



Children's Network (CN)

Fatherhood Conference Inspires Men of All Ages

HS Connection Staff

Inland Empire men were inspired, educated and better equipped to tackle the challenges of fatherhood and to be actively engaged in their children's lives during the Inland Empire Fatherhood Conference.

The August 15, 2015 conference, held at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, featured several speakers and workshops that provided fathers with information and resources. Keynote speakers for the event included Richard Jones, an actor, and Barry E. Knight, an author and leadership coach. Topics addressed during the workshops included: tips for new and young fathers, financial empowerment for dads, how to navigate the systems, fathering children with disabilities, and several others.

"One of the most consequential social trends of our time is widespread father absence in the lives of our nation's children," said Marty Sellers, Chair of the Inland Empire Father Involvement Coalition (IEFIC) and Executive Director of Operation New Hope.

Lesford Duncan, of the San Bernardino County Children's Network and the co-chair of the IEFIC, added that "an absent father increases a child's risk for experiencing a host of poor outcomes in the short and long term, such as poverty, poor school performance, child abuse and neglect, emotional and behavioral problems, and incarceration."

The inaugural conference was a result of a collaboration by the Inland Empire Father Involvement Coalition (IEFIC), a group of community-based organizations, county agencies, faith-based organizations, and individuals from various professions working together to reduce father absenteeism and the negative images of fatherlessness. The mission of the IEFIC is to encourage healthy child development by promoting the involvement, necessity, and value of the role of fathers in the family and the community. Participating San Bernardino County agencies include the Children's Network, Children and Family Services, Preschool Services Department, Behavioral Health, Public Health, Child Support Services, Probation, Superintendent of Schools, and others.

The Children's Network of San Bernardino County works to improve the quality of life for children at risk who, because of behavior, abuse, neglect, medical needs, educational assessment, and/or detrimental daily living situations are eligible for services from one or more

Continued on the next page...



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of the member agencies of the Children's Policy Council.

Children's Network is doing its part to help the community achieve the Countywide Vision by ensuring residents have the resources they need to provide the necessities of life to their families. Information on the Countywide Vision can be found at www.sbcounty.gov/vision.