

CHANGING THE LIVES OF DADS AND THEIR CHILDREN

FATHER Project and Mind the Gap



FATHER Project



Presenters

- Guy Bowling, Father Project Manager
- David Mirambeaux, Case Manager/Goodwill
Easter Seals – FATHER Project





Central Minnesota Legal Services



MINNEAPOLIS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.1



COMUNIDADES LATINAS
UNIDAS EN SERVICIO



FATHER Project

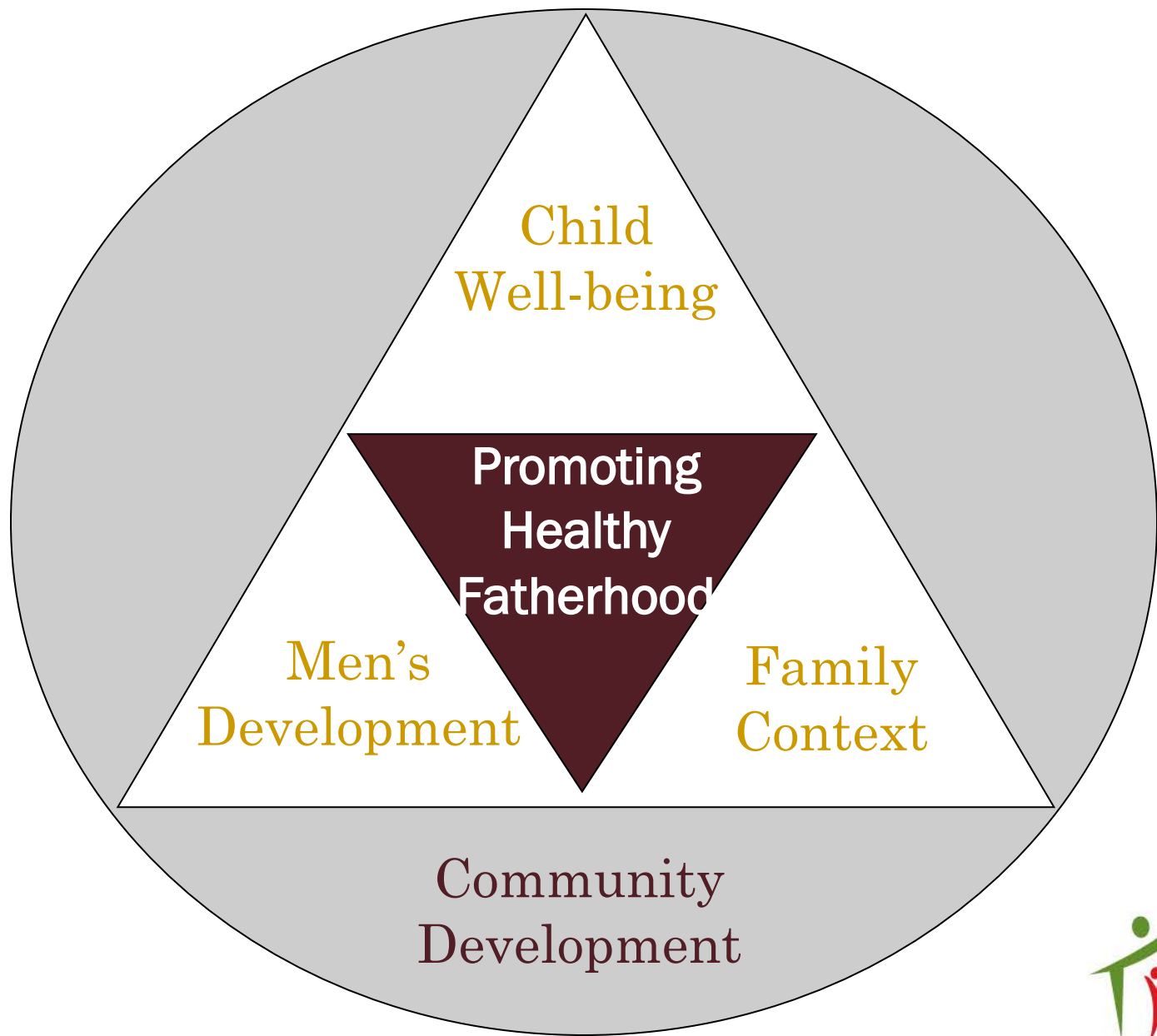


AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY SERVICES



GOODWILL-EASTER SEALS
MINNESOTA





The Crisis of Fatherhood

- Low Income Communities
 - More children born to never-married parents
 - Domestic violence
 - Alcohol & drug abuse
 - Mental health issues
 - Child welfare & child protection
 - Teen pregnancy



The Crisis of Fatherhood

- Socio-economic crisis faced by young men of color
 - Low educational attainment
 - High rates of unemployment and underemployment
 - High rate of arrest and incarceration
 - Intergenerational poverty
 - Structural racism



Positive Father Involvement

- Benefits for children and youth
 - Exhibit higher levels of academic achievement
 - Greater empathy, self-esteem and creativity
 - Higher verbal skills
 - Higher cognitive competence
 - Results hold true for both resident and non-resident fathers and across social classes



“Empowering fathers to overcome barriers that prevent them from supporting their children economically and emotionally.”



FATHER Project

- Solution focused
 - We believe that the positive involvement of both parents is important to the healthy development of children and increases their chances of leading a safe, healthy childhood.



FATHER Project

- Description of participants
 - Average age 29 years
 - 48% lack a high school diploma
 - 31% ex-offenders, most have criminal background
 - All are low income
 - Over 90% are non-custodial parents
 - African American 51%, Latino 23%, American Indian 12%, Caucasian 13%



What services are offered?

- Intensive Case Management
- Parenting and Empowerment Groups
- Child Support Services
- Legal Services
- Employment Services
- GED Services/Education
- Father and Family Activities
- Citizen Father Project/Community Action



Ramsey County Child Support Services

- Dedicated caseworker
- Orientation session, onsite office hours
- Forgiveness of public assistance arrears; 15%, 20%, 50%, then \$ for \$
- Driver's license reinstatement
- Release of student grant holds
- Review for modification of court order



In 2011, 202 fathers enrolled in the FATHER Project's intensive program.



In 2011, FATHER Project reported 38 job placements
with an average wage of \$10.19/hour



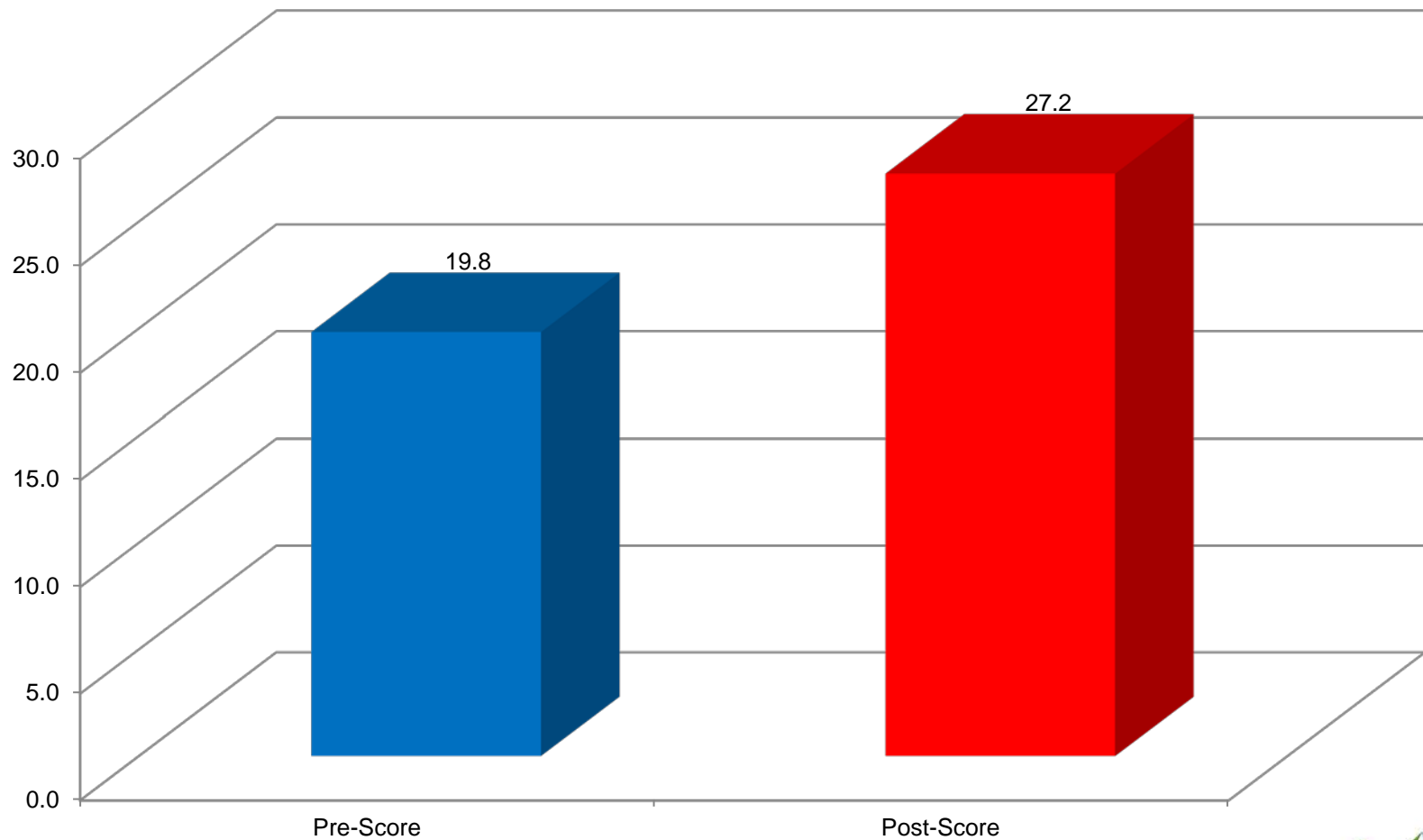


In 2010, FATHER Project participants, despite significant barriers to employment, paid 56% of child support owed.

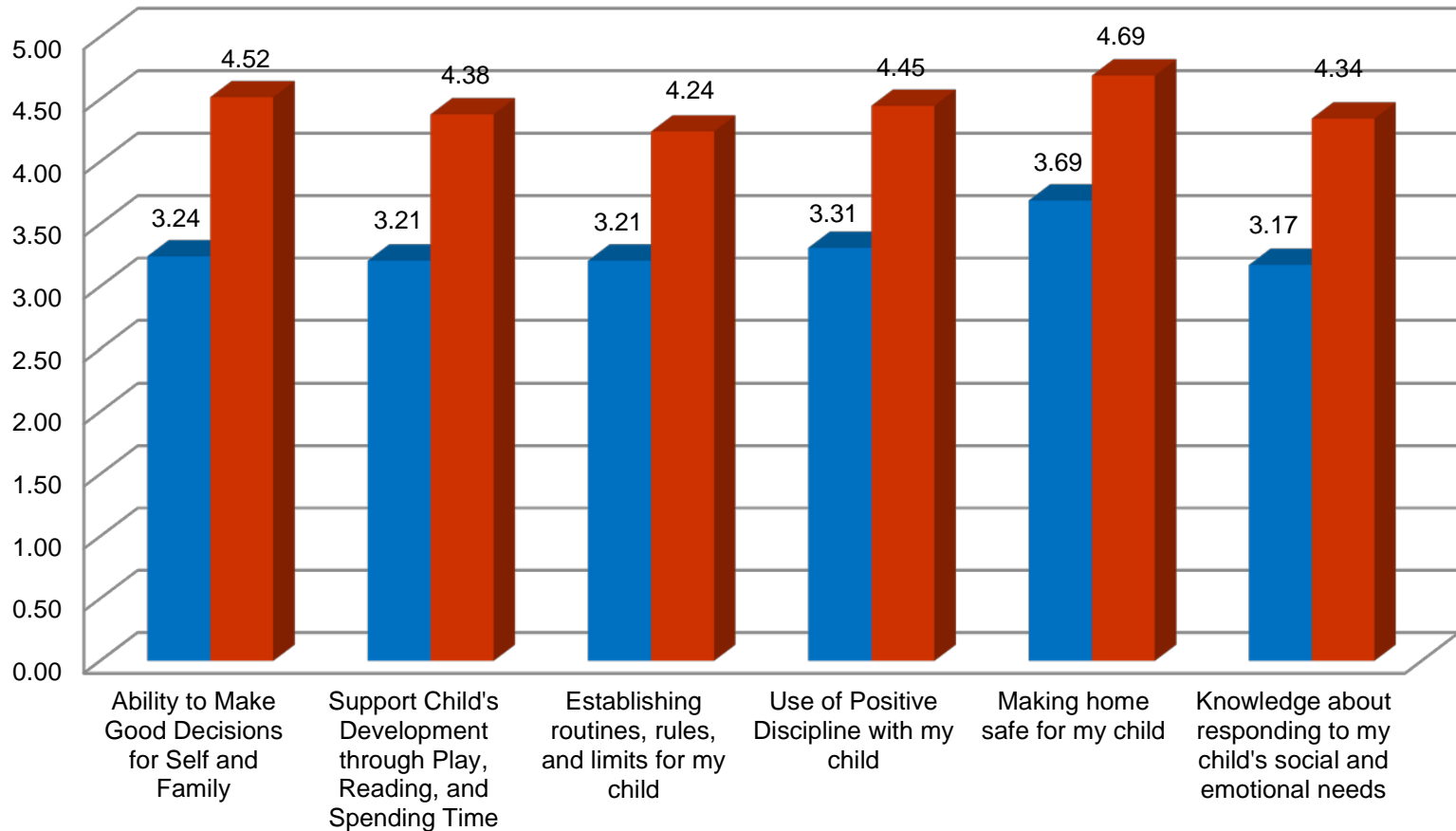
195 participants attended the bi-weekly child support orientation sessions.



Parenting Group Impact: Pre & Post Test Results



Parenting Group Impact: Item Results (pre & post)



FATHER Project

- Fundamentals of the Model
 - Responds to the real needs of fathers
 - Economic and emotional support
 - Positive father involvement and co-parenting
 - Connects public & private systems
 - Approach honors women
 - Focus on early childhood development
 - Collaborative approach, context of the community



FATHER Project: A vision for the future



Replication & Expansion

- Received \$1.7 million “Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood” grant
- Focus on healthy marriage/relationships, economic stability & parenting
- Engage new partners in providing services to suburban & rural areas, establish 5 new sites
- Increase capacity to serve diverse populations



FATHER Project Lessons Learned:

- Collaboration works.
- Mind the Gap recognition event success.
- G/ES “Day in the Life” success.
- If you see them how we see them, you will then become a champion.
- Support systems work, services are secondary.



Contact Information

- David Mirambeaux,
dmirambeaux@goodwilleasterseals.org
Phone: 612-730-3733 / 612-724-3539 x 112
- Trish Skophammer
Trish.skophammer@co.ramsey.mn.us
Phone 651-266-3200



Mind the Gap: Child Support, Corrections, and Fatherhood

Minnesota's experience as part of
OCSE Section 1115 Federal Grant



Presenters

- Cindy Steinberg, Grant Manager, Department of Human Services, State Child Support Enforcement Division
- Melissa Froehle, Ramsey County Child Support Supervisor
- David Mirambeaux, Case Manager/Goodwill Easter Seals – Mind the Gap



Context in Minnesota

- State supervised, county administered child support
- MN law allows for child support to be modified when obligor is incarcerated
- 2007 DOC/Child Support Liaison position implemented & SHLIF policies start statewide
- Well-established fatherhood programs
- On a percentage basis, MN diverts more offenders away from state prisons than any other state – prison population has more serious and chronic issues



What is the Mind the Gap effort?

- Three year grant project
- Funded in part by Federal 1115 grant (connected to Prisoner Reentry Initiatives)
- Partnership of state and local govt agencies and nonprofits – State Child Support, Hennepin County Child Support, Ramsey County Child Support, Department of Corrections, Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, Goodwill Easter Seals MN, African American Family Services



Objectives

1. Build collaborative partnerships
2. Improve information sharing
3. Train and educate professionals who serve offenders
4. Specialized case management services for pilot project



Expected Outcomes

- Develop best practices
- Improved paternity testing procedures for inmates
- Improved interface between child support and corrections computer systems
- Develop and use child support case summary sheet
- Improved child support, recidivism and fathering outcomes from specialized case management



Evaluation

- Process Evaluation
- Outcome Evaluation:
 - 3 quasi-comparison groups
 - Those who participated
 - Those who declined to participate but meet target criteria
 - Those who are the control group for a similar pilot project



Timeline

- September 2009 notified of grant award and Steering Committee starts meeting
- January 2010 – Case manager hired
- February 2010 - Kick-off – brought all partners together for training
- April 2010 – first group of offenders visited in prison
- May 2010 – first released offender enrolls in services
- April 2012 – last offender enrolls in services
- October 31, 2012 – case mgmt services will stop

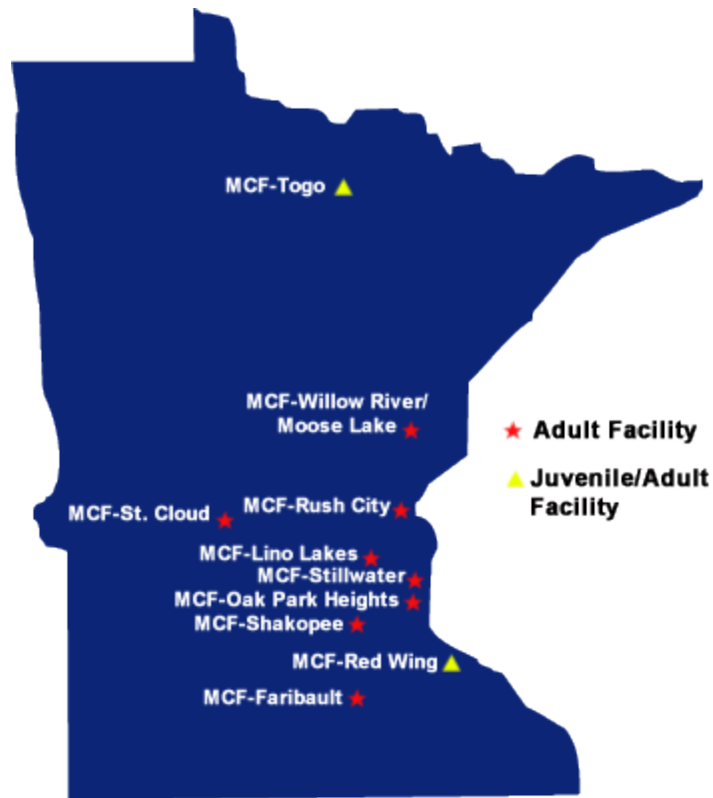
Total Time in Case Mgmt Services = 2 years



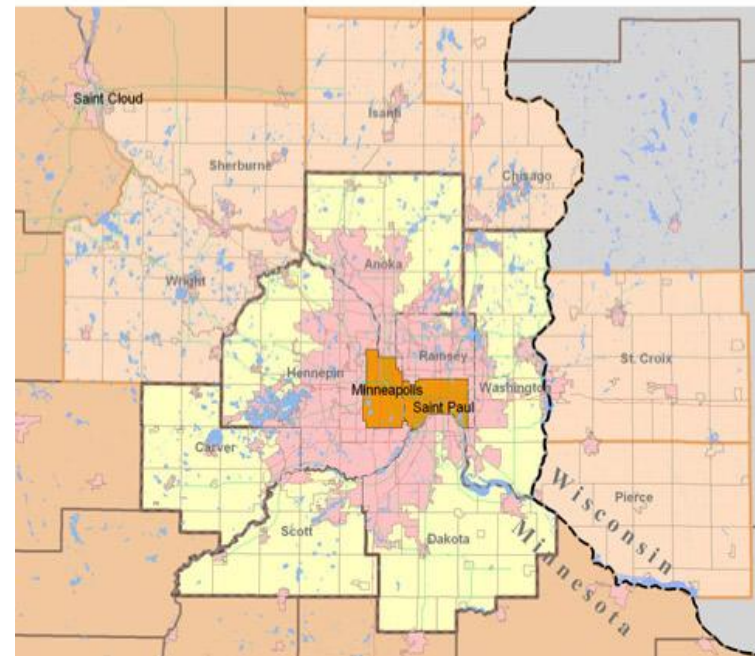
Specialized Case Management: Target Population

From Faribault Prison

to Hennepin or Ramsey county



Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington MN-WI
Metropolitan Statistical Area



Case Management Model

- Identified in prison 5 months pre-release, first contact with case mgr, visits, limited services
- After release, if meet with case manager, complete fatherhood plan, DV screening, then officially enroll, then child support services and other services start
- Stay with case manager until successful complete individual objectives or unsuccessful (stop participating/return to prison etc.)



Goodwill Easter Seals (fatherhood) case manager role

- Case management, intensive 1 on 1 services:
 - Individual development and monitoring
 - Monthly fatherhood plans with motivational goal setting
 - On-site G/ES parenting classes specific to the population
 - Connection to child support
 - Connection to G/ES resources, job club, training programs, soft supports



Child Support Role

- Communicate regularly with case manager
- Respond to monthly calls from NCPs
- Review for application of SHLIF strategies (such as arrears management)
- Get order right and keep it right
- Maintain coding for evaluation requirements



Addition of Second Chance Grant

- Goodwill Easter Seals was the recipient of additional funding for this population:
 - Provide dedicated employment consultants
 - Provide individualized mentoring
- Started part-way through the 1115 grant
- Resulted in team approach between case mgr, mentor and employment services, on-going coordinated case reviews between the team



Barriers that the men face

- Previous lifestyle
- Stigma that they cannot be trusted
- Addiction (estimates are 90% of MN inmate pop.)
- Resentment of the judicial system
- Shame
- Belief that their children are better off without them
- Belief that they will never, no matter what they do, get the opportunity to be part of their children's lives
- Belief that they can go to school and have free loan \$ (unrealistic/unknowledgeable beliefs about money)



Examples of success stories



- Derrick's Story
- Cory's Story
- Mike's Story (not pictured)

And findings from participant interviews



What do the numbers say?

- Enrolled – approx. 125
 - Successfully completing program
 - Return to Prison
- Paying child support
- Completing parenting classes / empowerment classes
- Keeping in contact with their child
- Completed DV prevention classes
- Mentor matches
- Successfully employed / ERT / complete skills training
- Trained as PGF / Completed Leadership Group / became mentor / external recognition
- Completed financial literacy training
- Independent Housing



Other components or outcomes from the grant

- Updated computer interface
- Phone script for participants to use when calling child support
- Child Support Case Summary Document
- Statewide training to professionals

Still in process / Coming attractions:

- Streamlined genetic testing in prison
- Legacy tools & training



Challenges we faced in implementation

- Initial enrollment numbers low – assumptions or expectations may have been too high
- Needs more extensive than anticipated
- Need more than one case manager; need multiple personnel
- Changes in roles (people leaving positions)
- Didn't have a lot of “carrots” to offer in the way of child support
- Connection with POs in the field very weak



Generalized Findings & Lessons Learned

- Need to keep regular meetings (bi-monthly steering committee) and CCR reviews
- Provide as many services in-prison pre-release as possible
- Immediate needs important, help develop relationships so you can address child support
- Strengths based approach
- Realistic expectations / takes a long time to see longer term benefits with child support



Institutional Impacts

- Corrections using child support information
- Corrections more broadly “family friendly”
- Child support –
 - Child Support Case Summary Document – broad use internally and with corrections
 - recognizing needs of offenders are different; connection to reentry more broadly;
 - some counties eager to connect and provide services even though not part of the grant
- Nonprofit side, identifying internal solos (fatherhood v. reentry) and finding solutions
- Improved collaboration among agencies



Contact information

- Cindy Steinberg, cindy.steinberg@state.mn.us
Phone: 218-832-3875
- Melissa Froehle, melissa.froehle@co.ramsey.mn.us
Phone: 651-266-3370
- David Mirambeaux, dmirambeaux@goodwilleasterseals.org
Phone: 612-730-3733 / 612-724-3539 x 112

