



An Action Plan



Masonic Community Center Foundation

“A Community Coming Together”



Local members of the Masonic Fraternity have developed a community Fatherhood-Family initiative in Omaha

Who are Masons?

Masons comprise the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world, with more than two million members in North America and more than 8,000 in Nebraska. Masonic Lodges are found in nearly every community; in larger cities, there are usually several.

Masons represent virtually every occupation and profession and come from diverse political ideologies. While all members hold personal religious convictions and believe in a supreme being, Masons as a group are not affiliated with any religious organization.

Masons believe and teach that each person, through self-improvement and community leadership, has an obligation to help humanity. Masons learn about morality and leadership at their local lodges, which are easily recognized by their display of the architect's compass and the carpenter's square – symbolic of builders in the community.

Masonic principles include:

- Fulfilling duties to God, country, neighbor, family and oneself
- Recognizing honor and integrity as keys to a meaningful life
- Caring for and sharing with one's fellow man
- Being a good citizen and obeying the law

Builders of the Past, Present and Future

Masons have made many important contributions to our country and to the world. A number of America's founding fathers, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock and Paul Revere, were Masons. Eight of the 56 people who signed the Declaration of Independence and 13 signers of the Constitution were Masons. Thirteen U.S. presidents, eight vice presidents, and 42 Supreme Court justices have been Masons, as have numerous members of Congress. Literally and figuratively, Masons have helped build America.

History of Giving

Masons contribute over \$2 million dollars every day to various philanthropies to meet community, social and healthcare needs – particularly for children whose families can't otherwise afford treatment. Some of these include:

- Orthopedic and burn hospitals (Shrine Masons Hospitals) for children
- Diagnosis, treatment and research related to diseases of the eye
- Scholarship programs
- Support of ordained ministers making pilgrimages to the Holy Land
- Diagnosis, treatment and research relating to children with central auditory perception disorders
- Medical research in molecular biology and arterial disease
- Clinics for children with language disorders
- Children's homes and retirement homes
- MasoniCHIP (Children's Identification Program)

Masonic organizations perform many public service activities in their communities and sponsor youth groups including the Order of De Molay, Job's Daughters and Rainbow Girls. Masons consider it important to help mold and develop the character of our country's future leaders.

A New Masonic Initiative for Omaha

Omaha Masons have come together and developed an initiative to help meet a major challenge of our generation, namely, the fractured and dysfunctional family unit. That this is a serious community and national social, moral and economic problem is clearly evident in the daily news and testified to by an abundance of statistics

THE MASONIC COMMUNITY CENTER FOUNDATION

Omaha Masons recently established the Masonic Community Center Foundation (MCCF). The MCCF is an IRS 501(c)(3) entity. Its purpose is to serve both the various Omaha Masonic organizations and the Omaha community in which they reside. The Masonic organizations draw their membership and vitality from and thus are intimately involved with the citizens in the locality in which they live.

Masons have a long history of honoring the precepts of duties to family, country and their fellow man. Consistent with those principles and to respond to the problem of the fractured family detailed above, the MCCF has formulated the **Fatherhood-Family Initiative**. The goal of the Initiative is to help strengthen the family. It will help fathers bond with their offspring and help restore responsible fatherhood to the family, including the role of authority figure and family provider. For the purpose of this Initiative the term "father" is defined as a recognized responsible adult male figure or role model, including the biologic father, adoptive father, or other adult caring male. This Initiative is sharply focused to foster a healthy bonding between fathers and young males, i.e., the 'Father-Son" relationship.

The MCCF Fatherhood-Family Initiative – A Holistic Program

Because multiple factors are involved in the phenomenon of the fractured family, it is likely that only a holistic approach could begin to successfully address the problem. The program we envision is composed of several interactive components which typically would be delivered via group involvement, individual contact, and pertinent referral.

ELEMENTS IN THE FATHERHOOD-FAMILY INITIATIVE

Father-Son Time and Activity Sharing

An important key to establishing the Father-Son relationship is to promote time and activity sharing between the two. Sports and recreational activities provide an attractive incentive for father-son participation and by their nature they teach the importance of individual effort and responsibility, team work, dependability, honor and their resultant rewards. These types of activities serve to stimulate initial interest in joining the program and will lead to opportunities for further education and participation in the program. Other father-son time and activity sharing projects include crafts, manual training and technical training.

Employment

The role of the father as a family provider is crucial to the success of any program designed to help the problem of the fractured family.

Fathers who do not have the skills needed for employment can be helped by

- Assisting them to obtain sufficient entry education
- Assisting them to attend a vocational or technical school and learn a trade
- Assisting them to acquire life skills needed to function in a work force (such as dependability, being on time, honesty, personal responsibility)

Parenting

Today many fathers lack parenting skills because they grew up without a role model to guide them.

Group sessions help inform and motivate such fathers.

Counseling

Today many absent fathers suffer from emotional problems and the loss of self esteem. These issues can be helped by individual counseling and group sessions. Effective fatherhood for these men depends on their improvement in these basic areas.

Legal Aid

Today many absent fathers face legal problems such as child support and visitation rights. These fathers need to have education regarding legal matters and legal assistance as may be necessary.

Advantages of the MCCF Regarding the Fatherhood-Family Initiative

The Masonic fraternity has many members in all walks of life. The Fatherhood-Family Initiative, therefore, is not dependent on a small group of people but rather has at its disposal a large and dedicated group of concerned citizens. Because they belong to a fraternity it is natural that Masons would be sensitive to and would work to strengthen fatherhood and the family. In addition to the Masonic fraternity there are many additional resources in the city of Omaha. There is thus the opportunity to engage other groups as partners and to utilize referral services for this important initiative.