

The COPES, Inc.

# Creating Lasting Family Connections® Curriculum Series



Strengthening Individuals, Families, and Communities for Over 30 Years

## **About the Council on Prevention and Education: Substances (COPES), Inc.**

COPES is a non-profit agency whose mission is to advance a comprehensive range of effective programs and services in the Louisville community to address substance abuse prevention through personal, fatherhood, marriage and family strengthening programs that focus on building upon existing personal, family and community strengths. Further, COPES continuously contributes to the national and international body of research and knowledge in the fields of prevention, mental health and emotional well-being as they relate to the development of programs and practices that reduce substance abuse, delinquency, violence, HIV infection, prison recidivism and other negative outcomes for children and families.

The goal of the integrated prevention approach used throughout all COPES programs is called "Connect-Immunity". The Connect-Immunity concept proposes that the more emotionally connected one is with other healthy people, the more immune to social disease one becomes. Each program that is part of COPES' *Creating Lasting Family Connections®* curriculum series is listed on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

### **INSIDE**

- Descriptions of the nationally recognized, evidence-based *Creating Lasting Family Connections®* (CLFC) curriculum series.
- The social, financial and emotional benefits of CLFC.
- How CLFC can save any community **millions of dollars** each year!
- How to learn to implement CLFC through your own agency.

## **The Original Creating Lasting Family Connections® Program**

The original *CLFC* program is a comprehensive, scientifically proven, 40-hour personal and family strengthening program that builds family skills and knowledge related to how childhood experiences can influence our behaviors and beliefs as adults; the differences between thoughts, feelings and behaviors; the developmental stages of children; characteristics of healthy families; emotional awareness and healthy emotional expression; developing expectations and consequences in relationships; saying “no” to people we’re close to in a manner that preserves and/or strengthens our relationship with them; our experiences with alcohol while we were growing up; examining the differences between abstinence from alcohol use, drinking alcohol in low risk ways, becoming drunk and developing alcoholism; examining the possibility of drinking responsibly; the characteristics of positive, influential parents and adults; cultural influences on attitudes and behaviors related to alcohol use; how to recognize when someone may be having problems with alcohol (or other drugs); methods for the prevention of, intervention in, and treatment of the development of a substance addiction; how alcoholism affects families; and the view that any substance addiction (including alcoholism) is a disease.



## **Results and Publications**

*CLFC* has been shown to improve the quality of people’s lives by increasing their healthy behaviors regarding their relationships with others. Specifically, *CLFC* has shown that it positively influences participants in the areas of parental beliefs and knowledge about alcohol and other drugs; youth involvement in setting and following family drug use rules; family and youth use of community services; bonding between parents and children; honest, deep communication between family members; onset of drug use by youth; and overall frequency of youth drug use. These results were published in the following articles:

- Johnson, K., Berbaum, M., Bryant, D., & Bucholtz, G. (1995). Evaluation of Creating Lasting Connections: A program to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse among high risk youth. Final evaluation report. Louisville, KY: Urban Research Institute.
- Johnson, K., Bryant, D. D., Collins, D. A., Noe, T. D., Strader, T. N., & Berbaum, M. (1998). Preventing and reducing alcohol and other drug use among high-risk youths by increasing family resilience. *Social Work*, 43(4), 297-308.
- Johnson, K., Strader, T., Berbaum, M., Bryant, D., Bucholtz, G., Collins, D., et al. (1996). Reducing alcohol and other drug use by strengthening community, family, and youth resiliency: An evaluation of the Creating Lasting Connections program. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 11(1), 36-67.

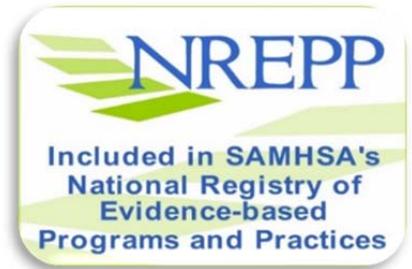
# Dissemination of the Original *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program

The *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program is in use across the entire United States and U.S. Territories, and a number of other countries. The curriculum is available in English and Spanish.

## CLFC: An Award-Winning Curriculum Series

CLFC programs have received numerous national awards for excellence. Below is a chronological listing.

- In 2013 the *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Marriage Enhancement Program was **listed on the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)**.
- In 2013 the *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Fatherhood Program: Family Reintegration was **listed on the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)**.
- In 2010 the *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program was recognized as an **unprecedented fourth time** recipient of the **Exemplary Program Award** from the **National Prevention Network (NPN)** and the **National Association of State Alcohol/Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) (1995, 1999, 2000 and 2010)**.
- In 2010 the *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program was again listed as a **Model Program** by the **National Dropout Prevention Center/Network** sponsored by Clemson University.
- In 2009 the *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program was identified as a **Promising Fatherhood Program** in the Administration for Children and Families' Responsible Fatherhood Initiative.
- In 2007 the *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program was **listed on the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)**.
- In 2006 the *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program was **reconfirmed** as an **effective substance abuse and violence prevention curriculum** by the **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**.
- In 2002, *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® was chosen as a **Model Program** by **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.
- In 2001, COPEs and the *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program received a **Special Recognition Award** from the **Executive Office of the President's Office of National Drug Control Policy**.
- In 2001, *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® received the U.S. Department of Education's **Certificate of Recognition** as a **Promising Program for Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools**.
- In 2001 *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® was **featured as an Exemplary Program** by Health Canada's Preventing Substance Use Problems Among Young People: A Compendium of Best Practices.
- The *Creating Lasting Family Connections*® Program was **featured as a Model Family Program** in the **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention** and the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's** Strengthening America's Family publication on substance abuse and delinquency prevention in 2000.
- In 1997, COPEs Model program, *Creating Lasting Family Connections*®, was **chosen as one of only eight programs nationwide** for the **Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's** model program dissemination project.
- Also in 1996, the *Creating Lasting Connections* program was **selected to join the International Youth Foundation's YouthNet**, an international effort to replicate highly successful programs as demonstrated by research. Only the most rigorously evaluated and effective programs in the world are selected to receive this honor.



## The CLFC Fatherhood Program: Family Reintegration



The *Creating Lasting Family Connections® Fatherhood Program: Family Reintegration* consists of 3 modules (parenting and family relationship skills, effective communication/refusal skills and alcohol and other drug education) delivered in 16 to 18 two-hour sessions. The program is designed to help fathers experiencing (or at risk for) family dissonance through any form of physical or emotional separation (substance abuse treatment and recovery, military service and prison reentry are typical examples). There is an optional module covering HIV prevention (2 to 3 sessions that may include HIV testing) for at-risk populations. Referral capability and/or case management services are also provided. Anyone interested in implementing this program is required to receive *CLFC* trainer certification (requiring 48 to 64 hours of developer-approved training—see page 7) in order to do so.

The *CLFC Fatherhood Program* has shown the ability to produce measurable positive change in parenting skills, refusal skills, conflict resolution skills, family/personal responsibility, open communication about alcohol, drugs and sex, increased HIV knowledge, increased HIV testing and sustained positive change in substance abuse recovery and prison recidivism (when applicable). The program is designed for people who desire positive personal, family and relational outcomes.

The *CLFC Fatherhood Program* includes content that is adapted to focus on life situations and culturally relevant topics specific to men who may wish to return to their fatherly role in their own family and community after experiencing any form of personal or family separation due to life events including incarceration, out of town work assignments, active military duty, discrimination (or other forms of distance or feelings of “less than”-ness).

### Results and Publications

The *CLFC Fatherhood Program* has been shown to increase healthy behaviors and attitudes in nine different areas of family and social interaction including communication skills, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, conflict resolution, emotional awareness, emotional expression, relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment and relationship management, while decreasing a participant’s likelihood of returning to prison **by an impressive 60%**. More specifically, the *CLFC* relationship skills are necessary for family, spouse or partner communication and the ability to effectively bond with and discipline children. Further, these



relationship skills have proven to be helpful for acquiring and maintaining a job, and handling pressure or conflict without resorting to negative, threatening or violent behavior.

Providing financial support, love and consistent discipline are important components of responsible fatherhood. Moreover, for the prison reentry population, disengaging from all criminal activity and staying out of jail, as indicated by a lack of recidivism, allows for the physical presence of fathers in the lives of their children. The *CLFC Fatherhood Program* has also been proven to reduce substance abuse, binge drinking, violent behavior and HIV transmission while increasing substance abuse recovery and personal spirituality. These results were published in the following article:

- McKiernan, P., Shamblen, S.R., Collins, D.A., Strader, T.N., Kokoski, C. (2013). Creating Lasting Family Connections: Reducing Recidivism With Community-Based Family Strengthening Model *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 24, 94-122.

## Return on Investment (ROI)



The *CLFC Fatherhood Program's* estimated cost of \$625 per person represents a bargain price for the benefits that its implementation provides—especially with men who are reentering society from prison. The example and numbers used below show the benefits of implementing the *CLFC Fatherhood Program* with 560 men in Kentucky—a state with a current recidivism rate of 35%. Kentucky could save over \$2.8 million per year just by providing the *CLFC Fatherhood Program* as a systemic part of post-release care for parolees. When the amount of money saved from a decrease in drug-related crime and the amount of taxable income these men can earn when they have been assisted by the program in gaining employment are considered, the savings figures skyrocket to **over \$14 million per year.**

### Recidivism Costs Per Percentage of 560 Men Released



Calculations based on 2009 data pursuant to Kentucky's average annual incarceration cost of \$22,000.



Furthermore, when a father becomes employed instead of being imprisoned, he is then able to pay child support (or begin helping to support his children financially), and be physically and emotionally present in the lives of his children.

Tax payers save money by not paying for the costs associated with the following: incarceration; child support (or child support enforcement); other negative outcomes arising from fatherless families including truancy, drug abuse, unwanted pregnancy, delinquency, etc.

Finally, when a father becomes successfully employed, he not only reduces his own family's burden on society, but he also reestablishes his role as a contributor by paying taxes and helping to support all other societal costs! In our study, 83.5% of our *CLFC Fatherhood Program* participants achieved employment during or soon after program participation.

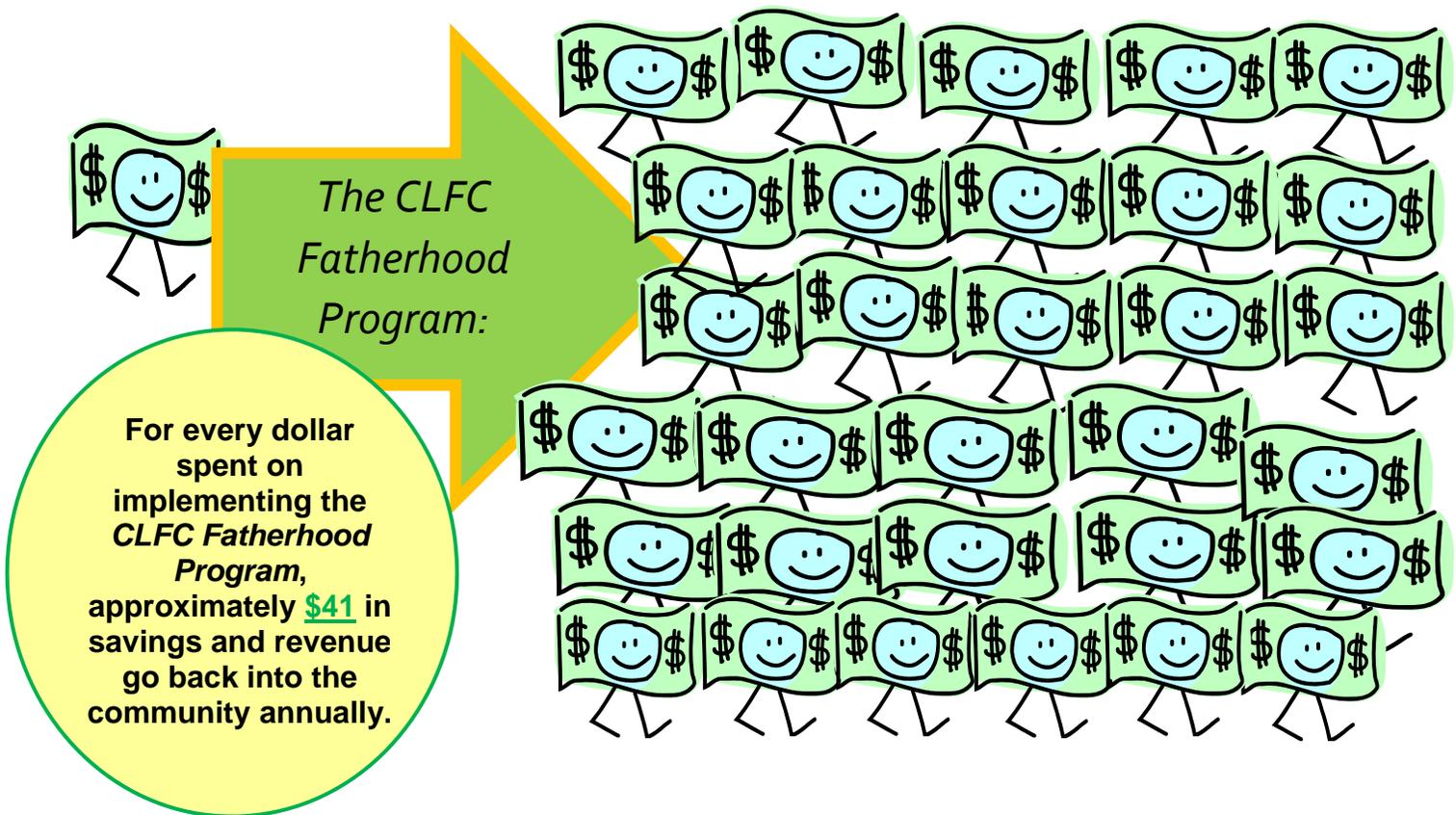
## Drug-related Crime Savings for 560 Men Released



Based on the average victim cost of \$6,396 per year for substance abuser –related crime, from the SAMHSA-sponsored study, "The Cost and Benefits of Substance Abuse Treatment," by The Lewin Group.

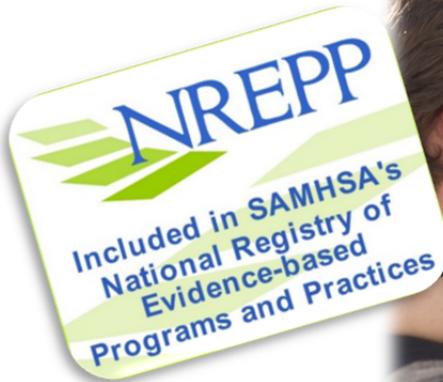


# Estimated Earnings for 531 Employed



In an effort to further address possible interpersonal skills of this reentry population, a version of CLFC was adapted to explore the relationship that these men have with their partners, spouses and children who are still free and living in the community without them. This program is entitled *The CLFC Marriage Enhancement Program*.

## The CLFC Marriage Enhancement Program



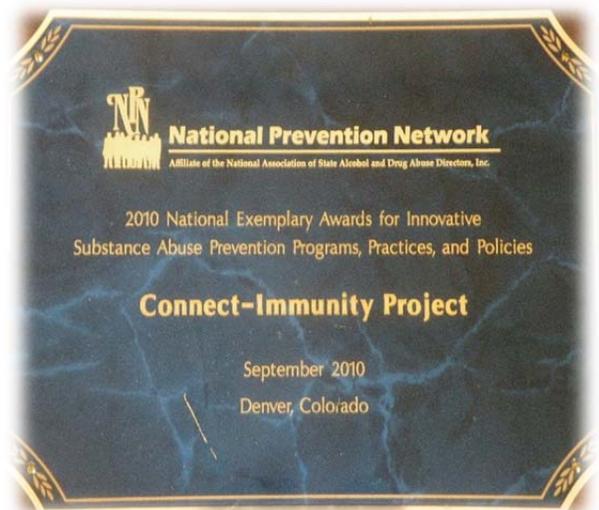
NREPP gave the *CLFC Marriage Enhancement Program* a **perfect score (4.0)** on all 'Readiness for Dissemination' ratings, including implementation materials, training and support resources, and quality assurance procedures.

The *Creating Lasting Family Connections® Marriage Enhancement Program (CLFC MEP)* consists of eight two-hour sessions (or a 2- to 3-day weekend retreat format) that systematically address relationship skills, conflict resolution, respectful communication, memory and reflective thought about factors that affect past and current relationships and relationship satisfaction/commitment. Anyone interested in facilitating this program must be certified by COPES to implement the program (requiring 24 to 40 hours of developer approved training). The program is designed to help anyone experiencing (or at risk for) marital stressors through any form of physical or emotional separation (e.g., military service, out of town work assignments, substance abuse recovery, marital separation or prison re-entry). The program is designed to produce measurable change in intrapersonal and interpersonal relationship skills, communication, conflict resolution, emotional awareness, emotional expression, relationship management, satisfaction and commitment, leading to a decreased likelihood of relationship dissolution. The program is for people who desire positive personal and relational skills that lead to greater health and success. Through the positive rapport established with program staff who share and model important new insights and behaviors related to marital success, couples engage with the material (and each other) to adopt positive, measurable changes toward more desirable and healthy relationship and family behavior.

## Results and Publications

The *CLFC Marriage Enhancement Program* demonstrated effectiveness for enhancing important skills, attitudes and perceptions that couples need most to create and maintain lasting marriages (intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal sensitivity, communication, emotional awareness and expression and relationship satisfaction, management and commitment). These results were published in the following peer-reviewed journal article:

- Shamblen, S.R., Arnold, B.B., McKiernan, P., Collins, D.A., Strader, T.N. (2012). Applying the Creating Lasting Family Connections Marriage Enhancement Program to Marriages Affected by Prison Reentry. *Family Process*.



## **CLFC Implementation Training**



A critical component of the *CLFC* curriculum series success lies in our ability to train other committed individuals who wish to learn to facilitate any of our programs.

While COPES has a 30 year history of providing staff to facilitate *CLFC* programs at other partner agencies in our region, we also understand that this option is not logistically feasible across the nation. We have over 15 years of successful experience in training the staff of other agencies to professionally facilitate our *CLFC* curricula with fidelity.

With a range of between 3 and 8 days of *CLFC* Implementation Training, your staff can be certified to provide one or more of our *CLFC* programs. The *CLFC* Implementation Training explores the professional-level skills and know-how to express *CLFC* concepts and techniques to others in an easy-to-understand way, how to develop effective responses for various questions and circumstances that may arise while implementing *CLFC*, and how to make acceptable adaptations to the curricula in order to better meet the needs of the specific population that your agency may serve.

For more information about preparing your staff to become certified *CLFC* Implementation Trainers, please contact Teresa Boyd Strader at 502-583-6820 or [teresastraderrfn@gmail.com](mailto:teresastraderrfn@gmail.com).

## **Join Us in Creating Lasting Family Connections® for Others!**

As the nation gears up to provide healthcare to everyone in the United States, *CLFC* stands out for its ability to work well both as a prevention and treatment measure, especially when experienced alongside other forms of mental and behavioral health support methods such as 12-step facilitation or individual cognitive behavioral therapy. And *CLFC* is a manualized program with a complete array of support materials that fit seamlessly into most treatment, education and case management plans. Therefore, it is certain to be regularly adopted by professionals in the fields of mental and behavioral health. Currently, at least one of the programs that make up the *CLFC* curriculum series is being utilized by professional practitioners in all 50 states, the U.S. territories, and several other countries. You have an opportunity to be a leading proponent of prevention and health promotion in your region by engaging your staff with *CLFC* Implementation Training and materials today!



**Get involved by contacting us via post, phone, email or social media.**

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## **Notes and Resources**

- 1 - <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=datool&surl=/recidivism/index.cfm>
- 2 - <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/divorce.htm>
- 3 - [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus10.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus10.pdf)

Return on investment data provided by Saint Wall Street, LLC. [www.saintwallstreet.com](http://www.saintwallstreet.com)