

THE
HEALTHY
MARRIAGE
INITIA-
TIVE

- Is for couples who choose marriage for themselves to develop skills and knowledge necessary to sustain a healthy marriage.
- It is a strategy for achieving child well-being, recognizing that children do best when raised by both parents in a committed, healthy marriage.

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

From the Director	1
Black Marriage Day	1
Award: Tammy Greer Brown	2
Region X Summit	2
AAHMI Research Conference	3
Symposium at Morehouse	3
Spotlight on the Region: Region III	4



AAHMI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 5

SPRING 2008

From the Director: Diann Dawson

Many exciting events have taken place recently and more are scheduled for the near future for the AAHMI, including this Newsletter. New features of the Newsletter will include news from around the Nation and from around the Regions regarding African American Healthy Marriage and upcoming events.

One of the more interesting developments we have recently noted is the increased collaboration between Healthy Marriage, Responsible Fatherhood and Domestic Violence programs. Collaboration by the three programs is increasingly important as

the goals of each of these programs are generally quite similar: fostering safe and healthy partner relationships and safe and healthy parent-child relationships.

Several of our Regional offices have recently sponsored or participated in conferences in which these programs collaborated to share and help the practitioners in these fields. Information on a few of those upcoming events is included in this issue.

As always, we are interested in your comments and feedback.

Black Marriage Day—Across the Nation

Across the nation, communities, churches and organizations celebrated Black Marriage Day March 30, 2008. Founded by Nisa Muhammad, Executive Director of the Wedded Bliss Foundation, this year's theme is "Get-

ting Married is Good; Staying Married is Better; a Healthy Marriage is Best." With a goal of 5,000 couples renewing their wedding vows, the organization celebrated its 6th annual Black Marriage Day. Among the states and communities celebrating:

(Story continued on page 2)

Tammy Greer Brown Receives Award



Tammy Greer Brown, Founder and Executive Director of Celebrating Real Family Life, Inc. was honored March 27, 2008 by World of Women (W.O.W.)'s Women in History Celebration.

Celebrating Real Family, Inc. is a non-profit organization devoted to strengthening marriages and families by bringing together individuals, churches, businesses, therapists, educators, social

workers and community organizations in the New York area. The organization received a Compassion Capital Fund grant from ACF last year.

Bringing together individuals, churches, businesses, therapists, educators, social workers and community organizations who support our efforts, the organization's goal is to improve not only marriages but the quality of life for families, as well.

"We're creating a cultural shift in the Black community to reconsider marriage and celebrate the joy that exists in spite of the pain we often experience."

*Nisa Muhammad,
Executive Director,
Wedded Bliss
Foundation*

Black Marriage Day *(Continued from page 1)*

- VOW of Longview, Texas, celebrated Black Marriage Day with a Conference featuring Rev. George Young, Pastor, Holy Temple Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm issued a proclamation declaring March 30th "Black Marriage Day" in Michigan. The Marriage Resource Center anticipated nearly 50 couples renewing their vows at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History on March 22.
- Mayors Ron Littlefield of Chattanooga and Mayor Claude Ramsey of Hamilton County, TN have proclaimed March 30 as Black Marriage Day. On that

same day, First Things First celebrated its 6th Annual Marriage Day. Dr. Rozario Slack, Director of Marriage, Fathering and Family Initiatives stated, "The black community is in need of a legacy of strong healthy marriages." Dr. Slack also stated: "First Things First wants to send a message to the next generation of Black couples that long lasting marriages are important."

- A Marriage Education Conference was held by Friendship West Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas with relationship skills training by Nisa Muhammad and Rozario Slack on March 29, 2008.

Region X hosts "Strengthening the Family Summit"

On March 25th, Region X, co-hosted a Regional summit entitled, "Strengthening the Family" in Seattle, Washington. The summit brought together national and local speakers to discuss policies and tools for working with fragile families and promoting healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood and youth empowerment.

Speakers included AAHMI Director Diann Dawson; Paris Finner-Williams of Finner-Williams and Associates Psychological Services; Ronald B.

Mincy, Professor of Social Policy and Social Work Practice at Columbia University in New York and George Williams, Executive Director of the National Center for Father's Urban Father-Child Partnership.

Cosponsors of the conference included Communities of Western WA—AAHMI and Divine Alternatives for Dads Services (D.A.D.S.) and First AME Fresh Start, among others.



What makes a marriage?

AAHMI Research Conference - June 17—19, 2008

Plans are underway to make this year's Research Conference an exceptional event.

This year's Conference will be held June 17—19, 2008 at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill at the Friday Center. Five different tracks will be followed on the following areas: Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood; Youth and Young Adults; Faith Based and Community Initiatives; Media and



Health. Preparations are being made and arrangements for speakers are being finalized. This Conference promises to be informative, enlightening and educational for researchers, teachers, practitioners, social workers, youth—everyone will leave the conference with new and practical information regarding Healthy

Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood.

To register for this event, go to: www.aahmi.net

Registration is free but you must sign up in advance since the conference is limited to 400 participants.

Special points of interest:

- Implementation of the Building Strong Families Program, **Executive Summary:** http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/strengthen/build_fam/reports/bsf_program_exesum/bsf_program_exe.pdf
- Implementation of the Building Strong Families Program: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/strengthen/build_fam/reports/bsf_program/bsf_program.pdf

Spotlight On: ACF Grantee *Bliss*

Bliss Foundation, a Washington, DC grantee of the Administration for Children and Families, has several recent events worth noting. • Weekly seminars are presented on Thursday, Saturdays and Sundays and present useful information on how to have great relationships. Topics covered include enhancing intimacy, resolving conflict and strengthening communication.

Seminars are held at 1338 N. Capitol Street, NW, Washington, DC 20002. For more information visit www.getbliss.com or call (202) 265-BLISS (2547).

• Bliss searched throughout the Washington D.C. community for local couples whose marriages have seen life's ups and downs and have survived and thrived. Bliss is looking to celebrate and honor four

couples who exemplify how marriage can sustain and inspire.



“A Better Relationship, A Better Life. This is BLISS.”

64th Annual Morehouse Symposium on the Family

Morehouse College hosted the 64th annual Morehouse Symposium on the Family on March 20th. Since its inception, the Symposium has addressed issues confronting families. This year's Symposium was entitled, “Families and Children: The Role of the State in family Formation.”

Among the panel presenters were:

Carlis Williams, ACF Regional Administrator for the Atlanta Regional Office; Georgia Supreme Court Justice, P. Harris Hines; Georgia Family Council President Randy Hicks and Child Welfare Director, Keith Horton.





Administration for Children & Families Navigation Key

1. Visit the AAHMI Website at:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/aa_hmi/AAHMI.html
2. Visit the Healthy Marriage Initiative
Website at: www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage
3. Visit the Healthy Marriage
Resource Center at:
www.healthymarriageinfo.org

The Administration for Children & Families is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Save The Date: AAHMI Research Conference June 17—19, 2008

Online registration:
www.aahmi.net



Spotlight on the Region: Region III

The Philadelphia Liberty Committee, the Philadelphia Fatherhood Practitioner's Network and the Region III fatherhood/Male Involvement Advisory Committee in partnership with the Pennsylvania Head Start Association hosted the Region III Head Start Fatherhood/Male Involvement and Healthy Marriage Institute 2008: "Raising the Bar to the Next Level: Redefining Healthy Marriages, Fatherhood and Families" on February 6-9, 2008.

The Institute was held in Philadelphia and was attended by over 250 fathers, practitioners, staff and community stakeholders. There were 20 presentations relevant to Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Marriage. Opening remarks were provided by ACF's Diann Dawson and David Lett, Regional Administrator for Region III.

Upcoming Events:

•The Eastside Community Development Corporation hosted the *Regional Healthy Marriage, Healthy Families Conference 2008 (Celebrating Communication, Collaboration and Commitment)* on Saturday, April 19, 2008 at the Virginia Beach Resort & Conference Center in Virginia Beach, VA. Workshops will be held on Media and Hip-Hop; Influence in Families; Financial Wealth-Building for Couples; Effective Communication Tools; War-time Deployment Stressors on Families. For more information, visit www.eastsidehr.org or call (757) 609-1555.

Please send comments or questions to Carol Moulton at carol.moulton@acf.hhs.gov

• Regions II and III will be hosting a two day Bi-Regional Healthy Marriage/Responsible Fatherhood Conference and Training Institute July 23 and 24, 2008. Among the scheduled presenters: Maria Kefalas, "Promises I Can Keep" and Mark Gungor, "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage."

The Conference will cover Healthy Marriage, Responsible Fatherhood and Domestic Violence Programs.

For more information, contact Bernadette Norton at (215) 861-4057 or Barbara Andrews at (212) 264-2890 x 101. You may also register at www.PAMRC.com