

Participant Bios

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.

Kendra Fisher and Brian Cosom are parents of eight-month old Brion. The couple heard about Baltimore Building Strong Families through a friend who participated in the program. Kendra (20yrs) thought the program would be great for her and Brian (24yrs) since they want to get married. The couple enrolled in the program in late January and will graduate from the program in mid-June, 2008. They have been receiving relationships education and parenting classes and family support services. They are both high school graduates. Brian's parents have been married for 20 years and he has one sister. Kendra's parents were not married and her father has been in and out of the criminal justice system. She has two brothers and one sister.

Brian was recently laid off from a warehouse job making \$8.75 an hour. Since being laid off, Brian and Kendra have been receiving a variety of employment-related services from different programs at the Center for Urban Families (Couples Employment Program, Building Strong Families, and the Responsible Fatherhood Program). These include weekly education on career advancement, financial literacy, pursuing further education, house ownership and entrepreneurship. Job readiness training is also available through the STRIVE program. Brian would like the couple to purchase a home and move to Texas after they are married. Kendra is interested in attending an institution of higher learning while she prepares for the couples second child due this winter.

Ron Haskins, Ph.D. is a Senior Fellow in the Economic Studies Program and Co-director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution and senior consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore. He is the author of *Work Over Welfare: The Inside Story of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law* (Brookings, 2006), the co-author of *Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America* (Pew Charitable Trusts and Brookings, 2008), and a senior editor of *The Future of Children*. In 2002 he was the Senior Advisor to the President for Welfare Policy at the White House. Prior to joining Brookings and Casey, he spent 14 years on the staff of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee,

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first as welfare counsel to the Republican staff, then as the subcommittee's staff director, and while there was the editor of the 1996, 1998, and 2000 editions of the *Green Book*. From 1981-1985, he was a senior researcher at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He holds a Bachelor's degree in History, a Master's in Education, and a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology, from UNC, Chapel Hill. Haskins lives with his wife in Rockville, Maryland and is the father of four grown children.

Joe Jones is founder and President of The Center for Urban Families (CFUF), formerly, The Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development (CFWD), a Baltimore, Maryland non-profit service organization established to empower low-income families by enhancing both the ability of women and men to contribute to their families as wage earners and of men to fulfill their roles as fathers. Prior to founding CFWD, he developed and directed the Men's Services program for the federally funded Baltimore Healthy Start initiative and replicated the nationally recognized STRIVE employment services program. A national leader in workforce development, fatherhood and family services programming, he has a solid reputation for influencing the direction of national public policy and the development of effective programs.

Mr. Jones has been a leading advocate for meaningful collaborations between marriage and fatherhood programs, and has been actively involved in forging relationships between the leaders within those two fields. His agency created and is running one of ACF's Building Strong Families sites, providing marriage education services to unmarried, pregnant couples. Out of his belief that families can rise out of poverty if provided the appropriate foundation and information to maintain a cohesive family unit, he worked in tandem with the State of Louisiana's Department of Social Services to develop the Exploring Relationships and Marriage with Fragile Families curriculum. The curriculum is designed to provide single parents with the communication, conflict resolution, and effective parenting skills that lead to better outcomes for children. Mr. Jones is a Weinberg Fellow and a graduate of the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Robert I. Lerman, Ph.D. is Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute and Professor of Economics at American University, and has worked for over 30 years in public policy and research on issues relating to family patterns, poverty, and welfare programs. As one of the first scholars to examine the patterns and economic determinants of unwed fatherhood, he co-edited (with Theodora Ooms) and contributed three chapters to *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*. Among other family-related publications are: "The Impact of the Changing US Family Structure on Child Poverty and Income Inequality," *Economica* (1996), and (with Avner Ahituv) "How do Marriage, Work Effort, and Wage Rates Interact?" (*Demography* August 2007). With Elaine Sorensen, he published a review paper on child support in *Means-Tested Transfer Programs in the U.S.* (2003, University of Chicago Press). Currently, he is serving as Principal Investigator of the evaluation of the Community Healthy Marriage Initiative. Dr. Lerman earned his A.B. from Brandeis University and Ph.D. in Economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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Kristin Anderson Moore, Ph.D., is Senior Scholar at Child Trends. She has been at Child Trends since 1982, heading the organization from 1992 through 2006, studying trends in child and family well-being, the effects of family structure and social change on children, the determinants and consequences of adolescent parenthood, the effects of welfare reform on children, and positive development. She has authored over 150 articles and books, as well as numerous Child Trends research briefs and reports. In 1999, she received the Foundation for Child Development Centennial Award for linking research on children's development to policies that serve the public interest, and she was chosen to receive the 2005 Distinguished Contribution Award from the American Sociological Association's section on Children and Youth. From 1998 to 2003, Moore served as a member of the National Advisory Council of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. She received her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Michigan.

Mary Myrick is the Program 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 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).

Jay Otero serves as the Project Administrator for the Family Expectations, Public Strategies, Inc. and oversees the establishment and operation of the program. Mr. Otero also serves as a lead consultant to multiple national demonstration sites. He has provided technical assistance and served as a specialist in the field at multiple conferences and seminars related to the implementation and management of the Healthy Marriage Initiative programs. Mr. Otero has 20 years of experience in program development and administration. Prior to his employment at PSI, he worked as the Project Manager for Healthy Families in Orlando, FL. While holding the position of Program Manager at Healthy Families, he served as a member of the design team of the Building Strong Families (BSF) model. As a result of his strong leadership, his program was

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selected as the first site in the country to pilot the BSF national research study. He received his Bachelors of Arts in Human Services Administration from Evergreen State College in Seattle, WA.

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 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.

David and Nina Sanderson, both age 24, are parents of Mila, born in July 2007. They have participated in Family Expectations (FE) since January 2007, after a nurse from Children First, a statewide home visiting program, referred them to the program when Nina became pregnant. They originally met and dated in high school, graduated and married in 2006. Nina and David share custody of Brian, age 8, who David fathered with a different woman during high school. David's parents have been married for 29 years and he has two sisters. Nina's parents were only married for six months, her mother has since been married several times, and Nina has ten siblings mostly from different fathers. Neither of them believes in divorce, and they received both premarital and marital counseling from their church.

In the months before they came to FE in January, they went through hard times, both losing their jobs, Nina as a hospital massage therapist and David as a sales manager at a lumber company. Without jobs and with sudden emergency car repairs, they soon became behind on their bills, and were facing possible foreclosure on their home. With the combined help that Family Expectations provides for their marriage and parenting, and other program supports such as job assessment and referral, and financial help with the mortgage and utilities, David and Nina held their family together. David is now employed as a Detention Officer in the Sherriff's Department in Oklahoma County, and Nina is working part time as a certified massage therapist. They both occasionally work as hosts in the FE program and Nina conducts a monthly workshop on Infant Massage.