

ST. LOUIS HEALTHY MARRIAGE COALITION

M*E*R*I*T

MARRIAGE ESTEEMED RESPECTED IMPORTANT TAUGHT

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

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FIVE YEAR MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR GRANT

It is more about the people we are now able to serve than the actual dollar amount. As an organization that is based on collaboration the fulfillment of this grant would not be possible without the partnership agencies which participated in the application/planning process. Now, the work begins. The "work" of the grant is to assist couples with educational services to cultivate stronger marriages and families.

The grant is being serviced by 14 local social-service agencies located throughout the area to meet the established goal written into the grant proposal to service 115 underserved census tracts of St. Louis

County and the City of St. Louis.

The partner agencies were ideal because they currently have established relationships in the targeted service area. Therefore, the obstacle to recruiting participants is diminished.

The grant dictates how each penny is spent. A very detailed budget was part of the application proposal and appropriate usage of funds as promised will determine if the funds are renewed the preceding years for a maximum of five years.

SLHMC has provided marriage education and family wellness classes to refugee and Hispanic



Now, the real work begins!

- Bridget Brennan

families and will be serving the Asian community soon. These workshops are provided on the basis that healthy marriage and relationship skills can be taught successfully.

MR. FRANK FUENTES VISITS ST. LOUIS

Bridget Brennan seized a window of opportunity to have **Mr. Frank Fuentes, Federal Deputy Commissioner for the Administration on Children, Youth and Families** meet with SLHMC as well as the leaders of the St. Louis Hispanic

community. It was the goal of SLHMC to conduct a productive roundtable discussion with Fuentes. With more than 20 people in attendance, the group discussed and made suggestions with the goal of being culturally competent and accommodating to Hispanic

families. Local grass roots facilitators were able to discuss their concerns and goals with a Federal Commissioner who facilitated the meeting in Spanish as requested. This was a unique opportunity to broaden the scope of SLHMC.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Bridget Brennan
Executive Director

WHAT IS FAMILY WELLNESS?

Family Wellness is a skills-based workshop to enable an array of families the opportunity to train and cultivate various relationship skills techniques, including applications for teen parents, domestic violence education, substance abuse, and conflict resolutions. This program is internationally acclaimed and has been delivered in several different languages.

In line with our mission SLHMC, provides the

training at a reduced cost to agencies and church leaders to present the curriculum to their clients and parishioners.

SLHMC seeks to shift the understanding of marriage from being an 'end point' with no need for further learning to a 'beginning' of profound personal development. Sometimes, "healthy" means divorce from an abusive relationship. There is zero tolerance for domestic violence, which includes physical, emotional,

and verbal abuse, to include the threat of violence as mentioned in Missouri law.

Ideally, with the teaching and subsequent learning of these skills, marriage will once again become a value and movement towards a life long union.

January 22-25, 2007 we will hold Family Wellness training for those wishing to be certified in the Family Wellness program. Please contact Melinda Love at 314.977.6397 or mlove8@msn.com for more information.



WHAT THE STATS SAY ABOUT HEALTHY MARRIAGES

The demographics of healthy marriages reveal interesting data. For example, children of healthy marriages are 55% less likely to suffer from child abuse. Boys raised with two parents are approximately 50% less likely to commit a crime leading to incarceration by their early thirties. Young ladies from married families are approximately 33% less likely to have children out-of-

wedlock.

Married people, especially men, tend to live longer than other groups of men. Over all better health and lower rates of disability, injury, illness are associated with married persons. Minorities also seems to benefit from better health when married.

Depression among married women is lower than

from single or co-habiting mothers. Domestic violence appears to be a lower risk for married women. Unfortunately domestic violence is still a serious problem for both married as well as unmarried women. SLHMC has a zero tolerance for domestic violence which includes both physical and verbal abuse.

**“ GREATER
HAPPINESS
IS
ASSOCIATED
WITH BEING
MARRIED ”**

THE CASE FOR MARRIAGE
BY LINDA WAITE

FRAGILE FAMILIES

An array of family dynamics and circumstances could cause a family to be considered "fragile". Based on the Louisiana Fragile Families Study the demographics suggest children of fragile families are more likely to be effected negatively in the following areas

- Live in poverty

- Girls are more likely to become teen mothers
- Poorer behavioral and mental health outcomes
- Have incarcerated fathers
- Greater incidence of domestic violence

Each of these areas are specifically addressed during the Family Wellness edu-

cational skills-building workshops. Topics include financial health, domestic violence issues, conflict resolution, and effective healthy communication skills for families.

Please contact Uyama Umana-Rodgers at 314.977.6396 or email her at urodgers@slu.edu for more information for Fragile Families Facilitators training.



Exploring Relationships for Fragile Families Training—February 9th-10th, 2007 Presented by Andrew and Terri Lyke on the Campus of SLU

A BOUQUET OF THANKS

As we celebrate the national holiday of Thanksgiving, the St. Louis Healthy Marriage Coalition would like to thank the many, many, people who have supported us and guided us in our three years of unfolding. Dr. Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary HHS, for his vision of healthy marriages and families. Mr. Bill Coffin, special assistant in Marriage Education ACF/HHS for his clear grasp of the vision coupled with the daily realities that we all encounter

in promoting healthy marriages and families and his willingness to be available with answers but not judgment. Senator James Talent and his staff, especially Peggy Barnhart St. Louis Field Rep. Thank you Congressman William Clay, Missouri State Legislators, Mayor Francis Slay and staff. Mr. Charles Doolley, STL County Executive and staff. The many ACF/HHS staff that we have met as the SLHMC has developed, for their patience and exper-

tise in walking us through some of the unfamiliar mazes to get where we needed to be. A special thank you to Pamela Marr, Region VII, Healthy Marriage Specialist. Our Board of Directors and Members of the Coalition who stood steadfast with hope as we agreed together to develop and build the St. Louis Healthy Marriage Coalition. Special kudos to Board Member Danae Delano who has led us through the 501(c)3 application process and led the way for the development of the By-laws.



ACCESSIBLE & AVAILABLE

The staff of SLHMC are approachable and eager to assist as needed. Please make note of their current contact information, the fax number is 314.977.6398

Bridget Brennan, Executive Director 314.977.6308; marriage@slu.edu

Welcome our newest team member Rachel Shannon

Rachel Shannon, Grant Assistant, 314.977.6309 healthymarriage@usa.com

Terry Arthur, Financial Administrator 314.977.6395; tarthur@slu.edu

Uyama Umana-Rodgers, Family & Marriage Coord./ Americorps*VISTA 314.977.6396 urodgers@slu.edu

Melinda D. Love, PR & Program Coordinator/ Americorps*VISTA



“WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT SLHMC? WHERE CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

MAKE A CALL AND GET CONNECTED”

DONATIONS WITH DESTINY

The mission and goals are in place. The partnerships have been cultivated. Financial support will add momentum and everyone can help. As a 501(c)3 C non-profit one can make a donation and utilize tax benefits (for those who qualify) and make the transaction mutually beneficial. A dollar, twenty dollars, or thousands of dol-

lars any and all donations can help propel the vision well into the future. Would you like to honor the memory of a couple that has been married for an extended period? Why not make a donation to honor them? Married ten years and glad about it? Why not make a \$10 donation in honor of your success. Were your parents married 45 years and

they have everything? Why not make a donation in honor of their success? Perhaps you are a newlywed that would like to remain married for 50 years, why not make a donation for \$50 to symbolize your life long goal. You can also make arrangements with your financial planner for end of life estate planning as well.



ST. LOUIS HEALTHY MARRIAGE
COALITION

3322 Olive St.
Suite #002
St. Louis, MO 63103

Phone: 314-977-6309
Fax: 314-977-6398
E-mail: marriage@slu.edu

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.STL-HEALTHYMARRIAGE.ORG

PROVIDING EDUCATION & SKILLS
ESSENTIAL FOR HEALTHY MARRIAGES.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Greetings from Lower SLU-vania, my fun name for our new offices. We are delighted with our new home and the personal welcome that we have received from the staff of the School of Professional Studies in whose building we reside.

We moved in on August 15th and on August 21st, our two VISTA volunteers, Uyama Umara-Rodgers and Melinda Love joined us. With their energy and talents we have been expanding our reach into the Community with alacrity.

We completed Year One of our Child Support

Enforcement Grant having served 100 + additional people than we had anticipated. We are appreciative of the dedication and commitment of our partners in that grant who have diligently taught Family Wellness classes to their clients and residents.

On October 2nd we were informed that we had been awarded a \$1.1 million dollar Healthy Marriage-Healthy Family Grant from the Adm. of Children and Families.

We are ecstatic! We have 14 partners that will be working with us in this grant to bring healthy marriage skills to families,

women, men and secondary school students throughout St. Louis City and County.

Special recognition goes to the Grant Writing committee: Barbara Holmes, Regionwise/SLU, Dept. of Public Policy—Grant Narrative Mary Domahidy, St. Louis University, Dept. of Public Policy – Research component Terry Arthur, St. Louis Healthy Marriage Coalition—Budget component.

On October 12th we held a one day FW training: *The Strongest Link: The Couple* for 30 of our Certified Family Wellness trainers.

On November 1st we welcomed Rachel Shannon as our new Grant Assistant. Rachel brings talent, commitment and a take charge persona to her position. She is busy exploring ways to connect the SLHMC to a wider audience.

*-Bridget Brennan,
Executive Director*

