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*News Release*

**RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD COMMUNITY ACCESS GRANT**

*Circle of Parents seeks to enhance the involvement of expectant and new fathers in the lives of their children.*

**Chicago** – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance recently awarded **Circle of Parents®** \$900,000 to increase the capacity of local home visiting programs to provide support and education that promotes responsible parenting among expectant and new fathers.

Utilizing the self-help parent support group model and the Conscious Fathering™ program of **Parent Trust for Washington Children**, fathers will support and learn from each other about ways to build responsible and healthy relationships with their children from the prenatal period and beyond. Trained group facilitators will integrate educational sessions with open discussions to address subjects such as: the importance of prenatal care, early childhood development, well-baby care, parent-infant bonding and nurturing, stress management, conflict resolution, healthy co-parenting, domestic violence and child abuse prevention, and effective and safe disciplinary practices.

Circle of Parents will implement the model in 50 program sites throughout the country over a period of five-years. To accomplish this, a comprehensive training, technical assistance, and capacity building system will be created in partnership with **Healthy Families America (HFA)**, **Parents as Teachers (PAT)**, the **National Fatherhood Initiative**, **Reflections, Inc.** (for their expertise in domestic violence), **parent leaders**, **Circle of Parents state network affiliates**, and **local community and faith based organizations**. The **National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research** serves as the project evaluator.

Education and self-help support groups for fathers vary in degrees of development and effectiveness. For this reason, Circle of Parents sought this grant to pool the expertise of parent leaders and a variety of professional disciplines in the child abuse prevention and family support fields to design, implement and evaluate a practical and cost-effective program model. As the program model is refined and replicated, Circle of Parents will be building a functional network of fatherhood support programs that share responsibility and accountability for the program's success. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the program will be measured by outcomes associated with responsible parenting and the satisfaction of the program participant who becomes a more involved father, a better partner with the mother of his child and a leader in his family and community.

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