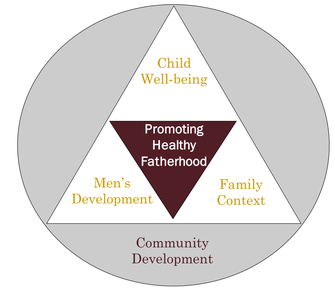
FATHER PROJECT
a program of GOODWILL·EASTER SEALS® MINNESOTA

Returning the Investment in Fathers: Describing the Economic and Emotional Impact of the FATHER Project
Minneapolis, MN



Goal of the program
Empower low-income, primarily non-custodial fathers to provide for the economic and emotional needs of their children.

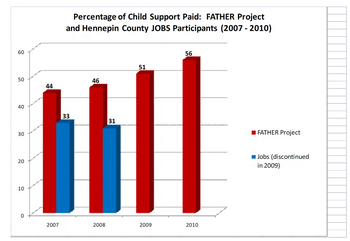
Program Strategies

Parenting Groups
Intensive Case Management
Child Support Services
Legal Services
Employment Services
Early Childhood Services
GED Services/Education
Life Skills / Empowerment Group
Father and Family Activities
Leadership / Community Action

Through Intentional & Broad Partnerships

Program Results

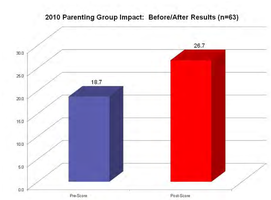
Earning GEDs
In FY2010, a record number of students (25) earned the GED degree through the FATHER Project's GED program.



Child Support Payments
FATHER Project participants, despite their numerous barriers to employment, paid 56 percent of child support they owed (in calendar year 2010).

Job Placement
In FY2010, 44 participants were placed in jobs by the FATHER Project. Between 2007 and 2010, 308 job placements were made with an average hourly wage of $10.23.

Parenting Skill and Commitment
In FY2010, 82 participants completed the 12-week parenting class; survey results showed an average increase from 18.7 to 26.7 on questions about improved parenting skills and knowledge.



Increased Parent/Child Interactions
Prior to receiving legal services through the program only 23% had contact with their children in the past month. After receiving legal services, 100% of participants saw their children in the next month.

Financial returns for the community

The combined actual and prospective Return on Investment (ROI) totals are estimated at <u>$9.47 for every $1 invested</u>.

An economic "Return on Investment" study of the FATHER Project was completed in November 2010 by the Wilder Research Center.

"Actual ROI" analyzed outcome data for FATHER Project participants in the areas of job placement, changes in wages and hours, job retention, educational achievement, and child support payments. Results showed that <u>for each $1 spent to run the program for one year, $3.41 will be returned in the long-term</u>. (Because conservative estimates were used, the economic impact may be even greater.)

When factoring in additional "prospective" benefits, results show that for each $1 spent to run the program, <u>an additional $6.03</u> is returned on the investment. These prospective benefits include establishing paternity on future child support payments, reduction in future criminal convictions, and fathers increasing their involvement in early childhood programming (impacting child literacy and development).

Participant leadership development and social change

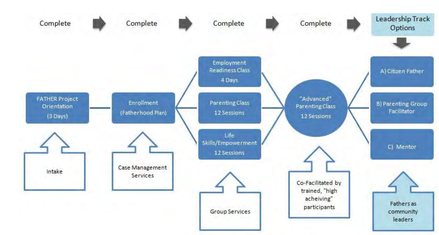
Citizen Father Project is a Community Action project in which fathers deliver messages to audiences about the importance of positive, involved fathers in the lives of their children.

Targeted audiences include: fathers, incarcerated fathers, mothers, youth, professionals and faith congregations.

Parent Group Facilitators receive training and then co-lead FATHER Project parenting groups.

Mentors are fathers who have demonstrated leadership in the program, who are then matched with new participants, to support them.

Leadership Track Options for Fathers



ABSTRACT

The FATHER Project model is holistic and involves the close collaboration of many partners, each contributing expertise that is critical to strengthening fathers and families. The goals of the program involve empowering low-income, primarily non-custodial fathers to provide for the economic and emotional needs of their children. Over the past five years, we have found that multiple approaches to evaluation are necessary to show evidence of program impact. Evaluation results, range from a formal economic return on investment study (conducted by Wilder Research) to several rigorous internal quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Evaluation Methods

. Standard measure of Parenting Attitudes (AAPI-2)
. Impact of Parenting Groups and Employment Readiness Training (Retrospective Surveys)
. Child Support data (aggregate annual data)
. Father – Child Interaction (internal form)
. Return on Investment Project (Wilder Research Center)
. Satisfaction Surveys and Focus Groups

Conclusions
Study results show a strong economic return on dollars invested in the FATHER Project. Preliminary results from the 5-year Responsible Fatherhood grant show that the overall impact to society is much greater—ultimately the program is about fathers supporting their children both economically and emotionally, a powerful combination in terms of stabilizing families and children for future generations, breaking the cycle of poverty.

Moving Forward
<u>Meet</u> grant goals of the Federal Responsible Fatherhood Initiative
<u>Sustain</u>, expand and replicate the FATHER Project's holistic model (in progress)
<u>Train</u> and educate staff across agencies
<u>Disseminate</u> evaluation results and promising practices
<u>Integrate</u> services from other fields into the FATHER Project model, such as Early Childhood, Re-Entry and Co-Parenting