



**COPEs**

## **QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

**Connect-Immunity Project**

**Jefferson County Fatherhood Initiative**

**Jefferson County Healthy Marriage Initiative**

Issue 6: September, 2009

### **Study Indicates Significant Reduction in Recidivism Rates for Reentry Groups Using CLFC**



A recent records study of individuals reentering our community from state incarceration programs indicates that those who receive *Creating Lasting Family Connections* (CLFC) as the intervention program in two of COPEs' federally funded projects have a significantly lower recidivism rate than similar individuals in non-program comparison groups. In fact, the recidivism rate of those receiving the program is almost two-thirds lower than those in comparison groups who did not receive the program.

The two initiatives studied were the Connect-Immunity Project (funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration –SAMSHA) and the Jefferson County Fatherhood Initiative (Funded by the Office of Family Assistance – OFA). We define “recidivism” as those individuals who are revoked, who absconded, or who are arrested. Included in the study were 9 program-receiving cohorts

from the Connect-Immunity Project and 11 program-receiving cohorts from the Fatherhood Initiative. Each program-receiving cohort is made up of 15 to 18 reentry and recovery individuals. These cohorts were compared to 6 comparison cohorts made up of individuals who were reentry and in recovery but who did not take the program.

The individuals in the comparison groups had a recidivism rate of 28.3%, nearly three times higher than those program-receiving cohorts who had a recidivism rate of 10.5%. This is a positive difference of approximately 63% for those receiving the CLFC program. The Kentucky Department of Corrections reports that multiple studies of the statewide recidivism rate compares favorably with our comparison group findings with recidivism holding steadily in the 30-33% range. The key factor in lower recidivism rates in this study appears to be the CLFC program.

We plan to continue to study to see if the CLFC program has similar positive outcomes over longer periods of time. At a time when costs for sustaining prisoners in incarceration amount to approximately \$40,000 per inmate, and looking at the human costs to men and women who are in prison and their families, we are happy to report what we believe is the beginning of a positive trend for programs who choose to use CLFC with the recovery and reentry populations. For more information on this study and specific data contact COPES, 502-583-6820 or [www.copes.org](http://www.copes.org).



## **Fiscal Year Ending for All Three Projects**

September is the final month of the fiscal year for all three or COPES' federally funded projects. The coming year will be the final year of the Connect-Immunity Project. The Healthy Marriage and Jefferson County Fatherhood Initiatives are projected to continue for two more years. Here is a brief list of accomplishments made by these projects over the past year, 2008-2009:

- All three initiatives have been funded for the 2009-2010 project year.
- All three projects are on track for serving their projected numbers of cohorts and participants by the end of their program funding periods.
- In addition to offering services to Dismas Charities' aftercare program for graduates of the Department of Corrections' Substance Abuse Program and clients of the Volunteers of America's Half-Way Back Program, we have been able to serve clients of Dismas Charities' programs at Saint Ann, Diersen and Portland; Sober Solutions; Saint Vincent DePaul's Saint Jude's Women's Recovery Center; and Change Transitional Recovery House for Women.
- We have served individual participants, usually referred by the Kentucky Department of Corrections Probation and Parole, who were residents of Hope Sisters, New Dimensions and Our Fathers House.
- Over 60% of clients volunteered for HIV testing provided by the Volunteers of America of Kentucky for the Connect-Immunity Project and the Jefferson County Fatherhood Initiative.

- The Fatherhood Initiative and Healthy Marriage Initiative were asked by the Office of Family Assistance to join an effort to collect national performance data. The new data collection uses the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) used by the Office of Management and Budget to measure performance of Federal programs.
- COPEs staff members including Ted Strader, Teresa Boyd Strader, Mara Rohrer, Chris West, and Brooke Arnold have presented workshops and participated in roundtables at conferences including the National Prevention Network Conference, Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grantees Conference, and other state and local conferences.
- Graduates of the Healthy Marriage Initiative were invited to participate in a panel discussion during a general session at the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grantees Conference.
- COPEs was recognized with the “Friend of Dad Organization” Award at the Inaugural 2NOT1 Conference.
- Claudia Richards, Branch Chief, Community Grants and Program Development, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), Capt. Florentino Merced-Galindez, the Federal Project Officer for the Connect-Immunity Project (CSAP) and Kevin Pangburn, Kentucky Department of Corrections nominated the Connect-Immunity Project for a 2009 National Exemplary Award for Innovative Substance Abuse Prevention Programs, Practices and Policies.
- The Jefferson County Fatherhood Initiative was designated as one of 8 programs nationally to be named a Promising Practice by the Office of Family Assistance.



None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the continued support of our partners who meet with us quarterly at Project Advisory Group (PAG) meetings, at monthly Joint Intervention Meetings (JIM) and who give us valuable advice and expertise throughout the project year.

## **Office of Family Assistance (OFA) Report on Promising Marriage and Fatherhood Programs Published**

The Office of Family Assistance (OFA) report on promising practices from its Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Initiative is now published. It is titled: *Emerging Findings from the Office of Family Assistance Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grants: A Review of Select Grantee Profiles and Promising Result*. This report designates Creating Lasting Family Connections (CLFC), used in COPEs’ Jefferson County Fatherhood Initiative, as a Promising Practice. CLFC is one of only 15 programs across the United States designated for this prestigious honor. Communities and agencies seeking outstanding programs for responsible fatherhood, or for reentry fathers, will be able to choose CLFC as a Promising Practice. Often agencies seeking federal funding are required to choose a promising

program in order to receive funding. The report is published by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov). The report was compiled by James Bell Associates.

## Project News Flashes

### Fatherhood Initiative News:

During program year 2008-2009 the Jefferson County Fatherhood Initiative continued to serve individuals reentering our community from incarceration settings and/or in recovery from substance abuse and their families. After three years of offering both the 20-session *Creating Lasting Family Connections* program and case management services, the Fatherhood Initiative is pleased to report a 77% retention rate. We have served 259 individuals. "Served" means receiving at least 8 hours of program services. 174 participants completed the program.

During the past fiscal year (2008-2009) the project completed 7 program cohorts partnering with 4 different local providers of services to the initiative's target population. This year we served 115 participants. The Fatherhood Initiative proposed to offer the program to each of these agencies and was able to complete program services to all groups as promised:

- Volunteers of America of Kentucky Half-Way Back Program: 4 Cohorts (each cohort contains 18 to 20 participants)
- Dismas Diersen Program: 2 cohorts
- Sober Solutions: 1 cohort
- Dismas Charities' aftercare program for graduates of the Kentucky Department of Corrections Substance Abuse Program: 1 cohort.

Additionally, participants from Dismas programs and Sober Solutions were offered HIV testing and counseling provided by the Volunteers of America of Kentucky.



Recent graduates wrote the following reactions concerning their reactions to the Fatherhood Initiative:

*This program has been a real eye opener for me. I've never experienced anything as powerful as the Creating Lasting Family Connections program. At first I didn't believe this program was worth my time. Ted promised me it was. I stuck around and I am grateful that I did. I didn't believe until I saw which brings me to this. Ralph Emerson said, "What you do is so thunderous. I can't hear you speak," which means, actions speak louder than words. Ted and his team deliver so well. It helped me better understand where I was more willing to learn. This has been a great opportunity and I thank, Ted, Chris, Mara and all the COPES staff. It has been a pleasure. Thanks a lot! I will be back!*

**Toby H.**

*I am very grateful for the program and the staff at COPES. It showed me a new way to approach life and deal with life on life's terms. Being able to complete this program has taught me a new attitude towards myself and my family. I feel very confident in being a positive role model for my son and family. Thanks.*

**Brandon H.**

*I would recommend COPES' Creating Lasting Family Connections to anyone who wants to have a successful and better life. I learned so many things by taking these classes. I learned about how to be a better parent to my kids and I learned how to get real with people and how to set clear expectations with people also.*

**Anthony P.**

## Connect-Immunity Project

### News:

Since the last newsletter, 100% of the participants in Cohort 8 who completed the program also completed the follow-up evaluation. 90% of the CI-8 Comparison Group who completed the Wave 1 Evaluation also completed the follow-up evaluation. Fifteen (15) participants completed Cohort 11 CLFC programming this month. Sixty percent (60%) of these participants in Cohort 11 voluntarily agreed to be tested for HIV. We have also started two new cohorts: Cohort 12 at St. Jude Women's Recovery Center with 16 participants and Cohort 13 expected to start with 20 participants on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Since we were awarded this grant we have served a total of 202 participants. Within this number:

- 169 are minority participants,
- 23 are minority female participants
- 130 are minority reentry participants. (Note: some participants are counted in several categories and we also served non-minority participants).
- We have provided 115 Case Management sessions to 74 participants
- 31 participants have attended Joint Intervention Meetings with their service providers (Department of Corrections, Dismas Charities and COPES, Inc.)

Here's what some of the participants had to say about their experience with the COPES CLFC program:

*COPES has taught me to deal with life struggles. It has taught me to be humble and to better cope with my family's character defects, as well as my own. COPES is very encouraging regarding managing and learning from life lessons. I'm glad I was a part of this program because it has taught me to live a better way of life.*

### Derrick S.

*This program is what you make of it. In order to grow you've got to take in the information by listening and opening up, facing your problems in order to find positive resolutions.*

### Joshua S.

*This was the sh\_\_\_. I loved it. I learned a lot. Without COPES, outcomes in and of my life would have been a catastrophe. Anyone who comes to COPES with an open mind has a good chance of gaining from this program. I would take it again if I could.*

### James P.

## Healthy Marriage Initiative News:

In August, Ted Strader and Brooke Arnold attended the annual Office of Family Assistance Grantee Conference held in Washington, D.C. Ted and Brooke were selected to present a workshop, "Serving High-Risk, Reentry, and Trauma-based Clients" with a focus on recruitment, retention, and curriculum exercises highlighted. In addition to presenting, OFA selected one of two couples nominated by COPES to participate in a panel discussion during the opening sessions of the conference. Eric and Jessica B. traveled to D.C. to share their inspirational story with hundreds of grantees of how they became a part of the COPES' "family" while participating in the Marriage Enhancement program. Since their participation at the national conference, Eric and Jessica have been approached by many attendees and were recently asked to share their story yet again at an ACF Forum for the southeast region in Lexington, KY. Brooke Arnold traveled with Eric and Jessica for the presentation and yet again they received further praise for their courage to share how the COPES' Marriage Enhancement program has made an impact in their lives.



We are pleased to report that the Jefferson County Healthy Marriage Initiative has been refunded for Year 4. With the help of Dismas Charities (Diersen, Portland, St. Ann, Day Treatment), VOA, Change Program for Women, and past FI/CI participants we served forty-four (44) couples out of the targeted forty-five (45) couples for Year 3. To date, of the 44 couples served, thirty (30) couples and two (2) individuals have now completed Marriage Enhancement Programming with another anticipated seven (7) couples to complete programming on October 22, 2009.

Recent participants in both the 10 week Marriage Enhancement program and Weekend Retreat had the following to say regarding their participation:

*This experience and training has given my husband and me so much hope. We were on our way to divorce court, now we know to try other ways instead of giving up so easily on the person you love and spend time with the most. Thanks COPES.*

**Celica B.**

*Before attending the COPES program on enhancing our marriage, we were unsure of how to work through difficult situations. Now we feel confident in communicating our innermost feelings to one another while being sensitive to one another's views. We know now how to work through it respectfully.*

**Missy & Allen T.**

*I thank COPES for the Marriage Enhancement program – the instructors have shown me the skills to make my relationship better, keeping hope for me and my spouse. They have very good clarity to all questions, great suggestions, and they take the time to listen to me – giving me guidance to a better, healthier relationship. Thanks to COPES and staff, Brooke and Boone. I hope to stay in touch with COPES.*

**Larry S.**

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