



A Distinctive Difference!

Omaha Masons recently established the Masonic Community Center Foundation, 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.

A major challenge of our generation is the fractured and dysfunctional family unit together with the absence of the father living in the household.

That this is a serious community and national social, moral and economic problem is clearly evident in the daily news and is testified to by an abundance of statistics. The steady dissolution of the family structure over recent decades is a core issue and is linked to many of today's societal ills such as births out of wedlock, child abuse, child death, juvenile delinquency, gangs, violent crime, and poverty.

Many groups and organizations have attempted to respond to the many problems facing society. Although of good intent and worthwhile, their efforts may address consequences of societal breakdown and not cause, in effect developing substitutes for fundamental father and mother responsibilities.



A Program of the Masonic Community Center Foundation

What are the distinctive features of the Fatherhood-Family Initiative?

Today's families, youth and parents, are daily subjected to a host of societal stresses. This can result in a destructive circle of youth-parents-youth-parents interactions. The Fatherhood-Family Initiative (FFI) is designed to help break this vicious circle and 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. As a consequence, the physical, social and mental well-being of the citizens of Omaha, Nebraska will be improved.

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.

An important key to establishing the “Father-Son” relationship is to promote time and activity sharing between the two. Because sports and recreational activities provide an attractive incentive for father-son participation the FFI has established the Home Team Sports Club. The types of activities offered serve to stimulate initial interest in joining the program and will lead to opportunities to assess and address the needs of the participants

The structure of the Fatherhood-Family Initiative in a number of distinguishing ways compliments those of other organizations that are currently serving the community:

- The father-son participants in the Home Team Sports Club are enrolled as a unit. The Club’s initial sport for the members is organized recreational basketball.
- The club’s activities throughout are specifically geared to the father-son unit. All opportunities are taken to establish and/or strengthen bonding between the father figure and the young male.
- The young male is paired the adult male with whom he has the closest family relationship. See the definition of “father” given above. No outside participant is selected for the young male by the organization.
- By enrolling the father-son participants as a unit, the program spans two generations at the same time.
- The father will be a visible authoritative/disciplinary figure for his son during the program’s activities.
- The relationship between the father and son is on-going and will continue to grow and develop beyond the stated confines of the program.
- The sons will serve as a link to other related individuals, including mothers and siblings. This will have a favorable impact on the family. The program may schedule events to which relatives and others are invited to attend.
- The father-son participants will develop a sense of identifying with and belonging to the group constituting the Home Team Sports Club. In effect, they will become part of a new neighborhood or community which will be an alternative to other groups or gangs to which they may be exposed.
- The membership can function in a self-governing way so that the participants develop a sense of responsibility to the entire group by answering to the group.
- The Initiative can assist in meeting identified personal needs of the participants by engaging in partnerships and arranging appropriate referrals.
- The Initiative is open-ended and can develop other programs as seems desirable.
- The Fatherhood-Family Initiative was developed by the fraternity of Omaha Masons. Masons have a long history of philanthropy and community service. This Initiative, therefore, has the support of a large number of people from all walks of life. The available resources and contacts of the Masonic fraternity provide a strategic advantage to the Fatherhood-Family Initiative.