that tacitly condoned violence against women. In the past, women were encouraged to stay in abusive relationships; today they are encouraged to find safety and shelter. In the past, women were encouraged to believe they could change the man who batters; today many women recognize he has to change himself.

Men who batter are usually attempting to control their partner by using any means necessary, including the children, the legal system, etc. It is important to recognize that non-abusive men find themselves in conflict during divorce or custody disputes too. However, in the debate on national policy, it is important not to lose sight of the experiences of battered women. If national policy was shaped to protect battered women and children, reduce partner abuse and encourage healthy relationships, a byproduct might be fewer divorces and longer lasting marriages.

The discussion of role models often centers on the absent father. But what if the father is abusive and present? Two accounts from battered women have shaped my perspective on this theme. In the first, a woman noted that her husband and her son had a very strong relationship. In many ways, her husband was a great father. However, after a severe beating her five year old son told her, "Mommy, if you just did what daddy told you to do, he wouldn't have to hit you." The impact of this negative role model is evident. How is this child learning to view women and relationships? How is he learning to resolve conflict with a loved one?

In the second case, a battered woman, who had been divorced from the abusive ex-husband for about a year, reported the following:

> He called me up saying he was jealous and enraged over my relationship with my boyfriend of six months. My ex-husband threatened me saying, "If I ever see you two together, I will kill you." Within a half-hour my ex-husband came to my home and shot our daughter and my boyfriend. They survived the assault, but later I asked my daughter, "'Knowing that your father had a gun, why did you stay in the house?' My daughter's reply was, 'I remember the last time you got beat up! I didn't help you! I promised if this ever happened to you again I was going to help you!'"

Children exposed to domestic violence get hurt and learn negative messages about relationships and resolving conflict.

In conclusion, the issue of domestic violence has a real impact on restricting the gifts of fatherhood. Although not all men are violent, a significant number of women are physically and emotionally abused by their partners. Partner abuse plays a major role in the divorce rates, and has perpetuated into an intergenerational cycle of violence in this country. We must address this issue so the debate over what prevents men from being good fathers has more balance. Not all fathers are villains, but at the same time not all fathers are heroes. The question we now ask is how do we improve the odds of making more fathers heroes?

Getting Men Involved: The Male Involvement Project

Ed Pitt, Director, The Male Involvement Project, The Families & Work Institute

Parents are the primary educators of young children and the vital link to their children's future. It is therefore imperative that programs and services for children, especially health and education services, form partnerships with parents to insure that children realize maximum benefits from these services.

Involving parents (especially low-income parents) in these partnerships has become increasingly more challenging over the past 20 years. Much is related to the increased stress associated with long-term, multi-generational poverty, substance abuse and early teenage parenting. Lack of commitment and rigidity on the part of our society and its institutions account for the rest.

In the case of our institutions—both education and human services—too many view the idea of involving parents as an unnecessary and additional burden. As a result, they approach the task with neither enthusiasm nor imagination.

Society stubbornly ignores the realities of home and family life by imposing narrow definitions and guidelines (e.g., intact, biological) for them to qualify for key benefits and services.

This same rigidity can be detected in the limited ways men and fathers are perceived to be involved in the daily lives of young children. Child rearing is still viewed as a female/maternal role and parental involvement is equated with mother involvement. Men in turn are routinely assumed to be uninterested, neglectful, inadequate, absent, deadbeat, etc.

Behavioral scientists remind us that children benefit from warm and nurturing relationships with men. Men are most likely to develop those sorts of relationships in environments which value, support and encourage them.

The Male Involvement Project at the Families and Work Institute is designed expressly for the purpose of increasing male involvement in the pre-school and Head Start experience of children. The Project utilizes a specially designed one-day training program to arm pre-school and Head Start administrators and parent involvement specialists with information and strategies required to increase male participation in their programs.

The one-day training program incorporates the experience of 14 programs that have been quite successful at maintaining high levels of male involvement. These exemplary programs are highlighted in the new publication *Getting Men Involved: Strategies for Early Childhood Programs.**

A second component of the Male Involvement Project focuses on changing entrenched community attitudes about men and their involvement in the lives of pre-school-aged children. In Baltimore, Minneapolis and San Anselmo (near San Francisco), local pre-school programs are forming "collaboratives" with other pre-school, health and social service agencies in an effort to change overall attitudes and approaches to serving children and their families—including men. This component is being subjected to intensive process evaluation with a view towards national replication.

The Male Involvement Project is one component of the Fatherhood Project, a national research and education initiative examining the future of fatherhood and ways to support men's involvement with children. James A. Levine founded the project in 1981 at the Bank Street College of Education. For more information, contact: The Male Involvement Project, The Families and Work Institute, 330 - 7th Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10001. (212) 465-2044; FAX 465-8637.

* *Getting Men Involved: Strategies for Early Childhood Programs,* written by James A. Levine, Dennis T. Murphy and Sherrill Wilson, can be ordered by calling Scholastic, Inc. at (800) 631-1586. Price: $12.95.

DEADBEAT DADS — *continued from page 1*

> suggests that he return the baby to the mother saying "It's in the Baby Girl's and your best interest." Less than seventy-two hours after doing this, the mother has the infant committed to St. Joe's for foster care placement.

This Minneapolis man is not a deadbeat dad. Working for a national parenting information and support organization — MELD — which has served over a thousand young fathers and dads to be, we've seen the inequity of labeling as deadbeats young fathers who are out of the labor force, out of school, out of hope, and have little life expectancy beyond 25.

According to a Ford Foundation economist, there are ten million noncustodial fathers in the U.S. who don't pay the entire amount of child support they owe. Of these, only 21 percent were unable to meet the terms of their child support because they were poor. Of the fathers that pay no child support at all, only 30 percent fail to do so because they can't afford to. This means that there are fathers who don't pay child support and can afford to. It also means that there are millions of fathers that want to support their children and cannot. There is little similarity between these two communities of fathers. Child support policy attempts to cover both, but is ineffective.

Author Bryan Robinson wrote that over 90 percent of teenage fathers want to pay financial support, nearly 90 percent want to participate in the care of their children, 96 percent attempt to maintain close contact with mother and child, 80 percent want to learn more about how to care for a baby, 75 percent were actually finding ways to provide financial support for their children, over 80 percent helped in other ways, and despite some outdated hospital policies about father involvement in the birthing process, one in four teen dads were there when the baby was born.

Let's not continue to beat down fathers with unfair labels. Instead let's beat down barriers that keep fathers away from caring for their children.

Nashville — An Overview of the Issues and Outcomes of the Conference

Neil Tift, Director, The Fathers' Resource Center

As the 737 descended into the crowded airspace of the Nashville Airport, I was more apprehensive than I thought I would be. I was here to participate in a national conference hosted by Vice President Al Gore.

Pre-conference roundtable discussions lasting over two days were facilitated by Ralph Smith of the Philadelphia Children's Network. Practitioners from 11 states reported on their full-time efforts to assist fathers to re-engage in the lives of their children. It was both encouraging and disheartening to hear the stories of lost lives, missed opportunities, and second chances that many men have experienced as they struggle to find a healthy approach to parenting their children in today's fast-paced and changing world.

There are many days when I feel frustrated at the lack of supports available to fathers. In sharing our concerns among these practitioners, I found myself feeling increasingly proud of our local efforts, and the current array of options that fathers in the Twin Cities have available. These options, while limited, are more abundant than those found in many other metropolitan areas.

The discussions at the Father Re-Engagement Roundtables centered on a series of issues that were practice-focused and practice-derived, including:

- Fathers care, even if that caring is not always shown in conventional ways.
- Joblessness is a major impediment to family formation and father involvement.
- Existing approaches to public benefits, child support enforcement, and paternity establishment operate to provide obstacles and disincentives to father involvement.
- A growing number of young fathers and mothers need additional support to develop skills to share the responsibility for parenting.
- The transition from biological father to committed parent has significant developmental implications for young dads.

Roundtable participants generated suggestions for public policy change to address critical concerns:

- Abandon the distinction between "custodial" and "non-custodial" parents insofar as benefits are concerned.
- Use the child-support enforcement system as a case-finding mechanism while de-emphasizing its collection and punitive aspects.
- Provide amnesty for fathers who wish to declare paternity but are discouraged from doing so due to overdue child support payments.
- Promote and facilitate voluntary establishment of paternity.
- Pursue means for non-custodial parents to provide alternative forms of child-support when unemployed, such as child-care and other "in-kind" supports.
- Create mechanisms to address fathers' being denied, as strenuous as mechanisms that address non-payment of child support.
- Encourage and even require mediation and counseling as essential components of the paternity establishment and child support enforcement process.
- Include support for developing and strengthening co-parenting relationships.

As a panel member of the Men's Forum one morning during the conference, I enjoyed the opportunity to hear and share the stories of 30 men, who are researchers, educators, and practitioners. I felt empowered by the strong presence of the Vice President and his wife Tipper, as they expressed their interest in being actively involved in expanding opportunities for fathers and father figures to parent their children. The event, with such noted experts as Dr. Kyle Pruett, Ralph Smith, and Dr. Jim Levine, authors Richard Louv and David Blankenhorn, country western singer Garth Brooks, and the luncheon speaker Jesse Jackson, indicated that perhaps these issues are finally being recognized as critically important concerns that deserve serious national attention.

Consortium Director Marti Erickson with Vice President Al Gore. Marti was co-chair of Family Reunion III, which was sponsored by the Consortium and the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

As a result of this gathering in July, at least three important outcomes are strengthening the work that my colleagues and I are doing:

1. FatherNet is now available as an on-line distributive computer information system that provides a bulletin board to share information on research, opinion and policy documents related to the involvement of men in the lives of children.

2. A National Practitioners Network has been created to offer the opportunity to continue to meet and to share information regarding our work to provide and increase direct services to fathers and their families.

3. The Minnesota delegation to the conference convened to process the results of the conference and to generate a follow-up plan to pursue the efforts initiated in Nashville. In addition to building on Minnesota's own programs, we will be a strong voice in national follow-up activities led by Vice President Gore.

FatherNet - Accessing Information Electronically

FatherNet is an electronic, computer accessible compilation of information, research, opinion and policy documents related to the involvement of men in the lives of children. FatherNet has been created to provide a forum for discussion and ongoing electronic access to the latest information resources.

FatherNet —

- offers Family Reunion III conference proceedings, related articles, electronic newsletters, bibliographies and other resources to help you in your work.
- provides an electronic bulletin board to allow you to debate, exchange, and discuss ideas around topics involving the role of men in children's lives.
- is accessible 24 hours a day.
- is free to the user (other than possible long distance phone charges).
- can be accessed through dial-up computer modem connections or through Internet.
- is available as a main menu option on the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse.

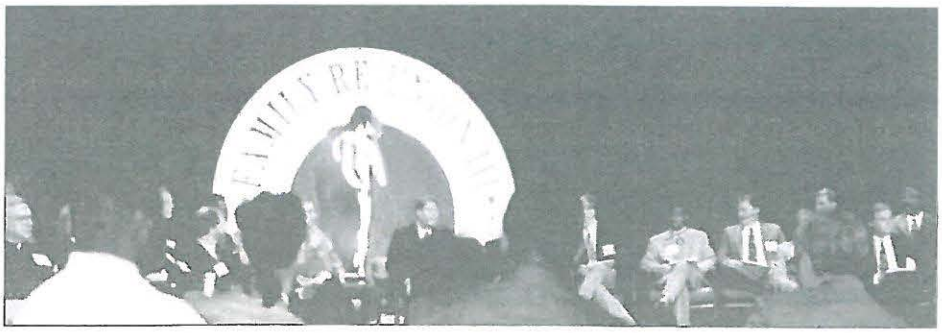
Fathernet is a project of the Consortium and part of Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse (CEC). CEC is an on-line distributive computer information system which provides a pathway to research-based information related to the health, education and welfare of children, youth, and families. Everyone is welcome to use FatherNet and participate in the bulletin board discussions.

To Join the Discussion on FatherNet's Electronic Bulletin Board:

- The current topic of discussion on the bulletin board is: "What factors support or hinder the involvement of men in children's lives?" To read the comments to date, go to the FatherNet gopher (instructions to the right).
- To add your comments to the bulletin board, write them in an e-mail message and send to: father@tinman.mes.umn.edu and in the Subject line of your message, write: involvement in children's lives (all lowercase letters)
- You will receive a return e-mail message confirming receipt of your comments and that they were appended to the discussion.
- The topics change periodically; the subject line message will change with the topic. See the FatherNet bulletin board for current topics and how to participate.

For Further Information on FatherNet:

- send an e-mail message to cyfcec@maroon.tc.umn.edu
- call the Consortium office at 612/626-1212 OR
- read the "ABOUT FatherNet" directory on CEC.



Vice President Gore facilitates a discussion at Family Reunion III with a group of experts in the field of fathering. The group included researchers, educators, practitioners, and policy makers from across the country.

For me, one of the most striking aspects of Family Reunion III was to hear top level policy makers telling their personal stories of balancing work and family. If we all meet on that common ground as mothers, fathers, sons and daughters - if we step out of our professional roles and think about what it takes to make our own families run smoothly - maybe then we really can move toward family-friendly policies.

—Marti Erickson

Directions for Accessing CEC and FatherNet

do one of the following:

If you have access to the Gopher system:

a) start your Gopher software
b) select "Other Gophers" [or similar listing] and make the following choices on subsequent menus:
North America
USA
Minnesota
Children, Youth & Family
Consortium Clearinghouse

***Short cut on some systems (UNIX and mainframes): start your Gopher software by typing the following:

gopher gopher-cec.mes.umn.edu

You may also be able to set an electronic bookmark to: gopher-cec.mes.umn.edu.

If you don't have gopher but your system does offer TELNET access:

a) type: telnet gopher-cec.mes.umn.edu
b) at the login prompt type: cec

If you don't have gopher or TELNET but do have your computer connected to a modem:

Set your computer's communication software settings to: N 8 1, (no parity, 8 bit word length, and 1 stop bit). Call 612-626-1200 (if your modem speed is 1200 bps), 626-2400 (2400 bps), or 626-9600 (9600 bps). After your modem indicates you are connected:

a) wait a few seconds and then press the Return/Enter key about 3 times slowly
b) a message will appear on your screen, at the "access>" prompt type:
gopher-cec.mes.umn.edu
c) when you see "login:" type: cec
d) you should see the main menu listings

Consortium Update

In the spring of this year, the Consortium was awarded recurring annual funding through the University's Strategic Investment Pool. Also, Gene Allen, VP of the Institute of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics at the U of M has earmarked additional funding to support the Consortium's activities and programs. Because of this funding we have been able to expand our staff and our office. We are grateful to everyone who has played a part in assisting the Consortium in securing this funding.

As part of the request for funding, the Consortium developed a strategic plan entitled "A Blueprint for Our Future." This document reviews the Consortium's progress and lays out our goals and vision for the future. This document is available by writing or calling the Consortium office at 612-626-1212. A brief summary of the organization and structure of the Consortium is also available upon request.

The Consortium welcomes the following new members to its Advisory Council (previously called Steering Committee): **Bill Bomash**, Associate Professor and Extension Educator, EDS, MN Extension Service, U of MN; **Bonnie Braun**, Associate Dean, College of Human Ecology, U of M; **Sandra Christenson**, Coordinator, School Psychology Program, U of MN, **Norm Coleman**, Mayor, St. Paul; **Roxie Foster**, Director, National Parenting Association - MN; **Chuck Oberg**, M.D., Deputy Medical Director, Hennepin County Medical Center; **Carol Shields**, Assistant Director, 4-H Youth Development Center, MES, U of M; **Dwaine Simms**, Program Replication Manager, MELD for Young Dads Program.

Consortium Workgroups

The Consortium Workgroups are composed of people from the community and the university who come together to pursue common goals that enhance their own work and serve the needs of young people, families, and the professionals who work with them. The Workgroups welcome anyone who would like to attend. Participation can vary from working on a single task to participating actively in all of the meetings

The **Research Workgroup** is seeking individuals who are interested in research activities at the U, collaborative efforts between communities and the U, and evaluative components of research. After last April's successful conference on evaluation, this Workgroup will spend part of its efforts on follow-up activities.

The **Advocacy Workgroup** is engaged in critical issues related to violence prevention and advocates for programs and policies to address those issues. This Workgroup is actively recruiting new members to help with these important issues.

The **Teaching Workgroup's** focus is on strengthening the University's efforts to prepare people to work with children, youth, and families in the 90's. This Workgroup would encourage educators from all institutions to join in their lively discussions and plans to educate students on issues such as parenting and child development.

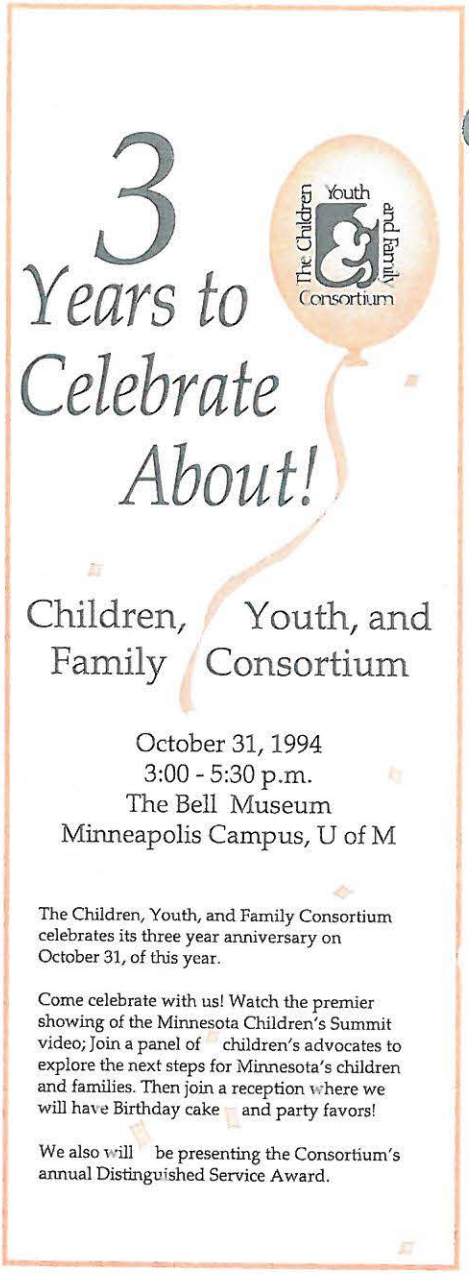
There is room for many other Workgroups at the Consortium; if you would like to form a Workgroup on a specific topic, or would like more information on any of the Workgroups, please contact Marian Heinrichs, CYF Consortium, 612-626-1212.

New Staff

Lori Bock joins the Consortium staff as the Coordinator of the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse. Lori comes to the Consortium from the United Way where she directed the Information Center and served on the Family Vision Council. Lori has a M.A. in Library Science and a B.A. in French, both from the U of MN.

Michael Brott joins the Consortium as Community Program Specialist working with the Community Connectors Institute. Michael was the director for Action for Children prior to coming to the Consortium. Michael has a B.A. in Government/Public Policy from St. John's University.

Judith Kahn joins the Consortium staff as Associate Program Director. Judith comes to the Consortium from the Youth in Aids Project, part of the Adolescent Health Program at the U of MN, where she was the Associate Director. Judith has a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a B.A. in Psychology and Education from Washington University in St. Louis.



Interns & Volunteers

Wendy Schirvar completed a practicum with the Consortium this summer. Wendy is a graduate student in the School Psychology program at the U of MN.

Sheila Walker is currently working at the Consortium. Sheila is a student in the School of Social Work's Child Abuse Prevention Program.

Kris Lieberman has recently started an internship at the Consortium, and will be with us for two quarters. Kris is an undergraduate in the Child Psychology program at the U of MN.

Connection Corner

BrotherPeace Twin Cities formed on October 15, 1988 as a men's action group whose goal is to get men involved, through public actions, to end men's violence against women. BrotherPeace believes that men's violence against women is a men's issue and needs to be ended by men. Some of the current activities include presentations, workshops, conferences, legislation issues, and advertising intervention. For more information call 612-929-5713.

The Fathers' Resource Center was created to provide information and services that support men in their roles as involved parents. FRC has developed a broad range of programs to teach and assist men in their roles as fathers. Some of the programs offered are: Fathers' support groups; parenting classes; family law clinic; speakers bureau; individual counseling for fathers; father and child activities, and information and referral. For information call 612-874-1509.

Action for Children, a bi-partisan commission focused on children and family policy at the State of Minnesota, recently released its publication "First Steps" Kids Can't Wait 1994 Progress Report. "First Steps," is an update on Action for Children's 1992 report, "Kids Can't Wait: Action for Minnesota's Children" which outlined six major recommendations and 37 strategies for achieving the kind of future wanted for Minnesota children and families. The current report shows progress that has been made for each of the strategies. For a copy of the summary of the report, call Action for Children at 612-296-4156.

Minnesota Higher Education Center Against Violence & Abuse

by Jeffrey L. Edleson, Professor of Social Work and Center Co-Chair

MHECAVA is a newly established statewide program of the Higher Education Coordinating Board focused on expanding and enhancing the education of students in health science, mental health, law & criminal justice, and elementary and secondary education professions. The Center is part of the School of Social Work at the U of M. The Center has focused on building its infrastructure this summer. We have several offices in McNeal Hall on the St. Paul Campus.

We are very excited that Christine Imbra, most recently the Assistant Director of the Department of Security & Safety at Bemidji State University, has accepted the position of Center Director. Christine has worked in a battered women's shelter, is a trained police officer, and has run collaborative community-university projects in the past. At Bemidji State, she investigated all sexual harassment and violence cases, facilitated the "Men Against Rape" program, and coordinated the Crime Prevention Program. Christine holds a Bachelors in criminal justice and a Masters with an emphasis in Organizational Administration.

Jeffrey Edleson and Jamie Tiedemann will continue serving as Co-Chairs of the Center Advisory Board which has just been appointed. The Advisory Board includes representatives of all six state higher education systems, community based anti-violence programs, survivors of violence, professional and licensing organizations, and students. Statewide task forces focused on education regarding violence and abuse will soon be formed to focus on four professional groupings: (1) health sciences; (2) mental health; (3) law and criminal justice; and (4) elementary and secondary education. The Minnesota Legislature has asked that these statewide task forces examine professional education, licensing, and continuing education and establish agendas for expanding and enhancing education concerning violence and abuse.

We are seeking broad input from individuals, community-based organizations, and higher education institutions. If you or your organization would like to participate on a task force or otherwise with the Center please contact us at the following:

Minnesota Higher Education Center Against Violence & Abuse
386 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108-6142

612-624-0721
1-800-MIN-CAVA (toll free in Minnesota)
Fax: 612-625-4288
Internet: mincava@umn.edu

A county-by-county examination of the well-being of Minnesota's children has been completed in the Minnesota KIDS COUNT report: "Minnesota's Kids - A Closer Look." It profiles the needs of children by reporting on 11 indicators that measure poverty, risks at birth and level of violence and neglect. The report, compiled by the Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota and Congregations Concerned for Children (CCC), shows that while Minnesota is often portrayed as a state where all the children are above average, there are thousands of children who lack basic economic security and safety. Copies of "Minnesota Kids - A Closer Look" are available for $10 from CCC as is a summary of the report. Call 612-870-3660.

The Minnesota Office of Volunteer Services (MOVS), Mentor Network has recently published a directory of over 400 mentor programs serving children and young people throughout Minnesota. Copies can be obtained by calling 1-800-234-6687. Resources listed offer opportunities for children to regularly interact one-on-one with an older mentor through programs sponsored by organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters which operates in seven Minnesota locations. Also check directly with local volunteer centers to request volunteer mentors or to contact people who have already volunteered for such roles. To identify the center in your area, call MOVS at 1-800-234-6687.

The leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds is traffic crashes. The 1994 Minnesota Ghost Out is aimed at changing statistics like these. On November 15, students from across the state will paint their faces or otherwise signify their deaths to serve as visual reminders of the tragic and fatal results of drinking and driving. The 1994 Ghost Out is one of many activities being held in conjunction with MN Chemical Health Week, November 11 - 18. For more information on conducting a Ghost Out contact Melissa Minnehan at the Center for 4-H Youth Development, 1-800-444-4238.

If you have items for Connection Corner please send them to the Consortium office. Deadline for the Winter newsletter is January 8, 1994.

Consortium Calendar

October 17 *Community Forum on Family Violence* at the Minneapolis Convention Center, a community-wide family violence prevention initiative. For more information contact Lisa Thornquist at 612-348-7805 or Howard Epstein at 612-348-7550.

October 17 Benefit performance by *Marti Erickson and Free Spirit* for the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association (GMDCA). Held at Plymouth Congregational Church. Performance begins at 7:30. Cost $10/person. Reservations are required. Call GMDCA at 612-341-1177 for info and reservations.

October 31 The Children, Youth and Family Consortium's Third Anniversary Celebration and Children's Summit Video Premiere. From 3:00 - 5:30 p.m. at the Bell Museum on the Minneapolis Campus. Free. See announcement on page 6. For more information call 612-626-1212.

November 8 - 13 National Council on Family Relations 56th Annual Conference: *Families and Justice: From Neighborhoods to Nations* Minneapolis Hilton and Towers. For registration information call 612-781-9331.

November 8 *Anticipating the Future of Males in Families*, National Council of Family Relations pre-conference workshop. Sponsored by the Males in Families Section, Minnesota Council on Family Relations. For registration information call 612-631-1494.

November 10 *Everyone's A Winner! Teaching and strengthening families through playing games.* Workshop sponsored by Congregations Concerned for Children and held at the Centennial UMC in Roseville from 8 am to 12:30 pm. Cost $24. Registration is required. For more information call Congregations Concerned for Children at 612-646-8805.

November 15 - December 15 *4th Annual Food For Thought Book Drive* sponsored by the Consortium and Chi Psy. For information on donating children's books or on being a collection site for books contact Jan Joannides at 612-626-1212.

February 3 *Disrupting Cycles of Violence and Abandonment*, a workshop sponsored by the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, University of Minnesota. For information contact Debra Warhol at 612-626-1156.

Submit entries for calendar to the Consortium office. Deadline for Winter newsletter is January 8.

Who is the Consortium?

Vice President Al Gore and Mrs. Gore, who hosted Family Reunion III, co-sponsored by the Consortium and the Tennessee Department of Human Services, and who are providing leadership for the development of FatherNet and the Father to Father initiative.

Dwaine Simms, who is the Program Replication Manager at MELD for Young Dads Program in Minneapolis. Having a premature daughter thrust Dwaine into fathering concerns. He effectively works to make a difference in the lives of fathers and their children.

Oliver Williams, who is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the U of M and a father. Oliver has studied domestic abuse in communities of color, especially African-American families, and has a special interest in the role of the father.

Neil Tift, who is the Director of the Fathers' Resource Center in Minneapolis. Neil is a father and grandfather whose personal life has shaped his work with fathers as a family mediator, and as an author.

Lowell Johnson, who is a Parent Educator and Early Childhood Teacher for White Bear Lake and Cambridge-Isanti Early Childhood Family Education programs. Lowell has been actively involved in the Minnesota Fathering Alliance and the Males and Families section of the MN Council on Family Relations. He is also co-editor of *Working With Fathers*.

And the Consortium is you!

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Children, Youth, and Family Consortium
12 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
(612) 626-1212

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