



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Fatherhood Program

**Mission:** To nurture the potential of every child by focusing on educating fathers about the role they play, responsibilities they have, and well-being of their children.

**Why:** Children from fatherless homes are five times more likely to be poor and 20 times more likely to be incarcerated; 71% of all high school dropouts are from fatherless homes. Our communities and our children deserve better outcomes.

**How:** We educate in a direct way through the delivery of the evidence-based 24/7 Dad Curriculum in multiple locations throughout the YMCA of Greater Des Moines, Door of Faith Ministries, and Muscatine Family YMCA.

**Who:** We primarily serve low income men who are infrequently involved in their children's life and who want to do better. The average annual income of a participant is about \$14,000. Referrals come from previous graduates, corrections, and social service agencies.

**Results:** Graduates of the program between 2010 and 2015 have a lower recidivism rate than do other Polk County ex-offenders - 12% instead of 36% according to the Iowa Department of Corrections. The average annual cost for the care of an inmate is over \$34,000. Ninety six graduates of the program in state fiscal years 2011 and 2012 significantly improved their on-time payment of support to the parent who lives with the child. The year prior to graduation, participants paid less than 38 percent of the support on time; however, the year after graduation, on-time support rose to 68 percent. The year after, the on-time rate rose to 70 percent. Even after four years, the support paid is 65%. To put that in perspective, the national on-time support rate is 64 percent and there are 33 states that do not reach the national level.

**Purpose of Increased Funding Request:** To build the capacity to deliver programs with fidelity throughout the State of Iowa in order to ensure more kids receive the nurturing and needed support physically, emotionally, mentally and financially from their fathers. With the increase in funding, we will be able to identify and expand to another community in the form of a start-up grant. This grant will cover the cost of curriculum, include facilitator training to another community and lead a statewide training for facilitators.

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## Fatherhood Testimonials

**Earnest Davis:** I would like to thank you for this program. I've learned a lot during my short stay. I'm making steps toward being a better father and person. I'm able to teach and be tough...and what it is to be a good father and community leader. Again, thank you! I pray this class will encourage others as I have been.

**Jeffery Hudson:** I want to thank this class in so many ways! It opened my life and eyes up to life and responsibility. It helped me put my kids first and to give order to my life. It helped with my daily struggles and the do's and don'ts of life. I understand what it takes and what I did wrong in my life. It put real meaning in my life! Thanks!

**Sidney Saunders:** I would like to thank you for this program. I just got started and it has not only taught me to be a better parent but a better person to myself. With their aid in helping me get the amount of my child support decreased which will help me not only financially, but I will have some money to take my son and daughter to outings like movies, shows and plays. With this program, it helps fathers to expand their careers, get their licenses back, and financially give them a great boost.

**Doug Blom:** I started the father's group eight weeks ago and learned a lot about things I thought I already knew. It taught me how to be a better father and how to deal with problems in a better way. I am really thankful I got the chance to take this class and appreciate the people who helped fund this class. Thank you!

**Steve Gibbs:** I want to take this time to say thank you for providing this class for fathers in Iowa. It is really educational and helpful in so many ways. It's taught me how to be a better father and how my kids view me as a dad. Thank you for the opportunity...it is highly appreciated.

**Rodney Nelson:** I would like to thank all who make this class possible. I am learning a lot about myself and how to better myself for me and my family. I learn something new every week.

**Anthony Walton:** I really enjoyed the father rights classes. I came to this class angry and bitter with my child support situation. But after seeing and talking to other fathers in similar situations, it helped me to overcome and understand the importance of talking care of my children, as well as being a good father. Thanks to this class, I finally have hope. And the fact that this class exists, enabled me to better interact with my children and grandchildren. Great program! Thanks for believing in family! And a special thanks to the staff – Phil and Craig.

**Antwon Johnson:** I would like to say thank you for this class. Being in this class showed me how to be a better person, father and friend. It taught me ways I can visit my child without having arguments with his mother. After the 12 weeks, I had a talk with the mother of my child and we agreed that she will sign off on the child support that was owed to her. I explained to her what I've been learning. She said she also noticed the changes. Thank you very much!

**Craig Wood:** Coming from a ministerial background, I was intrigued when I first heard about the Fatherhood program...so much so that I attended a couple of classes just to see what it was all about. I was so impressed by what I heard from both the facilitators and the attendees that I volunteer every Wednesday to help with the facilitation of this incredible program. The impact I've seen on many of the dads who attend is awesome. Meeting with these men is the best part of my week. I highly recommend that not only should this program continue, but it should spread to all other states as well.