

# Protecting Our Children's Tomorrow Today



## Fall 2018 Newsletter

**The mission of Parenting for Non-Violence (P4NV) is to educate and support parents to raise their children in emotionally healthy ways so that their children can thrive personally, socially and academically.**

### Reaching the Parents

Parenting for Non-Violence strives to strengthen families by providing proven parenting skills and the support needed to effectively use these skills in their lives. During the fiscal year 2017-2018, 403 parents participated in one of our workshops, bringing the total number who have benefitted since our first workshop 6 years ago to 1131 parents. Between July 1 and October 15 of this year, over 100 parents have attended a program at one of 8 different sites, and the calendar continues to fill. Our goal is to have over 500 parent participants by the end of June, 2019.

Numbers, however, do not tell you how attendees incorporate these skills into their lives, or how the new strategies improve the quality of their family's lives BUT their stories do.

### Fred's Story

Fred, a young African American in his mid-thirties, was raised by his mother and his father was involved in his life. When Fred was 14, he observed that his older brother was able to buy goods, such as prized sneakers, that he could not afford.



The cash came from drug sales. So, Fred started to deal.

Fred dealt drugs for about ten years, somehow always managing to elude the law.

In his early twenties, Fred decided he'd had enough of this lifestyle. He was sick and tired of toting a gun and felt oppressed by the mounting number of funerals he found himself attending – fifteen altogether – for friends who had fallen victim to this way of life. He knew there must be a better way. Fred conferred with his church pastor, was baptized, and three weeks later – near his church at 92nd and S. Cottage Grove – was himself riddled with 10 bullets. Eight months in rehab followed. Fred had to learn how to walk again.

Fred was blessed. Pastor Bates stepped up for him, found him employment and a place to live. The quality of his life was on the upswing. Fred eventually began to facilitate Peace Circles and became involved in Restorative Justice through St. Agatha's Catholic Church. It was there that his relationship with Parenting for Non-Violence began.

Fred and a fellow Restorative Justice presenter were introduced to P4NV and invited to take a workshop with the hope that they would eventually become facilitators. They had the experience of leading groups of men, they knew the neighborhood, and they understood the mind-set of the community.

Fred has now been facilitating P4NV workshops for about three years. Active Parenting Publisher's parenting education programs are still part of his repertoire, but the Fatherhood program, in which he

has been trained and certified to teach, better addresses the issues that face men – the population that Fred primarily serves. His participants include the men in transition at the Cook County Department of Corrections, and parents of probationers at the Cook County Juvenile Justice center. Fred has been an invaluable member of our facilitator team, offering advice and feedback about aspects of the program that work best and what new approaches might be added. The men listen. Fred has been in their shoes.

Fred has custody of his 13 year-old daughter.



### Questions asked of Fred:

**Q. How has facilitating parenting education programs changed you as a father?**

I used to be a dictator, saying for example, 'do it because this is my house or because I said so!' Now, I listen and my daughter talks to me. Before, she would go to her grandmother.



## Q. What is the value of parenting education to the population you serve?

They've learned to want the information in the program. For example, a parenting program was offered to the men in the Department of Correction. My co-facilitator and I chose not to make it mandatory but convinced 7 men to sign up. At the next session, 37 men appeared. We had to add another workshop. Now there's more demand for time slots than we have the means to fill.

Communication skills that work are emphasized in the classes, especially the skills of listening and staying calm. Though the program is designed to work on relationships with children, the men say that they're using the skills in other areas of their lives. After participating in several class sessions, the men begin to use the skills in the class setting – sharing their thoughts and feelings, and their determination to make differences in their relationships going forward. One man reported that if he had used these skills and stayed calm in a situation, he would not have landed in the DOC.

The participants in these classes love their children and want a better life for them than the one they have had. We affirm with them that they have what it takes, especially with these new skills, and we emphasize how the father influence is much stronger than they realize. They leave the last session with feelings of hope and empowerment.

## Q. Fred, so you believe there is a need for our programs? And where do you think we go from here?

Absolutely, I do. Problems often start at home. I hear parents saying they don't need parenting education because their kids aren't yet teens. Learning these skills needs to start early. Looking for answers when a child is a teen is often too late. By then parents can feel overwhelmed because a positive and respectful parent/child relationship has never been nurtured.

Parents need to know what to do when a teen acts up. Sometimes the parent knows their child is not going to school and the parent does nothing.



*Bravo, Fred! We are lucky to have you as part of our team.*

**Ways to Support Us - [Mention P4NV to a potential host site or donor.](#) We are in need of volunteers – grant writers, researchers and others. We welcome conversations with persons who have skills they wish to contribute and are looking for an opportunity to make a difference. Share the information with Teresa Pennix Gill at [tgill@parenting4nonviolence.org](mailto:tgill@parenting4nonviolence.org)**

## P4NV Update

P4NV continues to respond with new programs in answer to parents' needs and requests. The 12-session Fatherhood program, introduced in 2017, has been in strong demand. Family Money Skills was instituted just this month; providing the critical skills needed to make smart financial decisions. Family financial literacy ensures the cycle of learning and progress passes from generation to generation.

A ten-minute segment of the documentary on P4NV has been completed. The first viewing is scheduled at Westmoreland Country Club in Wilmette on Sunday, November 18. P4NV is very grateful to award-winning documentarian, Dr. Pat Werhane of Big Questions Productions, and to Tom Cunningham for his wonderful filming and editing skills and to both for donated time. A big thank-you also goes to Ev McHugh and Sheila Mickus for their generous funding. Teresa Pennix Gill's sensitive interview conveys the importance of parenting education in a touching, heart-rending way. The viewer is introduced to parents of diverse backgrounds as they engage in a class session. We hope this documentary will promote interest in and support of widespread parenting education.

Four new facilitators, three of whom speak Spanish, have participated in an Active Parenting webinar and are proceeding through the next training steps. These three will fill some of the gaps that will occur at the first of the year; our very popular Spanish language presenter, Migdalia Gutierrez Cortez, must cut back on her schedule as she takes on a full-time employment. Milly has been the ideal facilitator, loving the work and going the extra mile in many ways – including being a great ambassador.

We are very grateful for the addition of four new Board members, as we continue to be a working Board composed strictly of volunteers. The need and increasing demand for this important form of education can be fully met only with many hands to make it possible.

## Introducing New Board Members

**Deacon Alfred Coleman II.** A deacon at St. James Catholic Church, he is the Director of Zacchaeus House for homeless men needing a second chance.

Deacon Coleman will take on responsibility of oversight of the Fatherhood program.

**Karen M. Purves, LCPC.** She recently retired from private practice where she focused on helping clients with mood disorders, relationship and self-esteem issues. Karen has assumed the duties of recording secretary.

**Tiffany Swann-Covington, MBA in International Management from Baldwin Wallace University.**

She is the former Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Northern Instruments Corp. and has served other major companies and organizations in lead management capacities. Tiffany is our lead in updating the strategic plan.

**J'Arnay R. B. Taper, Master's in IMC from Roosevelt University.** She is a freelance integrated marketing communications professional. J'Arnay will employ her talents in developing and monitoring our social media.

We thank all who have made our outreach possible. Small non-profits cannot thrive without you!  
April 1, 2018 – October 31, 2018

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