

# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

**Child Support & Fatherhood Programs  
Making a Positive Connection!**



Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement  
August 5, 2010



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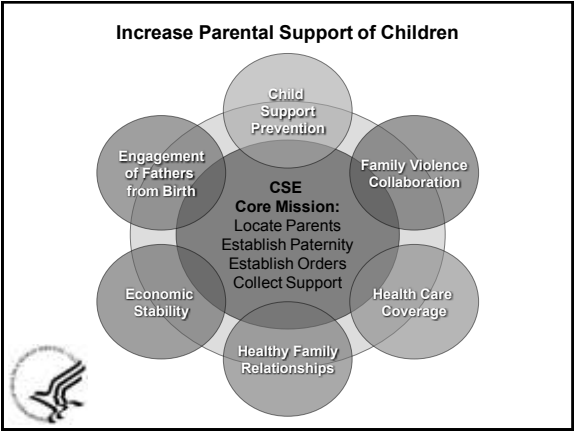
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**Child Support and Fatherhood Programs: Making a Positive Connection**

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Hennepin County Child Support  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 5, 2010

Barry Bloomgren  
Area Manager

Karen Strandemo  
Human Services Supervisor

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**Hennepin County Child Support and FATHER Project**

- Introduction
- History
  - Hennepin County is the only active jurisdiction remaining from the original 10 Fragile Family sites across the country
  - Voluntary Program
- Background




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**Hennepin County Child Support and FATHER Project**

**Partnership**

- Staff
  - 2 Child Support Officers maintain regular office hours at FATHER Project site
  - 2 Child Support Supervisors
  - County Attorney Liaison
  - Support Staff
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)
  - The purpose of our MOA is to set forth the operational responsibilities regarding the partnership between Hennepin County Child Support and FATHER Project
- Funding

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**Hennepin County Child Support and FATHER Project**

- Expectations - Hennepin County Child Support Services
  - Defined in Memorandum of Agreement
    - Dedicated Staff
    - Hennepin County Child Support Services
    - Data Reports
    - Annual Goal Setting
- Expectations - FATHER Project
  - Defined in Memorandum of Agreement
    - Dedicated Case Management Staff
    - FATHER Project Services
    - Sharing of Information
    - Space and Logistical Support

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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

## Hennepin County Child Support and FATHER Project

- **Priorities**
  - Child Support
  - Orientation
  - Domestic Violence
  - Sharing of Information



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## Hennepin County Child Support and FATHER Project

### Lessons Learned

- **Beginning Expectations**
  - Accountability
- **Location**
  - Centered in Community
- **Commitment**
  - Partnership
- **Evaluations**



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## Child Support and Fatherhood Programs: Making a Positive Connection

FATHER Project-Goodwill Easter Seals  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 5, 2010

Andrew Freeberg  
Program Director/Evaluator

Guy Bowling  
Program Manager

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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

## The FATHER Project:

Empowering fathers to overcome barriers that prevent them from supporting their children economically and emotionally




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## FATHER Project Partners

- Hennepin County Child Support
- Central Minnesota Legal Services
- Parents as Teachers/Meld
- African American Family Services
- Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)
- The Division of Indian Work
- Way To Grow
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)
- William Doherty, Ph.D., The University of Minnesota
- Minneapolis Public Schools / Adult Basic Education
- Project for Pride in Living
- Minnesota Fathers and Families Network

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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

## The FATHER Project What services are offered?

- Intensive Case Management
- Parenting and Empowerment Groups
- \*\*\*Child Support Services\*\*\*
- Legal Services
- Employment Services
- GED Services/Education
- Father and Family Activities
- Leadership Development & Community Action

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## FATHER Project: Description of Participants (2009)

- Average Age = 29 Years
- 44% lack High School Diploma
- 31% are ex-offenders; majority have criminal background
- All are low-income, more than 90% are non-custodial parents
- African American (57%), Latino (20%), Native American (14%), Caucasian (9%)

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In 2009, 229 fathers enrolled in the FATHER Project's intensive program.

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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

In 2009, FATHER Project provided 90 "Parents as Teachers/Meld" parenting class sessions



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In 2009, in partnership with CLUES, the FATHER Project provided 46 Latino Parenting class sessions



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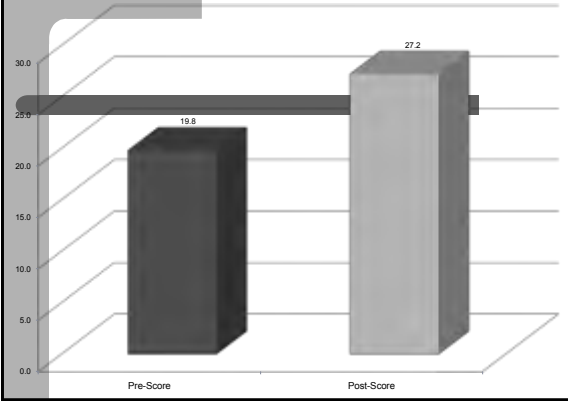
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Parenting Group Impact: Preliminary Pre and Post Test Results



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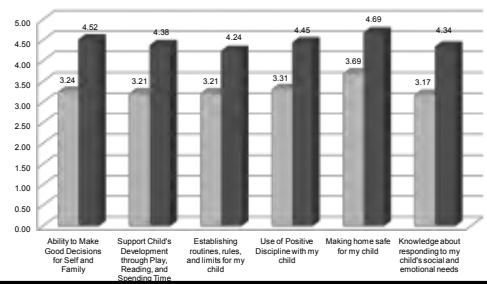
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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

**Parenting Group Impact: Item Results (pre & post)**




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In 2009, FATHER Project participants, despite significant barriers to employment, paid 51% of child support owed. 195 participants attended the child support orientation.

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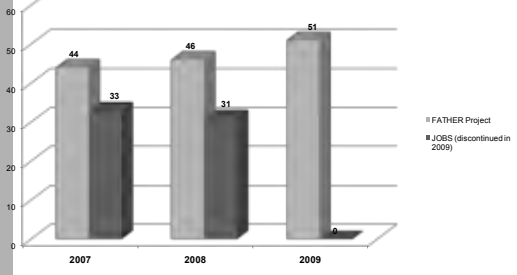
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**Percentage of Child Support Paid: FATHER Project and Hennepin County "JOBS" Participants (2007 - 2009)**




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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

## What's Working: Hennepin County Child Support and FATHER Project

- Dedicated Staff: 2 Child Support staff maintain regular office hours at FATHER Project
- Child Support Enforcement Officers' role with FATHER project:
  - Screen all prospective FATHER participants' case information
  - Establish paternity and establish, modify and collect child support orders
  - Help prepare participants for court appearances
  - Participate in regular "Coordinated Case Reviews"
  - Evaluate participant situations to have arrears forgiven
  - Support family and community activities

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FATHER Project partners, Judie Haughton and Nicole Martin, Hennepin County Child Support Officers

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## Lessons Learned: FATHER Project's Partnership with Hennepin County

- Collaborative involvement at leadership and management levels is essential
- Integrating child support services is critical to successful outreach, recruitment, and retention
- Child Support Enforcement Officers and Case Managers work cases collaboratively
- Dedicated, committed child support staff work on-site at the FATHER Project office, helping participants overcome child support barriers
- Together, we provide a common message that reflects our shared mission and objectives
- Working together, we have changed participants' attitudes about Child Support

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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

## FATHER Project A Vision for the Future

- Meet grant goals of the Federal Responsible Fatherhood Initiative (through 2011)
- Implement Strategic Plan: Sustain, expand and replicate the FATHER Project Model
- Train and educate staff across agencies
- Disseminate evaluation results and promising practices
- Deeply integrate fatherhood services within other fields, such as: early childhood development, corrections, and co-parenting

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Visit us at:  
[www.goodwilleasterseals.org/fatherproject](http://www.goodwilleasterseals.org/fatherproject)

Guy Bowling, Program Manager  
[gbowling@goodwilleasterseals.org](mailto:gbowling@goodwilleasterseals.org)

Andrew Freeberg, Ph.D., Program Director/Evaluator  
[afreeberg@goodwilleasterseals.org](mailto:afreeberg@goodwilleasterseals.org)

View the FATHER Project Replication Manual at:  
<http://www.clarityfacilitation.com/fp/index.html>



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## Child Support Fatherhood Program Webinar



August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Presenters: Tim McCartney, Al Howard, & Allen Clay

Hamilton County Job & Family Services  
Cincinnati, Ohio

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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!



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### REAL Dads

- **REAL Dads helps eliminate barriers to employment and engagement with the child**



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### REAL Dads The Role of the CSEA

**The Work**

- HCJFS provides about 25 referrals per month
- HCJFS dedicates one technician to meet face-to-face with each participant and who manages this **specialized** caseload

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**REAL Dads  
The Role of the CSEA**

**The Work**

- A Hamilton County Child Support Technician is on-site at the REAL Dads facility two days per week. He provides child support consultation at intake and ongoing support throughout client's time in the program
- Additionally the Life Coaches and our Child Support Technician work closely with our "Super Jobs Center" (One Stop Operation) to assist participants in finding employment

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**REAL Dads  
The Role of the CSEA**

**The Commitment & Partnership**

- Meet monthly with Lighthouse Staff to review successes, challenges, and outcomes
- Partnership is guided by an MOU between the parties
- The Department provides public relations efforts through our website, in publications, speaking engagements, radio, TV and print interviews

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**REAL Dads  
The Role of the CSEA**

**The Funding**

- Funding for the dedicated Child Support Technician is provided with IV-D funds thru the Random Moment Sample Cost Allocation Methodology
- Additional Program funds through a federal grant received by Lighthouse Youth Services

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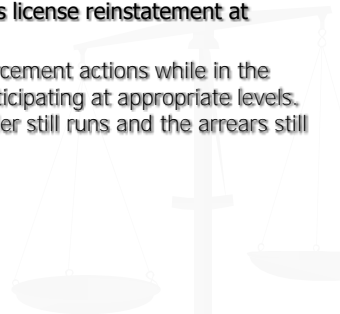
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**CSEA Incentives For Fathers To Participate**

- Automatic driver's license reinstatement at intake
- Suspend all enforcement actions while in the program and participating at appropriate levels. However, the order still runs and the arrears still accrues



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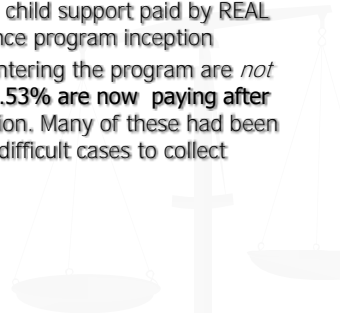
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**Outcomes Of The Program**

- Over \$443,550 in child support paid by REAL Dads caseload since program inception
- 89% of fathers entering the program are *not* paying at intake...53% are now paying after program completion. Many of these had been among our most difficult cases to collect



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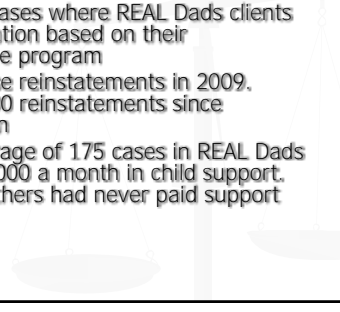
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**Outcomes Of The Program**

- Countless court cases where REAL Dads clients avoided incarceration based on their involvement in the program
- 105 drivers license reinstatements in 2009. Approximately 300 reinstatements since program inception
- Currently an average of 175 cases in REAL Dads paying over \$20,000 a month in child support. Many of these fathers had never paid support before



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### **Unexpected Results**



- It's clear that this program gives some men the first real opportunity in their life to discuss their challenges, frustrations, hopes, and dreams with other men. These opportunities are not plentiful in our society but have proven to be quite valuable...

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### **Awards**

- REAL Dads program was chosen as a winner of a 2009 achievement awards from the National Association of Counties for innovative programs that contribute to and enhance county government



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### **REAL Dads – A Success Story**



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**Media Coverage**

- Lots of positive media coverage regarding the program. Multiple print, radio, and TV opportunities...an excellent opportunity to showcase partnerships, effectiveness etc....
- <http://www.youtube.com/hcifs#p/u/41/P0j1tqs-DFM>
- [http://www.hcifs.hamilton-co.org/Update\\_Newsletter/2009html/March/UpdateArticle2\\_0903.htm](http://www.hcifs.hamilton-co.org/Update_Newsletter/2009html/March/UpdateArticle2_0903.htm)
- <http://www.local12.com/mediacenter/local.aspx?videoId=46253@wkrc.web.ent>

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**Lessons Learned**



- Work with obligee to get buy-in for suspension of enforcement activities AND to engage them in the REAL Dads journey with the father
- Build mutual respect between the organizations
- Focus on continuous improvement and program evolution
- Keep communication lines open

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**Other Developments of Interest**

- Because of the success of this program our agency has started serious discussion about how to implement the idea of greater engagement of fathers in our Children's Services and Public Assistance environments...They are all too often an afterthought in those systems...

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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

## Contact Information

- Tim McCartney
  - Chief Operations Officer
  - (513) 946-1732
  - [mccart04@jfs.hamilton-co.org](mailto:mccart04@jfs.hamilton-co.org)
- Al Howard
  - Team Leader
  - (513) 946-1683
  - [howara@jfs.hamilton-co.org](mailto:howara@jfs.hamilton-co.org)
- Allen Clay
  - Child Support Technician (REAL Dads Program)
  - (513) 946-1711
  - [cclaya@jfs.hamilton-co.org](mailto:cclaya@jfs.hamilton-co.org)

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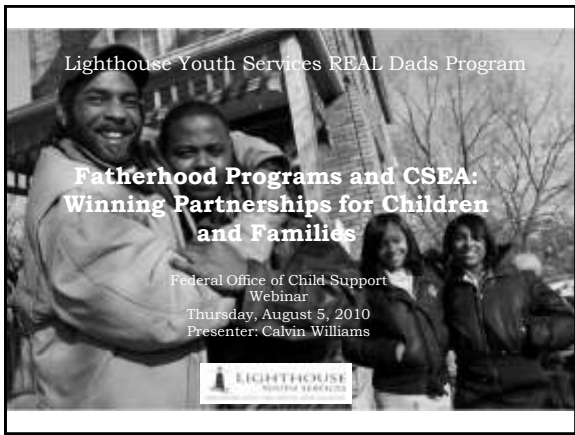
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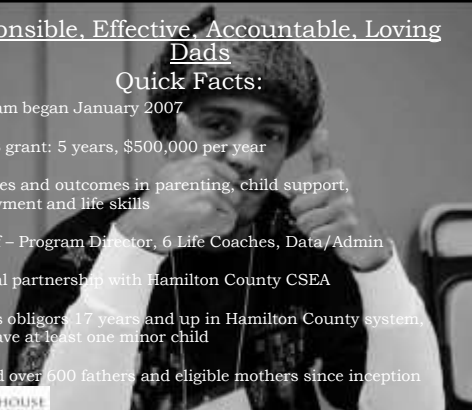
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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

Responsible, Effective, Accountable, Loving Dads  
Quick Facts:

- Program began January 2007
- DHHS grant: 5 years, \$500,000 per year
- Services and outcomes in parenting, child support, employment and life skills
- 8 staff - Program Director, 6 Life Coaches, Data/Admin
- Formal partnership with Hamilton County CSEA
- Serves obligors, 17 years and up in Hamilton County system, who have at least one minor child
- Served over 600 fathers and eligible mothers since inception



LIGHTHOUSE  
North Springs

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### Referral Activity

<p><b>2007</b> Letters from CSEA ( their envelopes, then LYS)</p> <p>6 -7% response rate</p> <p>First class - 7 fathers</p> <p>Focus Groups:</p> <p>“Dread, anxiety...”</p> <p>“More bad news”, Numbers just keep going up”</p> <p>“Pleasantly surprised...”</p> <p>“...someone will be listening to us...”</p>		<p><b>2010</b> Through July - 198 referrals 89 Intakes (45%)</p> <p>Class X - 35 registrants 20 at first class (57%)</p> <p>*99 children (step, bio, grand)</p> <p>21 graduates (60%)</p>
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LIGHTHOUSE  
North Springs

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### From Where and Why?

Where

- **Word-of-Mouth - 65%**  
Friends, family, previous program participants, bus stops, corners, on the job
- **CSEA/SuperJobs - 25%**  
Technicians, S. J. Orientation sessions (Allen Clay)
- **Courts/Probation/Other - 10%**  
Legal Aid, Urban League, CIRV, Other JFS

Why

- Want to get my child support situation straightened out
- Help with a job
- Improve my ability to pay (modification, arrears reduction)
- Want to be with/see/parent my children
- Bonus: be with others in my situation, sharing thoughts, feelings, getting support

LIGHTHOUSE  
North Springs

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# Child Support & Fatherhood Programs Making a Positive Connection!

## Starting the Relationship: Components of the Intake Process

- Referral call – 10-14 minutes (listening, empathy, respect)
- Assigned immediately to Life Coach, intake scheduled at the initial call or first call-back
- RFMIS forms, AAPI
- Consultation with Allen Clay (CSEA Technician)
- Narrative Summary and draft ISP developed
- Reviewed, agreed upon and signed by client




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## Value-Add to the client's Experience: Consultation with the CSEA Technician

- Privacy
- Life Coach present
- Full disclosure
- DL reinstated
- Initiate modification
- Check pending upcoming court action/dates
- Breakdown arrearage profile; forgiveness option




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## Program Components

- One-on-one relationship with and support from Life coach
- Fatherhood Class ( 12 weeks, Nurturing Father w/Relationship, Brain Class, Movie and Storytelling added)
- Access to attorney
- Financial Literacy – Budget, Credit and Debt Consultation
- Consultation, service and positive relationship with CSEA Technician
- Life, parenting, child support assessment (intake)
- Court advocacy
- Referral to SuperJobs
- Transportation, child care, client assistance, incentives




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**Fine Points of Successful  
Partnership**

- **Managing program discharges**
- **Reconciling/balancing CSEA REAL Dads caseload versus active in program**
- **Communicating program extensions**
- **Consistent and prompt response to requests for information**



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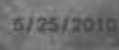
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**REAL Dads – REAL Success!**

- **Arrearage forgiveness!**
- **Access to, reconnection with child/children!**
- **Employed – paying support!**
- **Better relationships!**
- **ROI to the Community!**



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**“I didn’t know they  
cared...”**

Church of the Savior Volunteer



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