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Our History



“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” In 2002, **James McDonald** began those steps leading Muskingum County forward in fatherhood. Initially, ForeverDads was known as “Muskingum County Dads Count”. An advisory council was formed. James championed community agencies to provide block dollars of funds for support. *Celebrate and strengthen fatherhood* became the theme, demonstrated by starting All Pro Dads Day breakfast activities and providing the Nurturing Fathers program. His vision and leadership propelled the next phase of this community cause, leading the council to hire a director. As founder, his shoes were big to fill.

In 2006, after volunteering with this fatherhood initiative, **Burl Lemon** was hired as the interim director, followed by becoming the Executive Director. These steps coincided with his leadership in creating the initiative as a 501(c)3 nonprofit community based organization and incorporating it as ForeverDads.

Under Mr. Lemon’s leadership, to date there have been five (5) board presidents. **Rick Lawyer (2006-2009)**, **Allen Bennett (2010-2011)**, **James McDonald (2013-2014)**, **Ben Hess (2015-2017)** and **Jason Wilhelm (2018 -)**.

June, 2018 - ForeverDads will acquire and become owners of the formerly known as James Madison Elementary School whose history extends back to 1850 as Putnam High School. This facility is now named, ForeverDads - the Center for Fathers and Families.

Unfolded in the pages ahead will be the success of this organization as a result of a community committed to revitalization and restoration of responsible fatherhood. However, without the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood grant funding support, their state level guidance and templates for performance we would not have the framework that exist today. The synergy of connecting with other like minded fatherhood focused organizations has created a web of connection for us as practitioners' as well as support to families across Ohio.

The path to our outcomes is footprinted by the programs, activities, events, fundraising projects and their vast wraparound support of our collaborative partners. This year is a compliment to all these ingredients that have blended to change the landscape of fathers and families in Muskingum and regional counties served which includes primarily Guernsey and Perry, plus Morgan, Noble and Coshocton.

Responsible Fatherhood Child Support Compliance Program

Output:

1. If obtainable, the client will secure a valid driver’s license within a reasonable timeframe pre-established by his case manager.
2. Client would participate in our Employment Development program, within 30 days will have scheduled interviews, and become gainfully employed within 60 days.
3. Client will attend the NFL (Nurturing Fathers for Life) program held weekly until completion or participate in a self-guided fatherhood program tracked by a staff member.
4. Client will, upon employment make regular payroll deducted Child Support payments as per court order and CSEA established
5. If necessary, the client will participate with a Substance Abuse coach, participating at a minimum of two (2) sessions per month
6. If a parenting order is not established or needs modified, the client with the assistance of ForeverDads through our legal resource partnerships will provide the necessary guidance.
7. ForeverDads will provide to the Muskingum County Domestic Court per their request, an update of progress and performance. ForeverDads will notify the court immediately if the client fails to be compliant to this proposed Navigation Plan.
8. ForeverDads clearly understands that this client has had ample time to become compliant, that his failure to fulfill his Child Support obligation warrants the jail sentence to be imposed immediately upon his failure to comply and actively participate.

Responsible Fatherhood Child Support Compliance Program



In an effort to increase the number of men as fathers to become committed and compliant with their Child Support Orders, ForeverDads will provide a navigation plan that holistically serves to the outcome of the Courts, CSEA and to the benefit of the father as well as his children. The father's compliance to this plan is a tool that the courts or the county Child Support Enforcement Agency may use in lieu of incarceration or fines. Strictly up to their jurisdiction.

ForeverDads is committed to providing:

- **Initial Intake** - designed to gather basic information, receive all court compliance documents and establish a commitment to participate
- **Fatherhood Coaching** – one or multiple review(s) of status as relates to barriers, identify resources to address these barriers and follow up sessions to insure compliance to overcoming these barriers
- **Employment Development** – a one on one coaching session(s) to develop a plan for employability, equipping in areas of interest based on availability, and assistance with community support resources to become gainfully employed. Continuity of accountability is required to participate.
- **Access/Visitation/Custody Support** - complete review of parenting performances assessed, all available legal documents will be included with clients file and supportive coaching prior to legal services will be provided.

Programs



Program	Proposed	Outcome
Boot Camp for New Moms	20	12
Mom As a Gateway/Understanding Dad	8	0
Survival Skills for Healthy Families	10	12
Connections: Dating & Emotions	15	22
Relationship Smarts PLUS	50	59
24/7 Dads	24	0
On My Shoulders	15	0
Inside Out DAD	120	63
Boot Camp for New Dads	40	9
Nurturing Fathers	12	11
based on all participants involved in a program	286	166

Summary: this year unfolded a unique journey.

Here is what we discovered:

- The community of those we serve and need support services have become extremely transitional
- Serving men as fathers has shifted to a large degree from program based initially to needs based primarily
- The needs based services included:
 - Fatherhood Coaching
 - Custody (legal/parenting time)
 - Child Support (compliance and right sizing)
 - Children's Services (equipping and advocacy)
- Programs with zero performances:
 - *Mom as Gateway/Understanding Dad & On My Shoulders* - were scheduled, promoted and prepared to be delivered simultaneously, however the community did not respond with any registrants
 - *24/7 Dad* was not offered as proposed, however this is a focus curriculum we are looking to develop in this next year for fathers to complete who have time restraints to program schedules due to employment

Activities

Activities is the bedrock of recruitment!

ForeverDads in their ever creative development, utilized our All Pro Dads Day to bridge the delivery of our Everybody Loves F.R.E.D project which in turn cultivate a gateway for us to identify fathers who needed assistance as well as those who wanted to serve.



A one-hour monthly breakfast held before school where fathers and their children meet with other dads and kids in a school cafeteria, local church or even a restaurant. During this time, they hear and discuss a wide range of family topics, spend time together, create fun memories, and are equipped with resources to strengthen their relationship.



Everybody Loves F.R.E.D. (Fathers Reading Every Day) is a simple, effective and sustainable intervention activity that gets dads reading to their children. Conducted and demonstrated during our school based All Pro Dads Day breakfast activity.

In partnership with our local schools and local civic league organization, we brought together fathers and children. Each dad received a book that was age appropriate selected for them and their child. After having been served a meal, a staff member dad would demonstrate reading the book, bringing out different learning experiences for both the father and child.

Each father was given a Response Card to share his reading experiences, as well as feedback and an opportunity to request a follow up for assistance or to volunteer.

Here are the results:

- **Four** (4) different books were used during the activity year
- **Twelve** (12) different local business sponsored these books (and attended to see their investment at work)
- **Eight** (8) sites participated, seven schools and one civic league, plus seven different hosting partners
- **866** father/father-figures attended (284 attended more than once)
- **47** mothers
- **1103** students
- **166** fathers requested more information for assistance
- **102** fathers responded they would volunteer

Impact



Through the journey of this year, we have discovered the value of ETO. While the learning curve may have stifled us for a moment, the robust tool it has become is invaluable. The ability to tap into data, access the information for clients you are serving at any moment, on any computer is fluency to our workflow. Add to this feature the interactive ability for all the team members to share, read, review and input keeps our service to the fathers we serve alive and active.

*To date we have served over **256** men as fathers:*

- **131** Community Dads
- **63** Incarcerated Fathers
- **62** Male Youth (undetermined father state)

Focus on Employment:

Of the **131** Community Dads...

- **41** have received some type of employment service
- **31** interviews were scheduled
- **32** interviews were attended
- **31** jobs were obtained by fathers

Wraparound

As part of our wraparound service plan, we changed our NFL (Nurturing Fathers for Life) to a continuous offered program. In essence, we begin the program sessions and run through the full curriculum, once completed the cycle begins again. This same pattern continues throughout the year. If a father misses a session, he is able to pick it back up when the next cycle is offered. However, the bigger benefit is if the father comes in for support services, he can begin group support immediately.

The second significant component of this high response services agenda is that when a father participates in the NFL - he has the option of being aligned with a mentor. *InStep* is our mentorship support piece that connects a program participant father with a mentor.

This very change has allowed us to have a higher level of focused impact with and for the father we are serving. Between the class sessions and mentoring support, we are experiencing a higher level of reportable outcomes.