

Union County Fatherhood News

Fall 2015 Newsletter
Volume 1 Issue 1

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 History of the Organization
- 1 Recap of June Conference
- 2 Thabiti Boone Letter
- 3 Message from the Chairman
- 4 Recent Events
- 4 UCFIC Leadership

Our Mission

Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition's mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children with involved, responsible, and committed fathers in their lives.

History of the Organization

By Ron Richardson

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.



Young Fathers with Thabiti Boone

Recap of June 2015 Conference

By Ron Thomas

The third annual Union County Fatherhood Initiative Conference, held at Kean University's New Jersey Center for Science, Technology and Mathematics was by all accounts a very successful and well received event. Over 150 men attended the event that provided a great opportunity for learning, networking and fellowship.



Conference Honorees (from left): Spagner, Thomas, Boone, Blanchard

With opening remarks by Rod Spearman, statement of purpose by Ron Richardson, Union County Freeholder Vice Chairman Bruce Bergen and New Jersey Assemblyman Jamel C. Holley (LD 20), the conference moved into dual sessions of seven breakout workshops. The topics were: Money Matters: Finances in the New Economy; Returning Fathers: Numbers, Needs and Nuances; STEM: Careers for the Future; Family Literacy: How Fathers Can Take The Lead; Men's Health Forum; Barbershop Talk and Why Education Matters.

Please see *Recap* on page 3

THABITI BOONE
PRESIDENT OBAMA WHITE HOUSE
CHAMPION FOR FATHERHOOD

August 12, 2015

To: The Union County (NJ) Fatherhood Initiative Coalition

I want to extend my gratitude and congratulations on the success of your 3rd Annual Union County Fatherhood Initiative Conference. On behalf of President Obama, his Fatherhood Mentoring Initiative and the entire White House Administration, we salute you on your continued commitment and partnership with his platform and efforts pushing the importance of Fatherhood and the critical role that fathers play in the lives of their children, families and communities.

The President is sincerely grateful for all your leadership with the Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition, promoting the needs and concerns of our fathers and Men in the cities and communities of the State of New Jersey. The President has often stated he can't move this country forward without the dedicated work of leaders like you all who serve on the Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition.

Working with fathers and pushing Fatherhood, as valuable as it is, in our country is not an easy task. That's why your work is so important, necessary and need to be commended. Your heroic work strengthens fathers, which strengthens families.

I had a wonderful time at this year's conference. I was honored to be a guest and honoree at this year's conference. The award and recognition meant so much to me and my commitment to uplifting fathers.

I was excited by the level of participation, the number of fathers, Men and guests who attended. I was really pleased to see a good number of young men at the conference. The workshops covered topics that were relevant to the needs of fathers. The speakers, their presentations and the information shared were powerful and uplifting.

I was impressed with the energy, synergy, collective passion and spirit of everyone. The professionalism and quality of this year's conference was outstanding. As I've traveled around the country, the Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition and conference continues to be one of the best I've seen. It fits exactly into the goals and expectations of President Obama.

You are demonstrating yourselves as one of the model Initiatives the President can count on.

I applaud you again all as you continue to push forward on this important work. You can continue to count on me and my support.

All the continued Best,

Thabiti Boone
President Obama White House
Champion for Fatherhood

Message from the Chairman

By Rod Spearman

In 2013 Kim Nesbitt Good of Nesbitt Funeral Home had this vision of men and fathers in Union County coming together to uplift, encourage, recognize and honor those average fathers who are the corner stone of their families and community.

The role of the father is as meaningful and important today as it was 20, 30, 40 or 50 years ago. Fathers were always more than just the bread winner of the family; fathers are the head of the family; they share wisdom, give encouragement, use their talents constructively, and nurture the importance education.

Research shows that fathers and men who are actively involved in the lives of their children help reduce teenage pregnancy and sexual activity, obesity, high school dropouts and criminal behavior.

The Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition hosted its third Fatherhood Conference this year having over 150 fathers and men attending. The conference gave these men insight into being better men and fathers. The workshops helped them learn the importance of addressing mental health and communication issues in families. In addition, the sessions helped men and fathers understand their value to their communities.

Our continuing goal at UCFIC is to work at uplifting and building men and fathers to be better and more effective leaders in strengthening their families and communities.



Rod Spearman, Chairman UCFIC

Recap from page 1

The breakout workshops were followed by a jazz networking lunch featuring Victor Ector, a panel discussion on Modern Fatherhood: Fatherhood, Work and Family was held with the introduction by J. Christian Bollwage, Mayor of the City of Elizabeth and moderated by Reverend Dr. Evans L. Spagner. The panel, made up of the workshop facilitators, responded to several questions posed by the moderator.

William Jones, Executive Director Housing Authority of the City of Elizabeth discussed the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's message to "connect the fathers in our communities with local services, programs, and ideas to 'strengthen the bond between fathers and their children'".

Following his comments, awards were given to Sidney Blanchard, Founder and Executive Director Community Access Unlimited, J. Michael Sanders, Ph.D, Pastor Fountain Baptist Church, Summit and Gerald Lamont Thomas, Ph.D, Pastor Shiloh Baptist Church, Plainfield.

To close the conference, we were first blessed by the personal testimony of Gloria Gaynor on the adverse impact that growing up without her father had on her life and relationships. Following her was a very inspirational speech by Thabiti Boone, the President Obama White House Champion of Change for Fatherhood.



Panel of workshop facilitators and moderator



General Session Attendees



Thabiti Boone and Gloria Gaynor



Kahlil Carmichael - "The Fitness Doctor"

Recent Events

Community and Family Life Development Weekend

October 16, 2015

FITNESS and WELLNESS for MEN: A Holistic Approach To Health
With Kahlil Carmichael - "The Fitness Doctor"

October 17, 2015

'POWER OF MALE ROLE MODELS' Spoken Word Motivation Through
Enrichment and Mentoring with David DZ Boyer

October 17, 2015

Youth and Men Golf Outing at the West Nine
1st Tee - Plainfield Country Club
Building Character and Values in Our Youth



Youth Golf Lesson at the West Nine

Save the Date

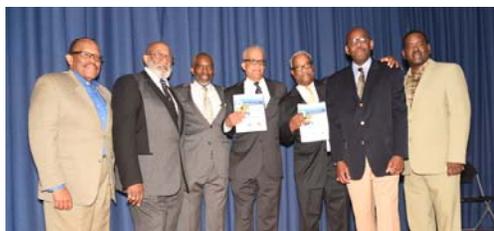
4th Annual Fatherhood Conference
June 11, 2016

Powered By



UCFIC Leadership Team

Roderick Spearman - Chairman	William Stevens - Charter Member
Ron Richardson - Treasurer	Kevin Caldwell - Member
Edward Hughes - Charter Member	Rev. Ron Thomas - Member
William Jones - Charter Member	



(From left): Thomas, Richardson, Spearman, Jones, Stevens, Hughes, Caldwell

- Thank You to Our Sponsors**
- Elizabeth Housing Authority
 - United Way of Union County
 - Community Access Unlimited
 - County of Union, New Jersey
 - Elizabeth Development Corporation
 - Polcari and Co. CPAs
 - Trinitas healthcare System
 - ERA Queen City Realty
 - Fountain Baptist Church
 - Metropolitan SDA Church
 - Second St. Youth Center Foundation, Inc.
 - Spencer Savings Bank
 - Union County College
 - Kellogg Foundation
 - Plainfield Housing Authority
 - Shiloh Baptist Church

Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition - P.O. Box 505 - Rahway, NJ 07065

E-mail: ucnjfatherhood@gmail.com