



AMTC

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News

“Outcomes for children are improved when fathers are involved, including healthier child development, greater emotional stability, and better modeling of positive relationships and conflict resolution.”

— ANGELA TURNER

AMTC News

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The Importance of Fathers

People often ask what I like most about my line of work: not only does it allow me to support my family in a meaningful way, but it shows my family and those around me that AMTC’s focus is on strengthening families—and on always putting family first. I am exceptionally fortunate that I can go to work each day and learn how to strengthen my own family by the work that we do.

The work of our clients is of utmost importance. We partner with organizations that stabilize and strengthen families. In this newsletter, we focus on fathers. A father’s role is equally important to that of a mother. With an increase in single-parent households, fathers oftentimes do not have equal parenting time and have the responsibility of paying child support. These factors can make co-parenting stressful on fathers, their children and the children’s mother.

In this newsletter we profile two AMTC clients who are helping fathers participate in the lives of their children. Much research has suggested that outcomes for children are improved when fathers are involved, including healthier child development, greater emotional stability and better modeling of

positive relationships and conflict resolution.

Two of our clients, **Fathers’ Support Center (FSC)** and the **Milwaukee County Child Support Services (CSS)**, are highlighted in this newsletter. Both received grants titled “New Pathways for Fathers and Families.” Please read the first article about these stellar organizations and their tremendous impact on fathers, and ultimately families. I also invite you to read about the role of AMTC with FSC and CSS. We highlight specific examples of fathers who have been impacted by these programs and learn about one of my colleagues who works in this field.

As always, if there is anything that AMTC & Associates can do for you, please don’t hesitate to let us know. We are in this together!

Angela Turner
Principal





Left: Program participants at Fathers' Support Center each receive a suit as part of their preparation and training for job interviews.

Fatherhood Grantees

Helping fathers better connect with their children

AMTC & Associates is privileged to work with two national fatherhood grantees: **Fathers' Support Center (FSC)**, which serves the city of St. Louis and all of St. Louis County, Missouri; and **Milwaukee County Child Support Services (CSS)**, Wisconsin. Both are recipients of New Pathways for Fathers and Families (Pathways) grants; the goal of each program is to strengthen families by focusing on fathers.

In brief, the programs help fathers build relationship skills to better connect with their child and the child's mother (whether they are current or past partners), and they receive training for gainful employment and financial literacy. The goal is for fathers to contribute positively to their respective families with social, emotional and financial stability.

Pathways grants are awarded by the National Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. Both FSC and CSS deliver programs that partner with clients to develop individual pathways toward success, based on goals and needs.

Just how do these organizations carry out this tremendously important work? Halbert Sullivan is the founder and CEO of Fathers' Support Center and was recently interviewed by *STL Community Cast* via podcast: "Our program, our methods, are based on therapeutic processes that help the change in behavior, to change attitude.... They sign on for a year, but the first six weeks is five days a week, from eight o'clock to four o'clock. There ain't no exceptions to that rule."¹

Halbert went on to explain that employers want individuals who are on time and come to work every day, hence the rule. Day to day, FSC incorporates evidence-based curricula in the categories of parenting, healthy relationships and work readiness. These methods are coupled with social service assessments, referrals, individualized case management, follow-up and more.

Milwaukee County Child Support Services (CSS) bases its operations on the fundamental principle that a family is healthiest when supported by both parents, whenever possible. This necessitates the promotion of

family stability, thereby creating a better quality of life for the children of Milwaukee County. CSS locates absent parents and works to establish, enforce and/or modify child support orders.

However, CSS is not simply an "enforcement" or "collection" agency; it rallies around families to create the best environment for everyone involved. As a Pathways grantee, it does this through similar goals and strategies to those of FSC by building financial skills and promoting healthy relationships.

Although the focus of the grants is to serve fathers, for both CSS and FSC it's ultimately about what's best for children and their families.

¹ "Fathers' Support Center Founder & CEO Halbert Sullivan," *STL Community Cast*, September 14, 2018, <http://www.stlcommunitycast.com/>.

Below: Milwaukee County Child Support Services co-sponsored Fatherhood Summit 2018, which brought together area resources for building strong families. CSS assisted 201 participants at this event.



Success Stories

Lives are affected and real change occurs through federal grant funding. Organizations such as Fathers' Support Center (FSC) and the Milwaukee County Child Support Services (CSS) make it happen. Here are a few examples.

From CSS:

▶ A father received a letter from Child Support. He attended the Fatherhood Summit and enrolled in Pathways with My Father's House. While at MFH he began working with the Pathways Child Support Specialist, Ms. L. He was re-hired by his employer and worked with the child's mother to forgive the arrears owed to her. The case is now closed and he has no child support garnishments from his check.

▶ A father wrote: "I just want to thank you for all of your advice and support. You really helped me out with this custody battle issue with my son's mother. The courts gave me sole custody of my son and we can't be happier. Sincerely, Fatherhood Participant. Thank you."

From FSC:

Fathers in the program wrote:

▶ "It was the best thing that happened to me, helped me with saving and also filling out applications for other jobs that I didn't know how to do. I had the best advocate there is. I would love to come back and will recommend others to join who need the help and support."

▶ "All the facilitators have been incredible. I would have never guessed so many amazing, caring and like-minded people were gathered in one organization. Thank you! I am now and forever will be an advocate for Fathers' Support Center."

▶ "I feel that I have grown as a man and father."

▶ "I learned so much about time management, banking, budgeting, corporate America, interviewing skills and myself. I wish I would have found out about this program years ago. The best four weeks ever!"



Photos on pages 2 and 3 used by permission of Fathers' Support Center and Milwaukee County Child Support Services.

The basics of a Program Performance Evaluation Plan

AMTC & Associates partners with the Milwaukee County Child Support Services (CSS) and Fathers' Support Center (FSC) so they can be as effective as possible in reaching their goals. One of the many methods that AMTC utilizes for both CSS and FSC is called a Program Performance Evaluation Plan, or PPE. It is a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that aims to improve programming, monitor ongoing processes and progress and ensure continuous quality improvement. All of this helps organizations realize best outcomes.

Briefly, components of the PPE include:

- **Field Research:** AMTC provides ongoing staff training, coaching, technical assistance and follow-up surveys with program participants.
- **Data Management:** AMTC examines data related to fidelity, as well as program performance in real-time, and generates reports for the granting agency.
- **Trainings/Coaching:** AMTC provides technical assistance, offers ongoing guidance and addresses challenges.

Sara Woods, a Senior Evaluation Associate for AMTC, noted that among the PPE's many benefits, it also "supports a culture of curiosity leading to a continuously improved program."

Meet one of our *Associates*



ANN WOLTER

SENIOR EVALUATION ASSOCIATE

WITH AMTC SINCE 2008

EDUCATION: University of
Wisconsin-Madison

What is your educational background?

My degree is in English and French secondary education. I taught high school English and French for six years and then became an educator in sexual risk avoidance for a non-profit organization. That eventually led me to AMTC.

What do you find most meaningful about your work with AMTC and fatherhood programming?

I really enjoy my role in conducting focus groups with staff and providing analysis of findings to help **Fathers' Support Center** maintain staff satisfaction and strong organizational management, which enhances long-term employment and improves outcomes for clients.

What do you feel you've accomplished so far with the current funding for FSC?

I've worked with FSC staff to develop and implement a meaningful evaluation plan that we update each year. Through the plan and data analysis, I can provide insights for continuous quality improvement. I also enjoy providing training and insights into data collection and creating guidance that makes the system as useful as possible.

What are your ultimate hopes for your work with AMTC and fatherhood programming?

At AMTC I hope to help with organizational administration in a way that makes the work of all associates easier. At FSC, to make a difference in program outcomes and staff satisfaction is the goal.

Outside of your work, what do you enjoy?

I enjoy cycling, playing piano, spending time with good friends and traveling.

THANK A SPECIAL THANK-YOU YOU

As the year comes to a close and we look ahead to a bright future, AMTC & Associates wishes to give a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who has shared in our work. At AMTC, we are privileged to partner with top-notch organizations and individuals who inspire us every day.

We look forward to many years of shared experiences and strong relationships. In addition, we acknowledge the following organizations and agencies that have collaborated with us this past year (in alphabetical order):

- Abstinence and Marriage Education Resources (A&M Partnership)**, throughout the State of Illinois
- Better Family Life, Inc.**, St. Louis City and County, MO
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee**, Milwaukee, WI
- Family & Workforce Centers of America**, St. Louis City and County, MO
- Fathers' Support Center**, St. Louis City and County, MO
- Illinois State Board of Education**, State of Illinois
- Milwaukee County Child Support Services**, Milwaukee County, WI
- Mission West Virginia**, 14 counties throughout the state
- Opportunities Industrialization Center of America (OICA)**, Philadelphia, PA
- American Indian OIC**, Minneapolis, MN
- OIC of South Florida (OIC-SFL)**, Miami-Dade County, FL
- Summit Academy OIC**, Minneapolis, MN
- Urban League**, Newark, NJ
- Opportunities Industrialization Center of South Florida (OIC-SFL)**, Broward and Miami-Dade County, FL
- Trinity Church (Peacemakers)**, Miami-Dade County, FL; Harlem, New York City