

News Release

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Father Friendly Training Hosted by Darlington County First Steps

HARTSVILLE, S.C.— On November 8, 2014, Richard Barr from The South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families traveled from Columbia, S.C. to Hartsville S.C. in order to educate community partners and others on the importance of having active fathers in young children’s lives.

The Father Friendly Training was hosted by the Darlington County First Steps’ Parents Are First Program which is a recently funded federal grant that provides services to pregnant and parenting young people, ages 15-24. The training was held on a Saturday morning with representatives from more than 20 Community organizations, including the private, public, and faith-based sector. The training was geared towards professionals, laypersons who are currently working with fathers and for those who want to work with fathers. Barr was the key speaker of the presentation titled “The Irreplaceable Role of the Father”.

Barr is an energetic and unique speaker and used these two characteristics to better engrain the message. This was evident as he started off his presentation with the playing of the song “Papa Was a Rolling Stone” by The Temptations. Barr used this song as a metaphor of the difference it makes by having a present or an absent father.

He stated “When I first heard this song, the lyrics did not have such a deep meaning because at the time I would just dance around and enjoy the music. Later on, I understood the message behind the song.” He linked the stone and the father together and said, “A stone needs to be a foundation. It should not be able to move.” Barr explained how the song was exemplifying a man struggling with his identity because of his father’s absence.

The catchy tunes and the powerful message from Barr, was the ice breaker of the presentation. He continued to captivate the audience as he proceeded in telling about the seven kinds of poverty which are spiritual, mental, bodily, societal, cultural, economic and political/systems, according to Barr. “When fathers are around and actively involved, these poverties are less likely to happen” He said.

Barr also covered Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs which consists of self-actualization, self-esteem needs, love and belongingness needs, safety and security needs, and physiological needs which

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are all important to understand when working with fathers. “Often times, we try to educate people before helping and guiding them. We can’t expect outcomes without inputs” Barr said.

Barr turned the presentation over to Derrick Dease as he talked about some of the programs that are offered to young men. Dease is the Executive Director of “Man 2 Man” which helps young men learn professionalism and parenting skills. “Many times we don’t have a lack of jobs, but job skills. That’s why we provide services that teach young men how to market themselves in the corporate world” said Dease.

Dease and the Man 2 Man team, work closely with their fatherhood participants to make sure that they provide a stable future for themselves and for their children. Dease stated, “We help the men who are willing but not able.” While helping fathers become better professionals, Dease and staff also help with their emotional needs.

Brenda Ayers, Project Director of PAF said, “In order to make a real difference in the lives of our young fathers in Darlington County, we have no choice but to involve them. As a community, we can no longer ignore the significant impact that young fathers have on the lives of their children and we must be equipped with the skills and knowledge to actively involve fathers in our programs. This training has provided our staff, our partners and many others in our community with information and direction that will be crucial to the successful implementation of the fatherhood initiative for this and many other programs.”

Barr is the Director of Community Development and Programming for the Center. He joined their team in January 2011. Barr provides assistance to fatherhood programs by facilitating improvements and implementation. The goal of the Center is to strengthen relationships between fathers and families throughout South Carolina.