



# ECRC Community Chronicle

EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER :: *Summer News 2013*

## RIGHT PATH FOR FATHERS PARTNERSHIP KICKS OFF WITH HELP FROM A FEDERAL GRANT AND ECRC

*It's a tough spot for a father to be in: if he doesn't have a job, he won't be able to pay child support. If he doesn't pay, the penalties can threaten his ability to become or remain employed. It's a vicious cycle that the Stark County Department of Job & Family Services hopes to end.*

The department's Child Support Enforcement Division is one of only eight agencies nationwide to receive a five-year federal grant of \$500,000 a year. The grant will fund a program called *The Right Path for Fathers Partnership*. The program is designed to help long-term, non-custodial parents overcome barriers to employment, obtain jobs and make consistent child support payments. The Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) will provide several support services for the program. Its pilot phase began in July, with full implementation scheduled for October.

*Right Path* fathers will have the opportunity to earn their GEDs, gain work experience and prepare to seek employment by enrolling in one of two job skills programs offered by Goodwill and the Stark County Community Action Agency. They will also be enrolled in the ECRC's *24/7 Dad* fatherhood classes.

"The ECRC's *24/7 Dad* program can make a significant difference for fathers who do not have a relationship, or have a minimal relationship, with their children, because it teaches them how to be a good father and how to play an important role in their children's lives," said Rob Pierson, deputy director of child support, Stark County Department of Job & Family Services.

To maintain father engagement, the ECRC will offer peer support sessions for fathers who have completed the *24/7 Dad* program. For those who have support orders that don't include parenting time or visitation arrangements, the ECRC will help them to develop a plan so they can start spending time with their children.

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## A FOCUS ON FATHERS

### A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our second edition of the *ECRC Community Chronicle*. In this issue, we are highlighting initiatives throughout Stark County that promote the critical role of fathers in their children’s healthy development. *The Fatherhood Coalition, 24/7 Dad, The Right Path for Fathers* and *Drumming with Dads* are all examples of community initiatives improving the lives of children by focusing on their relationships with their dads.

As the father of two teenage sons, I sometimes drive my wife a little crazy because of our differing parenting styles. When my boys were younger, I would often wind them up by wrestling on the floor. I was the parent who taught my kids how to ride bikes, catch balls, love adventure and experience the adrenaline rush, as my wife would hover nearby, ready to rescue and soothe. As my kids grew older, I was the parent who pushed them to study more, work harder and practice more.

It has been said that mothers see the world in relation to their kids and fathers see their kids in relation to the world. The reality is that mothers and fathers parent differently, and each can play an essential role in healthy development. Fathers with young children tend to spend a greater percentage of their one-on-one time engaged in stimulating, playful activity than do mothers. We enjoy roughhousing, which teaches children how to deal with aggressive impulses and engage in physical contact without losing control. Fathers are often the parents who want their kids to be ready for a world that isn’t always kind or fair. We encourage risk taking and independence, and we focus on achievement, which tends to increase self-esteem. Mothers tend to be more nurturing, are more likely to have a calming effect, and are more in tune with feelings and emotions. Both parenting styles are integral to healthy development.

There is a lot of research that shows children who have healthy relationships with their fathers establish better social relationships, have higher self-esteem, perform better in school, have fewer behavioral problems and are less prone to engage in delinquent behaviors. Clearly, when trying to promote young children’s healthy development, strengthening the father-child bond is a wise place to focus. As this edition of the *ECRC Community Chronicle* shows, investments in fatherhood programs are really investments in children and the adults they will become.

SCOTT HASSELMAN, *Executive Director*

**MEET OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES** *The Early Childhood Resource Center Board of Trustees plays an important role in providing fiscal and legal oversight, making policy decisions, providing strategic planning and more. Chosen for professional expertise and understanding of early childhood education issues, each board member can serve a maximum of three, three-year terms.*

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# STRENGTHENING BONDS

## *with the Beat of a Drum*

According to researchers, drumming has therapeutic effects. It promotes self-expression while easing stress, anxiety and tension. But can drumming also help bring a parent and child closer together? The Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) thought so, which led to creating the *Drumming with Dads* program.

The *Drumming with Dads* program kicked off in March, funded by a grant from Arts in Stark. The one-hour program was offered weekly at the William Hunter Center in Canton, led by local musician Greg Rice. Rice has spent many years teaching drummers of all ages.

Following the four-week drumming program, participants gave a fifth-week performance at the ECRC. Although the program was targeted to fathers and their children, 18 children and 12 adults participated, including dads, uncles, grandfathers and single moms.

“Greg’s enthusiasm made the program fun for everyone who attended,” said David Kerber, the ECRC’s parent liaison. “The parents and children thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They returned each week and were excited to learn something new. It was a time to strengthen the parent-child bond as well as promote socialization among the parents.”

The next series will be held in Massillon in September\*. The four weeks of drumming will culminate in a performance on week five at the ECRC. All family members are welcome to watch the participants showcase their new drumming skills. ♦

*“We had great success with our first series and look forward to doing it again in September.”*

— David Kerber, ECRC parent liaison

\*Note: Date and location TBD. Visit [www.ecresourcecenter.org](http://www.ecresourcecenter.org) for more information.



The *Drumming with Dads* program helped parents and their children bond during a five-week program centered around drumming.

# ECRC Collaborates with Fatherhood Coalition to Help Men Become Fathers

*It's been said that a woman becomes a mother the moment she finds out she's pregnant and that a man becomes a father the first time he sees his newborn child.*

But, in many cases, men don't have the parenting skills or emotional know-how to truly be a good father and positive role model. That's where The Stark County Fatherhood Coalition and the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) step in to encourage and assist fathers in becoming an integral part of their child's life.

The fatherhood coalition is a collaboration of public and private agencies that bring services and programs to fathers and families. Services range from resolving child support barriers to programs that help fathers become engaged with their children and strengthen their relationships. The collaboration has been successful because a wide range of skills and services are made available through each of the member agencies, including the ECRC, which provides its 24/7 Dad group program.

"The ECRC has been an important partner in the efforts to see families succeed," said Rick Deheer, court administrator of the Stark County Family Court, which is also a partner in the fatherhood coalition. "In the case of the 24/7 Dad program, the ECRC's expertise with fathers is a tremendous benefit with proven results. They are always willing to consult with other community agencies with similar missions, and that collaborative spirit works best for everyone involved." ♦

## SUPPORTING FATHERS AT SPECIAL EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

In collaboration with the Stark County Fatherhood Coalition, the ECRC devotes staff, time and funding to several events, including:

**FATHER'S DAY FISHING RODEO:** *The Stark Social Workers Network and Stark County Fatherhood Coalition hosted a fishing rodeo at Cook's Lagoon. The event was designed to bring fathers and their children together.*

**AMNESTY DAY:** *On August 21, parents who had been issued child support warrants by Stark County Family Court were able to appear to clear the warrant without being arrested. During the event, they could address issues with their case, work with child support case managers to reinstate their driver's license and arrange payment plans for delinquent child support. Amnesty Day is an investment in the potential of non-custodial parents to become employed, make consistent support payments and play an active role in their children's lives.*

**FATHERS WALK YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL DAY:** *In September, Stark County fathers will join fathers across the country in walking their children to school, meeting with their teachers, and attending related events planned throughout the day.*



“The ECRC has always been a great community partner to work with for the best interests of families and children in our community,” said Pierson. “The ECRC shares the same vision we do and is always very cooperative, active and hands-on in joint ventures.” ♦

## 24/7 DAD PROGRAM IMPROVES PARENTING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Poverty, lack of education and high levels of unemployment can adversely affect a father’s relationship with his children. The Early Childhood Resource Center’s *24/7 Dad* is a comprehensive program that offers innovative tools, strategies and exercises to help fathers strengthen their relationships with their children. Developed by parenting experts, the program focuses on the characteristics men need to be good fathers—all day, every day—regardless of their life circumstances.

Studies from Pennsylvania State University show that fathers who participated in the *24/7 Dad* program increased their parenting skills and knowledge to a statistically significant

degree. Children who have positive relationships with their fathers are less likely to exhibit disruptive behavior and experience depression, and are more likely to develop good social-emotional skills.

Lamarkus Cantwell participated in the *24/7 Dad* program. He has learned how to better relate and co-parent with his children’s mother.

*“I already had a pretty good relationship with my daughters, but I’ve learned how to improve some of my techniques. Even though their mom and I still have issues, I’ve learned additional skills of intervention as well as dealing with upcoming crises. I would like to be involved with more fatherhood classes,” – Lamarkus Cantwell*

# SPARK Ohio to Become Part of ECRC



SPARK Ohio is a family-focused intervention program that helps preschool-age children get ready for school by building reading, language and social skills, and seeks to create a seamless transition into school.

The program has been managed by the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton since 2003.

With SPARK Director Shana Rozier accepting a position with the Canton City School District and the program experiencing significant growth over the last year, Sisters of Charity Foundation staff thought a transition was needed. SPARK Ohio will be moving under the auspices of the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC), with Executive Director Scott Hasselman leading both ECRC and SPARK efforts. Hasselman has nearly 30 years of experience working in programs that serve children and families.

“I am deeply committed to continuing the expansion and development of SPARK in Ohio, with an emphasis on a community-based, multidisciplinary team approach,” said Hasselman.

“We are fortunate that our partnership with the ECRC will allow us to continue building our capacity as the replication hub for SPARK across Ohio. We are grateful that our current SPARK team will continue with us as well. We request your patience as we work to map out the numerous details involved in the transition,” said Joni Close, president of the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton. ♦



# WANTED: *A Few Good Men to Make a Difference*

REACHING  
OUT

BY DIANA BOGGIA

Take a moment to think back to when you were a child. What fond memories do you hold with your dad that still make you smile? Were there rough and tumble wrestling times, fishing or camping trips, bike rides or woodworking projects? Does the sight of your dad at the grill come back to mind? Did he sing or whistle while you were together? Did he tuck you in at night? I hold a special memory of my dad, as he would wake us up and carry us out to the back yard in our pajamas to watch lunar eclipses and shooting stars. He'd wrap us warmly in blankets and place us on lawn chairs as we gazed into the night sky in awe.

Who else in your family played an important role? Did you have an older cousin or an uncle who took an interest and made you feel special? I have a memory of my older cousin who returned from the army and took me to the zoo. That winter, we built an igloo together bigger than I was. My grandfather and his brother, Uncle Hank, used to sing me songs from the railroad days and tell me stories of what life was like when they were little boys.

Many of us are so fortunate to have fond memories of a nurturing father who guided our way, but just as many children are not. More and more children are being raised by their mother in a single-parent home. However, those children need not miss out on all that a father can give. If I were to describe a father, he would be a male who plays a significant role and shows an interest in a child. He would remain involved, nurture his child's spirit and provide a positive influence throughout his child's life. Nowhere is it written that a father must be biologically related in order to make a significant difference; all you need is a man who cares. If your child is without a father, open the possibilities by inviting a healthy male role model into your child's life. Invite stepdads, grandfathers, uncles, older cousins, close friends or neighbors, a Big Brother, or any others who are dedicated to making a positive, lasting impact. The biology is not as important as the connection.

These male role models can make a huge difference in a child's life if they get involved with school activities and field trips, build forts out of cardboard boxes and blankets, play cards and tell stories, read chapter books together, go for nighttime walks with a flashlight, or catch local high school sporting events together. The choices for involvement are nearly unlimited. What's truly important is to connect each day and make some memories that will build a bond—to be the man who makes a difference.

*Diana Boggia is a parent specialist at the Early Childhood Resource Center. She also writes a weekly syndicated newspaper column titled Family Matters and has authored parenting books, including "Parenting with a Purpose." Diana's website is parentwithapurpose.com.*



did you  
know?

Research results show that the presence of a responsible father significantly reduces child poverty.

5x

Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor.



In 2002, 38.4% of children being raised in single-mother homes were living in poverty, as opposed to only 7.8% of children in married-couple families.



## SUPPORT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER

Early education and care are more important than ever—and so is your financial support. Your support helps promote the healthy development of young children by improving the quality of their early education and care. Please send your gift in the enclosed envelope, donate online at [ecresourcecenter.org](http://ecresourcecenter.org) (click on the GET INVOLVED tab) or call 330.491.3272 today.



# NEWS BRIEFS

### WOMEN'S FUND GRANT DELIVERS LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Women's Fund, an endowment of the Stark Community Foundation, awarded the ECRC a \$2,800 grant to offer a training series that will help child care administrators gain leadership skills.

### ECRC AND YOUNG AUDIENCES PARTNER FOR NEW ARTS PROGRAM

With support from the Stark Community Foundation's Summer Time Kids grant, Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio has partnered with the ECRC to offer character education arts programs for early learners. The programs have been held throughout the summer, using storytelling and music to encourage the development of social and emotional skills.

### ECRC AGAIN CHOSEN TO COORDINATE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS

For four years in a row, the Stark County Family and Children First Council has awarded a contract to the ECRC to coordinate parenting education programs, offer family support services and engage in strategies to increase parental involvement at child care centers. The contract is made possible by a grant from the Ohio Children's Trust Fund.

### PNC VOLUNTEERS DONATE MONEY AND TIME

A team of volunteers from PNC awarded the ECRC with a \$3,000 check to support family programming. The volunteers also provided 100 hours of service to the ECRC.

# COMING EVENTS

### SEPT. 14 – NOV. 23: DAD-APPROVED PROGRAMMING

*Dad-Approved Programming* (DAP) is a fun and educational way for male role models to spend quality time with their child, grandchild, niece or nephew. Whether it's Laundry Basket Basketball, Wooden Sculptures or *Drumming with Dads*, DAP will be a memorable time. These Saturday programs happen Sept. 14 & 28, Oct. 12 & 26, and Nov. 9 & 23.



### SEPTEMBER 29: A DAY IN CANDY LAND FUNDRAISER

Journey down a magical road to sweet surprises at the fun-filled, family-oriented *Day in Candy Land* event on Sunday, September 29 from 2-6 p.m. at the Cultural Center for the Arts in Canton. You'll be transported into a life-size version of the Candy Land board game, surrounded by musicians, creative performers and interactive experiences. If you can't attend but wish to help a child or family in need while still supporting the ECRC, please consider purchasing additional tickets for us to donate.

**When:** Sunday, September 29, 2 p.m. – 6 p.m.

**Where:** Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton

**Cost:** \$15 per person (2 and under free)

Call 330.491.3272 or visit [www.ecresourcecenter.org](http://www.ecresourcecenter.org) to purchase tickets for you and/or a deserving family.

You can also send a check (made to ECRC) in the envelope provided. Please write "Candy Land ticket donation" in the memo.

### FIND US ONLINE

Visit [ecresourcecenter.org](http://ecresourcecenter.org) to learn more about our programs, services and volunteer opportunities, and make secure online donations.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER

*A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System*

1718 CLEVELAND AVENUE NORTHWEST  
CANTON, OHIO 44703

[ecresourcecenter.org](http://ecresourcecenter.org)

## OUR MISSION

*In the spirit of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the mission of the Early Childhood Resource Center is to promote the healthy development of young children by improving the quality of their early education and care through comprehensive programming, resources, and support services for families and early childhood professionals, to be leaders and advocates at the state level, and to promote the professionalism of the early childhood field.*

### CENTER HOURS

Monday	CLOSED
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday	8:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Friday & 2nd & 4th Saturday	8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

*ECRC has chosen to print responsibly on recycled paper.*

**A Day In  
CANDY LAND**

Fundraiser for the Early Childhood Resource Center

**September 29, 2013**

**Cultural Center for the Arts  
2 - 6 pm**

This fun-filled family event includes:

- ★ Life-sized Candy Land board game and characters
- ★ Musical entertainment and performers
- ★ Interactive experiences for children
- ★ Opportunities to win vacations, over night stays and more!