



THE COMMISSION  
&  
Community Council Health Systems

Presents

A Panel Presentation & Community Discussion  
*“Voices of Men Who Have Experienced Family  
Disruption”*

Tuesday, June 12th, 2018  
6:00 P.m.

Belmont Mansion  
2000 Belmont Mansion Drive  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19131

**THE COMMISSION’s** mission is to strengthen families and improve child well-being through the integration of Responsible Fatherhood; 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 involving Fathers.

**CCHS’s** mission is to provide comprehensive mental health and educational services to adults and children. All services are designed to be holistic, geographically assessable, culturally sensitive, and coordinated with other related service systems, both formal and informal.

# Why the topic?

We know that children and parents routinely interact with behavioral health providers, and effective behavioral health services are critical to child well-being. We also know that behavioral health services are important for parents' wellness and in turn, parents' effectiveness as caretakers. If left untreated behavioral health child or parent issues can unfortunately significantly disrupt the parent-child relationship.

THE COMMISSION as well as CCHS are concerned with the well-being of children, youth and families, including the men within those families, who are often overlooked or themselves avoid accessing mental health or educational services designed to improve their well-being.

We offer tonight's presentation as a beginning community dialogue that is designed to humanize our view of men and their present day struggles within family settings, especially when it comes to parent-child relationships.

## **ANITA M. ROGERS, Ph.D.**

Dr. Anita Rogers conducted preliminary interviews of today's five panelist who shared their family history, stories of fatherhood and triumph over challenges. No matter the circumstances/diversity of each of the men's family background, they shared similar beliefs on the disruption of fatherhood roles in our society – institutional racism creating barriers to family cohesion, court bias/sexism against fathers perpetuating father-child separation, need for fathers to maintain positive relations with the mothers, lack of formal and informal supports for fathers, and the reluctance of men to seek behavioral health services for recovery. Their solutions to address such barriers were also similar – provide fatherhood education, institute non-gender biased family court laws/protocols, eliminate financial eligibility to be involved in the life of your child, and promote father inclusion in service determination for them and their child.

Dr. Rogers has been involved with the delivery of education, civil rights, human services, program development, and mental health in varied capacities: administrator, fundraiser, program developer, evaluator, strategic planner, teacher and trainer at the local, national and international levels. She is particularly proud of the national school-based substance abuse prevention curriculum she developed on behalf of the US State Department for the government of Malaysia. Dr. Rogers also coordinated a national mentoring project, Linking Lifetimes, in 11 American cities and a kinship support program, Grandma's Kids, she developed for Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning. Dr. Rogers was the first Executive Director of the Philadelphia Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolence where she worked closely with Coretta Scott King and other civil rights leaders. She initiated the first latter-day freedom rides that took youth from the Philadelphia region to visit southern civil rights historic locations and meet with such notables as Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, Andrew Young and many unsung heroes. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Temple University, master's degree in special education from Antioch University, and a PhD in Educational Psychology from Temple University.

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## Agenda

- I. Welcome and Program Overview – James Paige, Chief Operating Officer, CCHS.
- II. Inspirational Word – Reverend Anthony L. Stevenson, Pastor and Servient Leader & Founder, The Interfaith People Unified Resource Center.
- III. Why the Topic? – Remarks from Event Sponsor, James Nixon, President and CEO, CCHS.
- IV. Why the Partnership? – George D. Mosee, Governance Chair, The Strong Families Commission (THE COMMISSION).
- V. Greetings from Bilal Abdul Quayyum, President of the Father’s Day Rally Committee, Inc.
- VI. Introduction of Panelist – James Paige, Chief Operating Officer, CCHS.
  - Gary Chilutti, Founder, Films-4-Good
  - Alphonso E. Dashiell, Independent Entrepreneur
  - Rufus Sylvester Lynch, Chair, The Strong Families Commission, Incorporated
  - Sun W. Moon, Clinical Director, Progressions Behavioral Health Services Inc.
  - Robert L. Queen, Jr., Author, BATTERY NOT INCLUDED – “A Father’s Dilemma”
- VII. Panel Dialogue – Moderated by James Paige, Chief Operating Officer, CCHS.

### **Break**

- VIII. Presentation of Irvis, Fields, and Williams Award – by Lynn Fields Harris, Commission Treasurer.
  - Honoree Philadelphia City Councilman Derek S. Green.
- IX. Community Dialogue – Q & A – Moderated by James Paige, Chief Operating Officer, CCHS.
- X. Closing Remarks – James Nixon, President and CEO, CCHS.
- XI. Benediction & Adjournment – Reverend Anthony Stevenson, Pastor and Servient Leader & Founder, the Interfaith People Unified Resource Center.

# Panelist

## **Gary Chilutti**

*What About Me: The Child's Point of View*



Gary Chilutti is the proud father of an adoptive daughter (now 20 years old) from his first marriage, of whom he shared joint legal custody. Throughout his and his daughter's life, he has scheduled and prioritized his professional/work life around his time with her. Her happiness and wellbeing took precedence. He has currently been married for the past 12 years to his second wife. As an abandoned, foster and subsequently adopted child, he has a unique understanding of his daughter's struggles and his fatherhood role that has influenced his personal and professional life. His relationship with his daughter is evolving as she finds her place and acceptance in the world. He has had the honor of being a lifelong community builder and social justice worker locally, nationally and internationally. Gary has a social work degree from LaSalle University. As a documentary and commercial filmmaker and consultant to nonprofit organizations, the mission of his company, *Films-4-Good*, is to put powerful visual communications to work in the service of community-building and justice-related efforts. The nonprofit consulting side of *Films-4-Good* is designed to help strengthen those organizations strategically, organizationally and financially to fulfill their missions in a sustainable manner.

Gary's life story, featured in a *Daily New* article – *Saved By Love*, provides a backdrop to his advocacy and passion to make a positive difference in families and our communities. As a newborn, Gary was left in a box in an alley, but was fortunately discovered by a man and his dog. Prior to being adopted into a two-parent household, he was in foster care for the first 7-1/2 months of his life. His biological parents were never found. He describes his adoptive parents as authentic, affectionate and respectful of him throughout his life. His stable household allowed him to grow and prosper. He also describes that his parents were not stuck in traditional gender roles, but performed tasks as was needed. Though reared by amazing parents, he still recognizes his issues of abandonment, and his dedication to systemic change in the family support system drives his passion and his own self-awareness. Mr. Chilutti's own experience with the family court system highlighted how fathers were relegated to second-class citizens in the life of their child (ren). He states that the fight for equity of fathers is a civil rights issues – and another form of sexism. When fathers ask for joint custody, Gary says that courts seem to think they have unrealistic expectations and view them through a distorted lens. While there have been some improvements in the court systems for fathers and agency recognition of fathers, he says written policies have not kept pace with the science that kids can become the victims of divisive custody procedures and fathers are not expendable.

His advice to fathers include the following: build a solid network of other dads / parents, friends, family; obtain qualified therapeutic resources; and hire a good attorney who can keep you educated about your child's needs and help you secure a full relationship with both of their parents. Always put your child's needs ahead of your own, find a support network of fathers, and recognize that good fathers are not visitors in their child's life, but an essential part of it. For the formal system and agencies who are supposed to help families, he recommends treating fathers like the equal partners they should/can be, mandating that agencies have father-friendly policies, and taking away incentives for parents to demonize each other in court. Remember, a child is better with two healthy parents in their life. Ultimately, a child's unfettered emotional and physical access to both of their parents must be recognized and the presumption of joint custody needs to become the law of the land.

## *Alphonso Dashiell*

### *I Am Still Here*

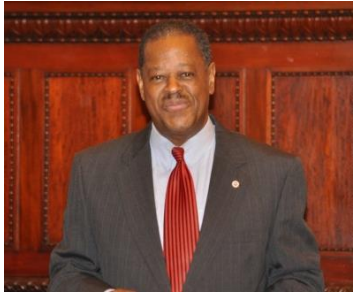


Alphonso is a 25-year-old, single father to four-year old son, Caleb Dashiell. He is a budding entrepreneur and part owner of his own business, *Independent Artist Matrix* founded in November 2017. The *Matrix* brings together varied art modalities for mutual benefit through shared resources. Mr. Dashiell is a graduate of St. John Neumann and Maria Goretti Catholic High School and is currently attending Community College of Philadelphia to study business. He is fluent in both English and Spanish and considers himself a naturally good student. He is a self-proclaimed genius who quotes James Joyce, “A man of genius makes no mistakes, his errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery” as an inspiration. His varied employment experiences have included working as an advance and field organizer for the Tom Wolf for Governor Campaign, certified personal fitness trainer, front desk associate, camp counselor and marketing distributor. He notes that his community work with the Tom Wolf campaign allowed him to expand his life understanding and become less judgmental of others. Alphonso considers himself a relatively conscious black man with what he would describes as a sophisticated, but not so subtle rage, with an ever-present smile on his face. Optimism frames his life point of view and brings him back from feelings of depression. His mother says that he is the silver lining in any cloud! Resiliency permeates his life.

Mr. Dashiell grew up in a two-parent family with his mother and a stepfather who was an abusive alcoholic. His mother and stepfather are now divorced. His mother was and is his rock and virtually was a single parent to him in his early years. His biological father was in and out of his life and resulted in his feelings of unworthiness. He grappled with how a father/parent could be so thoughtless and self-centered. At age 19, he was incarcerated for three months with subsequent house arrest for a crime he states that he did not commit, and he is still trying to get a retrial or at least an expungement of his record. Many of his financial struggles stems from his inability to get jobs with a criminal record, the plight of many a Black man exiting prison. His felony record has been a main deterrent in him obtaining livable wage employment, better credit, and creating new intimate relationships. When he was released from jail, he immediately participated in a cognitive counseling program. Alphonso states this was quite helpful and enlightening, and he wishes he had started such therapeutic sessions earlier in his life. He recognizes the value of counseling and still attends therapeutic sessions.

When Alphonso learned he was going to be a father, he was happy and fearful at the same time. Without ongoing tangible employment, he wondered how he was coming to support his child. However, he was and is committed to ongoing involvement in his son’s life. After a contentious custody battle with his son’s mother and the family court system, he now has shared legal and physical custody. His commitment to his son is unwavering, and unfortunately many people find this surprising. Recognizing the value of two-parent involvement, he and his son’s mother participate in shared activities with their son. He bemoans the stereotype of black fathers being irresponsible and reckless. He has met so many fathers who just need support to overcome the many community and formal system obstacles that confront them. Mr. Dashiell admonishes fathers to never give up on their parenting role and to seek out support systems to help. His advice to agencies is to listen to fathers, give them voice, connect them to formal and informal resources, let them know they matter, and acknowledge their equity in parenting. Finally, he notes that his son Caleb is his legacy and all that he does is for him!

**Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch, ACSW**  
*Feelings of Abandonment - Unprotected and Unloved*



Dr. Lynch and his wife of 33 years together have four children, and five grandchildren. He is a forensic macro practice social worker who is the former Dean of the Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. Lynch has served in senior staff positions in the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of Pennsylvania's government and has experience in private industry, higher education, and non-profit corporations. In 2010, Dean Lynch was recognized as a *NASW Social Work Pioneer* for his contributions to the evolution and enrichment of the social work profession. He was elected as a National Board Member of the National Association of Social Workers, representing the states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey in 2015. In July 2016 he was recognized as a Steller Innovator for his pioneering project; *The Integration of Responsible Fatherhood within Foster Care Service Delivery and Other Children and Youth Servicing Systems* by Ashoka Changemakers and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Children's Wellbeing Initiative.

During this same time period (2014), Dr. Lynch, while serving as a Senior Fellow at the Stoneleigh Foundation Co-founded and was elected Chair of The Strong Families Commission, Incorporated (THE COMMISSION) which in 2017 convened, in partnership with others, a historic bipartisan and bicameral *Symposium on Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement* to consider the value of fathers and their contributions to the well-being of Pennsylvania's children and families. In January 2018, the Commission accredited 12 children, youth and family-focused corporate entities as **Father Friendly Flagship Agencies (3FAs)** in recognition of their **Commitment** to father friendliness and continued agency self-assessment, **Willingness** to consider alternative strategies to removing children from their home, **Readiness** to value father inclusion in their service delivery to children and families, and **Achievement** for qualifying as an accredited 3FA.

Dr. Lynch's professional and national reputation is testament to his resiliency as a child/youth growing up in foster care and his ability to address challenges straightforwardly. Born in Baltimore, MD, he was in the foster care system from age three to 18, with a consistent caregiver from age four. He notes that his foster father was unaffectionate and rarely spoke to him except for the request for errands. He also states that his moral values were developed under the nurturance of his foster mom, although she sometimes reminded him that she did not get paid enough for his care. His siblings were also in foster care, and their travels from childhood to adulthood was fraught with multiple challenges: his brother in and out of jail and his sister in multiple abusive relationships. He says he was the one who "escaped the trauma of foster care" and indeed often felt like the "Golden Child". However, he acknowledges that over his lifetime, he has had a rollercoaster of mixed emotions of anger, guilt and helplessness that have been moderated by his optimistic attitude. Dr. Lynch tried to be the protector of his siblings, especially his sister. With the death of her last abusive husband in the past two years, he is now building a relationship with her as they both open up to each other about their lives and experiences in foster care. His relationship with his children is not what he would like it to be, however, he struggles to be a loving and caring father or step father to them all. He notes that when his daughter was born, he went from being an unaware socialized Chauvinist to Pro-feminist as he wanted his daughter too to be strong. When asked about the success of his son, Lynch remarks "...he is still young, and success is great; but as a father, I care more about the type of person he will grow into and his contributions to humankind."

Dr. Lynch strongly encourages fathers to honor the mothers of their child (ren) and the kinship/community network that supports their child. He implores agency gatekeepers to continually self-assess their services to ensure that they are father inclusive and comprehensive to address their familial needs.

***Sun W. Moon, Psy.D, MBA***

*Giving Fathers an Equal Voice/Opportunities for Involvement*



Dr. Moon has worked in behavioral health for the past 20 years all in Philadelphia metro area. He is a married father of a two-year old son. In January 2018, he became the Executive Director of Progressions Behavioral Health Services. Prior to this administrative position, Sun was the Clinical Director and staff psychologist for the same company for over four years. Other professional and work experience has included the following: serving as a Clinical Supervisor/Clinician with delinquent and dependent boys and male teenagers at a JACHO- accredited residential treatment facility of the Devereux Foundation – Children’s Behavioral Health Services, an Evaluator for Joseph J. Peters Institute providing specialized evaluation and consultation services, and a Clinical Coordinator for Resources for Human Development – New Direction providing coordination and psychotherapeutic services to Philadelphia youths placed out of their homes and much more. His dedication to continuous professional improvement is evident in his many post-doctoral trainings that expanded his interests with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Sanctuary Model, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, School Psychology, Functional Behavioral Assessments, and Co-Occurring Mental and Substance Use Disorders.

His mom, dad, younger brother and he migrated from South Korea in the 1980’s. When they arrived in America, they were fortunate to have an established network of family and friends who supported their transition. Blessed to grow up in with two parents, he noted that his family structure was not a traditional paternalistic South Korean family where fathers have been known to be non-emotional and stern with their children and relationships. Dr. Moon states that his father created a family environment of acceptance, inclusion, affection, and empowerment and encouraged his children to find and do what they love and be yourself.

Sun feels proud that he has been given the privilege to work with so many individuals and their families in and out of Philadelphia. He is adamant that more of their stories should be told and listened to by all stakeholders (mothers, other family members, agency staff, etc.). His supportive family background has allowed him to create a professional life that treats fathers and others in the family constellation with the respect they deserve to achieve a productive life. Dr. Moon believes that all agency program participants should be the primary driver in the type and format of services that they should receive. He stresses that staff should not predetermine the elements of service based on their assumptions about an individual, rather services should match with the individual preferences and their assets. Thus, self-determination will allow fathers and others to benefit more from their services designed with them and not just for them. He states that it is essential to recognize the choices one makes and wants, and build an empowerment service system around such, with individuality at the forefront. When it comes to fathers, Dr. Moon assumes their best intentions and not the negative stereotypes of them. He notes that services for fathers must be informed by their past and current experiences that impact on their present life choices as a parent and a man. With this latter recognition of a father’s journey, Dr. Moon believes that agencies can work with fathers and their support systems to overcome barriers to achieve positive parental outcomes.

**Minister Robert L Queen Jr,**  
*Batteries Not Included: A Father's Dilemma*



Robert L Queen Jr, is the husband of Georgeanna Queen for 36 years and father of four beautiful adult daughters. Since 1993, he has been a Minister of the Gospel and Director of Project Redirect Inc. in Pittsburgh Public Schools where he provides intervention/prevention strategies. He is the author of the book, *Battery Not Included - A Fathers Dilemma*, and its companion guide *Batteries Work*. This book project is designed to help and encourage fathers by equipping them with the training and tools to be great dads. Robert has worked with youth and men's ministries for over 30 years, through Soul Saving Station International Christ Crusaders of America Inc., as the Men's Mid-West Men's President, Youth Pastor and Church Administrator. He also serves as a board member for S.O.S. (Save Our Son's) ministries, working with boys from ages 11-17. His extensive work also includes the Pathways to Freedom Program, a product of the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development in Detroit Michigan. He traveled with Mrs. Parks for over four years and introduced over 200 youth, from the Pittsburgh area, to her and provided a tour of the Underground Railroad route. Robert has also served as the Pittsburgh Area Director for Urban Young Life Ministries, taking over 400 youth to Young Life Summer Camps in New York, Virginia and North Carolina.

Minister Queen grew up in a two-parent family until age 13, when his parents separated. Education was highly valued as evidenced by nine of his 10 siblings completing college and/or advanced degrees as well as his mother achieving a college degree. The turbulence in his childhood family began when he was nine and 10 years of age. His father, with drug and alcohol issues, began intimidating his family with violence including pulling a gun on his mother. Robert stood between his mother and the gun. He said these incidents left him physically and emotionally disconnected and left him feeling isolated, angry and bitter. His own communications skills with his wife and children was affected by his childhood traumas and resulted in a brief separation from his wife. His reconnection with God and entry into counselling helped him get back on the right track, learn positive communication skills and reunify with his family.

Robert says God has placed this ministry of reconciliation on his heart and has imposed a mandate for him to carry it out for the rebuilding of the family, and the salvation of our children and communities. Robert emphasizes that it is important to show fathers the respect they need and deserve. Merely securing financial support from a father to their children is not enough. Parenting education/support of fathers is essential to improve father-child-family relations. Robert tells fathers to show up, be involved, be healthy and address your own issues that may be causing family disruption. He is adamant that institutional racism has continued to create intentional barriers to separate fathers from their children especially for men of color. These institutions include courts, jails, schools, public housing and social service agencies that often discriminate against men of color. He says that it is essential that the anti-father stereotypical service models ("deadbeat" dad mentality) be eliminated. He hopes that we can bring fathers back to their rightful places, next to the mothers even when they are not living together.



## *Suggested Reading List for Fathers*

1. "Making Divorce Easier on Your Child" 50 Effective Ways to Help Children Adjust," by Nicholas Long, Ph.D., and Rex Forehand, Ph.D. (Authors of Parenting the Strong-Willed Child). Contemporary Books
2. "Joint Custody With A Jerk" Raising a Child with an Uncooperative Ex; A hands-on, practical guide to coping with custody Issues that arise with an uncooperative ex-spouse, by Julie A. Ross, M.A. (Director of Parenting Horizons) and Judy Corcoran. St. Martin's Press
3. "Your Child Is Smarter Than You Think!" by Wanda Draper, Ph.D. Macedon Publishing Company, Oklahoma City, OK
4. "Divorce and the Military" A Comprehensive Guide for Service Members, Spouses, and Attorneys," by Marsha L. Thole and Frank W. Ault. Published by The American Retirees Association.
5. "The Language of Letting Go," by Melody Beattie
6. "Divorced Dad's Survival Book: How to Stay Connected with Your Kids," by David Knox, Ph.D.
7. "Divorce Casualties: Understanding Parental Alienation," by Douglas Darnall, Ph.D.
8. "Divorce Poison" by Dr. Richard Warshak.

# *Notes*