



Union County Fatherhood News

Winter 2016 Newsletter
Volume 2 Issue 1

History of the Organization

By Ron Richardson

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In Elizabeth New Jersey in the Spring of 2013 there was a gathering of men, who through the efforts and vision of Mrs. Kim Nesbitt Good, formed the Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition (UCFIC). With her initial support and the subsequent support of others, the organization has grown and, in the process, we are bringing together men and fathers throughout Union County. We emphasize the importance of fatherhood by bringing awareness, educating some while reminding others, to think about the impact they have on the lives and future of their children.

In the past three years we have touched many and opened lines of communication with the male population of Union County through workshops and seminars in Elizabeth, Linden and Plainfield. So far, we have held three conferences that have had a steady increase in attendance, nearly doubling the participation from last year to 2015.

UCFIC will continue to impact the lives of fathers with resources and activities to enrich the lives our youth continuing our effort to build community and sustains families in Union County and beyond.

Recap of June 2016 Conference

By Darryl Jeffries



Conference Attendees

4TH ANNUAL UNION COUNTY FATHERHOOD CONFERENCE -- A BIG STEP FORWARD TO HELP PROMOTE AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF MEN IN CONTEMPORARY FAMILY LIFE.

More than 200 participants were in attendance at the **Fourth Annual Union County Fatherhood Coalition Initiative's** conference to help raise awareness concerning the importance of fatherhood and its far-reaching impact upon the quality of life in the community. The event was held on **Saturday, June 18, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the New Jersey Center for Science, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) located at 1000 Morris Avenue, Union, N.J. on the Campus of Kean University.**

The event presented by the Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition, is an effort to provide comprehensive strategies and approaches that conference organizers believe will raise awareness and empower men -- young men in particular -- with viable skills and solutions to better navigate the journey of fatherhood.

"The Fourth Union County Fatherhood conference allowed us another opportunity to reach fathers with information that will allow them to become better fathers, better husbands and better men in the community. We placed resources at their disposal that they can take and utilize down the road concerning a host of issues and challenges. I believe our efforts were productive and a positive step forward in the process," Roderick Spearman, Chairman of the Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition stated.



Life Time Achievement Award
Recipient William D. Jones (Center)

Please see *Recap* on page 4

CORY BOOKER
UNITED STATES SENATE



June 12, 2016

I want to take a moment to thank the Union County Fatherhood Coalition for the incredible work that you do. Through your efforts you have touched so many lives. Your work strengthens fathers, which strengthens families, which strengthens communities, which strengthens our nation. Fathers have a profound impact on the lives and future of their children. We have all been affected by the father figures we have had in our lives. As fathers, you have the opportunity to be a positive presence in the lives of your children. Through that presence be a pillar in your community.

As with the Fathers Now program in Newark, by providing men with the skills, tools and support they need to be strong fathers and citizens. We are truly investing in the next generation and in generations yet unborn. The work of the Fatherhood Initiative will have long lasting and sustaining reverberations throughout Union County and beyond. I am pleased that the United Way of Greater Union County, The Elizabeth Housing Authority, The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and Community Access Unlimited are all partnering in support of this program. It's a great coalition. The tremendous support this program and initiative has received really reflects just how important we all know fatherhood is to our society.

This is a national cause, supported by President Obama, to highlight the vital importance of supporting fathers across the nation. The challenge is impossible without commitment and compassion of people working at the grassroots level in their own community to provide fathers and their families with resources and support to help them as fathers and as men.

I would again like to thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this event. But also to thank you for the profound, beautiful, urgent work that you do. I look forward to your continued success. Thank you.

(Message from video presentation
by Cory Booker, June 18, 2016)

Message from the Chairman *By Rod Spearman*



Greetings to all of you! This is the time of year when we men and fathers are asked to bring gifts of joy to our families, children, wives, girlfriends and others to celebrate this special season.

It is also a time of year when we as fathers/men can take the lead in encouraging our family and friends by doing and saying things that uplift our children, through positive interactions that last long after the material gifts are given, the trips are taken, the food has been eaten and we have all returned to our daily activities of going to work and school every day.

We fathers and men can give each member of our family the gift of a hug daily. The gift of eating dinner with our family regularly. The gift of helping our children with their homework.

The gift of reading with a family member. The gift of doing community service all year long with our children, and not just during the holidays. If we take the lead in giving and teaching these kinds of gifts now and continue through all of next year, they will lead from teachable moments to a lifetime of giving by our family.

Men and fathers take this season and give the gifts that only a father/man can give to his family and community and rejoice in seeing the fruits of giving of yourself well into the future.

Recap from page 1

The focus of this year's conference is 'Preparing Men to Lead in the 21st Century.' The day-long conference featured an opening session with a keynote message delivered by Vaughan McCoy, Esq. President of the PSEG Foundation, followed by 8 workshops divided evenly during the morning session and afternoon sessions. Conference workshops will focus on the following topics of discussion: Men's Health Forum; the Three R's: A Self - Development Program for Men; Fathers: Overcoming Obstacles by Turning Liabilities into Assets; Solutions to Re-Entry Programming: Services, Advocacy and Peer-Bridging; Veteran Re-Integration; Barbershop Talk; Guiding Parents: How to plan for College; and, Preparing for Retirement. The luncheon features a performance by renowned jazz bassist and recording artist Curtis Lundy and his ensemble.

The conference also honored several distinguished individuals whose legacy of enduring community service has made a substantive contribution to the growth and advancement of the Union County Fatherhood Coalition Initiative. They include: UCFIC Lifetime Achievement recipient William D. Jones, Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Elizabeth; UCFIC Leadership Award recipient Adrian O. Mapp, Mayor of the City of Plainfield; UCFIC Fathers of Resilience recipients: David "DZ" Boyer, David Scott, J. Frantz Dorilas, John Rummola, Lorenzo Keets, and Richard Tabor.

"We are proud to serve as an ambassador for this conference to promote issues impacting fatherhood because HUD is taking this issue very seriously as a national policy initiative. As housing professionals, our experience shows that in public housing, particularly family public housing, the heads of household, overwhelmingly, are women. The fact is, there exists a large male population who reside in public housing, but for a host of reasons, they don't share equally as heads of household and as dads. This conference provides a safe haven for these men and provides resources and information to empower them to better enable them to play a more stable role and to correct a long-standing imbalance, William D. Jones, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Elizabeth, stated.

In an effort to create greater awareness and to provide greater access, conference organizers cast a wide net to get the young, the old, those who have been part of the outcast community and those who are coming back into the community. Organizers believe this conference should be a great opportunity for fatherhood to take its rightful place among those whose circumstances have placed them on the margins of society. The operative premise is a belief among organizers that with the right training, the right teaching and putting the right tools in place, men will come to find faith and hope and just be good men. And, they believe that's the primary purpose and mission: for the conference to inspire men to achieve their highest potential.

The conference attracted the sponsorship of a host of partners representing the corporate, ecumenical, educational, and not - for - profit community as well as several community service providers. They include: The Housing Authority of the City of Elizabeth (HACE); United Way of Greater Union County; Union County College; County of Union, New Jersey, Polcari & Co. CPA's; Elizabeth Development Corporation; Community Access Unlimited; Trinitas Regional Medical Center; and Grace Photography.

Distinguished members of the Union County Fatherhood Coalition Initiative Board include: William Stevens, charter member; Ed Hughes, charter member; Ron Richardson, charter member; Kevin Caldwell, member; Ronald Thomas, member; and Roderick Spearman charter member and chairman.

The Union County Fatherhood Coalition is planning for next year's conference as well as it is planning a host of activities throughout the year to raise greater awareness about the importance of fatherhood and it's far - reaching positive impact on the quality of life in the communities of the urban nexus and across the state and the nation. ###



Vaughan McCoy



N.J. State Senator Tom Kean



Curtis Lundy Ensemble



Future Men, Fathers and Leaders

Recent Events**Community and Family Life Development Weekend**

November 12, 2016

Youth and Men Golf Outing at the West Nine

1st Tee - Plainfield Country Club

Building Character and Values in Our Youth

The fall of 2016 marked another exciting year-end community event, as the UCFIC participated as a sponsoring partner in the 5th Annual Youth & Men Golf outing.

The day of family fellowship, fitness and fun for all was held at the West Nine facility of the Plainfield Country Club. We are grateful to the First Tee Youth Golf Program of Plainfield and its staff for hosting this event.

More than 28 young people from the Union County area participated in learning more about golf, its fitness benefits and how it builds character and values in us. This event has become an anticipated collaboration of men and community, committed to helping our youth understand more about the sport and the value of the First Tee Program. The program offers academic support and college scholarship opportunities during the entire school year.

A special thanks goes to the annual event Partners and Sponsors which include Second Street Youth Center, KIAH Institute, NJ State Men's Fellowship and the UCFIC Team.

**UCFIC Leadership**

Roderick Spearman - Chairman

Ron Richardson - Treasurer

Edward Hughes - Charter Member

William Jones - Charter Member

William Stevens - Charter Member

Kevin Caldwell - Member

Rev. Ron Thomas - Member

Save the Date!**5th Annual Fatherhood Conference**

June 10, 2017

At: **Community Access Unlimited**

80 West Grand Avenue

Elizabeth, New Jersey

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