

## Strategic Planning

Fathers and Families Center uses the strategic planning process as a direction-setting tool to ensure the organization is consistently moving towards greater success in accomplishing the mission. The overarching goal of the planning process was to continue the growth and

success that the Center has attained over its fifteen-year existence.

Following a structured timeline, the planning process consisted of a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis using interview and survey/evaluation information from relevant sources. These sources included the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, the Center's staff, program participants and leaders of the governmental and private sectors.

One-on-one interviews not only gathered information relative to the S.W.O.T. analysis in general, it also considered the interviewees' visions for FFC and their analysis of the changing community environment for fathers and their families.

The Committee used the information gathered during the planning process to develop goals and supporting strategies that are consistent with the Center's Mission, Vision and Statement of Principles.

With approval of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, all strategy recommendations became the basis for identifying the action steps required for each strategy of the annual Action Plan. The Board will conduct periodic reviews of the Strategic Plan during each year of the plan to assess progress and determine any needed adjustments.



*Involvement, Consistency,  
Awareness and Nurturance*



*Vision*

**Children with involved fathers,  
thriving in healthy families  
and strong communities.**

*Mission*

**To build a noble legacy of fatherhood -  
improving the life chances of children  
by assisting young fathers  
in achieving self-sufficiency  
and in strengthening parental involvement.**

### 2009-2011 Strategic Planning Committee

Christopher Walker, Committee Co-Chair, HR Operational Excellence Manager, Cummins  
John A. Smith, Committee Co-Chair, FFC Board of Directors  
Ian Albright, FFC Marketing Specialist  
Kevin Griffen, FFC Board of Directors  
Holly McKiernan, FFC Board of Directors  
Wallace McLaughlin, FFC President/CEO  
Robert Ripperger, FFC Chief Operating Officer

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**F**ATHERS AND FAMILIES CENTER  
**Strategic Plan 2009-2011**



## Organizational History

Fathers and Families Center, initially known as the Father Resource Program, traces its beginning to Wishard Health Services' Social Work Department.

In May 1991, the hospital, through the leadership of Sarah Meadows, then Director of the Social Work Department, conducted a feasibility study resulting in

the consensus that there was strong evidence that a resource program for fathers was needed due to a high single parent birth rate and the invisibility of young fathers.

The team that developed the program included Wallace McLaughlin, Ph.D., who became the first Program Director and is currently serving as the Center's President/CEO. In April 1994, the first class began. The Center's slogan was and remains "Building a Noble Legacy of Fatherhood," a statement that communicates the program's determination to reconnect a generation of young men with the tradition of responsible fatherhood.

In 1999, the Fathers and Families Resource/Research Center, Inc., was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization after six years operating as Wishard Health Services' Father Resource Program. From the start of the program in November 1993, the Center has delivered services to nearly 4,000 young fathers residing in Marion County's inner city and other community neighborhoods. Except for a few cases, program participants come to the Center voluntarily with many of these fathers learning of the Center's services by word-of-mouth from past participants. They represent the growing number of low-skilled, unemployed or underemployed, and undereducated young fathers.

The Center became a United Way of Central Indiana member agency in 2003, a few months after re-locating from Wishard Hospital to a more visible and accessible location on North Illinois Street. Since 2006, the agency has been doing business as "Fathers and Families Center," serving fathers and expectant fathers up to age 28. The Center has secured federal, state, and local funding to support initiatives promoting responsible fatherhood and increased child support, healthy marriage, increased non-custodial father involvement, ex-offender re-integration, and crime prevention.

The Center has received numerous awards for national, state, and local recognition including the 2008 Champion of Compassion Award from the U.S. Department of Labor's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.



## Strategic Goals

### 1. Develop a housing transition program to assist fathers and families with obtaining housing.

About 15,000 people are homeless in Indianapolis each year. A new approach toward aiding homeless people is needed – an approach that focuses on helping people before they become homeless. Although many of the Center's fathers are not homeless in the traditional sense, many have the potential of being homeless due to living in temporary unstable housing, a recent release from incarceration, their criminal record, being poor with no credit history, and/or other financial hardships.

### 2. Ensure fathers who are ex-offenders that use our services are successfully reintegrated into their communities.

More than 27,000 inmates are incarcerated in Indiana prisons – 91 percent of whom are men. Of the 5,200 released from prison and into Marion County every year, 74 percent will commit another crime within three years of being released, according to the Indiana Department of Corrections. Approximately 70 percent of fathers who seek the Center's services are involved in the criminal justice system.

### 3. Improve life options for fathers and families through advanced educational achievement.

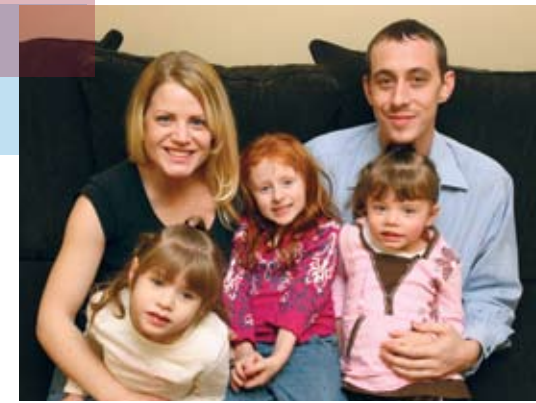
Only 19 percent of males are graduating from high school in Indianapolis. 84 percent of fathers visiting the Center for services need their GED. GED recipients are about half as likely to earn associate's degrees and much less likely to earn bachelor's degree than high school diploma holders (Boesel, Alsalam, Smith, 1998). Yet, most jobs that pay a living wage require post-secondary education.

### 4. Provide job opportunities for all program participants.

Obtaining employment is the primary assistance requested by fathers visiting the Center. The challenge is daunting. Indiana's unemployment rate in July 2008 rose to 6.3 percent, above the national average of 5.7 percent. In addition, many of the Center's participant-fathers have past criminal convictions or have been recently released with felony records. More importantly, 70 percent of private companies refuse to hire felons, no matter what the crime, a 2006 report from the School of Public & Environmental Affairs at IUPUI found.

### 5. Foster healthy relationships among parenting couples.

In October 2006 the Center began a five-year Federal healthy marriage education grant. The healthy marriage program helps couples improve their communication, conflict management, and commitment. Though limited in scope to new and expectant parents, the initiative has been successful with high participation levels and positive results. Efforts should be made to build on the positive results of the Federal program and to expand services to parenting couples beyond current eligibility guidelines.



### 6. Expand and improve participants' access to medical, dental and mental health services.

Many participants arrive at the Center needing health services ranging from maintenance to immediate care. This particular need can affect the participants' success in class or in trying to obtain employment. There are some basic services provided to participants, but the Center could be more effective in its mission if these services were expanded to cover additional needs or provided for a greater level of need.

### 7. Increase the Center's capacity to serve the growing need of the Indianapolis community, both the neighborhoods that are not served and those that are underserved.

There is an unmet need in many Indianapolis communities for the services of Fathers and Families Center. This is due to: a concentration of participants from specific communities, services to participants in close proximity to the Center, the growing number of young males in need of Fathers and Families Center services, and the limited office hours and capacity of the existing Center. Furthermore, high transportation costs also limit accessibility to the Center's services. In order to meet this growing need and the challenges that go along with it, Fathers and Families Center must increase its capacity to serve the growing number of participants from throughout the city.

### 8. Maintain and ensure the financial health and stability of the Center.

The Center is currently dependent on Federal funds and selected foundations for the majority of its operating funds. The Center does not have an endowment fund to use as a cushion in the event there is a loss of income. Generally, funds received from the Federal government and from many foundations are accompanied by a time limitation. Thus, there is a need for the Center to provide as much diversification of income sources as is possible. In addition, there is a need to eliminate the mortgage on the Center's facilities.



## Principles

The Board of Directors, the volunteers, the staff, and the clients of the Center believe in certain organizational principles, which guide the mission and the activities of the Center.

- All visitors to the Center will be welcomed and respected.
- Fathers are encouraged to see hope for their future.
- Fathers are valuable resources to their children, families and communities.
- Fathers' involvement with their children is essential to developing both the fathers' and the children's maturity and potential.

- Parental self-sufficiency and meaningful employment are essential to the well-being of children.
- Effective parenting is the strongest building block of a community.
- Children need the love, involvement, and support of both their mother and their father.
- Fathers are encouraged to have respectful working relationships with their children's mothers.
- An informed community welcomes, acknowledges and supports fathers involved in the lives of their children.