

Participant Bios

Juan Carlos Areán is a Senior Program Director in the Children's Programs at the Family Violence Prevention Fund. Since 1991, he has worked on engaging men across different cultures to become better fathers, intimate partners and allies to end domestic violence and achieve gender equity. For over a decade, he worked at the Men's Resource Center for Change in various capacities, including director of the Men Overcoming Violence and the Refugees and Immigrants Programs. He also worked as a sexual assault prevention specialist at Harvard University. Mr. Areán is co-author of various articles, curricula and educational tools for men and an active trainer, who has led workshops and presentations nationally and internationally.

Cassandra Codes-Johnson is the Director of Family Services for the Center for Urban Families (CFUF), as well as the Director of the Baltimore Building Strong Families Program. Mrs. Codes-Johnson's expertise in human resources and vast knowledge of organizational structure, development and implementation provides her with the unique ability to not only manage a direct services program but to provide guidance on how to operate a flourishing non-profit organization. Under the leadership of Mrs. Codes-Johnson the Baltimore Building Strong Families Program has been successful in recruiting over 300 clients in less than a year, and has garnered numerous accolades in several local, national, and international media outlets. Cassandra Codes-Johnson received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Morgan State University and her Masters in Public Administration from the University of Baltimore. She is happily married and has a delightful seven year old and a playful seven month old daughter.

Anne Menard is an activist who has worked on policy, practice and research issues affecting domestic violence and sexual assault survivors since the mid-70s. After serving as a senior consultant to the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during 2005, she returned as Director of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRC DV), a position she previously held from 1994-99. She has served as a consultant to the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, the Lewin Group, and MDRC providing assistance to federally-funded Healthy Marriage projects in developing their response to domestic violence issues. At the NRC DV, Ms. Menard directs technical assistance, training, resource development and special projects to support domestic violence intervention and prevention efforts in the U.S. Prior to this national level work, Ms. Menard led the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence for over six years, and, in the early 1980s, co-directed Connecticut's largest domestic violence shelter and was actively involved in grassroots sexual assault advocacy.

Mary Myrick is the Project Director for the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center. As an Accredited Public Relations Professional (APR), Ms. Myrick is the Founder and President of Public Strategies (PSI) an Oklahoma-based project management and social marketing firm (with offices in the D.C. area, Colorado, and Texas). PSI has national, state and local clients

Healthy Marriage Strong Families & Child Wellbeing

from the public, private and non-profit sectors. She and her team of over 100 employees provide a variety of services including strategic planning, project management, advocacy, program development, technical assistance, event planning and public relations. Under Ms. Myrick's leadership, PSI has worked closely with senior policy officials to develop the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, a program nationally recognized as the first statewide, comprehensive effort to deliver information and education services designed to strengthen relationships and marriage, with a focus on low-income families. Its latest program, Family Expectations, is a large federal demonstration project, designed to provide marriage education for low-income couples during and immediately following pregnancy, with the goal of developing a model for statewide replication. Ms. Myrick also leads efforts to provide technical assistance to other agencies and organizations conducting marriage-related projects, including the ACF's National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, MDRC (Supporting Healthy Marriage), Mathematica Policy Research (Building Strong Families) and Pal-Tech (Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative).

Lisa Nitsch is a lifelong resident of Baltimore City and has worked at that House of Ruth Maryland for over ten years. She is currently the Gateway Project Program Manager. The Gateway Project is the men's abuser intervention service of the domestic violence prevention agency. Mrs. Nitsch oversees the day-to-day operation of the program and coordinates new program initiatives to improve the quality and scope of services. She was a principle driving force in the philosophical shift and functional redesign of the program from 'The Batterers' Program' to 'The Gateway Project' in 2003. This adaptation of the program focused on supporting men in a change process by encouraging them to set their own personal goals without shame while still holding them accountable for their abusive behavior. Mrs. Nitsch currently serves as the Vice President of Women In Fatherhood, Inc. She is also an active member of the Maryland Regional Practitioner's Network for Fathers & Families Board of Directors. She serves as a member of Baltimore City's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team and the city's Coordinating Council, and is Co-Chair of the Maryland Abuser Intervention Collaborative. Mrs. Nitsch's focus in the domestic violence field is on evaluating "success" for abuser intervention programs, engaging men in work to end violence against women, and coordinating public systems to best ensure victim safety. Mrs. Nitsch demonstrates strength in creating community partnerships among programs that have historically had conflicting agendas and provides technical assistance in this area to programs across the country.

Patrick Patterson is the Program Manager for the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, Public Strategies, Inc. Prior to joining PSI, Mr. Patterson worked for the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in the Philadelphia regional office with responsibility for Healthy Marriage, Fatherhood, and Community and Faith-based grantees and initiatives for the six states (VA, WV, MD, DC, DE, and PA) within the region. Before entering federal service, Mr. Patterson was Program Manager for the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina Statewide Fatherhood Initiative, a

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multi-year, \$8 million initiative in the state. Mr. Patterson has trained statewide, nationally, and internationally on father absence and its impact on families. His efforts to address father absence have garnered local, state, and national attention, highlighted by a special face-to-face meeting with President George W. Bush to discuss father absence and its impact on families. Mr. Patterson earned his master's degrees in Social Work and Public Health from the University of South Carolina.

Marline Pearson has taught Social Science and Criminology for 25 years and is a consultant to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. She is currently a Social Science Instructor at the Madison Area Technical College in Madison, Wisconsin, where she has pioneered a unique relationship skills class that was featured in Time magazine, a Fox 47 national news feature, and in the PBS special and companion book, *“Marriage: Just a Piece of Paper?”* Ms. Pearson is the author of *“Love U2: Getting Smarter About Relationships, Sex, Babies, and Marriage”*, a four-unit comprehensive relationship education curriculum for teens. She has also co-authored with Scott Stanley and Galena Kline, *Within My Reach*, a relationship skills and decision-making curriculum for helping individuals—primarily low-income mothers—achieve their goals in relationships, family, and marriage. Other publications include *“Making a Love Connection: Teen Relationships, Pregnancy, and Marriage”* (2006), co-authored with Barbara Dafoe Whitehead; *“Can Kids Get Smart About Marriage: A Veteran Teacher Reviews Some of the Leading Relationship and Marriage Programs”*, published by the National Marriage Project of Rutgers University, and *“Reaching for Higher Ground: New Approaches to Teen Sexuality,”* published in the Journal of Council on Family Relations.

Oliver J. Williams, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community and a Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, in St. Paul. He is also the Director of the Safe Return Initiative that addresses the issues of prisoner reentry and domestic violence. He has worked in the field of domestic violence for more than twenty-nine years. Dr. Williams has worked in battered women's shelters, developed curricula for batterers' intervention programs and facilitated counseling groups in these programs. He has provided training across the United States and abroad on research and service-delivery surrounding partner abuse. Dr. Williams' extensive research and publications in scholarly journals and books have centered on creating service delivery strategies to reduce violent behavior. Dr. Williams received a bachelor's degree in social work from Michigan State University, a Masters in Social Work from Western Michigan University and a Masters in Public Health and a PH.D in Social Work both from the University of Pittsburgh.