



### National Fatherhood Initiative Selects Commission as One of 20 National 24/7 Project Partners

In the fall of 2016 The Strong Families Commission Incorporated ("Commission") responded to a call from the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) requesting applications from organizations to partner with them to expand the "evidence-based" 24/7 Dad @ Program within the community or communities that they serve.



Since its' founding in 1994, (NFI) has provided national leadership on addressing father absence. Its mission is to transform organizations and communities by equipping them to intentionally and proactively engage fathers in their children's lives. NFI's vision is for every child to grow up with an involved, responsible, and committed father. A non-partisan and non-sectarian organization, NFI is widely recognized as a leading national voice on fatherhood issues and the premier source for community fatherhood renewal resources.

A goal of NFI is to build the capacity of community-based organizations that seek to begin or enhance fatherhood programs that benefit fathers, families, and especially children in their communities. A vital aspect of NFI's capacity building effort has been the expansion of its 24/7 Dad @ program, which it declares is the most widely used fathering program in the country among community-based organizations. NFI reports that independent third party evaluations have shown that the 24/7 Dad @ increases three assets in diverse racial and geographic populations critical to effective fathering: increased awareness and knowledge in how to be a good father, development of self-efficacy in the skills that mark a good father, and a high-quality relationship with the mother of the father's children (i.e. a good co-parenting relationship.)

The Strong Families Commission, Incorporated  
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***“Parenting Our  
Children – Is in  
the Best Interest  
of the Nation”-***



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**Statement adapted from the title of the  
1996 U.S. Commission on Child and  
Family Welfare Report to Congress**

The Commission felt one way to contribute to its vision that children and youth in Philadelphia, across the state of Pennsylvania, and around the country will benefit from and grow up with the emotional, social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and financial support of both of their parents in a healthy and supportive environment, would be to accept the NFI challenge to partner with others around the country in providing free of charge 24/7 Dad @ Curriculum Training. The Commission's commitment to the national effort is to train at least sixty Fathers within the Philadelphia area. The training curriculum will focus on assisting fathers to be more involved, responsible, and committed twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Included in the curriculum are the five characteristics of the 24/7 Dad @ Program: Self-awareness, caring for self, fathering skills, parenting skills, and relationship skills. The curriculum is delivered as a 24-hour program (2 weekly hours over a period of 12 weeks).



Left to right, Ver'non D. Brown, Alphonso E. Dashiell, Colin A. Hanna, and Asher Kemp, Jr.

The Commission thanks its volunteer certified 24/7 Dad @ trainers: Ver'non D. Brown, BA, Employment and Training Specialist; Alphonso E. Dashiell, Student and Civic Activist; Colin A. Hanna, MBA, MSS, Father-Child Reconciliation Commission Content Practitioner; and Asher Kemp, Jr., MBA, MSW, founder, and former Chief Executive Officer of Multi-Therapy Services (MTS), Inc.

## Family Strengthening in Pennsylvania

### New Partnership with the *Fathers Collaborative Council of Western Pennsylvania* Enables Commission to Connect Statewide

by Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch, ACSW, NASW Social Work Pioneer and Chair of The Strong Families Commission Incorporated

During the last two years of the Commission's history, its leadership has worked tirelessly in the City of Philadelphia to raise the consciousness and awareness of the potential value of a Father's contribution to the well-being of his children. In addition, individual members of the Commission and its network have provided Responsible Fatherhood training at various locations around the state, and presented at national and out of state conferences addressing issues of Parental and Extended Family Engagement. These activities have afforded the Commission an opportunity to form and maintain relationships as well as partnerships that exist today at the national level.

The Commission always realized that if it wanted to achieve its vision that children and youth in Philadelphia, across the state of Pennsylvania, and around the country will grow up with the emotional, social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and financial support of both of their parents in a healthy and supportive environment, it needed to connect with likeminded organizations and groups, especially those here in Pennsylvania.

**A 2016 New Year Resolution, which became a reality in January 2017, tasked the Commission to search beyond its borders of Southeastern Pennsylvania and connect with others within the state who are concerned about the well-being of children and the contributions that Fathers can provide which could improve the long-term developmental outcomes for their children.**

We were very lucky, our first attempt outside of the gate, proved to be fruitful. We were introduced to a Western Pennsylvania group (Fathers Collaborative Council of Western Pennsylvania (FCCWPA) by Erik Vecere, Vice President of Program Support, at the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI), who believed our goals and objectives were compatible. We met as a group in Pittsburgh and decided to move forward as a state-wide collaborative.

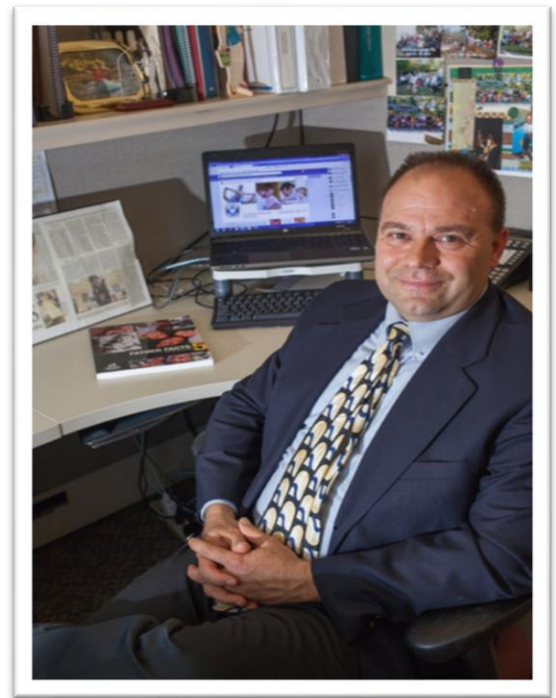
### **An Example of a Successful Inter-Agency Collaborative for Fathers: "Together Everyone Achieves More"**

The Fathers Collaborative Council of Western Pennsylvania (FCCWPA) was started in 2009 for the purpose of supporting the ongoing growth and stability of fatherhood programs in the region and -- through inter-agency collaborations -- to maximize resources in order to more effectively address the needs of fathers and their families.

The Allegheny Intermediate Unit (part of Pennsylvania's public education system and is one of [29 Intermediate Units](#) across the state) took the lead in organizing the Fathers Collaborative, but the collaborative council is maintained by all of the active members.

The success of the Fathers Collaborative is based, in part, on consistent and regular monthly meetings where representatives of various fatherhood programs in the region meet to address issues impacting fathers and their children. Collaborative services also include:

1. Educational workshops to help fathers maximize their role within the family;
2. Professional development for council members;
3. Networking opportunities for council members and professionals to assist local fathers to feel connected to a larger community;
4. Advocacy for the role of the father;
5. Events to celebrate fathers and their roles; and
6. Father and child activities.



Larry L. Klinger, Jr., M. ED, Program Supervisor, at Allegheny Intermediate Unit, served as host of the first meeting between the East and the West, and Co-Chairs the state-wide organizing going forward. **FCCWPA, 475 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120 Phone: 412-394-5955**





“Dads In The Mix.” Each participating agency operates individual Fatherhood programs that work together to strengthen the Fatherhood Movement in Western Pennsylvania.

The Fathers Collaborative (FCCWPA) also compiled a remarkable and extremely useful publication entitled:



**FATHERS COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA RESOURCE GUIDE**

Editor's note: A comprehensive listing of community-wide resources and contacts directed towards linking fathers and their families to needed services and/or information. For additional information, please review the [Fatherhood Resource Guide](#).



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**FCCWPA ACTIVE PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**



Representative Edward C. Gainey,  
 24<sup>th</sup> Legislative District of the PA  
 General Assembly

Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) -  
 Responsible Fatherhood Program.  
 Service Area: Allegheny County

Allegheny Family Network – Father  
 Involved Now. Service Area:  
 Allegheny County

Children, Youth & Families' DADS  
 Program. Service Area: Allegheny  
 County

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh –  
 Family Care Connection. Service  
 Area: Braddock, Hilltop (Mt.  
 Oliver), Lawrenceville, Rankin,  
 Turtle Creek

Family Resources – Hill District  
 Center for Nurturing Families.  
 Service Area: Hill District, Uptown,  
 Oakland

Franklin Center of Beaver County.  
 Service Area: Beaver County

Kingsley Center – Dads on Point.  
 Service Area: Highland Park, East  
 Liberty, Garfield, Lincoln-Larimer

## UIH Family Partners Joins the 3FA Network



The Commission welcomes UIH Family Partners as a new member of its community of 3FA learners. UIH joins the Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Reintegration Services, Progressions Behavioral Health Services, Inc., Bethanna, Catholic Social Services, Christ Home for Children, Northern Children's Services, John Marshall Elementary School, Episcopal Community Services, Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc., El Concilio of Philadelphia, The Bridge Intensive Prevention Services, Children Services Incorporated, Carson Valley Children's Aid, Institute for the Development of African American Youth, Jewish Family and Children Services, Turning Points for Children, and Delta Community Supports, all committed to the well-being of children and families that are also inclusive of Fathers.

### Background

For over two decades, UIH Family Partners has offered the greater Trenton community, services focusing on the unique needs and challenges faced by fathers and men. The overwhelming majority of men served, are men of color and/or young men who live on the fringes of society and face systematic barriers to employment, as well as men who have had involvement with the criminal justice system. UIH Family Partners' Fatherhood Programs equip and empower unemployed or under-employed fathers to play a more positive and active role in their children's lives, physically, emotionally and financially. UIH also offer teen pregnancy prevention strategies through the New Jersey Personal Responsibility Education Program (NJPREP) for young men to avoid premature fatherhood as well as job coaching and support for juveniles on probation through the World of Work (WOW) Program.

Established in 1859 before the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation, women's rights and many other major historic events ... a **U**nion of Presbyterian church women saw the need in an increasingly **I**ndustrialized society to establish a **H**ome for the destitute children of Trenton, New Jersey.

**Union Industrial Home (UIH) for Destitute Children** of Trenton was created and established through an act of the New Jersey Legislature in 1860 ... UIH is the oldest child welfare agency in New Jersey. Their name was changed to **Union Industrial Home Family Partners** in 2007 to more adequately reflect today's modern times and scope of services to support child and family well-being. However, although the venue and programs have changed over the decades to reflect changes in society, UIH's commitment to child & family well-being remains as steadfast as ever.

During the 1970's UIH, which began as a co-ed orphanage, evolved into a home for emotionally-disturbed boys. In the 1980's, the agency became a residential home for teen moms and their babies who were placed by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families. Unfortunately, due to funding restrictions and program challenges, UIH Family Partners' leadership made the strategic decision to permanently close the residential home for teen moms in 2010.

### Focus on Fathers

A decade earlier (1990's) at a separate location, **UIH crafted a program for men** created out of pilot funding through the federal **Parents' Fair Share Act**. **Operation Fatherhood** was developed to help men get to work to pay their child support orders. As a result, UIH has, for almost 25 years, implemented programs to strengthen families by strengthening fathers in the form of workforce development, resume creation, job search and placement, mock interviews, interview clothing through *Dress2Impress*, anger management classes, financial literacy, parenting education, and *Platinum Dads* awards. The

Platinum Dads Award Program is a *UIH Signature Event* held each year on the Saturday before Fathers' Day, to honor men in the community who are role models and exemplary dads.

**Left, Duncan W. Harris,  
UIH Associate  
Executive Director;  
Pastor Julio Guzman,  
Platinum Dad Winner,  
and UIH Karen  
Andrade-Mims,  
Executive Director**



Looking to a future that will hopefully extend another century at least, UIH Family Partners, through a \$150,000 capacity-building grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, designed a new branding look and created a new website to increase marketing and outreach throughout greater Mercer County and beyond. UIH will continue to build value and demonstrate return on investment for tax payers, employers, and community stakeholders as they build stronger families, one father at a time. UIH's continued longevity is guaranteed by being responsive to needs as they arise and by forming new partnerships with like-minded organizations, including The Strong Families Commission Incorporated of Philadelphia.

## News from the Nation's Capital



### Obama Administration Releases New and More “Father-Friendly” Child Support Program Regulations

On December 19, 2016, HHS' Administration for Children and Families announced a new rule to make state child support enforcement programs more effective, flexible, and family-friendly.

**The Goal:** To ensure child support obligations are based upon accurate information and the noncustodial parents' **ability to pay** and to establish **realistic orders** so that noncustodial parents pay regularly, rather than setting

an unrealistically high order that results in higher rates of nonpayment.

Another highlight of the rule change will **prohibit states from excluding incarceration** from consideration as a substantial change in circumstances, require states to notify parents of their right to request a review and adjustment of their order if they will be incarcerated for more than six months, and ensure that child support orders for those who are incarcerated reflect the individuals' circumstances while continuing to allow states significant flexibility in setting orders for incarcerated parents.

For additional information on the final rule, go to:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/media/press/2016/new-rule-will-increase-regular-child-support-payments-to-families>

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## Continuing Resolution Keeps Federal Government Funded Through April 2017

To review an analysis prepared by the Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, D.C., go to:

<http://www.clasp.org/news-room/news-releases/statement-on-continuing-resolution-to-keep-federal-government-funded-through-april-2017>



## IN THE NEWS:

### ***New Resources from the Child Welfare Information Gateway***

Child Welfare Information Gateway promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families by connecting child welfare, adoption, and related professionals as well as the public to information, resources, and tools covering topics on child welfare, child abuse and neglect, out-of-home care, adoption, and more.

#### **Family Engagement: Partnering with Families to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes (2016)**

This bulletin provides an overview of the foundational elements of the family engagement approach, followed by strategies and promising practices for implementing this approach at the case level, peer level, and systems level.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f-fam-engagement/>

#### **Family Engagement Inventory**

The Family Engagement Inventory (FEI) is designed to assist professionals in child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, early education, and education to learn how family engagement is defined and implemented across these fields of practice.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fei/about/>

## What Parents Say About Keeping Families Together and Strong Through Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds (Alliance) joined with a group of birth parents to produce this issue.

<http://bpnn.ctfalliance.org/Early%20Intervention%20Brief.pdf>

### Training Webinars and Conferences

#### **Upcoming Webinar:** Promoting Self-Sufficiency through TANF and WIOA 2Gen Partnerships

Co-Hosts: HHS Administration for Children and Families and Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration

When: Thursday, February 16, 2017

Time: 3pm - 4:00pm eastern

This webinar aims to help state human services agencies, workforce agencies, and local organizations learn more about two-generation (2Gen) approaches and highlight specific strategies that two states are using to leverage Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding to support 2Gen efforts. These field innovations, model practices, and research and systems changes are achieving positive outcomes for both parents and their children. Presenters from Maryland and Washington will discuss how WIOA state planning and 2gen efforts have resulted in improved policies, collaboration, and outcomes for TANF families.

To register, go to:

<https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2017/01/12/07/53/WIOA-Wednesday-on-Thursday-Promoting-Economic-Self-Sufficiency-through-TANF-and-WIOA-2gen-Partner>



#### **Upcoming Webinar:** Inside the Black Box: Measuring Service Delivery, Client Engagement and Fidelity

Host: Fatherhood Research and Practice Network

When: Tuesday, March 7, 2016

Time: 12-1:30 p.m. EST.

This webinar will illustrate how programs and researchers can track the services and interventions that fathers actually receive using approaches developed in previous national demonstration projects. It will also consider ways to measure receptivity and buy-in from participants based on a tool developed for use with clients in child protective services. Finally, attendees will learn about measuring how consistently a fatherhood program is delivered over time and by different facilitators

To register go to: <https://join.onstreammedia.com/register/49718514/njw7vbo>



**18th Annual Families & Fathers National Conference: Never Giving Up!**

Host: Fathers and Families Coalition of America  
When: February 27 – March 3, 2017  
Where: Sheraton Gateway LAX Hotel, Los Angeles, California

Over 80 workshops, Pre-Conference Accreditation Training, inspiring plenaries, parent-centered series and workshops for frontline staff, and annual awards gala.

To register, go to: <http://fathersandfamiliescoalition.org/conferences.html>



**2017 Texas Fatherhood Summit: Strengthening Services to Support Fathers**

Host: The University of Texas at Austin  
Where: Austin, Texas  
When: Friday, March 24, 2017  
Time: 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (followed by a networking reception)

Join hundreds of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners from all over the state and country in an important conversation about how agencies and programs can best support and include fathers to strengthen families. The Summit is hosted by the Child and Family Research Partnership at The University of Texas at Austin and the Texas DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention Division. The hotel rooms in the event block are going fast - **the reservation deadline is February 24, 2017**.

To register for the conference, go to:  
[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-texas-fatherhood-summit-strengthening-services-to-support-fathers-tickets-29378889048?mc\\_cid=0265f3c55e&mc\\_eid=fd63df5c7c](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-texas-fatherhood-summit-strengthening-services-to-support-fathers-tickets-29378889048?mc_cid=0265f3c55e&mc_eid=fd63df5c7c)

**Child Welfare League National Conference: Advancing Excellence in Practice and Policy – Highlighting Successful Strategies to Address the Needs of Children, Youth and Families**

Host: Child Welfare League of America  
Where: Washington, D.C., Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill  
When: March 29 – 31, 2017

This conference will feature evidence-informed/based programs and practices, and related policies and tools that lead to successful implementation of practices, services and programs, resulting in improved outcomes for children, youth and families—and that are most likely to generate positive attention in the public policy context

To register for the conference, go to: <http://www.cwla.org/success2017/>

**3rd Annual New York Fathering Conference: Ready to Work: Navigating Home, Job and Community**

Host: Westchester County Executive Robert Astorino's Fatherhood Initiative.  
Where: Westchester County Center, White Plains, New York  
When: Tuesday, April 4, 2017

Workshops will cover a broad spectrum of issues impacting fathers and their families including: a) navigating government systems, such as social services, child support, family court, etc.; b) employment issues, such as hiring trends, career building resources, re-entry programs, etc.; c) physical and mental health; c) engaging fathers in families, schools and programs; and d) conflict resolution and domestic violence.

For additional information, go to: <http://www3.westchestergov.com/fatherhood-initiative>

# The Strong Families Commission

## Vision

- Children and youth in Philadelphia, across the state, and around the country will benefit from and grow up with the emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and financial support of both parents in a healthy and supportive environment

## Mission

- Strengthen families and improve child well-being through the integration of Responsible Fatherhood; as well as advocate for the elimination of policy and program barriers that affect the successful reunification of children and families, including Fathers; leverage resources to contribute to the well-being of children and families; and encourage collaboration among Philadelphia organizations and beyond that are family-focused and inclusive of Fathers

## Goal

- Model Philadelphia as the most Father Friendly City in America, by eliminating the systemic barriers that work against increasing father inclusiveness in all systems of care that address the well-being of children, youth, and families. Achieving this goal can propel the Philadelphia model of father integration into a successful example for the rest of the nation to emulate

## Strategy

- Partner with children, youth, and family-focused agencies and systems of care to increase their capacity to include Fathers in their service delivery models that are designed to improve the well-being of the children they serve

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU** to everyone who made a tax deductible gift to The Commission in 2016.....

...and we *invite* anyone who wishes to support the work of the Commission to give generously and securely online -- [www.thestrongfamilies.com/mission.com](http://www.thestrongfamilies.com/mission.com) - via PayPal and/or you can mail a check to:

**The Strong Families Commission, Incorporated**  
**P.O. Box 13502**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19101**



*Lynn Fields Harris, MPA,  
Commission Treasurer*

### **A Note from the Editor:**

*If you have information on best practices, research and other topics that you think readers would be interested in, please contact me – Debra Pontisso --at [dpontisso@aol.com](mailto:dpontisso@aol.com).*



*Debra Pontisso, MPA,  
Director of Institutional Advancement*