



**Omaha**  
**Masonic Community Center Foundation**

**Masonic Community Center Foundation**  
**“A Community Coming Together”**



***Local members of the Masonic Fraternity plan a community  
Fatherhood-Family initiative in Omaha***

**Who are Masons?**

Masons comprise the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world, with more than two million members in North America and more than 17,000 in Nebraska. Masonic Lodges are found in nearly every community; in larger cities, there are usually several.

Masons represent virtually every occupation and profession and come from diverse political ideologies. While all members hold personal religious convictions and believe in a supreme being, Masons as a group are not affiliated with any religious organization.

Masons believe and teach that each person, through self-improvement and community leadership, has an obligation to help humanity. Masons learn about morality and leadership at their local lodges, which are easily recognized by their display of the architect's compass and the carpenter's square – symbolic of builders in the community.

Masonic principles include:

- Fulfilling duties to God, country, neighbor, family and oneself
- Recognizing honor and integrity as keys to a meaningful life
- Caring for and sharing with one's fellow man
- Being a good citizen and obeying the law

**Builders of the Past, Present and Future**

Masons have made many important contributions to our country and to the world. A number of America's founding fathers, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock and Paul Revere, were Masons. Eight of the 56 people who signed the Declaration of Independence and 13 signers of the Constitution were Masons. Thirteen U.S. presidents, eight vice presidents, and 42 Supreme Court justices have been Masons, as have numerous members of Congress. Literally and figuratively, Masons have helped build America.

## History of Giving

Masons contribute over \$2 million dollars every day to various philanthropies to meet community, social and healthcare needs – particularly for children whose families can't otherwise afford treatment. Some of these include:

- Orthopedic and burn hospitals (Shrine Masons Hospitals) for children
- Diagnosis, treatment and research related to diseases of the eye
- Scholarship programs
- Support of ordained ministers making pilgrimages to the Holy Land
- Diagnosis, treatment and research relating to children with central auditory perception disorders
- Medical research in molecular biology and arterial disease
- Clinics for children with language disorders
- Children's homes and retirement homes
- MasoniCHIP (Children's Identification Program)

Masonic organizations perform many public service activities in their communities and sponsor youth groups including the Order of De Molay, Job's Daughters and Rainbow Girls. Masons consider it important to help mold and develop the character of our country's future leaders.

## A New Masonic Initiative for Omaha

Omaha Masons have come together and developed an initiative to help meet a major challenge of our generation, namely, the fractured and dysfunctional family unit. That this is a serious community and national social, moral and economic problem is clearly evident in the daily news and testified to by an abundance of statistics.

## Recognition of a Developing Problem – The Moynihan Report

In 1965 Daniel Patrick Moynihan published a study titled "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action". The Moynihan report detailed the problem of the breakdown of the African-American family. Moynihan was severely criticized at the time, but history has proved him right and the problem has only become progressively worse. Although the continuing deterioration is most severe in the black population, all other ethnic groups are following a parallel course.

## WHAT ARE THE DATA?

### ***Births Out of Wedlock – Overall (Nationally and by Ethnic Groups)***

Moynihan was concerned in 1965 that 25% of African-American babies were born out of wedlock; 40 years later that figure had soared to 70%. This alarming trend toward illegitimacy is manifested in every segment of American society as can be seen in **Figure 1**. This Figure shows the national data comparing non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black and Hispanic groups. The parallel escalation in the percentage of all births to unmarried women is striking.

### ***Births Out of Wedlock – Grouped By Mother's Age***

The age groups of unmarried women who are having babies are displayed in **Figure 2**. This graph shows that in the year 2004, 97.4% of the women less than 15 years of age who gave birth were unmarried, as were 82.4% of those who were 15-19 years of age. Unmarried women accounted for 35.8% of all births in the United States

## REPERCUSSION IN FAMILY UNITS

### ***Living Arrangements of Children - Overall National Data***

There has been a steady dissolution of the traditional family structure over recent decades. **Figure 3** shows the cumulative national United States data for living arrangements of children. In 1970 eighty-five percent of all children lived with 2 married parents and 11% lived with the mother only. In 2006 these figures were 67% and 23%, respectively.

### ***Living Arrangements of Children – Categorized by Ethnicity***

**Figure 4** displays the living arrangements of children categorized by race and Hispanic origin for the year 2006. The percentages of children living with 2 married parents were as follows: Asian, 84%; White, 74%; Hispanic, 66%; Blacks, 35%. The percentages of children living with the mother only were: Black, 51%; Hispanic, 25%; White, 18%; Asian, 10%.

### ***What is the Situation Locally?***

Nebraska and surrounding states are not immune to these societal changes and they reflect the national trends. **Figure 5** tabulates overall data for Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri. It can be seen that in Nebraska >15% of homes did not have a father present, >23% of all babies were born out of wedlock and >75% of teen births were out of wedlock.

### ***What are the Economic Costs of Family Fragmentation?***

A landmark study entitled “The Taxpayer Costs of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing” was released April 2008 at the National Press Club. This was a collaborative research project by the Institute for American Values, Georgia Family Council, Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, and Families Northwest. Using rigorous methodology they estimated that family fragmentation costs U.S. taxpayers (federal, state and local levels) at least \$112 billion each year.

### ***The Masonic Community Center Foundation***

Omaha Masons recently established the Masonic Community Center Foundation (MCCF). The MCCF is an IRS 501(c)(3) entity. Its purpose is to serve both the various Omaha Masonic organizations and the Omaha community in which they reside. The Masonic organizations draw their membership and vitality from and thus are intimately involved with the citizens in the locality in which they live.

Masons have a long history of honoring the precepts of duties to family, country and their fellow man. Consistent with those principles and to respond to the problem of the fractured family detailed above, the MCCF has formulated the **Fatherhood-Family Initiative**. The goal of the Initiative is to help strengthen the family. It will help fathers bond with their offspring and help restore responsible fatherhood to the family, including the role of authority figure and family provider. For the purpose of this Initiative the term “father” is defined as a recognized responsible adult male figure or role model, including the biologic father, adoptive father, or other adult caring male. This Initiative is sharply focused to foster a healthy bonding between fathers and young males, i.e., the ‘Father-Son’ relationship.

### ***The MCCF Fatherhood-Family Initiative – A Holistic Program***

Because multiple factors are involved in the phenomenon of the fractured family, it is likely that only a holistic approach could begin to successfully address the problem. The program we envision is

composed of several interactive components which typically would be delivered via group involvement, individual contact, and pertinent referral.

## **ELEMENTS IN THE FATHERHOOD-FAMILY INITIATIVE**

### ***Father-Son Time and Activity Sharing***

An important key to establishing the Father-Son relationship is to promote time and activity sharing between the two. Sports and recreational activities provide an attractive incentive for father-son participation and by their nature they teach the importance of individual effort and responsibility, team work, dependability, honor and their resultant rewards. These types of activities serve to stimulate initial interest in joining the program and will lead to opportunities for further education and participation in the program. Other father-son time and activity sharing projects include crafts, manual training and technical training.

### ***Employment***

The role of the father as a family provider is crucial to the success of any program designed to help the problem of the fractured family.

Fathers who do not have the skills needed for employment can be helped by

- Assisting them to obtain sufficient entry education
- Assisting them to attend a vocational or technical school and learn a trade
- Assisting them to acquire life skills needed to function in a work force (such as dependability, being on time, honesty, personal responsibility)

### ***Parenting***

Today many fathers lack parenting skills because they grew up without a role model to guide them. Group sessions help inform and motivate such fathers.

### ***Counseling***

Today many absent fathers suffer from emotional problems and the loss of self esteem. These issues can be helped by individual counseling and group sessions. Effective fatherhood for these men depends on their improvement in these basic areas.

### ***Legal Aid***

Today many absent fathers face legal problems such as child support and visitation rights. These fathers need to have education regarding legal matters and legal assistance as may be necessary.

### ***Advantages of the MCCF Regarding the Fatherhood-Family Initiative***

The Masonic fraternity has many members in all walks of life. The Fatherhood-Family Initiative, therefore, is not dependent on a small group of people but rather has at its disposal a large and dedicated group of concerned citizens. Because they belong to a fraternity it is natural that Masons would be sensitive to and would work to strengthen fatherhood and the family. In addition to the Masonic fraternity there are many additional resources in the city of Omaha. There is thus the opportunity to engage other groups as partners and to utilize referral services for this important initiative.

# APPENDIX

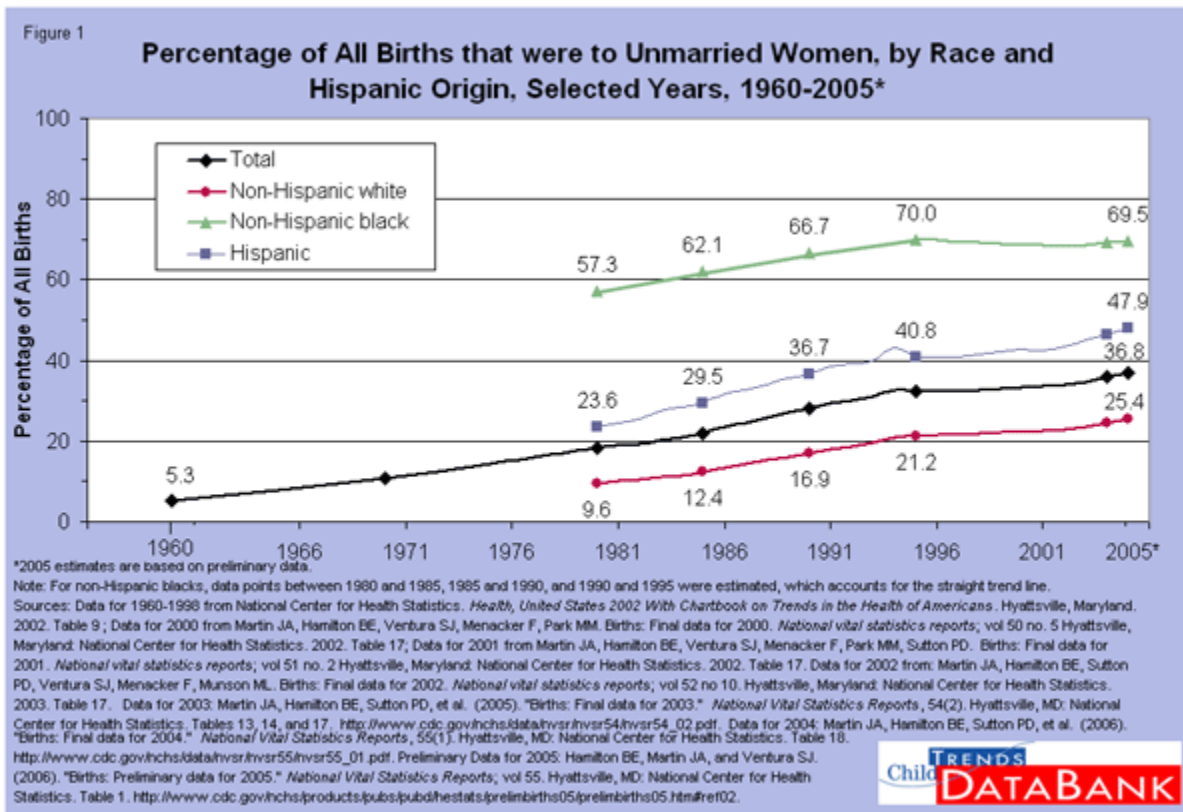


Figure 1

Figure 2

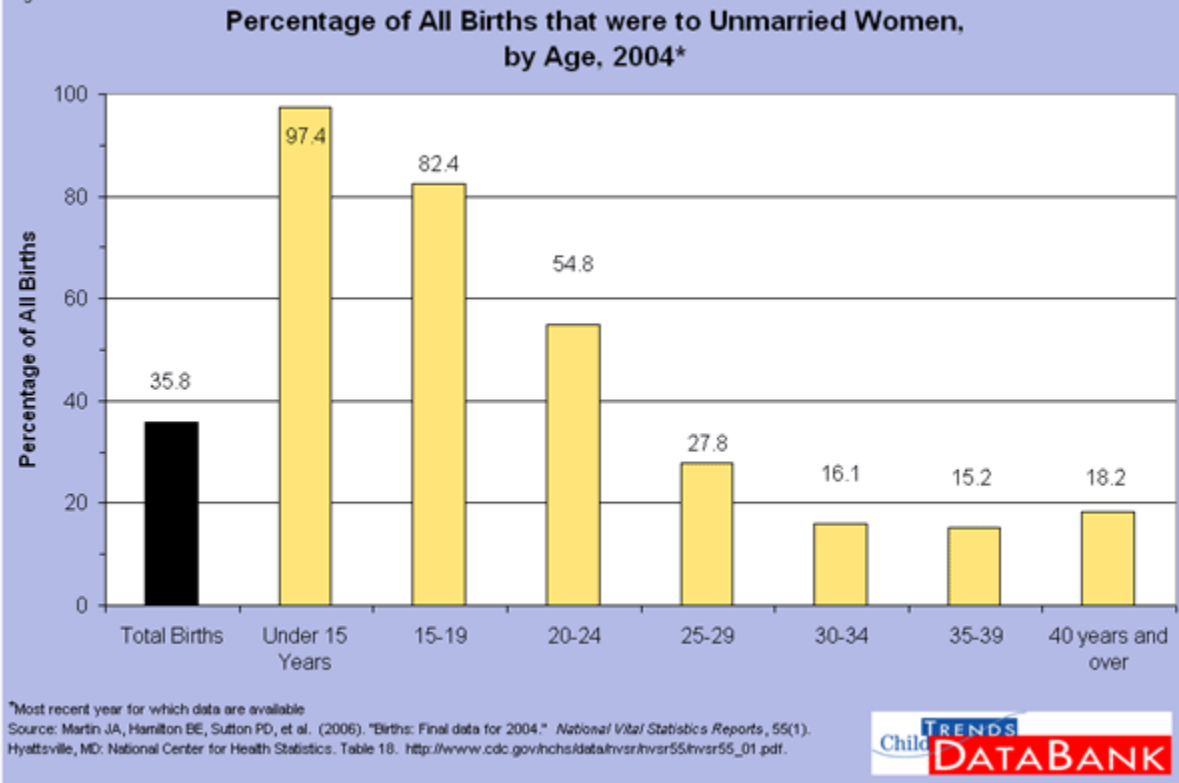


Figure 2

Figure 1

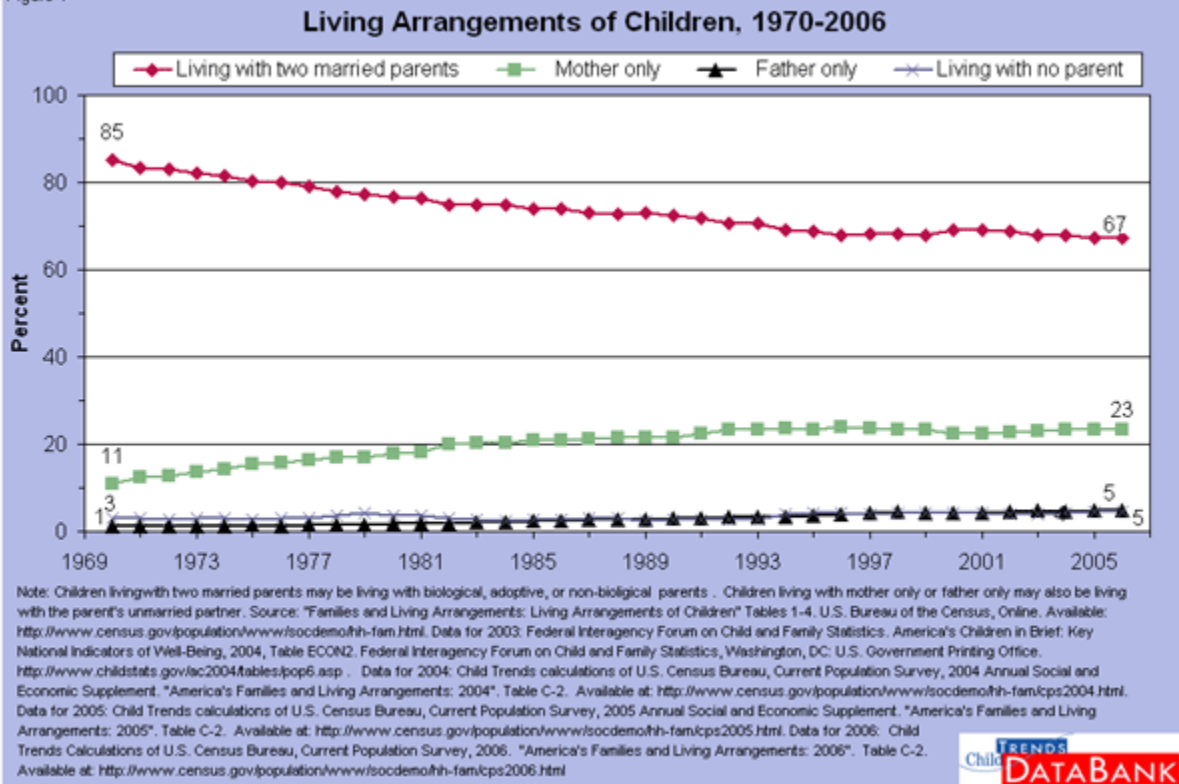


Figure 3

Figure 2

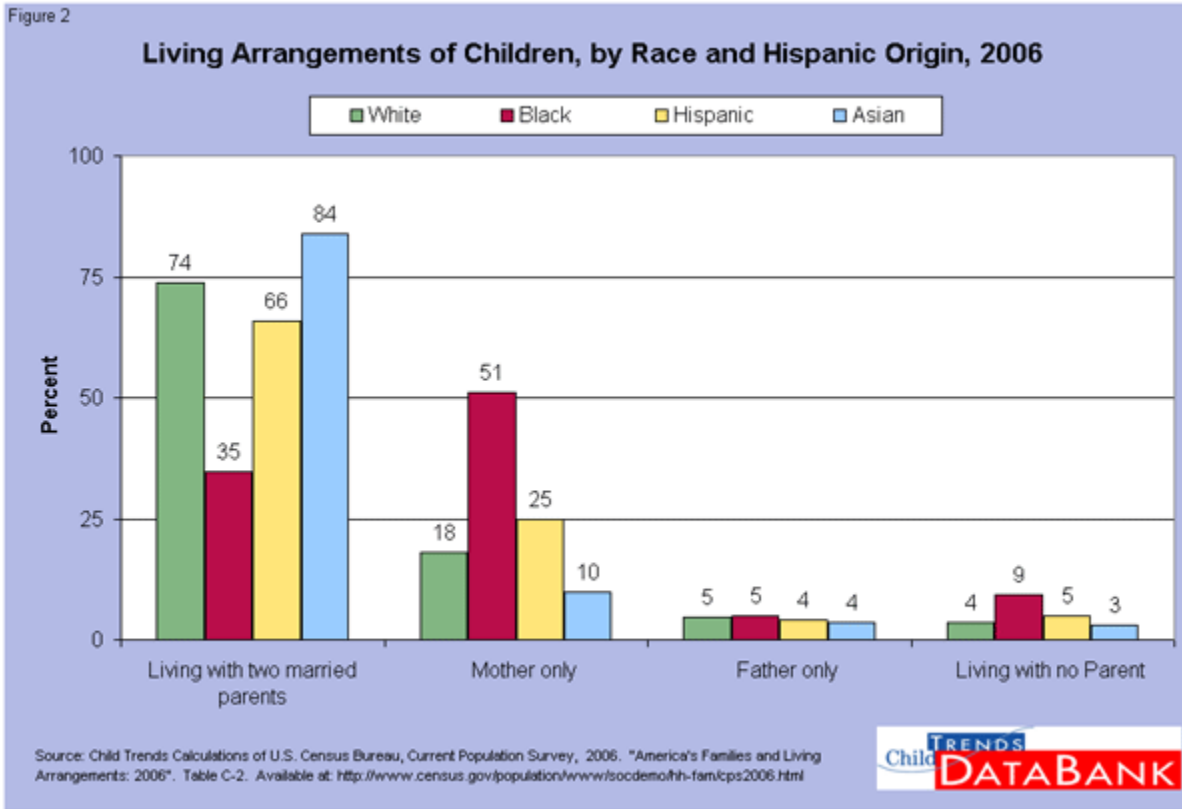


Figure 4

**United States Department of  
 Health and Human Services  
 Region 7  
 Statistics Reported Year 2007**

State	% Fathers Not Present in Home	% All Babies Born out of Wedlock	% Teen Births out of Wedlock
Iowa	>18%	>24%	>78%
Kansas	>21%	>24%	>70%
Missouri	>28%*	>32%**	>74%
Nebraska	>15%	>23%	>75%

\*10<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation

\*\*7<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation

Figure 5



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