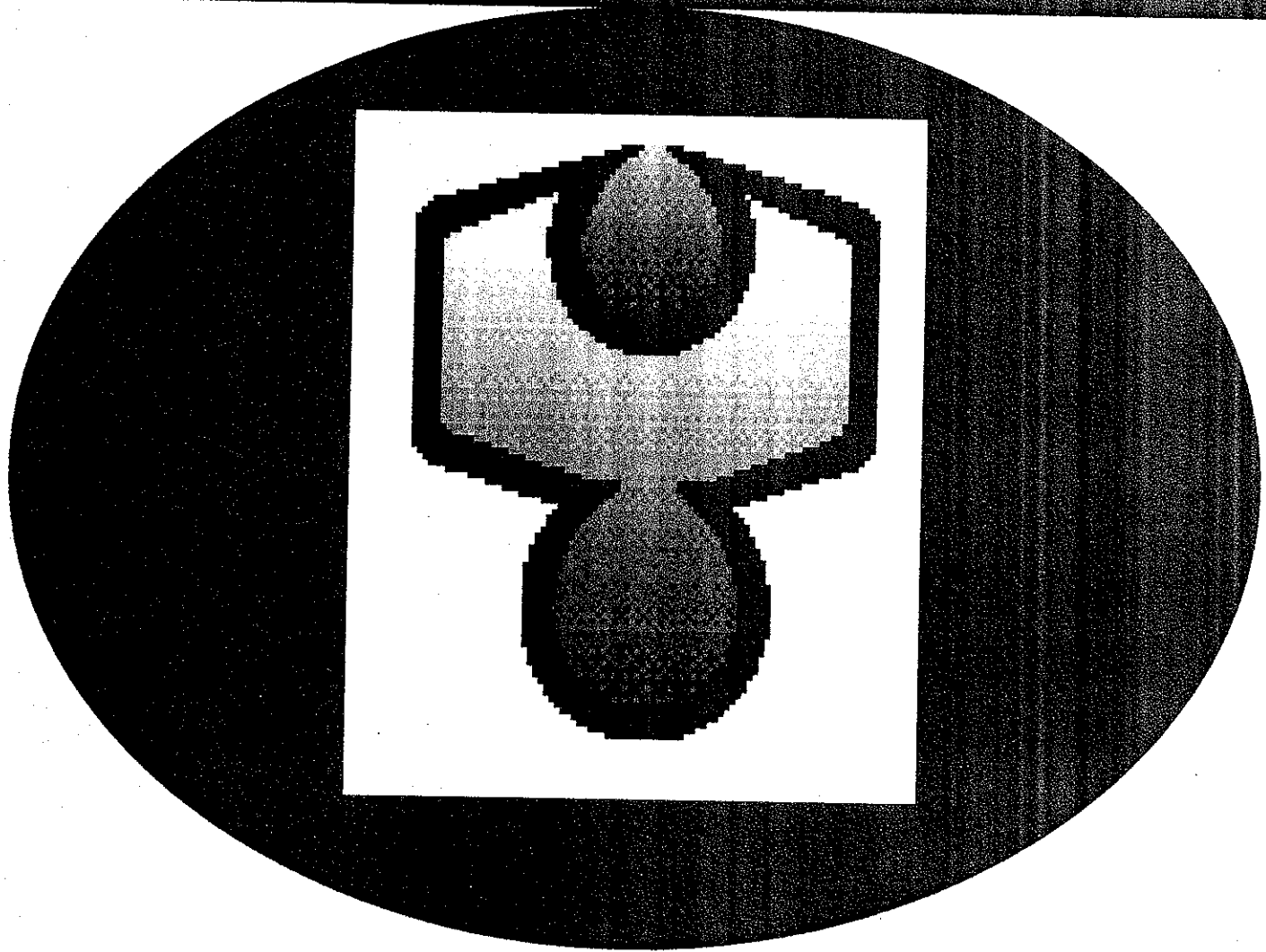


# The Nurturing Father's Program



## **Nurturing Father's Program**

### *From Research and Validation Study 1*

"Parental Attitudes and Behaviors of Participants in the Nurturing Father's Program"

"Quality fathering programs do have a strong potential to increase the parental attitudes and behaviors of its participants. The Nurturing Father's Programs, which were evaluated in this study, proved successful at increasing the parental attitudes and behaviors of participants in all five constructs and overall score of the AAPI-2. It was evident that the Nurturing Father's Program targeted key parental behaviors and beliefs, and the structure and content helped to evoke positive change in their participants. The program provided an effective model by which other programs may be patterned."

"Results of the analyses conducted indicated that there were significant increases in all five of the AAPI-2 subscales (expectations, empathy, corporal punishment, role-reversal, power and independence) and in the overall AAPI-2 score (see Table 1). This suggested that participants in the Nurturing Father's Program improved in their understanding of the developmental capabilities of children, improved in ability to demonstrate empathy toward the needs of children, improved in the reported use of alternate strategies to corporal punishment, increased understanding and acceptance of the needs of self and children, and increased in the value placed on children feeling empowered. Additionally, the results suggested overall improvement in parental attitudes and behaviors that were known to contribute to child abuse and neglect."

Daire, A.P., Greenidge, W.L., & Johnson, N.M. (Manuscript under review). Parental attitudes and behaviors of participants in the Nurturing Father's Program. *Fathering*.

**The Nurturing Father's Program**  
*From Research and Validation Study 2*  
A Cross Cultural Investigation of the Nurturing Father's Program  
Outcomes

"Overall, the findings of this study provide support for cross cultural use of the Nurturing Father's Program, specifically with White, Hispanic, and African-American participants."

"These results suggested that the Nurturing Father's Program, a psychoeducational program for developing attitudes and skills for male nurturance, was effective in changing parental attitudes and behaviors for its participants as measured by the AAPI-2. This was of particular importance since responses to the AAPI-2 provided an index of risk in five specific parenting and child rearing behaviors known to contribute to child abuse and neglect (Bavolek & Keene, 2001). Additionally, Hispanic fathers appeared to get the most out of the program, particularly in appropriate expectations, empathy, and role reversal. A number of practice implications became evident. The Nurturing Father's Program could be a valuable resource for Early Head Start Programs and other programs to assist individuals in bolstering their parenting skills and decrease risks of child maltreatment. Fagan & Iglesias (1999) found that African-American and Hispanic Early Head Start parents with greater parenting skills demonstrated more engagement in the program. Thus, the Nurturing Father's Program also could augment services provided by Early Head Start Programs by increasing the fathers' readiness to participate in these programs. Moreover, certain states with high Hispanic population, such as Florida, Texas, and California, should consider the Nurturing Father's Program in local and statewide intervention programs for fathers, particularly because of the stronger outcomes for Hispanic participants. Additionally, grassroots organizations that serve different populations of fathers might find this an effective approach particularly because a higher education degree was not needed for training to be a facilitator of this program."

Daire, A.P., & Greenidge, W.L. (Manuscript under review). A cross cultural investigation of the Nurturing Father's Program outcomes. *Journal for Multicultural Counseling*.

# Focusing on Fatherhood

Judge James Sheridan is hoping two new programs will help make better men out of local fathers

**L**enawee County District Court Judge James Sheridan has had plenty of time to think about the impact of irresponsible behavior on society. Twenty-three years of dealing with offenses ranging from shoplifting to domestic violence have given him ample opportunity to reflect on how these crimes affect families, and children in particular.

Sheridan describes the case of the man who asked not to be sent to jail for a drunken driving offense because he's worried about how his girlfriend will take care of their children by herself.

"Tell me, how responsible can you be as a father when you're out drunk on the roads?" Sheridan asked. "What's the message here? I'm willing to speak the words of responsibility, but I haven't a clue as to what responsibility is really all about. I get this all the time."

This summer, Sheridan got an idea for reducing the kinds of irresponsible behavior he deals with on a daily basis while simultaneously improving the lives of the county's children.

While attending a conference in Orlando, Fla., in August, Sheridan met Mark Perlman, creator of a program called "Nurturing Fathers." Perlman gave Sheridan some materials describing his group-based curriculum, which aims to teach men so to become loving fathers who take an active role in their children's development.

"In Lenawee County, we have parenting classes and some wonderful stuff for women," said Sheridan. "I thought, 'Where's the stuff for the dads?'"

Sheridan feels that enhancing men's parenting skills will strengthen families while reducing the incidence of irresponsible behaviors that bring men to court.

"The motivation is real simple," said Sheridan. "That is, if you start looking in court at the number of people who either are totally irresponsible fathers or the product of irresponsible fathers, you could probably cut half my caseload out by just taking care of that."

Upon returning to Lenawee County after the conference, Sheridan lost no time in contacting local social service agencies to determine the feasibility of developing a fatherhood program in the area.

So far, Sheridan's efforts have helped to establish two new programs: the Fatherhood Program, offered through Family Counseling and Children's Services in Adrian, and the Nurturing Fathers program, based on Perlman's curriculum

Please see FOCUS, page A4



Telegram photos by Lad Strayer

Insight Counseling therapist Michael Snyder-Barker, left, Family Counseling and Children's Services director John Bailey, Terry Beurer, director of children protection for the Family Independence Agency, and Sally Welch, director of Recovery Lifestyles Inc., right, meet with Lenawee County District Judge James Sheridan.

Story by Jennifer Burd  
Daily Telegram Special Writer



## Focus

Continued from page A1

and facilitated by therapists at Insight Counseling in Tecumseh. Both programs are accepting referrals, and the Nurturing Fathers group will have its first meeting later this month.

The two programs will conduct group sessions that combine counseling, education, and peer support while seeking to help men examine their own needs, learn nurturing principles, overcome barriers to effective fathering, learn ways to exert discipline within the context of fun, teach values to children, and enhance co-parenting skills.

In recent years, the importance of effective fathering skills has received increasing national attention. The National Fatherhood Initiative, an independent nonprofit organization founded in 1994, and President Bush's Fatherhood Initiative at the Department of Health and Human Services have provided leadership for conferences, programs, and workshops on fatherhood across the country.

Proponents of these programs cite statistics that show children who come from fatherless homes are more likely to experience poverty, to perform poorly in school and to be treated for emotional problems.

"One of our great problems of the last 40 years has been our teaching men that they are nothing more than sperm donors as far as children are concerned," said Sheridan. "The idea that men shouldn't be around 100 percent of the time is absolutely ridiculous.

"Eighty-five percent of all persons incarcerated in prisons are from fatherless homes," Sheridan said. "Seventy-one percent of all high school dropouts are from fatherless homes. If that doesn't bother you, check your wallet the next time you have to pay taxes toward welfare. What does that tell you about the need for having Dad in the home?"

John Bailey, director of professional services at Family Counseling and Children's Services, says his agency was working on developing a fathering skills component for its domestic violence program before being contacted by Sheridan.

"We began hearing more and more about the Fatherhood Initiative when I was at some conferences (in Atlanta and New York) as part of this domestic violence piece," he said. "More and more people were starting to say, 'Well, what do men need to do to be good fathers?' And so we started thinking about what we needed to do to incorporate this.

"And then we started thinking maybe we needed to also look at programs for men who aren't battering their female partners but might be able to improve on their parenting."

Bailey says his agency's Fatherhood Program is structured around principles set forth by the Fatherhood Initiative, such as improving support capabilities, improving child well-being, and helping fathers focus on child-centered activities. The program will include 10 sessions over a period of about four months. Between sessions, participants will be expected to monitor one another within teams and develop ways to cope positively with family situations before reporting back at the next group session.

"We're trying to not only improve men's ability to be fathers, but also to help men hold other men accountable if they're not being good fathers," said Bailey. "By men raising the standard so society raises what

it expects of men, hopefully being a father will be valued more than what it is now."

Therapist Michael J. Snyder-Barker of Insight Counseling says that he, too, had been thinking of developing a fathering skills program.

"I've been wanting to do a program for fathers since I finished college back in 1995. So for me, this is a dream come true," he said.

The hands-on aspect of the Nurturing Fathers curriculum is a large part of what makes it effective, according to Snyder-Barker, who will facilitate the group sessions along with counselor Mark Hall. Participants will apply concepts learned by practicing active listening skills, visualizing change, keeping a journal, and creating a "play shop" to which they will bring their own children for a session. Workbook activities to complete at home will also be assigned.

"The goal (of the programs) is very simple — to have fathers be responsible for their children," Sheridan said. "To do what's necessary to have a stable, happy marriage."

Snyder-Barker estimates the divorce rate in Lenawee County has reached about 65 percent. In contrast, the national average is about 50 percent.

"The goal is to help the mental well-being of the caregivers so they can teach the children to be healthy," said Snyder-Barker.

Most participants are likely to enter one of the two fathering programs through court referrals as a condition of probation. The referrals may stem from substance abuse or assault charges, small claims issues, custody cases, and any other cases in which the welfare of children is an issue. Some participants will be referred by local social services agencies and still others may enroll in the programs on their own.

Terry Beurer, supervisor of child protection at the Lenawee County division of the Family Independence Agency, has spent time reviewing the curricula for the fatherhood programs and says his agency will be making referrals to each program.

"We definitely have a vested interest," Beurer said.

Sheridan says he is in the process of determining formal criteria for who should be sentenced to the programs.

"Right now, what we're looking for are men that are basically in the age of either being a father or becoming a father," he said. "Especially those who have articulated the importance of their family but have demonstrated that they haven't a clue as to what fathering is all about."

Sheridan says he anticipates making referrals to the fatherhood programs at the rate of one or two per week. In some cases, he may sentence an individual to additional programs aimed at improving behavior, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

Bailey said he expects the numbers referred to the fatherhood programs will be manageable, an appraisal he bases on his experience dealing with referrals to his agency's domestic violence program.

Individual who are unwilling to complete the program requirements will violate probation and appear again before the judge.

"From the people I've talked to from my Florida experience, most of the guys who get into (the Nurturing Fathers curriculum) really enjoy the program. They start seeing that the reward and the gratification is immediate.

"I'm sure there will be some violations, and I'm hoping not to have to use jail time. Obviously, we do have to have something to act as (a deterrent) on the other end."

Measuring how the

programs have helped fathers will also be a challenge, Sheridan said.

"To a large degree, we can only measure on an immediate basis," said Sheridan. "What this amounts to is, if you're talking about the next 10, 15, 20 years, the answer is only that we have them acquire the information and hope like heck they'll use it when they get out."

Bailey said his agency is required to quantify outcomes for its programs.

"We're an accredited agency, which means that we must look at outcomes for all of our counseling," he said. "So we're creating the outcome measures as we go on this, and they will be in place and will be based on the assessment of an individual."

Bailey said he also has contacted Adrian College to discuss conducting a five-year research study of the two new fatherhood programs.

Snyder-Barker says he uses a set of therapeutic protocols to assess participants' growth in all the programs his practice offers.

Sheridan anticipates that one result of the programs ultimately will be a reduction in court caseloads. "But this is a long-term process," he said. "It might be my successor's successor who sees the results."

Both fatherhood programs will be funded by participant fees, whether attendance is court-ordered or voluntary. The cost of the Nurturing Fathers program will be \$25 for the 15 two-hour sessions, paid in advance, or \$25 per session. Each participant is also required to purchase a \$20 workbook. The Fatherhood Program will charge for each of its required 10 sessions on a sliding fee scale, to a maximum of \$20 per session.

Sheridan said he has considered that paying to attend one of the programs might impact some fathers' ability to pay child support, undermining the effectiveness of the sentence.

"You have someone who is incredibly irresponsible," Sheridan said. "The mother may be getting the check, but what is that really doing for the children? The second thing is, are they going to get the check in the first place?"

Sheridan's hope is that enrollment in one of the programs will save some of the participants' marriages.

"If it's a situation where



Telegram photo by Lad Strayer  
**Lenawee County District Court Judge James Sheridan, center, shown presiding in a recent trial, hopes two new programs that promote fathering skills will help make a difference in the lives of local families.**

being married won't work, fine — but still be responsible," said Sheridan.

Sheridan has also considered issues surrounding the burden of debt that can accrue to a father who is unwilling or unable to pay child support.

"That can become self-defeating, and there's been a fair amount of discussion about that," Sheridan said. "Are we better off to keep him paying on that debt forever or actually worry less about the debt and encourage him to be in the home where he can be of some support and be paying much more because he's living there?"

Sheridan would like to see the core concepts of the new fatherhood programs included in the

curricula of other parenting classes and programs offered throughout the county. As a step in this direction, he has held discussions with Sally Welsh, director and primary therapist at Recovery Lifestyles, a Christian-based nonprofit agency, to explore enhancing the curriculum of her agency's parenting classes with additional instruction on the importance of both parenting roles.

Sheridan will meet with Bailey, Snyder-Barker, Beurer, and Welsh in January to further discuss the implementation of programming and how best to educate the community about the concepts behind the programming and resources available.

"The object is not necessarily

just to deal with what's going on in the courtroom," said Sheridan. "Obviously, if you see something in the courtroom that's happening because of continual behavior outside the courtroom, doesn't a judge have an obligation to start speaking about what's happening outside the courtroom that's affecting what's happening inside the courtroom?"

For more information on the Nurturing Fathers program, contact Insight Counseling at 424-5438; for information on the Fatherhood Program, contact Family Counseling and Children's Services at 265-5352.

Agencies that want to become involved with Sheridan's task force on parenting issues may contact him at 264-4673.

**Main Identity**

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**From:** <nurturingconnect@fuse.net>  
**To:** <mcperl@GTE.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 24, 2003 9:51 PM  
**Subject:** Wanted to share...

Hi Mark,

While it's still fresh in my mind and heart I wanted to share with you the events of my evening. I attended the graduation ceremony of Suma's (Calvin Williams)Nurturing Father's Program in Cincinnati. Fourteen African-American men shared their testimonies and read their letters in the presence of their God, wives, children, parents, siblings, and friends. The impact that this program has made on them is life changing. Two had been homeless, many were drug and alcohol abusers, most were absent or neglectful fathers. They have found hope, a way, and light through the efforts of Calvin, his staff, and your program. This isn't a job, my dear friend, it's a ministry. I was moved to tears (sobs) and beyond. What a privilege we have been given to intervene in the lives of others. I am truly humbled and I just wanted to share it all with you. I hope this finds you well and going strong.

Hope to see you soon.

Love,  
Gayle

10/26/2003

**Main Identity**

**From:** "Audrey Berry" <baa08@doc.state.nc.us>  
**To:** <mcperfi@verizon.net>  
**Cc:** "Steve Bailey" <BST03@doc.state.nc.us>; "Lander Corpering" <cln01@doc.state.nc.us>; "Charlotte Price" <cprice@doc.state.nc.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2006 4:20 PM  
**Subject:** North Carolina Department of Correction, Western Region

Greetings from the Western Region of the North Carolina Department of Correction. I received the information in regards to the training in Florida. It sounds wonderful....but I will be unable to attend. I thought I would send you a note and share where we are with our program. As you know you came to Lenoir, North Carolina in January of 2006 for 2 days to conduct training. Since that time we have implemented this program at 12 minimum custody facilities in the Western Region of North Carolina. This program is funded through a grant awarded by the Governor's Crime Commission. The Father Accountability Program uses the Nurturing Father's Program as the approved curriculum. We are into the second program cycle since implementation. The response has been great from the inmate participants. Here are some testimonies from the inmate participants:

- 1-"This program really helped me to have a better understanding and meaning of what a father is suppose to do to manage and be involved in his children's life."
- 2-"I feel that it is a very positive program and very helpful for those who did not have father's in their lives to teach us how to become nurturing, loving, accountable father's to our children."
- 3-" I learned a lot on how to be a better husband as well as a better and more productive Father."
- 4-" It makes you look at life different. If you are a father, uncle or brother to any young child. It helps in all your relationships "
- 5-" The class was great and helped me to understand the way a father should be and what a father should do for his child and family."
- 6-"The program taught me how to talk to my kids without hollering all the time. I now know that spending time with my kids develops a better relationship."
- 7-" I believe anyone with children could benefit from this program. It definitely has merit! I am glad I got to participate."
- 8-" It helped me to realize that even though I'm in prison I can still make a positive impact on my daughters life. I can't change or take back the mistakes I've made and I can't get back all the years I spent in here (PRISON) away from her....but I can start right now and continue for the rest of my life being the best Dad I possibly can. This class gave me a lot of hope and new found faith in myself as a father. THANK YOU!"
- 9-"It's a good program. A lot of guys come from dysfunctional homes and relationships. They need to be exposed to some normal values and ways to resolve conflict. I like the fact that a lot of guys opened up

1/10/2007



## **10 Tips For Being a Great Dad**

1. **Show Up** - Be there for your children.
2. **Support and Respect** your children's mother.
3. **Listen** - earn the right to be heard
4. **Discipline with Love**
5. **Be a Role Model - Teach by Example**
6. **Know and Be Known** to the people in your children's world
7. **Play with your children / Read to your children**
8. **Show Affection** - Let them know you **Love** them
9. **Help Out** - Take an **Active Role** (homework, housework, etc.)
10. **Keep a Sense of Humor**

# *The Father I am Committed to Be*



Written by Steve Shamblin  
for his Graduation Speech  
from his Nurturing Fathers  
Course,  
February 7, 2002

## *I am committed*

- To accept with open arms the responsibilities of the life I helped create.
- To show by example to accept people and respect their customs and beliefs regardless of difference.
- To fulfill his needs for Love & Acceptance
- To praise his efforts that may have been in vain and tell him that I believe in him.
- To teach the love of nature & all things natural, to be connected to his environment & protect its resources.
- To take the time when he asks why, and stimulate his imagination to the possibilities of what the world beholds him.
- To stimulate his curiosity of things not known so that he may be eager to learn.
- To earn his trust when asked for guidance.
- To allow him to make mistakes and offer words of encouragement to try again.
- To discipline with patience & understanding, void of anger & violence.
- Encourage him to identify & express his feelings' without fear of discussing them.
- To teach him responsibility with the joy of owning pets
- To encourage him to run, play and explore with his friends & learn the rewards of friendship.
- To love and accept who he is & what he may become.