

REVIVING
Marriage
IN AMERICA

Strategies for Donors

By William J. Doherty



PhilanthropyRoundtable

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PhilanthropyRoundtable

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Letter from The Philanthropy Roundtable

The Philanthropy Roundtable is delighted to publish William J. Doherty's guidebook on how philanthropists can support healthy marriages in America.

The institution of marriage has undergone significant changes and challenges over the last 40 years. The impact these changes have wrought on family structure is no longer a matter of debate. A diverse spectrum of researchers agrees that the lives of our children and the well-being of our communities would be improved if we knew how to promote healthy marriages.

This guidebook aims to give donors a solid foundation in the issues and opportunities in the field of healthy marriage development.

The Philanthropy Roundtable gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Arthur Rasmussen and the Mark and Carol Hyman Fund in making this guidebook possible.

The Roundtable holds public meetings around the country where donors can exchange ideas, strategies and best practices. We also offer customized private seminars, at no charge, for donors who are thinking through how they can make the greatest difference in their giving. Please contact us at 202.822.8333 or at main@PhilanthropyRoundtable.org if you would like further information.

Adam Meyerson
President

Stephanie Saroki
Senior Director, K-12 Education Programs

Introduction

In 1997 a group of Tennessee businessmen began to talk about the direction of their city. “We wanted to know how we could really make a difference in Chattanooga,” says Hugh O. Maclellan Jr., president of the Maclellan Foundation. “We realized that the city’s biggest problem was the breakdown of families, and that every part of Chattanooga was being affected by it.”

Maclellan and his colleagues confronted grim statistics that showed Chattanooga families were suffering from unusually high rates of divorce, absentee fathers and teen pregnancies, which were hurting not only the individuals immediately involved, but the community as a whole. The numbers told the story:

“We realized that the city’s biggest problem was the breakdown of families, and that every part of Chattanooga was being affected by it.”

- The divorce rate in Chattanooga was 50 percent higher than the national average. (The state of Tennessee as a whole ranked fourth worst in the nation for divorce.)
- Chattanooga had the fifth-worst out-of-wedlock birth rate of 128 leading cities in the United States. A 1994 study showed 50 percent of births in the city and 39 percent of births in the county were to unwed mothers.
- One in three Tennessee families were headed by a single parent, compared to one in four nationwide; in 2000, the state ranked eighth worst in the nation.

Chattanooga’s civic leaders understood what these bleak statistics meant for their city. Numerous studies have demonstrated that divorce, out-of-wedlock births and the absence of fathers greatly increase a person’s likelihood of suffering a number of ills, among them poverty, violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and early death.

Chattanooga’s health, Maclellan and his colleagues concluded, depended on the health of its families. With this in mind, they set out to found an organization that would strengthen the ties that bind.

Maclellan thought big because the problem was big. He set a goal to reduce divorce, births outside of wedlock and non-responsible fatherhood by 30 percent in Chattanooga. Nine years later, Hamilton County has seen a 28 percent drop in divorce filings, a 20 percent decrease in the divorce rate and a 23 percent decrease in teen out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

Maclellan and his colleagues say their efforts are only partially responsible for this progress. Yet Chattanooga achieved impressive results. It is clear that the Chattanooga model can be replicated and that similar programs provide opportunities for philanthropists who want to foster healthy marriages and improve the well-being of our nation's families.

During the last 40 years, the institution of marriage has changed more rapidly, and been challenged more forcefully, than at any other time in human history. For the most part, the philanthropic community sat out the social revolution in marriage and the dislocation it has caused for children, adults and communities. Many donors now want to get involved but lack grounding in the issues and key opportunities. This guide aims to provide that grounding. The pages that follow will examine the current landscape, most effective interventions, and opportunities for donors of all sizes seeking to promote healthy marriages in America.

I

The State of Our Unions: Marriage in America

Marriage in America has changed a great deal over the past two generations. Once uncommon, divorce, cohabitation and out-of-wedlock childbearing have increased dramatically. Between the mid-1960s and 1980, the divorce rate in the United States doubled and to this day remains high. What's more, about 37 percent of children in America are now born to unmarried parents. These changes have occurred in all social groups, but have been particularly pronounced among low-income Americans and among African-Americans in general.

For several decades the impact of this dramatic change in family structure was the subject of vigorous debate among scholars. No longer. A diverse spectrum of researchers now accepts what has been common sense for many: that if we knew how to promote healthy marriages, the lives of our children and the well-being of our communities would be improved.

The effects of the decline of marriage have proven to be devastating for society, and in particular for young people. According to David Popenoe, co-director of the National Marriage Project and professor of sociology at Rutgers University, "children from broken homes, compared to children from intact families, have six times the chance of growing up poor. For other youth problems like delinquency and teen pregnancies, the rates for broken-home children are two to three times what they are for children from intact families." Studies have demonstrated that the failure of parents to form and maintain healthy marriages is associated with crime, poverty, mental health problems, welfare dependency, failed schools, blighted neighborhoods, bloated prisons, and higher rates of single parenting and divorce in the next generation.

Of course, the decline of marriage is not the sole, direct cause of all of these problems; many economic, social and political factors contribute to these social ills. It is clear, however, that the dis-

If we knew how to promote healthy marriages, the lives of our children and the well-being of our communities would be improved.

The Benefits of Marriage

Benefits for Adults

1. Married men and women have lower mortality rates and tend to have better overall health than their single counterparts.
2. Married couples tend to have more material resources, less stress and better social support than people who are not married.
3. Married men are less likely to abuse alcohol.
4. Both married men and women report significantly lower levels of depression and have better overall psychological well-being than their single, divorced, widowed and cohabitating counterparts.
5. Married African-Americans have better life satisfaction than those who are single.
6. Married men report higher wages than single men and have been found to be more productive and more likely to be promoted.
7. Married women tend to have substantially more economic resources than single women. The economic benefits of marriage are especially strong for women who come from disadvantaged families.

Benefits for Children

1. Children from families with married parents are less likely to experience poverty than children from single-parent or cohabitating families.
2. Children born to cohabitating couples have a higher chance of experiencing family instability, a factor that has been linked to poor child well-being.
3. Children from married, two-parent families tend to do better in school than those who grow up in single-parent or alternative family structures.
4. Children from intact, two-parent families are less likely to experience emotional-behavioral problems.
5. The more time children live in a married, two-parent home, the less likely they are to use drugs.
6. Children who grow up in a married, two-parent family are less likely to have children out of wedlock in their future relationships.
7. Women with married parents are less likely to experience a high-conflict marriage.
8. Single mothers report more conflict with their children than married mothers.
9. The rate of infant mortality is lower among married parents.
10. Children living with their married, biological parents are less likely to experience child abuse.

solution of marriage lies at the heart of nearly every significant social difficulty in our country. If public policy and philanthropic initiatives to solve most social problems are to succeed, they cannot ignore the indispensable contributions of healthy marriages.

Philanthropy and Marriage: Obstacles to Involvement

Unfortunately, many past policy and philanthropic efforts have failed to recognize the importance of healthy families and, as a result, have spent their time, energy and money addressing the effects of these problems rather than attacking the cause. There are a number of reasons why many philanthropists have been reluctant to get involved in marriage issues:

- Many donors have viewed marriage as a private adult relationship and not as a crucial social institution. They assumed that it was not anyone else's business whether people got married or stay married.
 - They have not seen the connection between marriage and children's well-being, and between marriage and serious social problems such as poverty and crime.
 - Some secular donors have regarded marriage as the responsibility of faith communities and not private philanthropies.
 - Some "liberal" foundations have avoided marriage because they emphasize diversity of family forms and are afraid of stigmatizing single parents.
 - Some "conservative" foundations have viewed marriage as a personal value, not a public value—a private moral issue and not a societal issue.
 - Some foundation leaders doubt that anything can be done to revive marriage at local levels because larger social forces have undermined it. This is a common view even among sociologists and historians who worry about the decline of marriage.
 - Many donors are unaware of the research on what makes marriages succeed and fail, as well as recent research-based innovations in marriage education and community healthy marriage initiatives. They may assume that all marriage initiatives are faith-based efforts that, while worthwhile, lack rigorous evaluation standards, or that the only available service is
-

marriage counseling, a direct service that they do not fund.

- Staff and board members have personal and family experiences with marriage and divorce, experiences that can make them skittish about entering this arena. Carole Thompson of the Annie E. Casey Foundation notes that, unlike many other areas of funding, “This one is personal!”
- In some cases when foundations are interested in supporting local marriage initiatives, they have not known how to get involved. Community professionals with whom foundations often work may lack expertise in marriage and may even discourage foundations from getting involved in marriage initiatives.
- Today, some foundation leaders may fear that if they fund marriage programs, they will become involved in the culture war over same-sex marriage. Marriage is a contentious issue in contemporary America.

Philanthropy and Marriage: Avoiding Hot-Button Issues

Some skeptics raise two issues regarding the healthy marriage agenda: stigma against single-parent families and discrimination against same-sex couples. Donors can deal with both issues, but they must be prepared in advance. Here are some perspectives and guidelines from the field.

Regarding concerns about stigmatizing single parents, donors can point to evidence that most people of all social classes, races and ethnic groups aspire to lifelong marriage for themselves and their children. This includes single parents, almost none of whom hope their children will grow up to be single parents. The donor’s aim is to help people achieve their own goal for lifelong marriage, not to impose a lifestyle on them or to cast aspersions on people who are raising children outside of marriage. The marriage agenda is mainly about the future—creating the capacity for people to form and sustain healthy marriages—and not about criticizing anyone for past decisions.

As Jeff Kemp, president of Families Northwest, says, “The marriage movement is for children, for families, for couples, for us all. Married, single, divorced, widowed, old or young, we’ve all got a stake and a role in this positive, preventative

social movement focused on what is best for children.” All families where children are being raised deserve the support of their communities, but communities should not be afraid to promote the best environment for children—a loving, married, two-parent family.

Julie Baumgardner, executive director of Chattanooga’s First Things First, concurs with this approach. She adds, “Many people forget that 75 percent of divorced people remarry within four years of their divorce. They are as interested in getting it right as anybody is, perhaps more so since it didn’t work out the first time. Often, we are afraid to talk about marriage with people who are divorced because we fear their feelings will be hurt. It has been my experience that they are the ones who really want to talk about it, who strongly encourage their adult children to take premarital classes, etc., because they know the pain divorce can cause.”

Every national poll on marriage shows the continued idealism of American youth and adults about marriage.

An irony of the criticism that funding marriage programs is unfair to single-parent families is that nearly all foundation and government funding in the past has gone to single-parent families, and will continue to go to them because of poverty and other challenges associated with these families. This new effort is designed to open a small window for promoting the kind of family that nearly everyone sees as optimal for raising children.

Regarding same-sex marriage, each donor has to decide whether to tackle this divisive issue. If not, donors should not engage it or they will find themselves dominated by it.

Donors can take the approach suggested by Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, by emphasizing the following point: “Our society is having an important conversation about the legal rights of same-sex couples. This conversation will continue in many forms, but it’s not part of what we are dealing with in our project. We have chosen to focus on the 97 percent or so of the population who are in heterosexual relationships.”

No donor is responsible for every social issue and each donor must draw boundaries around priority areas. Two additional points can be made about this issue:

- The nonmarital birth rate and the divorce rate are social problems primarily in the heterosexual community, not the gay community. Philanthropists are putting their resources where the biggest need is.
- The need for relationship education in order to move out of poverty is an issue mainly for low-income heterosexual women.

The key in both areas is not to be defensive about your focus and priorities, and to use the conversation as an opportunity to educate people about the problems with contemporary marriage and the need for new solutions. Most community members will end up supporting donor initiatives, or at least not opposing them, if their concerns are approached in these ways.

Philanthropy and Marriage: Avenues of Opportunity

Whatever the reasons for the lack of philanthropic participation in the past, the good news is that it's not too late to get involved. Even while researchers are documenting the negative effects of failed marriages, they are finding that Americans have not given up on this vital social institution. In fact, every national poll on marriage shows the continued idealism of American youth and adults about marriage. Nor have urban low-income Americans given up on the institution of marriage, despite stereotypes assigned to them by many in mainstream society.

In this regard, a study known as *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing* has provided important new information about unmarried parents in urban areas. Led by Sara McLanahan of Princeton University and Irv Garfinkel of Columbia University, and funded by the federal government and 21 foundations, this study is following 5,000 newborn urban children and their parents, most of whom are unmarried, through 2009.

The *Fragile Families* study has found that the great majority of unmarried new parents in urban areas have a romantic relationship at the time of the birth, and that most aspire to forming a family together and eventually marrying. In fact,

most of these couples see marriage as the best foundation for raising children, a view shared by a majority of Americans of all social groups.

Along with these encouraging findings about the values and aspirations of new urban unmarried parents, the Fragile Families Study is also finding that without assistance and support, most of these couples will not achieve their goal of marrying and raising their child together. The fall-off of couple relationships over the first year after the child is born is considerable. The desire for marriage is there, but the obstacles, both economic and relational, are many.

How can donors help overcome the many obstacles to healthy marriages in America? There are three main avenues for addressing the decline and revival of marriage: 1) marriage counseling, 2) marriage education, and 3) community healthy marriage initiatives. Although marriage counseling for individual couples has been around for decades, its leaders, for the most part, have not addressed marriage as a social and community issue. With some exceptions such as the National Registry of Marriage Friendly Therapists (co-founded by Kathleen Wenger and myself), marriage counseling has been on the sidelines in recent efforts to restore marriage in the United States. Therefore, the remainder of this volume will focus on the other two main levers: marriage education and healthy marriage initiatives.

2

The Knowledge to Succeed: The Value of Marriage Education

Marriage education aims to equip individuals and couples with the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to succeed in marriage. There are a wide range of programs, both preventive and remedial, enhancing and repairing. Most marriage education occurs in classroom settings with trained instructors, though some marriage mentor programs focus on couple-to-couple instruction and support.

A key tenet in marriage education is that marital success depends not on finding a “perfect match” but on knowledge and competencies that can be taught and learned. Couples are taught the benefits and advantages of marriage, reasons to persevere in marriage, and a roadmap of what to expect along the way. They are trained in areas such as communication, conflict management and positive ways to connect in everyday life.

More detailed descriptions of the major marriage education programs currently offered all over the United States can be found on two websites: National Healthy Marriage Resource Center—www.healthymarriageinfo.org—and the Coalition for Marriage, Family, and Couples Education—www.smartmarriages.com.

Thanks to a number of studies in recent years, the field of marriage education now has a solid base of knowledge about what it takes to build a healthy, stable marital relationship. Studies have documented the effectiveness of a number of educational programs for young people, premarital couples and married couples. Most programs can be taught by trained lay people and not just professionals.

Studies show that low-income couples appear to value marriage education as much as middle-class couples, although there are barriers of cost and access. Two large-scale, federally funded research studies are underway on the effectiveness of marriage education for low-income families.

Marriage Education for Adults

There are many marriage education services already in existence that can be adapted to local settings. They include classes in communication and problem-solving skills, marriage mentoring in which seasoned couples coach younger couples, weekend retreats, and support groups. There are specific programs for remarried couples in stepfamilies and for couples in distress. Foundations can partner with a local organization to provide resources to train local leaders in one or more of these marriage education programs.

In practice, most direct marriage education services are delivered by faith communities, although the curricula they employ are often secular in nature. For example, the New Hope Foundation in Muscatine, Iowa, has a long track record of funding United Marriage Encounter, an interdenominational Christian ministry, including staff support and leadership development.

Long-term, the most effective use of philanthropic support in marriage education is to build capacity for delivering marriage education in local communities, rather than providing funds for direct services. When funding this capacity-building, it is important to ask a number of questions of service providers. Where did they learn their craft? Which curricula and premarital inventories do they use? If they are providing marriage mentoring, where did they receive training in this work? Are they connected to national resources such as the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education (see page 21)? Are they familiar with the major research findings about marriage and marriage education?

Local marriage educators should be connecting with established programs in the field rather than reinventing every aspect of their programs. The field of marriage education has been around long enough now, with a growing track record of success, that donors can expect local leaders to be conversant with these developments and to explain why they are using or not using established programs adapted to local needs.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: New Hope Foundation

LOCATION: Muscatine, IA

PROJECT: United Marriage Encounter

PRIMARY GOAL: To encourage strong marriages through the Marriage Encounter Weekend and other marriage support ministries

COMMITMENT: Significant donors

Donors should be wary of the solo operator who feels no need to learn from prior work in the field.

In addition it is essential that direct marriage education providers develop plans to handle issues of domestic violence. The U.S. government now requires all federally funded projects in the marriage area to have an explicit plan to protect the safety of participants in marriage education programs. Before long, there will be a number of domestic violence plans from federally funded projects that could be adapted by other local organizations.

Building capacity for delivering marriage education in local communities is more effective in the long term than providing funds for direct services.

Prisons represent another frontier for marriage education programs. Although relatively new, marriage education services to prisoners and their partners are being developed in several parts of the country. These services are being provided by traditional agencies focused on supporting prisoners and their families, such as

the Osborne Association based in New York. Osborne received a \$600,000 grant over four years to provide the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) to soon-to-be-released or recently released prisoners and their spouses if they are raising minor children. The Oklahoma Marriage Initiative also has developed a program to provide an adapted version of PREP to prisoners and their spouses. Such services are seen as an important step in reintegrating prisoners, in addition to decreasing the high marital and family dissolution rate among them.

Other marriage education programs for incarcerated individuals and their spouses are being developed in Florida and Missouri, and in Chattanooga, Tennessee, by Rozario Slack of First Things First (see page 25). This area of intervention is expected to grow even more, as evidenced by a conference on marriage education in prisons hosted by the federal Administration for Children and Families in April 2006.

Some direct marriage education services are now being adapted to cultural communities in the United States. The best-developed materials are in the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative; newer initiatives are underway in the Hispanic and Asian communities and with low-income white couples, a neglected sub-population.

Marriage Education for Youth

Helping young people develop good relationship skills before they get married and preparing them to make good choices about mates is crucial to reviving marriage in our country. Youth marriage education is a promising area for donors because it incorporates health, peer violence prevention, pregnancy prevention, and developing community assets. Young people generally are easy to reach because they are already connected to schools and youth programs and are eager to learn information that is relevant to their current lives.

The challenge for donors is to have the foresight to understand how helping young people learn skills for their current relationships can prepare them to defer pregnancy until marriage (or at least until adulthood), make wise choices about whom to marry, and go on to succeed in marriage. Marline Pearson, creator and author of the Love U2 marriage education program, notes that “all good social service work can be undone by one failed relationship or pregnancy.” The skills developed in early marriage education, on the other hand, can last a lifetime.

With five outreach educators covering all 50 states, the Dibble Fund for Marriage Education is a good source of consultation for foundations interested in this area. Based in Berkeley, California, this nonprofit organization has been developing and funding marriage education programs for young people for the past 20 years.

Charles Dibble, a successful engineer until his retirement in 1965, became interested in marriage education shortly after his retirement. His involvement in marriage education began at his great niece’s wedding, at which he was surprised to hear her say, “Don’t worry; it’s just my first wedding.” Dibble realized that this flippant remark was indicative of a larger problem and became determined to help change prevailing attitudes about marriage.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: The Dibble Fund

LOCATION: Berkeley, CA

PROJECT: Dibble Fund
for Marriage Education

PRIMARY GOAL: To help young people learn skills which enable successful relationships and marriages; to serve as a nationwide advocate and resource for youth marriage education and to publish materials which help teach relationship skills

COMMITMENT: \$750,000 since 1991; over \$1 million prior to 1991

Three Decades of Marriage Education

Marriage education began in earnest in the 1970s, when visionary supporters of marriage began efforts to try to improve all marriages, not just troubled ones. In 1973 David and Vera Mace founded the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment, an organization that to this day continues to promote couple support groups around the country. Faith communities began offering workshops and retreats for couples. Professional programs were established in the 1970s to teach communication skills to married couples. These skills included techniques in listening carefully, showing empathy, expressing one's concerns in a constructive way to one's spouse, and effective problem-solving.

By far the largest marriage-strengthening program of the 1970s was Marriage Encounter, which had spread to the United States from Spain. Hundreds of thousands of couples, mostly Roman Catholic but also from other Christian denominations, attended weekend retreat programs led by a clergyperson and two lay couples. The goals were marital and spiritual renewal. By the late 1970s, the promise of lay-led, community-based marriage programs seemed great.

But in the 1980s, Marriage Encounter weekend retreats dwindled, and faith communities seemed to turn their attention elsewhere. Professionals found they could not fill their communication skills courses. Only programs for premarital couples continued to attract substantial and growing numbers of couples, in part because participation was required by their clergy as a condition for marriage. It was during this same time, however, that academic research on marriage and marriage communication began to take off, providing a growing basis of scientific knowledge for the field.

Looking back at the drop-off in the 1980s, it is now clear how much the 1970s activities to strengthen marriage were fed by the human potential movement and its focus on personal growth and small group experiences. An "enriched" marriage was part of personal enrichment. But during the 1980s, the rise of consumer culture eclipsed the mainstream culture's fascination with personal growth. This was also a time when academic researchers did not see divorce and single parenting as major social problems.

Feminist leaders at the time emphasized the dark side of marriage for women whose husbands refused to be equal partners to their working wives and women trapped in abusive relationships. The mainline Christian

churches emphasized pastoral sensitivity to divorced people and single parents, which seemed inconsistent with proclaiming the unique value of life-long marriage. The conservative Christian churches still preached about life-long marriage but were not organizing programs for couples to help them achieve such relationships.

Overall, during the 1980s there was little academic or cultural foment about the decline of marriage. But by the mid-1990s, the seeds of a marriage renewal were germinating, nourished by broader cultural and academic changes. A widespread revisiting of the divorce revolution surfaced by mid-decade. The controversy was intense, indicating that a new cultural and professional conversation had begun. This second half of the 1990s may someday be viewed as the turning point for marriage in the United States.

In 1996 Diane Sollee, a marriage and family therapist, founded the Coalition for Marriage, Family, and Couples Education, with the goal of connecting the disparate marriage education programs, bringing marriage education to the attention of public policy leaders, and jump-starting a movement to foster healthy marriages through education and cultural change. She created a national clearinghouse for marriage information, began an annual national conference, generated intense media attention, and galvanized public policy, professional and community interest in skills-based education for marriage in schools, churches, extension offices, military bases, child-birth classes and a variety of other settings. Within the first five years, attendance at Sollee's Smart Marriages conferences grew from 400 to 1,100. By 2006 the figure passed 2,200. Her smartmarriages.com email list-serv provides a steady flow of information on marriage and marriage initiatives to thousands of subscribers.

The decade after 1995 witnessed the resurgence of interest in professionally developed marriage education programs that attracted the interest of faith communities and government funders. This period also witnessed the origins of community healthy marriage initiatives (see Chapter 3) and significant marriage reports by institutes and think tanks, in particular David Blankenhorn's Institute for American Values, David Popenoe's and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's National Marriage Project, and Theodora Ooms's Marriage Project (situated within the Center for Law and Social Policy). These think tanks on marriage, which cross the ideological spectrum, were the first centers of intellectual depth on marriage to be funded by foundations and individual donors interested in renewing marriage in the United States.

In the 1980s, he focused on reading marriage studies. He called leading researchers, such as David Olson at the University of Minnesota, and asked them two questions: “What do we know about healthy marriages?” which they could always answer, and “How do we communicate this to young people?” which they often hadn’t considered.

Before he died of cancer in 1991, he founded the Dibble Fund to serve as a nationwide advocate and resource for youth marriage education and publisher of materials that help teach relationship skills to young people. Its initial gifts were to both Philanthropic Ventures and the Peninsula Community Foundation (now the Silicon Valley Community Foundation). The fund works like an operating foundation, with the bulk of Dibble’s money now residing at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

Helping young people develop good relationship skills before they marry is crucial to reviving marriage in our country.

The organization focuses on marriage education and teaching teens how to have healthy relationships, skills which have wide-ranging effects on teen and domestic violence, verbal aggression, sexual behavior, and teens’ relationships with their parents. Developing these skills now gives teens the tools they will need later to get and stay married.

The Dibble Fund has published a popular brochure, “10 Things Teens Should Know about Love and Marriage,” and Dibble Fund president Kay Reed often speaks at youth conferences and gatherings. The fund works with teachers to promote healthy relationships in schools. Its model works directly through the school because teachers often don’t have the material to teach relationship skills.

In addition to the Dibble Fund’s initiatives, there are other new programs that help young adults with their current relationships but also emphasize the important role of marriage in adult life. Promising examples mentioned by Diane Sollee, founder and director of Smart Marriages, are “10 Great Dates Before You Say I Do,” “How to Avoid Marrying a Jerk,” “The Black Marriage Curriculum,” and “The First Dance: Managing the People Stress of Wedding Planning.” New opportunities to disseminate the recent wave of innovative “outside the box” programs in marriage education are rela-

tively inexpensive because they require no training to deliver, and some are aimed directly at youth or the public at large through DVDs.

Donors could help make these programs available in public libraries, community centers, religious institutions and hospitals, or even get them on local public television. Billboards and public service announcements are a similarly cost-effective, and underutilized, way to get out informational messages to the public.

Finally, there is currently a big disconnect between where young married people are going for advice—to websites like www.TheNest.com that create peer communities—and the traditional offerings of marriage educators. Innovative donors could partner with web-savvy young adults, who came of age with the internet and are now making their way into the marriage education field, to develop and offer marriage education on the internet and reach millions of individuals and couples.

3

Supporting Healthy Marriages: Community Initiatives

Community healthy marriage initiatives are broad-based coalitions of community groups and organizations that help individuals and couples form and sustain healthy marriages and that promote cultural change in support of healthy marriages. They consist of a diverse mix of projects sharing the common mission of building healthy marriages, one community at a time.

Funding Healthy Marriage Initiatives

Community healthy marriage initiatives, often led by dedicated volunteers, can benefit greatly from additional funding in order to prosper and develop deeper roots in their communities. Those that attract and nurture substantial private and sometimes public funding mature into major marriage mobilizations with several full-time staff members and a wide range of coordinated events and educational activities for couples, community institutions, media and the general public.

An advantage of partnering with a community healthy marriage initiative is that it may be more conducive to continuity than a single organization whose leadership might change. There may also be more creativity from the cross-fertilization of different groups in the community, as well as more public visibility. Many new community healthy marriage initiatives would be able to take off with relatively modest seed money from a foundation. In addition to an influx of resources, foundation support gives fledging coalitions needed credibility in the local community for raising challenge funds. However, experienced donors recommend not requiring challenge funds at the outset because local organizations often lack the visibility and capacity to raise additional money in the early stages of their work. This capacity comes later.

A recurring opportunity to partner with a local community healthy marriage initiative is to support the celebration of National Marriage Week (February 7-14), Black Marriage Day (the last Sunday in March) and, of course, Valentine's Day. Appendix C contains a list of community healthy marriage ini-

tiatives as of August 2006. New groups are springing up and will be added to the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center website, www.healthymarriageinfo.org.

What follow are examples of some of the best current community initiatives. These mature organizations need ongoing funding for their programs, as well as infusions of resources for breakthrough projects that will set the standard for other communities. For some donors, these initiatives may be partnering opportunities; for those looking to develop new programs, these pioneers can provide inspiration and guidance.

First Things First: Revival in Chattanooga

In 1997 local leaders in Hamilton County, Tennessee (home of Chattanooga), confronted the county's biggest problem—the breakdown of the family—head on. Chattanooga had a divorce rate 50 percent higher than the national average, the fifth highest unwed birth rate of cities in the nation, and a significant lack of father involvement—trends that were hurting not only the individuals immediately involved, but also the entire community, taking a toll on education, economic development and neighborhood stability.

Confronted with such grim statistics, these civic leaders, led by Maclellan Foundation president Hugh O. Maclellan Jr., began an effort called First Things First to solidify the institution of the family as the building block of society. Nine years later, Hamilton County has seen a 28 percent drop in divorce filings, a 20 percent decrease in the divorce rate and a 23 percent decrease in teen out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

How did Chattanooga achieve such stunning results? Early on, First Things First made key decisions that shaped its later success:

- To be a secular organization based on Judeo-Christian values that intentionally seeks to build bridges between the sacred and secular, public and private.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: Maclellan Foundation

LOCATION: Chattanooga, TN

PROJECT: First Things First

PRIMARY GOAL: To strengthen families in Hamilton County, Tennessee, through education, collaboration and mobilization

COMMITMENT: \$3.4 million since 1998

- To be proactive, not reactive. By focusing on preventive strategies, the donors hoped to stop family break-ups before the worst happened, not just devise ways to aid already distressed families.
- To focus on advocacy, education, mobilization and technical assistance rather than providing direct client services. (They now provide some direct client services because existing ones were insufficient.)
- To work with a wide array of programs and initiatives, and to create a community-wide effort involving government and political leaders, places of worship, social service agencies, the private sector, the media and private citizens.

From the outset, Maclellan wanted First Things First to influence the broader community culture and to develop local capacity to strengthen marriage; he wanted to “teach people how to love a city.” This meant putting together a marketing and public relations campaign along with providing traditional services.

This ambitious project therefore needed an executive director with skills in civic leadership and public relations along with social service experience. In its second executive director, Julie Baumgardner, the First Things First board found this combination, and Baumgardner assembled a talented staff to partner with churches and local professionals to build capacity for marriage education, responsible fatherhood and related services.

Making a Media Splash. An important ingredient in the success of First Things First has been its media strategy—to attract positive attention to needs in the field as well as to First Things First as an organization, which Maclellan reports has 68 percent name recognition in Chattanooga. The staff held a press conference to kick off the initiative and wrote articles for several local magazines to educate the public and to introduce First Things First. The organization also used relationships with local media to get airtime on morning shows and “Live at 5” stories.

The key, according to Baumgardner, was making First Things First a resource for the media by providing interesting stories and taking a partnership approach. It provided the news stations with compelling and interesting topics about marriage and family, which gave First Things First a platform

to educate the public about its mission and purpose. This approach also enabled First Things First to work out arrangements where it received discounted prices on airtime or was given unsold inventory slots after paying full price for one or more primetime slots.

From Divorce Mediation to Fatherhood. First Things First has been involved in a wide variety of projects and programs to strengthen families in the Chattanooga area. It was approached by the state legislature and a local judge to facilitate the development of the Hamilton County Divorce Education and Mediation Project. First Things First was charged with pulling together professionals working in the area of divorce and mediation, including mental health providers, mediators, clergy, attorneys and judges, to determine what type of protocol and curriculum to implement for divorcing parents with children (where there was no abuse involved), and which groups would be approved to teach the curriculum.

A study by the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga found that the program resulted in a 50 percent decrease in return court visits for child visitation and custody suits. The Divorce Education and Parenting Plan Pilot Project is permanent now, and the state legislature voted to expand the program statewide in 2000.

In addition to its involvement with the Hamilton County Divorce Education and Mediation Project, First Things First has launched fathering and marriage public service campaigns, and has trained hundreds of professionals through marriage enrichment, step-family-strengthening programs and fathering and parenting seminars.

The organization also sponsors premarital classes and an African-American marriage initiative, which includes ongoing training and an annual celebration weekend. It promotes family-friendly policies in area businesses and recruits local churches to sign a Community Marriage Covenant.

From the outset, the organization has been closely involved with the domestic violence prevention community. Baumgardner serves on the board of the local domestic vio-

Hamilton County has seen a 28 percent drop in divorce filings and a 23 percent decrease in teen out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

lence organization. Issues around abuse and violence are integrated into the marriage courses, including information about how to get help if someone is involved in an abusive relationship. First Things First's partnership with the domestic violence prevention community includes informal consultation on programming and message development, mutual referrals, and providing talks and seminars for each other's organizations.

Maclellan initially invested \$250,000 to give First Things First enough resources to make an initial splash in the community, attract a board of "doers," hire a strong staff and be self-sufficient for the first few years while tackling the challenge of attracting additional funding. The organization now has support from 15 foundations and numerous churches, corporations and individual donors. A key to this broad support is the vision of making a dramatic, lasting difference for the whole community on a wide range of social problems that stem from the failure of marriages to form and flourish.

"You can have singles, doubles and occasionally a home run. First Things First is a home run. It's the best bang for our buck."

The Maclellan Foundation continues to fund First Things First but moved from providing grants outright to providing partial matching grants and then to the current practice of requiring 100 percent matches on all awarded grants. As early as 1998, the Maclellan Foundation grants comprised less than half of First Things First's total budget.

Data as a Driver of Success. Another key to First Things First's success is its use of data to drive the project and measure its progress. In 1999 the organization issued the Hamilton County Marriage Report that described the marriage, divorce, cohabitation, father involvement, and unmarried childbearing attitudes and behaviors of Hamilton County residents.

First Things First also commissions the Barna Research group to conduct follow-up community surveys every three years to compare to the original baseline study. The data obtained are used to make the case for community-wide prevention and intervention by highlighting the negative factors (such as high rates of divorce and unmarried child-bearing) that affect child, adult and community well-being, and to show that the community is interested in initiatives that strengthen marriages and families.

First Things First carefully tracks participation in its events, monitoring its own progress and publicizing impressive figures, such as the more than 6,000 people who attended seminars in the first seven years of the program's history.

First Things First also uses this data to help craft community messages and educational programs and to track changes in community attitudes and behaviors. For example, when the data showed that over 50 percent of Hamilton County residents doubted the importance of raising children in marriage with involved fathers, staff began marketing messages and offering talks that provided evidence to the contrary. Although impressive changes in attitudes and behavior in Hamilton County cannot be assigned solely to First Things First, leaders use the data to provide indicators that what they are doing contributes to these changes. Examples include:

- The earliest surveys found that 48 percent of Hamilton County residents believed that premarital preparation was important, while the latest survey showed that 88 percent of Hamilton County residents believe that premarital preparation is important.
- Divorce filings in Hamilton County have decreased 28 percent since 1997. The divorce rate has decreased 20 percent.
- In Hamilton County, teen out-of-wedlock births have decreased 23 percent. Out-of-wedlock births for women of all ages have also decreased slightly.

As a community healthy marriage initiative, First Things First is both a template and a training ground for the development of additional initiatives across the country. The U.S. Administration for Children and Families has brought interested leaders from around the country to Chattanooga to provide training in this model. Maclellan reports that First Things First has “achieved its objective far better than I thought, especially in improving fathering and reducing divorce.”

“You can have singles, doubles and occasionally a home run. First Things First is a home run. It's the best bang for our buck,” he says of the foundation's funding. “Their programs affect every single part of Chattanooga society.”

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: Dick and Betsy DeVos Foundation

LOCATION: Grand Rapids, MI

PROJECT: Community Marriage Policy; Institute for Marriage and Public Policy

PRIMARY GOAL: To promote lasting marriages and marriage preparation; to establish spiritually healthy families; to provide research and public education on ways that law and public policy can strengthen marriage as a social institution

COMMITMENT: \$75,000 to support local Community Marriage Policy; over \$200,000 to Institute for Marriage and Public Policy

Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids

Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids, originally known as the Greater Grand Rapids Community Marriage Policy, began as a community initiative in 1997 “to encourage and empower couples for lifelong healthy marriages, and to raise the standard of two-parent families in the community.” To accomplish these goals, Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids (HMGR) offers a variety of community programs and generates public awareness through the media.

The organization sponsors premarital workshops in both faith-based and civil settings, trains pastors and lay leaders (nearly 300) to administer premarital inventories, hosts events specifically focused on marriage and enrichment in the African-American community, and has designated February as “Celebrate Marriage Month” to raise awareness in the community about the importance of healthy marriages.

HMGR has been supported by a unique combination of private and public investment. Richard and Helen DeVos, through a donor advised fund of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation; the West

Michigan Christian Foundation; Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services; and other individual donors have stepped forward. In addition, key operational leadership comes through an organization called City Vision and ten partner agencies.

Virginia (Ginny) Vander Hart describes how the West Michigan Christian Foundation in partnership with the DeVos Foundation, where she serves as executive director, was the catalyst for the initial funding of HMGR. She reports that the DeVos family first got involved in marriage work in response to news that the federal government was interested in funding a demonstration grant. “Grand Rapids has a long history of public/private cooperation,” she says. The DeVos family, through the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, provided the private match for the federal money, and the West Michigan Christian Foundation served as the

convener and provider of technical structure and support for legislators and grassroots groups who developed the initial model and application. “We quickly realized, however, that although we had lots of good people around the table, we didn’t have the kind of expertise or capacity to deal with the magnitude of this multi-million dollar grant. So we turned to Pine Rest Family Institute, which had the track record and institutional capacity.”

Although attracting a strong institutional partner like Pine Rest (and its president and CEO Mark Eastburg) was essential, Vander Hart points out that the key operational leadership is closer to the ground. In particular, organizations like City Vision, led by Earl James, and ten partner agencies, mostly non-profits and community-based ministries that had not worked in the marriage arena before, deliver a number of HMGR services. “It’s a mass partnership,” Vander Hart says. “These institutions are learning that marriage work is a critical leg of their community ministries.”

In May 2003, HMGR was awarded (in collaboration with two other local agencies) a \$990,000 federal grant approved by the state of Michigan to embark on a five-year demonstration project to improve child support enforcement and the financial well-being of low-income families. An additional focus of the project is to infuse healthy marriage and relationship programs into already existing services provided by the collaborating agencies. The goal is to enable low-income couples to have access to marriage preparation classes, premarital inventories and relationship skills courses. In order to secure the federal dollars, the collaborating agencies raised \$500,000 in matching dollars from foundations, private donations and corporate sponsors.

In collaboration with Calvin College, HMGR has completed several research projects to understand the attitudes and values that community members have about marriage; to determine the trends in divorce, marriage and unwed pregnancy rates; and to identify the resources within the community that are involved in supporting marriage. Research studies are beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions and programs. Their benchmarks for success are

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation

LOCATION: Grand Rapids, MI

PROJECT: Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids

PRIMARY GOAL: To join together with clergy and other community leaders to encourage and enable couples to reach their potential as lifelong married partners

COMMITMENT: \$500,000

the divorce rate and an assessment of the number of marriages entered into without premarital preparation. They also measure programmatic success by tracking and interviewing past participants.

Families Northwest

Founded in 1997, Families Northwest is a statewide organization in Washington (now extended to Oregon) working to improve the success rate of marriage, decrease the divorce rate, and improve the health of marriages and families. More than any other community healthy marriage initiative, Families Northwest has a regional, not just a local, scope and impact. Families Northwest provides educational resources and training services to individuals, families, and communities to help them develop marriage initiatives through-

“If we are going to solve our social problems, we must teach people how to have successful marriages and families.”

out the state of Washington, with a focus on providing leadership development at local and regional levels.

President Jeff Kemp, a well-known former professional football player, emphasizes that “supporting marriage is a preventative approach to social ills. If we are going to solve our social problems, we must teach people how to have successful marriages and families.” He notes, however, that this message is not “snazzy in people’s minds” and therefore has to be repeated over and over. “We have to market marital health. The more visionary and entrepreneurial donors are the ones who get it first and lead the charge.”

In 2002 Families Northwest developed “Strategy Blueprints,” which describes the initiatives that will be part of their four-phase, ten-year cultural campaign. The centerpiece of the first phase is the “Marriage and Family Agreements.” Over 700 churches in 175 cities and towns have signed a Marriage and Family Agreement. Families Northwest also worked to provide pastors with the latest research information on marriage and family issues and to connect them to resources that will assist them in implementing educational and preparatory programs for marriages. The remaining phases, which will continue until 2012, focus on informing and enlisting public support for the marriage initiatives with the goal of creating a local marriage culture in each community.

Families Northwest has found that half the battle is getting

the word out about the benefits of healthy marriages. With that end in mind, the organization sponsors a daily one-minute radio feature, a bi-monthly newsletter and a weekly online family news update. Research projects have examined the marriage attitudes and behaviors of Washington residents and the attitudes and activities that influence their family time. Families Northwest intends to be involved in longitudinal quantitative and qualitative research in collaboration with local universities and colleges to determine initiative effectiveness.

Families Northwest has raised most of its funding (about \$1 million per year) from faith community circles and is working to include the broader philanthropic community. The organization also recently developed an innovative funding mechanism with local communities. Regional staff offer leadership development to local healthy marriage initiatives that show they have a “community transformation plan” with the following elements: a diverse group of dedicated clergy; a five-year commitment; and the ability to mobilize local donors for a 50-50 split of expenses between Families Northwest and the local organization.

John and Carolyn Mutz (Indianapolis, Indiana)

John and Carolyn Mutz came across First Things First of Chattanooga at a conference sponsored by The Philanthropy Roundtable and decided to see if there was a need and desire for such a program in Indianapolis, Indiana. They were well-situated civic and philanthropic leaders, and John was former president of the Lilly Endowment and former lieutenant governor of Indiana. John believes that we need “a movement with the same feel as MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). Services are important, but we are dealing here with community attitudes.”

Carolyn also believes strongly in marriage. She says, “I believe that marriage is the foundation of all communities. My background is in counseling and social psychology, so while John thinks marriage is economically important, I’m more interested in its social benefits.”

John and Carolyn gave a small grant to a community organization to convene local leaders for several meetings to talk about marriage and to determine whether the community was ready for a serious effort in this area. Although he had extensive experience with political hot-button issues, John says that he was taken by surprise at the negative reaction and resistance from mainline

social service organizations and providers, and the reluctance of other foundations to get on board.

This experience is common among pioneering philanthropists in the marriage arena; supporting healthy marriage and two-parent families seems to be a “no brainer” to donors who come to understand the issues. They are then caught off guard by resistance and even attacks from groups expected to be first to get on board. The key divisive issues are same-sex marriage and fear of stigmatizing single parents and divorced people (see pages 12-13). Being for marriage appears to some people as being against other groups. “After that we changed course,” says Carolyn, “and we invested in a survey.

Public attitudes and will are crucial to the success of community initiatives to revive marriage and stabilize families.

We believed the most useful next step for Indiana would be to have a research base and a reliable source of information on the state of marriage.”

With an eventual green light from local leaders, the first action step was to survey community attitudes toward marriage. The Mutzes believed that creating a public-private partnership on behalf of marriage would require focusing on tangible benchmarks such as reducing the higher-than-average divorce rate in Indianapolis and emphasizing the connection between stable families and worker productivity.

Once the research was completed, the Mutzes published it in a pamphlet, for a total cost of about \$53,000. This study has also been used by a number of other local organizations, both private and public. The Mutzes made an important decision to “over-sample” black households in their survey. This common research strategy involves polling minority groups in greater numbers than their proportion in the population, in order to ensure that in the final analysis there are enough members of certain groups to draw legitimate conclusions. Perhaps in part because of this survey decision, black clergy have been eager to get involved in the conversations about healthy marriage.

The Indianapolis version of First Things First is still in its formative stage. John, Carolyn and their associates currently are in conversations with the mayor’s office and the governor’s office about supporting a citywide marriage initiative modeled after First Things First. They are also connecting with the Indianapolis Front Porch

Alliance, a cooperative partnership among the city, faith institutions, neighborhoods and community members, to address local problems. Like Chattanooga's Hugh Maclellan, the Mutzes recognize the central importance of leadership in any umbrella organization established in Indianapolis. In particular, the executive director must be able to relate to many groups in the community and establish a visible, positive face for the initiative. Ultimately, they believe, it is public attitudes and will that are crucial to the success of a community initiative to revive marriage and stabilize families.

The Weatherwax Foundation (Jackson, Michigan)

A small private foundation in Jackson, Michigan, the Weatherwax Foundation developed a community-wide healthy marriage initiative in response to a pattern they discovered in its grantmaking. Executive Director Maria Miceli Dotterweich explains, "So many of the problems we saw crossing our desks were related to family breakdown. We felt that if we could address that issue, then we could forestall other problems down the road."

After a visit to First Things First in Chattanooga during a conference sponsored by The Philanthropy Roundtable, the foundation approached the United Way with a request to convene a community planning team to explore the possibility of a healthy marriage initiative in Jackson County, which has a higher divorce rate than the state average.

The foundation provided funding for a nine-month planning process, during which the team explored opportunities to strengthen marriages in Jackson County, while providing education, preparation and enrichment activities in support of marriage. For example, the community collaborative sponsored a monthly Brown Bag Lunch Series to highlight healthy marriages and families through continued education and discussion, and hosted a successful "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage" workshop weekend for 500 people.

Another key part of the planning process was determining attitudes of local residents toward marriage-related issues. One survey question asked, "Do you think cohabitation helps prepare you for marriage?" According to Dotterweich, initial survey responses will later serve to measure the success of the initiative: "After we see what those attitudes are, then we will begin a campaign to move them in healthier directions supported by data. Later, we will go back to see if we were able

to encourage a community-wide change in those attitudes.”

The Weatherwax Foundation’s involvement in marriage is guided by three principles. First, the foundation worked with the Jackson community to develop a two-line definition to shape the scope of its work: “The healthy marriage initiative provides education, preparation and enrichment activities in support of marriage. In addition, this initiative promotes the empirical value of the personal and societal merits of marriage for wives, husbands and children.”

Second, the Weatherwax Foundation is committed to a positive approach, particularly in its language, an approach which Dotterweich described as “uniquely American.” She explains, “We do not go out and say, ‘If you divorce, bad, bad things will happen.’ We say, ‘A healthy marriage means these good things; two parents in the home means these benefits for your children.’ Americans, with their natural bent for self-improvement, are interested in learning about the *best* exercise program or the *best* way to buy a house. Why not the best way to be married and raise children?”

Third, Weatherwax has leveraged its resources by engaging a wide range of constituencies. The planning process involved partners such as human service providers, clergy, attorneys and parents who deal with the effects of broken families, thus building a solid foundation of support for a strong community healthy marriage initiative.

As the nine-month planning process concludes, Weatherwax enters the next phase of its healthy marriage initiative with valuable knowledge of its community’s needs. A surprising thing the foundation learned is that “people are looking for very basic life-skills, which are necessary to be successful in marriage or anything else,” says Dotterweich. “People are entering marriage without the skills of home management, or how to put a meal on the table, or communication—some real nuts-and-bolts kinds of things that cut across every spectrum.”

In response, the foundation is focused on addressing these needs by developing programs that can be used in a variety of settings, such as churches, businesses or community centers. Dotterweich says: “We want our healthy marriage programming to be used across all settings, because this is an issue which involves our whole community, not just one select group.”

4 Supporting Healthy Marriages: National Initiatives

National initiatives, as the name implies, are attempts to foster nationwide solutions to marriage issues. These initiatives range from programs to stimulate community healthy marriage initiatives across the country, to seeking model solutions for underserved populations, to supporting research.

Encouraging a National Movement: The Marriage CoMission
Under the direction of Chick-fil-A senior vice president Don “Bubba” Cathy and his wife Cindy, WinShape Marriage, a nonprofit organization founded by Bubba’s parents Truett (founder & CEO of Chick-fil-A, Inc.) and Jeannette Cathy in 1984, hosted a 2004 Marriage Movement Summit, where leaders of various organizations and healthy marriage initiatives formed a new national partnership named the Marriage CoMission.

Convinced that a renaissance of marriage depends on local leadership, the CoMission supports “catalytic city marriage initiatives” by providing training and strategies for effective collaboration between business, faith and civic organizations in communities. Director Jeff Fray affirms that this country “has been primed for a season of collaboration.” The CoMission works to balance sensitivity to diverse cultures while staying true to its shared mission: “to strengthen the desire in men and women for life-long, healthy marriages and equip them to lead strong families.”

As a result, their “co-strategy” is to overlap efforts within the coalition and integrate them behind city marriage initiatives. To that end, the CoMission has formed a series of working groups to zero in on strategic sectors, such as the

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: WinShape Foundation

LOCATION: Atlanta, GA

PROJECT: WinShape Marriage; Marriage CoMission

PRIMARY GOAL: Through prayer, worship, group discussions and couple mentoring, to assist couples in maintaining and growing their relationships; to provide training and strategies for collaboration between business, faith, and civic organizations in communities

COMMITMENT: Over \$20 million since 2003

Vine and Branches Foundation: The Marriage CoMission Goes Local

“It’s got to be local,” the Vine and Branches Foundation’s executive director John Stanley explains. “In order to increase healthy marriages in the country, donors must focus on their communities first. The statistics say it looks hopeless—but it’s not. We believe we’ve got one generation to turn this around.”

The private Christian Vine and Branches Foundation in Wisconsin sees local organizations with “talent, resources and Rolodexes” as grass-roots catalysts for the national Marriage CoMission. The foundation’s involvement in the healthy marriage movement began “in the hearts of the founders.” Aware of the impact of unhealthy marriages on friends, family and the community, the founders sought ways that they “could help turn the tide.”

The Vine and Branches Foundation brought the national marriage movement to local Wisconsin communities by joining with other donors to create the Foundation for a Great Marriage. Stanley explains how the foundation leveraged its funds: “We were able to add some heft to a start-up idea, and now our involvement signals other donors to join us to move a social cause.”

Working in partnership with a broad cross-section of individuals and organizations in the community who influence families, the Foundation for a Great Marriage’s goal is to educate and encourage people toward a healthy marriage. The organization is now focused on 12 counties in Wisconsin that contain 80 percent of the state’s people—suburban, rural and urban populations that all require different programming.

The Vine and Branches Foundation understands that “raising public

media, corporations, church and education. The CoMission provides tools and strategies for donors interested in pooling national resources to better invest them locally in cities and communities.

For the year 2006, eight cities qualified as Marriage CoMission Target Cities and have entered into a collaborative relationship with the CoMission. The CoMission’s Community Mobilization Team also convened over 50 leaders from these

awareness is a huge challenge," but feels that this work can be done best by community leaders who come together with the common goal of "moving the needle on healthy marriages in their county." Stanley says, "We know there are three qualities of a great grantee that can never be compromised: Leadership, Leadership, Leadership." To Stanley, a "compelling mission and a well-laid out plan pale in comparison to the community leader in whom you are investing."

Another thing the Vine and Branches Foundation is clear about is how to measure success: "We will know we're successful if county statistics show the marriage rate in a given community is up and the divorce rate is down. We will know we are successful over time if the out-of-wedlock childbirth rate is down, domestic violence is down, and finally, if healthy marriages are publicly noticed." In order to achieve success, the Vine and Branches Foundation is very involved in helping its organizations build capacity: "We're not only about program grants. We've taken a lesson from one of our friends who says 'we are called to spend ourselves and not just our money.'" Stanley concludes, "We let our feet follow our giving in many cases."

So far, Vine and Branches' initial investment has had huge returns: In less than two years, the Foundation for a Great Marriage has secured a \$5 million federal grant for the state of Wisconsin.

Building on its initial success, the Vine and Branches Foundation will continue to work to achieve the vision of the Marriage CoMission in Wisconsin by empowering local leaders with "the resources and relationships they need to strengthen marriage in their communities." Stanley sees both hope and challenges on the road ahead: "We need to generate tremendous public awareness about the benefits of healthy marriage in this country. We've got a lot of work to do."

eight cities in a three-day intensive training on best practices conducted by experts from leading organizations in the field.

The Marriage CoMission has received funding from WinShape Foundation; additionally, the Cathy family has made substantial financial commitments to improving marriages, including a multi-million dollar conversion of Berry College dairy barns into a marriage retreat center and support of various marriage enrichment programs for company

employees. Bubba and his wife Cindy, having taught a newlywed and engaged couples Sunday school class for over 20 years, have now greatly expanded their marriage ministry. Bubba says, “Seeing my mom and dad being successful in the marketplace as well as having a successful marriage has been an inspiration to my family and me. Chick-fil-A is a marriage-

and family-friendly company and we received our inspiration from the head of our company, Truett and Jeannette Cathy.”

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: Annie E. Casey Foundation

LOCATION: Baltimore, MD

PROJECTS: Matching funds for federal demonstrations; local meetings with black clergy; research and conferences

PRIMARY GOAL: To promote the importance of stable, healthy two-parent families for child well-being by uniting policymakers and practitioners around solid research

COMMITMENT: Over \$2 million

Annie E. Casey Foundation

With a long history of work for the betterment of children and families, particularly low-income, ethnic minority families, the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore is now one of the largest private donors in the marriage arena. It has contributed over \$2 million to its marriage initiatives.

Ralph Smith, senior vice president of the Casey Foundation, articulated the foundation’s move toward a marriage agenda in this way: “If we want children to matter, we’ve got to say that work matters,

and we’ve also got to say that marriage matters.”

According to Carole Thompson, who leads marriage initiatives for the foundation, Casey has come to appreciate the implications of the decline in marriage in the black community and the importance of stable, healthy two-parent families for children’s well-being.

Casey’s primary strategy is to bring together policymakers and practitioners around research and best practices. For example, the foundation has funded Rev. Robert Franklin, a prominent theologian, to convene consultation meetings with black clergy on the issue of marriage in the black community. These meetings have led to reports and strategic planning for the next steps in restoring marriage and two-parent families to the prominence they once had in the black community.

An additional strategy is to help local community groups develop their capacity to apply for and obtain federal funds

for marriage initiatives. Casey provided nearly \$1 million in matching funds for two Building Strong Families federal demonstrations in Atlanta and Baltimore. Casey was also the only private sector supporter in 2006 of the federal African American Healthy Marriage Conference and the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Forum.

Casey avoids viewing family and other social issues as the pitting of one interest group against another, and its staff strives to work across divides—such as those between single mothers and divorced fathers, and between men’s and domestic violence advocacy groups—to shape dialogues that focus on the needs of children, families and communities. Casey helped fund a 2006 Building Bridges conference that brought representatives from domestic violence, healthy marriage, and responsible fatherhood groups together for the first time.

The foundation has also partnered with the Institute for American Values and the Brookings Institution to convene mini-conferences and write reports on marriage—reports that provide intellectual fuel for strategic planning and common ground for both liberals and conservatives to come together in constructive dialogue. During a 2004 panel sponsored by the Brookings Institution on the topic, “The Marriage Movement and the Black Church,” Smith remarked, “We are certainly in an incipient movement, and we find ourselves inside a fairly big tent. The conversation is no longer about ‘right and left.’”

Talaris Research Institute

Talaris Research Institute is an example of an organization that does not list marriage as an explicit priority but is open to investing in marriage initiatives when they clearly relate to its core mission: early childhood education and parenting. Talaris is a Seattle nonprofit that emphasizes social, emotional and cognitive development in children from birth to age five and develops long-term partnerships with local and national groups working in this area. Out of these partnerships come research, tools and intellectual property that can be used by organizations around the country.

Talaris became involved in the marriage area through its partnership with prominent psychologist and marriage expert John Gottman of the University of Washington. Gottman has developed the “Bringing Baby Home” program, which provides

Public Sector Responses

Although government has always been involved in marriage through areas such as marriage and divorce law and welfare policies, there were few public sector initiatives to promote healthy marriage until the Bush administration took office in 2001. The 1996 welfare reform legislation had called for initiatives to promote marriage and two parent families, but states largely ignored these provisions of the statute. (Most social service professionals have been neutral or even skeptical about marriage for the populations with whom they work.)

There were, however, several pioneering efforts before 2001, notably Louisiana's covenant marriage law of 1997 and Florida's 1998 statute on premarital education. Under the leadership of Governor Frank Keating, Oklahoma in 1999 began using a \$10 million set aside of surplus welfare reform funds for marriage education at the community level. Utah Governor Michael Leavitt (now Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) created the first Governor's Commission on Marriage, which sponsors events around the state. Other states have gotten on board with modest efforts to strengthen marriage, most often in the form of legislation to encourage premarital education. Minnesota, for example, gives a \$65 discount on marriage license fees for couples who complete twelve hours of premarital education that includes a premarital inventory.

A major shift in the public sector has been the federal government's recent funding of programs aimed at "helping couples form and sustain healthy marriages." The Administration for Children and Families (part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) launched the Healthy Marriage Initiative (HMI) in 2002 with a special focus on low-income individuals and couples. The goals of the HMI are five-fold:

- To increase the percentage of children raised by married parents and free of domestic violence.
- To increase the percentage of couples who are in a healthy marriage.
- To increase awareness about the value of a healthy marriage.
- To equip couples, youth and young adults with skills to choose, form and sustain a healthy marriage.
- To support research on healthy marriage and marriage education.

To date, healthy marriage activities are being funded in 44 states through grants totaling over \$60 million. Rather than creating a new service delivery

system for healthy marriage activities, ACF sought to reach families they were already connected to through its existing programs. From 2002 to 2005, ACF provided more than 100 grants through its key program offices: Administration for Native Americans, Children's Bureau, Office of Child Support Enforcement, Office of Community Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Office of Family Assistance, and Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.

These grants are varied in their focus, target population and level of funding. Some examples include: Child Welfare Training Grants awarded by the Children's Bureau to develop and field test training curricula to assist child welfare staff in promoting healthy marriage and family formation; Special Improvement Projects (SIPs) grants awarded by the Office of Child Support Enforcement to improve child outcomes by providing child support and marriage education services to parents; and Compassion Capital Fund grants provided by the Office of Community Services to help faith and community based organizations increase their organizational capacity and to improve the services they provide. For more information on the types of grants and the offices that award them, see the ACF website at www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage.

In addition to funding direct service programs, ACF has contracted with a number of the major evaluation firms in the country to conduct systematic research and evaluation on the effectiveness of a variety of approaches to helping couples form and sustain healthy marriages. Indeed, the marriage initiative may include the most intensive evaluation plan of any federal social project in history.

ACF has also funded a national web-based resource with comprehensive information on healthy marriage and marriage education for the public, educators and policymakers. The National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, which has been developed for ACF with partner organizations, can be accessed at www.healthymarriageinfo.org. (Note: The author of this guidebook was one of the developers of the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center.)

Finally and significantly, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2006 (into which a long-awaited welfare reform reauthorization bill was folded) included substantial funding for community projects, with \$119 million per year going to 225 grantees, the majority of which are healthy marriage programs and the remainder responsible fatherhood programs. A list of organizations receiving these grants can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/grantees/list10-06.htm.

ACF's key program offices will continue to provide other funding for marriage strengthening activities. These are the allowable activities for all federal grants in the marriage arena:

1. Public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health.
2. Education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills, and budgeting.
3. Marriage education, marriage and relationship skills programs that may include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution and job and career advancement for non-married pregnant women and non-married expectant fathers.
4. Premarital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples and for couples interested in marriage.
5. Marriage enhancement and marriage skills training programs for married couples.
6. Divorce reduction programs that teach relationship skills.
7. Marriage mentoring programs which use married couples as role models and mentors in at-risk communities.
8. Programs to reduce the disincentives to marriage in means-tested aid programs, if offered in conjunction with any activity described in this subparagraph.

education to prospective new parents. The program combines couple relationship training with preparation for parenthood.

Talaris assisted in the development and evaluation of this project, with funding provided by the Apex Foundation, established by Bruce and Jolene McCaw, who became interested in early brain development following the birth of their own children. Now that the results of Bringing Baby Home show improvements in maternal depression rates, couple relationship satisfaction and fathers' connection with their infants, the center is funding the development of training materials so that this program can be transported widely.

Terrence Meersman, Talaris's executive director and a veteran

of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, emphasizes the importance of paying careful attention to how projects such as Bringing Baby Home can be brought to scale in other communities and sustained over time. Talaris takes a deliberate approach to investigating which kinds of programs and institutions can adapt Bringing Baby Home to their own needs—for example, prenatal programs and pediatric offices.

Meersman emphasizes that developing innovations is only the first step; rolling them out to existing institutions requires an equal level of creativity, resources and patience.

William E. Simon Foundation

In keeping with its longstanding interest in family life, the William E. Simon Foundation has funded intellectual think tanks in the marriage arena, such as the Institute for American Values and the National Marriage Project, for a number of years, as well as Manhattan Institute’s marriage and family scholar Kay Hymowitz. It has also funded a number of family-strengthening programs in inner cities.

The New York City-based foundation would like to expand its marriage work to include local marriage initiatives in the communities of Jersey City and the South Bronx. “It is clear that marriage is an institution beneficial to adults, children and society, and that it is in crisis, particularly in inner cities,” said the foundation’s vice president Sheila Johnston Mulcahy. “Despite any political or cultural momentum away from marriage in these locations, the Simon Foundation will continue working to promote and strengthen marriage in practical ways in the community.”

The Simon Foundation is working to circumvent potential obstacles while continuing to fund innovative reports, programs and small research projects on marriage in low-income communities.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: William E. Simon Foundation

LOCATION: New York, NY

PROJECTS: Institute for American Values; National Marriage Project

PRIMARY GOAL: To contribute intellectually to strengthening families and civil society in the United States and the world; to provide research and analysis on the state of marriage in America; and to educate the public on the social, economic and cultural conditions affecting marital success and child well-being

COMMITMENT: \$25,000 to Institute for American Values; \$100,000 to National Marriage Project since 2003

National Christian Foundation

Based in Atlanta, the National Christian Foundation provides a vehicle for donors to fund projects that support priorities of their choosing within the realm of Christian work. Under the direction of its donors, the foundation has made hundreds of grants to marriage and family organizations, including groups such as Focus on the Family, Family Life, America's Family Coaches, the Family Research Council and similar entities. It does not do systematic follow-up, leaving that to the donors themselves and the organizations they fund. Of particular note, however, is the increasing interest among the foundation's donors in funding marriage-related activities.

5

Marriage Strategies: The Voice of Experience

So far, this guide has discussed marriage education and community healthy marriage initiatives, and given examples of a variety of programs and foundations working in these areas. With this picture in mind of the current marriage philanthropy landscape, here are 11 important lessons donors new to the field can glean from the successes and setbacks of the pioneers in marriage philanthropy.

1. **Ground new initiatives on marriage in your current mission and priorities.** Connect them to your goals rather than viewing marriage as a new arena disconnected from, say, your historical interest in helping children, improving family life or serving the poor. Because healthy marriage is connected to almost any priority area that relates to social well-being, your work will be better integrated if you make that connection clear.
 2. **Make your case for marriage in simple language.** Philanthropist Arthur E. Rasmussen, who has funded a variety of marriage projects for the Institute for American Values and other groups, argues for making the “base case for intact marriage” in common language. He thinks people in the marriage movement have yet to articulate this case for the public in a compelling way. Arizona philanthropist Craig Cardon similarly emphasizes the importance of “having a simple answer to the question, ‘Why marriage?’” In making your case, it can be helpful to use adjectives that describe the kind of marriage you want to promote, such as “healthy” or “strong.” Otherwise, critics might think you are promoting marriage for its own sake, regardless of its quality, or telling everyone they should get married even if they have no suitable partner.
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3. **Emphasize the research findings, not just your values.** “Family values” are endlessly debatable in our contemporary society, but four research findings are now beyond serious debate:
 - a. children do best, on average, in healthy, stable, married families;
 - b. most adults of all social groups aspire to marriage for themselves;
 - c. when they achieve a reasonably good marriage, people are happier, healthier and more economically prosperous; and
 - d. marital success and failure is passed down from generation to generation.

Professionals and other community members who argue otherwise have not kept up with the research. As Ronald Haskins, consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation and senior fellow and co-director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution, suggests, “Always start with the data.” The powerful implication of the research data is that helping people build healthy, stable marriages is one of the most promising investments we can make in future generations.

4. **Explicitly use the word “marriage” in your publications and conversations.** Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the leading government advocate for healthy marriage initiatives, argues that donors can make a cultural contribution just by using the term “marriage” more explicitly in their priorities and program descriptions. It’s not enough to talk about “relationships,” “families” or “life skills” if you thereby avoid using the term “marriage.” Grantees will become more comfortable with the idea of nurturing marriages if donors are bold about standing up for marriage and not regarding all forms of intimate relationships as equally important for the well-being of children, families and communities.
 5. **Seek out individuals and groups already doing work for healthy marriages in your community, or who are eager to do this work.** Don’t begin by trying to convince reluctant or ambivalent
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groups that they should care more about marriage. As mentioned before, some frontline social service professionals believe that marriage is irrelevant to their constituents and even bringing up the topic would be an affront. Many of these professionals will come around eventually when they observe successful programs that attract interested members of their communities. Michael Hartmann, director of research and evaluation at the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, stresses the importance of “going to local neighborhoods and finding the best people. They will introduce you to others, and eventually you will find the right group to begin working with.” Many donors have found it worthwhile to seek out leaders and volunteers who already are connected to “communities of trust.” For instance, faith communities are often a good place to start because they have the trust of members. Americans have learned to trust their clergy and churches on the issue of marriage more than any other professional group or institution.

6. **Don't try to replicate ambitious projects without ambitious resources.** The most successful programs, such as First Things First in Chattanooga and Families Northwest, have leaders and donors with expertise, connections and charisma. A number of foundations have reported mixed results in replicating these successful programs without the exceptional leaders and resources involved in the original program. Joseph Dolan, executive director of the Achelis and Bodman Foundations, expresses concern about the transportability of programs without “strong local leaders who are ready to run with them.” Executive Director Fritz Kling of the Parker Foundation in Virginia suggests that recruiting and supporting high-level leaders for ambitious marriage projects requires substantial funding for salaries and infrastructure over enough years to create a secure base of funding and community recognition.
 7. **Develop community capacity rather than fund direct services.** There are just too many people who need marriage education for foundations to make a substantial contribution through funding direct services. Julie Baumgardner, executive director of First Things First, believes that “foundations can serve best by providing training for professionals and
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lay leaders who in turn serve the community.” For example, you could fund a nationally recognized trainer to come to your community to prepare 50-100 professionals and lay leaders in one of the established marriage education programs. These trainees can then provide the new service, for free or at low cost, to members of their faith communities and in other settings. Since this is not counseling or therapy, marriage educators can be trained in two to three days and then teach classes of 20 or more couples. Training these instructors is a potentially cost-effective enterprise for a funder to support.

8. **If you plan to fund a new program, be sure to set up standards and methods for evaluating the success of your initiative.** Jeff Kemp, executive director of Families Northwest, believes one funding barrier is that “measurable outcomes are hard in this kind of work, and faith communities who are doing the work are not oriented to measuring outcomes.” Only the most ambitious projects such as First Things First, Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids, and Marriage Savers’ Community Marriage Policies have set the goal of reducing divorce or unmarried parenting. To measure these big impacts, they rely on county and regional statistics of marriages, divorces and births to unmarried parents, mindful of the difficulty of assessing a direct cause-and-effect relationship. For more modest projects, donors generally expect evaluations of intermediate outcomes rather than long-term impacts on the community. The best programs keep careful records of who participates in marriage programs and how they evaluate the services, and they follow up with participants to recruit them into further services. Community healthy marriage initiatives should be evaluated not only on the basis of the number of participants served but also on the breadth and depth of community connections and partnerships. Programs that engage in community awareness projects should document their impact through opinion polls and media saturation coverage of their work. All of this, of course, depends on the size of the grant awarded to the project. But documentation of activities and outcomes of marriage programs should not be too burdensome and should in
-

fact help such programs. This may require additional support from donors, especially with faith communities that may not be accustomed to systematic evaluation of their programs.

9. **Get personally involved by participating in a marriage education experience.** Families Northwest president Jeff Kemp makes the point that marriage education is one of the few philanthropic arenas where donors can develop first-hand experience with the services. There is no substitute for first-hand experience to understand the potential of marriage programs. A first step could be attending a Smart Marriages conference to sample the various marriage education programs, or maybe taking a marriage education weekend with a spouse to catch the spirit of the marriage movement.

10. **Find a small marriage ministry that works, partner with it and help it grow.** United Marriage Encounter is a Christian ministry to help good marriages become better. Marriage Encounter Weekends give married couples 48 hours to learn better ways to communicate and to grow closer to each other and to God, and follow-up support groups are offered after the weekend. David M. Stanley, president of the New Hope Foundation in Muscatine, Iowa, says he and his wife, Jeanie, attended a United Marriage Encounter Weekend, “wanting a weekend together but with a firm commitment: ‘Remember, dear, we will NOT get involved in another organization.’ Our experience was so good that we *did* get involved.”

United Marriage Encounter then was a tiny all-volunteer ministry, active in only three cities. The New Hope Foundation’s grants allowed the organization to hire the first staff couple and begin to build an endowment. The endowment now provides the paid staff and other support, so that all of the many contributions by couples are used for program services. United Marriage Encounter has expanded to serve married couples in about 20 states plus several countries in Asia and Europe. New Hope continues to make annual unrestricted grants—smaller, as giving by others grows, reducing the need for New Hope’s financial help.

11. Walk humbly into the arena of marriage initiatives.

Although there is solid evidence for the importance of marriage to individuals and society, there is much to be learned about how to turn around the decline of marriage. No one has yet figured out a blanket solution for the wide range of communities who need support for healthy marriages. Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary Wade Horn strongly encourages establishing “relationships of trust” in which community partners are free to be honest about the problems and struggles with their projects. For example, they may have trouble recruiting the expected number of couples into their marriage education classes or mentoring programs. You should make it safe for them to share this difficulty, along with strategies for overcoming it. Otherwise, they may recruit more people into the program by changing the nature of the program into something else, such as parenting classes.

6

Marriage Strategies: The Ways Forward

The areas you decide to fund will depend on your resources, priorities and community. We've already described in depth how you can invest in two chief strategies: marriage education and community healthy marriage initiatives, and we've looked at some of the best programs out there. Now let's look at some other opportunities for giving in this field.

Develop a Marriage Resource Center

One easy way to get into funding marriage initiatives is to help a local coalition mount a web resource center. Some start-up community healthy marriage initiatives focus mainly on gathering and disseminating (generally web-based) information on marriage and marriage education in a community. The Orange County Marriage Resource Center (OCMRC) has been a spark-plug for the development of marriage resource center websites. These sites may serve as anything from an electronic clearing-house for local organizations and events in marriage education to an instrument with which to build a coalition.

By providing a central location for groups to advertise their events, the websites improve communication, help build relationships and increase publicity. “[A good website] quickly establishes you as the residential expert in community healthy marriage initiatives,” observes OCMRC founder Dennis Stoica. “You don’t even need a technical person to start the website,” he adds.

Marriage resource center sites are also quite inexpensive—Stoica estimates that it would only cost \$150 in hard expenses for the first year. As a result of this low cost and Stoica’s efforts, the sites have flourished throughout California and across the country. They are becoming essential tools for local initiatives and providing new energy to the movement. Diane Sollee, founder and director of Smart Marriages, advises, “A Marriage Resource Center website is the single most effective and cost-efficient way to organize and grow your healthy marriage initiative.”

Pascale/Sykes Foundation: Embedding Marriage Services into Existing Programs

The marriage connection is clear to leaders in the Pascale/Sykes Foundation. Its mission is to support low-income working families, particularly in New York City and New Jersey. As foundation president Frances Sykes says, “Everything works better when the marriage is working well.” The foundation’s key strategy is to focus on a range of “life skills” that include jobs, health, education—and marriage and preparation for marriage. It uses the Mathematica model developed for the federal government. (Mathematica is a research and evaluation company with a major contract to develop and test a marriage support program for low-income couples.) This model emphasizes life skills, basic services, coordinators to help families access services, and supportive public policies.

The foundation has had great success partnering with local institutions and agencies. For example, the foundation works with Project Hope in Camden, New Jersey, to incorporate a marriage component in services such as English as a second language, parenting classes, and “peacemaking” classes for children. Sykes sponsors conferences aimed at helping staff in Project Hope and other programs understand the role of healthy marriages in their existing efforts, and she expects projects to track marriage outcomes—for example, how many couples married or broke up. The focus is on healthy relationships, including but not limited to marriage.

Partner with Marriage Savers

Another vehicle for jump-starting a community healthy marriage initiative is Marriage Savers, a national organization that assists churches in strengthening marriages. Although Marriage Savers as a formal organization has been in existence since 1996, founders Mike and Harriet McManus have been promoting the establishment of Community Marriage Policies across the country since 1986, when Modesto, California, became the first city to organize local congregations as “Marriage Saver” congregations.

“Mike and Harriet McManus started their Marriage Savers organization with a small staff and tiny budget,” recalls David M. Stanley, president of the New Hope Foundation of Muscatine, Iowa, and a frequent donor to the

The Pascale/Sykes Foundation funds day-long conferences for grantees at a local hotel in a convenient location (something that Frances Sykes noted was important). The total for a recent conference, including facilities, food, materials, and \$1,000 for a facilitator, was just under \$2,400.

“The key,” Frances Sykes notes, “as with anything, is to stay in touch. We discuss marriage and two-parent families with grantees often. On site visits we discuss efforts to involve dads, guiding grantees to ask such questions as, ‘Would you like to spend the rest of your life with this person?’ and to take it from there, focusing on the children’s need for stability and consistency. We ask agencies to report three times a year and to include data that reminds the agency that marriage and fathers are important for family stability. We urge agencies to reach out especially to dads. Two agencies have been pleasantly surprised with the number of husbands and fathers who have joined family programs after the agencies reached out to them. Both agencies said that the men were glad to be asked to be part of something that had previously been focused on mothers and children.”

Sykes also recommends a hands-on way for local people to jump-start their understanding and training in marriage education: fund trips to the annual Smart Marriages Conference, which is the single best source of learning and inspiration in the marriage education field.

organization. “Marriage Savers has had an impact out of proportion to its size. The Community Marriage Policies that the McManuses promote—agreements by local clergy of all faiths to require premarital counseling and provide marriage mentoring—have already helped to sharply reduce divorce rates in many communities,” Stanley says.

A church becomes a Marriage Saver congregation by requiring premarital education for engaged couples, by training mentor couples to work with engaged and young married couples, and by developing programs for couples and families to promote marriage enrichment, reconciliation of troubled marriages, and support groups for step-families.

Mentor couples are generally selected by local pastors and are chosen because they are considered to be in a vital, long-term marriage (15-50 years married). Training prepares the

mentor couple to administer and discuss the results of a premarital inventory with the mentored couple and to engage the couple in communication and conflict resolution exercises. “Back from the brink” couples are recruited and trained to help couples currently in troubled marriages. The formerly distressed couple shares how they turned their marriage around and leads the troubled couple through 17 “Marriage Ministry Action Steps,” a process similar to the 12-step Alcoholics Anonymous model.

Marriage Savers has been pivotal in the development of many community healthy marriage initiatives around the country.

It has been instrumental in the initial development of major initiatives such as Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids, Families Northwest, and First Things First. Approximately 10,000 clergy in 215 cities across the country have signed a Community Marriage Policy pledging their commitment as Marriage Saver Congregations. A national evaluation found evidence

Community Marriage Policies have a modest but meaningful impact on reducing divorce rates in local communities.

that Community Marriage Policies have a modest but meaningful impact on reducing divorce rates in local communities, a striking finding considering that the implementation of these community policies differs widely across the country.

Cultivate Leadership

Another funding opportunity which emerged from the research for this guidebook is the need to train and mentor the next generation of community marriage leaders. A key concern that emerged from interviews with donors is the lack of transportability of the best programs that aim to make the biggest impact. Currently, leaders of the handful of highly successful community healthy marriage initiatives give one-day trainings to prospective leaders from other communities, followed by some telephone support as time permits. A potentially powerful project for a foundation, a private donor or a consortium of donors would be creating an institute for leadership development for community marriage programs. The charge would be to provide training and ongoing mentoring for local leaders in the multiple tasks of mobilizing a community on behalf of marriage.

A number of people interviewed for this guidebook pointed out that those who go into marriage work have “people skills” but not necessarily civic, management, fundraising and public relations skills. These skills must be taught through coaching and mentoring, but such assistance is labor-intensive and difficult to finance without external resources.

Second, there is an urgent need among clergy, who are natural leaders of a marriage revival in America, for renewing their own marriages. Indeed, a widely recognized but little-discussed barrier to the infusion of marriage education into faith communities is that many clergy worry that they are not living according to the principles of healthy marriage. Clergy are often expected to be “married” to their congregations and in the process move their own marriages to the back burner; their spouses are often expected to do the same. Often clergy don’t have the time to be “married well.” The result is that leaders of our faith communities are reluctant to preach what they are not practicing; they are not credible when they urge congregants to work on their marriages.

Perhaps the single most important thing that donors could do for marriage education in religious settings would be to support regular retreats for clergy couples (in nurturing, attractive settings), with follow-up support and educational groups. The ripple effects of revitalized clergy marriages could be enormous.

Embed Marriage Services into Existing Programs

In addition to direct marriage education, there are opportunities to embed marriage education into existing services for individuals and families. For instance, GFC Foundation in Orem, Utah, supports a Family Education Center at the American Heritage School, a private K-12 school in American Fork, Utah. The center hosts a monthly Family Lecture Series devoted to strengthening marriages and families. Topics have included “The Secret to a Happy Home” by Gary and Joy Lundberg, authors of *Married for Better, Not Worse*, and “Building A Healthy Family” by James MacArthur, who holds a Ph.D. in counseling psychology and has over 30 years of experience observing and researching the family.

Marriage messages could also be included in paternity establishment services, prenatal classes, welfare services, abstinence and sex education, divorce education, day care centers,

Four Research Priorities

W. Bradford Wilcox is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Virginia and a prominent scholar in research on marriage, cohabitation and religion. He was lead author for *Why Marriage Matters, Second Edition: 26 Conclusions from the Social Sciences*, a research summary published in 2005 by the Institute for American Values. Here are his recommendations for funding basic research that would contribute to the current healthy marriage movement:

1. An honest, updated appreciation of gender differences in marriage is long overdue. There is no need to turn the clock back to the 1950s, but we need to know how gender differences in relationship styles, relationship expectations and work-family preferences influence the quality and stability of contemporary marriages. My research suggests—contrary to conventional wisdom—that marriages organized along 50-50 egalitarian lines are less happy than marriages organized along more complementarian lines. But we need to know a lot more about how a healthy appreciation of gender differences (in areas besides the actual division of tasks) can foster good marriages. For instance, are wives happier in their marriages when they understand that husbands often respond to problems by “shutting down” communication to think about those problems?
2. How does the pervasive sexualization of our culture—from internet pornography to “hooking up” in college—affect the quality and stability of contem-

and Healthy Start programs for unmarried expectant mothers. Since healthcare settings are a relatively unexplored territory, there is a new push for combining marriage education with programs for weight loss and chronic illness.

One especially ripe opportunity is to work with responsible fatherhood programs to help them expand their purview to include marriage. Indeed, a number of marriage advocates began in the fatherhood arena, saw the connection between responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage, and subsequently became active in marriage initiatives.

Many indirect services related to marriage are aimed at low-income families, a priority group for many foundations. This is a

porary marriages? We know very little, for instance, about the effect of premarital sexual activity—e.g., number of partners—or pornography use on marital success. Understanding the consequences of this hypersexualization is a particularly important issue in low-income communities, where pervasive infidelity fuels a deep distrust between the sexes that inhibits the formation of good marriages.

3. Our nation's recent retreat from marriage—as evidenced by increases in illegitimacy, divorce, and single parenthood—has fallen disproportionately on the backs of minorities and the poor. How have churches serving these communities responded to this retreat? Are they stressing marriage and the values and virtues necessary for good marriages, or are they avoiding this sensitive topic? What can churches do to strengthen marriage in the communities where it is weakest?
4. Cohabitation now plays an important role in American courtship patterns and—among some groups—in organizing child-bearing and child-rearing. First, we know that premarital cohabitation is linked to a higher risk of divorce, but we don't really know why. We need to learn how, if at all, premarital cohabitation is linked to lower levels of marital commitment, trust and happiness. Second, we need to figure out precisely how cohabitation functions differently for childless adults in various social groups, and how the growing number of children spending some time in a cohabiting household are affected by this experience.

key strategy of the Pascale/Sykes Foundation in New Jersey and a central recommendation of Doug Besharov, director of the Social and Individual Responsibility Project at the American Enterprise Institute and trustee of the Mark and Carol Hyman Fund. Indirect marriage services have the advantage of a far greater reach than do direct services in which only a handful of individuals and couples choose to participate. The challenge is to make the marriage message more than a token one.

Experience shows that it takes a number of years of partnership with local social service agencies before a marriage component becomes genuinely integrated into the programs, rather than being an add-on or a way to generate additional resources

for current services that do not include a marriage element.

Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary Wade Horn cautions donors that true integration of marriage education into health, education and social services, while an important goal, is quite challenging. He notes that the federal government has had its best success at this kind of integration with Early Head Start, post-adoption services, refugee services and faith communities.

Use Your Power to Convene

Several foundations, notably the Annie E. Casey Foundation, have used the strategy of funding conferences with the objective of bringing new groups into the marriage conversation and developing new strategic action plans.

The Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin, also leverages its power to convene, funding conferences for up to 40 people through its Wingspread Conference Center. The foundation, which provides conference facilities, meals and logistical support, has sponsored important meetings on marriage-related issues. Funding travel and lodging for a Wingspread Conference, in cooperation with the Johnson Foundation, could be a useful contribution for foundations interested in marriage initiatives.

Of particular value are conferences on topics such as the role of marriage in alleviating poverty, which can bring disparate groups into conversation and expose those who are skeptical about marriage programs to the latest research. One strategy the Casey Foundation has found successful is to ask a local organization that has not been at the forefront of marriage work to convene and host a meeting on this subject co-planned with foundation staff. It may require a number of such conversations for frontline social service providers to begin to embrace a marriage component to their work. When they engage in new work on marriage and see the response of their constituents, these organizations and individuals often become enthusiastic supporters of marriage initiatives.

Fund Research and Policy Projects

As mentioned before, the most common area of funding for marriage until recently has been for policy and research insti-

tutes such as the Institute for American Values, the National Marriage Project, the Heritage Foundation and the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy. Examples of influential publications from these programs are the annual reports on “The State of Our Unions” from the National Marriage Project and “Does Divorce Make People Happy?” from the Institute for American Values. The latter document received huge media exposure in its challenge to the widespread beliefs that people do better when they leave unhappy marriages, and that unhappy marriages are not likely to get better.

Foundations such as the William E. Simon Foundation generally have responded to requests for sponsoring limited individual projects and publications from these research and policy centers. Some individual donors have signed on for extended projects and even non-targeted support for a center. The Achelis and Bodman Foundations first funded the work of the Institute for American Values on responsible fatherhood, and then continued to fund Institute projects as the case became clearer for the role of marriage in promoting responsible fatherhood and preventing a wide array of community problems.

Joseph Dolan of Achelis and Bodman emphasizes the importance of the credibility of the intellectual center that is seeking funding. He looks for institutes that have a track record of good scholarship, a leader with national credibility, and an academic advisory board of established scholars. Philanthropic investment in these intellectual centers has provided essential support for the marriage movement.

There is still a great need for research to support the healthy marriage agenda. W. Bradford Wilcox, assistant professor of sociology at the University of Virginia, has several recommendations for “basic” research on marriage and marriage-related topics such as cohabitation (see pages 58-59). In addition, the field needs “applied” research to improve its

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FOUNDATION: Johnson Foundation

LOCATION: Racine, WI

PROJECT: Wingspread Conference Center programs

PRIMARY GOAL: To cultivate ideas that sustain community by supporting education, sustainable development and environment, democracy and community, and family

COMMITMENT: In-kind donor

understanding of effective marriage education at the community level, delivered by frontline social service providers. In other words, how does marriage education work in faith communities and local social service agencies where staff and volunteers are not trained by leading experts in the field? What attracts individuals and couples to these programs and services, and how are their lives changed as a result? We have research on the effectiveness of marriage education classes, but little on the effects of mentoring. All of these issues are particularly important to study in low-income and ethnic-minority communities.

Beyond the individual program level, there is a big need for research on the effectiveness of community- or cultural-level interventions such as those being conducted by First Things First in Chattanooga. Repeated community polls to track knowledge and attitudes about marriage and healthy relationships, as well as people's awareness of community healthy marriage activities, would give local leaders a sense of how their cultural messages are working beyond broad outcomes such as marriage and divorce rates.

7 Conclusion: The Time for Marriage Is Now

The case for philanthropic support for marriage is clear and indisputable. The problem of marital failure is at the root of many social problems to which donors devote their time, attention and fiscal resources. Leaders across the country are now asking what we can do to resuscitate the institution of marriage for the benefit of all Americans, in particular low-income Americans who have been hit the hardest by the negative effects of its decline.

There is grassroots momentum for this resuscitation in most states across the nation. Over the past few decades, great advancements have been made in researching how to help people choose a good mate and form and maintain a healthy, lifelong marriage. There are established, cost-effective marriage education programs that can be taught by lay people, as well as emerging programs that offer self-directed learning. The media have caught the wave and are now spreading the message that marriage matters. Religious leaders and public officials are speaking out about the benefits of healthy marriages and intact, two-parent families.

Most of this progress has occurred with bootstrap funding, but additional resources are needed to bring the message and the programs to more Americans, especially the neediest groups who may need innovative approaches not yet developed. The recent infusion of resources by the federal government may be temporary (given political shifts) and comes with important limitations for groups such as faith communities and small local organizations that cannot compete for federal funding.

The philanthropic community, which has a long tradition and an enduring future of local partnerships, will determine the success of the fledging movement to revitalize marriage. Donors will need to retool, but the pioneers described in this handbook are showing the way. For good or ill, our nation tends to focus on a particular social problem only for a limited time. The time for marriage is now, and opportunities abound for donors to make a difference.

Appendix A

Where to Go for More Information

Projects mentioned in this report

Administration on Children and Families Healthy Marriage Initiative
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
Washington, DC 20447
acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/index.html

America's Family Coaches
Gary and Barb Rosberg
2540 106th Street, Suite 101
Des Moines, IA 50322
515.334.7482
888.608.COACH
americasfamilycoaches.com

American Enterprise Institute
1150 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202.862.5800
aei.org

Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment
P.O. Box 21374
Winston-Salem, NC 27120
336.724.1526
800.634.8325
acme@bettermarriages.org
bettermarriages.org

Black Marriage Curriculum
Wedded Bliss Foundation
236 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Number 610
Washington, DC 20002
301.613.1316
blackmarriageday.com

Brookings Institution

1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036-2188
202.797.6000
communications@brookings.edu
brook.edu

Center for Law and Social Policy

1015 15th Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005
202.906.8000
clasp.org

City Vision, Inc.

1422 Madison, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
616.446.1699
cityvisioninc.org

Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education

5310 Belt Road, NW
Washington, DC 20015-1961
202.362.3332
Diane@smartmarriages.com
smartmarriages.com

Families Northwest

P.O. Box 40584
Bellevue, WA 98015-4584
425.869.4001
888.923.2645
info@familiesnorthwest.org
familiesnorthwest.org

Family Life

P.O. Box 7111
Little Rock, AR 72223
800.FL.TODAY
familylife.com

Family Research Council
801 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202.393.2100
frc.org

The First Dance
1769 Lexington Avenue North, Number 334
St. Paul, MN 55113
651.895.6919
thefirstdance.com

First Things First
620 Lindsay Street, Suite 100
Chattanooga, TN 37403
423.267.5383
ftf@firstthings.org
firstthings.org

Focus on the Family
(street address not required)
Colorado Springs, CO 80995
719.531.5181
800.A.FAMILY
focusonthefamily.com

Front Porch Alliance
3210 Michigan Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64109
816.921.8812
exec@frontporchalliance.org
frontporchalliance.org

Hamilton County Divorce Education and Mediation Project
Circuit Court Clerk
500 Courthouse, 625 Georgia Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37402
423.209.6700
hamiltontn.gov/courts/CircuitClerk/education.aspx

Heritage Foundation

214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4999
202.546.4400
info@heritage.org
heritage.org

How to Avoid Marrying a Jerk

600 East Smith Road
Medina, OH 44256
TZitkovic@nojerks.com
Nojerks.com

Institute for American Values

1841 Broadway, Suite 211
New York, NY 10023
212.246.3942
info@americanvalues.org
americanvalues.org

Institute for Marriage and Public Policy

P.O. Box 1231
Manassas, VA 20108
202.216.9430
info@imapp.org
marriage Debate.com

Love U2 — Dibble Fund for Marriage Education

P. O. Box 7881
Berkeley, CA 94707-0881
800.695.7975
relationshipskills@dibblefund.org
buildingrelationshipsills.org/love_u2_relationship_smarts.htm

Marriage CoMission

1827 Powers Ferry Road
Building 15, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30339
404.775.8808
marriagecomission.com

Marriage Encounter
Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Inc.
2210 East Highland Avenue, Suite 106
San Bernardino, CA 92404-4666
909.863.9963
office@wwme.org
wwme.org

Marriage Savers
9311 Harrington Drive
Potomac, MD 20854
301.469.5873
marriagesavers.org

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
P.O. Box 2393
Princeton, NJ 08543-2393
609.799.3535
info@mathematica-mpr.com
mathematica-mpr.com

National Council on Family Relations
3989 Central Avenue NE, Suite 550
Minneapolis, MN 55421
763.781.9331
888.781.9331
info@ncfr.org
ncfr.org

National Healthy Marriage Resource Center
1620 Eye Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20006
877.962.0099
nhmrc@healthymarriageinfo.org
healthymarriageinfo.org

The National Marriage Project
Rutgers University
54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue
Lucy Stone Hall B217
Piscataway, NJ 08854
732.445.7922
marriage.rutgers.edu

The National Registry of Marriage Friendly Therapists
1769 Lexington Avenue North, Number 117
St. Paul, MN 55113
marriagefriendlytherapists.com

The Osborne Association
3631 38th Street
Long Island City, NY 11101
718.707.2600
osborneny.org

Pine Rest Family Institute
300 68th Street, SE
P.O. Box 165
Grand Rapids, MI 49501
616.831.2622
pinerest.org

PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program)
P.O. Box 4793
Greenwood Village, CO 80155-4793
800.366.0166
info@prepinc.com
prepinc.com

Project Hope
Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center
1600 Haddon Avenue
Camden, NJ 08103
856.757.3500
info@lourdesnet.org

Stepcouples: Me or the Kids?

cgtaylor.com/index.htm

Talaris Research Institute

P.O. Box 45040
Seattle, WA 98145
206.859.5600
talaris.org

Ten Great Dates

329 Canterwood Lane
Great Falls, VA 22066-1126
703.444.4505
arps@marriagealive.com
Marriagealive.com

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services

200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201
202.619.0257
877.696.6775
os.dhhs.gov

*Funders mentioned in this report***Achelis and Bodman Foundations**

767 3rd Avenue, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10017
212.644.0322
main@achelis-bodman-fnds.org
fdncenter.org/grantmaker/achelis-bodman/index.html

Annie E. Casey Foundation

701 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410.547.6600
aecf.org

Apex Foundation

P.O. Box 245
Bellevue, WA 98009
425.456.3103

Chick-fil-A, Inc.

5200 Buffington Road
Atlanta, GA 30349-2998
404.765.8000
chick-fil-a.com/Home.asp

Dibble Fund for Marriage Education

P. O. Box 7881
Berkeley, CA 94707-0881
800.695.7975
dibblefund.org

Dick and Betsy DeVos Foundation

126 Ottawa Avenue, NW
Suite 400
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616.643.4700

GFC Foundation

584 South State Street
Orem, UT 84058
801.224.8600

Johnson Foundation

33 East Four Mile Road
Racine, WI 53402
262.639.3211
johnsonfdn.org

Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation

1241 North Franklin Place
Milwaukee, WI 53202-2901
414.291.9915
bradleyfdn.org

The Maclellan Foundation
820 Broad Street, Suite 300
Chattanooga, TN 37402
423.755.1366
info@maclellan.net
maclellan.net

National Christian Foundation
1100 Johnson Ferry Road, NE, Suite 900
Atlanta, GA 30342
404.252.0100
800.681.6223
nationalchristian.com

New Hope Foundation
P.O. Box 209
Muscatine, IA 52761
563.264.8000

Parker Foundation
500 Forest Avenue
Richmond, VA 23229
804.285.5416
parkerfoundation.org

Pascale/Sykes Foundation
P.O. Box 3085
Sea Bright, NJ 07760-3085
732.747.2807
pascalesykes@aol.com

Philanthropic Ventures
1222 Preservation Park Way
Oakland, CA 94612-1201
510.645.1890
info@venturesfoundation.org
venturesfoundation.org

Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation
P.O. Box 230257
Grand Rapids, MI 49523-0257
616.643.4700

Silicon Valley Community Foundation
1700 South El Camino Real, Suite 300
San Mateo, CA 94402-3049
650.358.9369
siliconvalleycf.org

Vine and Branches Foundation Inc.
125 N. Executive Drive, Suite 206
Brookfield, WI 53005
262.754.2799
vineandbranchesfoundation.org

Weatherwax Foundation
P.O. Box 1111
Jackson, MI 49204
517.787.2117

William E. Simon Foundation
140 E. 45th Street, Suite 14D
New York, NY 10017
212.661.8366
wesimonfoundation.org

WinShape Foundation — WinShape Retreat / WinShape Marriage
P.O. Box 490007
Mt. Berry, GA 30149-0007
877.WS.RETREAT
winshape.org

Appendix B

Nine Major Marriage Education Programs

Note: Descriptions are from the federally funded National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (www.healthymarriageinfo.org), which will add more program descriptions over time.

PROGRAM 1

ACME: Building Better Marriages

www.bettermarriages.org

The Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment

P.O. Box 21374

Winston-Salem, NC 27120

Phone: 800.634.8325 or 336.724.1526

Fax: 336.721.4746

Email: acme@bettermarriages.org

Brief Summary of Program:

- ACME (The Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment) is an international, nonprofit, non-sectarian organization whose purpose is to promote better marriages by providing enrichment opportunities and resources that strengthen couples' relationships, increase intimacy, and enhance personal growth, mutual fulfillment and family wellness.
 - ACME is for couples whose marriages are functioning reasonably well, but which could be more satisfying.
 - The basic objectives of ACME are to: 1) increase awareness of self and partner, 2) identify areas for relationship growth, 3) develop effective communication and problem-solving skills, and 4) increase intimacy and empathy.
 - These objectives are achieved through experiential learning, group process and couple dialogue.
-

- ACME leaders are married couples who are committed to marital growth and have undergone training to become certified ACME leaders.

PROGRAM 2
Caring Couples Network
www.gbod.org/family.cnn

General Board of Discipleship
 P.O. Box 340003
 Nashville, TN 37203-0003

Phone: 877.899.2780
 Email: gbod@gbod.org

Brief Summary of Program:

- Caring Couples Network (CCN) is a model in which married couples, clergy and professional consultants (e.g., therapists, physicians, attorneys) organize as teams in religious congregations or community centers to serve couples and families experiencing difficulties.
- The purpose of the program is to help married couples and families in crisis and prepare engaged couples for marriage.
- Caring Couples are not counselors. Their primary role is to listen and share from their own life experiences.

PROGRAM 3
Couple Communication I and II
www.couplecommunication.com

Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc. (ICP)
 30772 Southview Drive, Suite 200
 Evergreen, CO 80439

Toll free: 800.328.5099
Phone: 303.674.2051
Fax: 303.674.4283
Email: icp@comskills.com

Brief Summary of Program:

- Couple Communication (CC) is a series of programs aimed at helping partners talk, listen, and effectively resolve conflicts.
- The four major objectives in Couple Communication are: 1) increase awareness of self/partner/relationship, 2) teach skills for talking and listening, 3) expand options for enriching the relationship, and 4) increase relationship satisfaction.
- Couple Communication I and II help teach effective communication skills.
- Great Start is a pre-marriage/early marriage program that is used in conjunction with CC I and CC II.
- CC is appropriate for couples of different ages, couples of various socioeconomic groups, distressed couples and well-functioning couples.
- Instructors for CC come from a variety of human services professions. Not all instructors hold a graduate degree and education levels vary.

PROGRAM 4
Family Wellness
www.familywellness.com

Family Wellness Associates
P.O. Box 66533
Scotts Valley, CA 95067-6533

Phone: 831.440.0279
Fax: 831.461.9564
Email: families@familywellness.com
Email: familywell@aol.com

Brief Summary of Program:

- The Family Wellness program teaches practical skills based on proven principles that strengthen, uphold and empower individuals, couples and families in order to promote healthy relationships.
- The instructors are required to take a 40-hour training course that models the skills and experiences of Family Wellness. The course is designed for school personnel, teachers, ministers, mental health and employee assistance workers, and others interested in assisting families.
- Topics covered in Family Wellness include: communication, problem-solving, values, money management, intimacy, community service, stepfamilies, parent and in-law issues, domestic violence, parenting, and separations due to military deployment/health/jail.

PROGRAM 5**PAIRS**

www.pairs.com

PAIRS Foundation, Ltd.
1056 Creekford Drive
Weston, FL 33326

Toll Free: 888.PAIRS.4U or 888.724.7748

Fax: 703.476.6650

Email: info@pairs.com

Brief Summary of Program:

- PAIRS is a series of programs that teaches concepts, skills, attitudes, knowledge and practices in order to improve relationships, including effective communication, constructive problem-solving, safe and constructive anger expression, and safe and constructive fighting.
 - PAIRS emphasizes the importance of communication skills, emotional intimacy and empathy in relationships.
-

- PAIRS programs are taught by both instructors (lay people) and trained professionals (licensed mental health professionals).

PROGRAM 6 PREP

www.prepinc.com

PREP Inc.
P.O. Box 4793
Greenwood Village, CO 80155-4793

Toll Free: 800.366.0166
Phone: 303.759.9931
Fax: 303.759.4212
Email: info@prepinc.com

Brief Summary of Program:

- PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) is a divorce-prevention/marriage-enhancing program.
- PREP is a skills and principle-building curriculum designed to help partners to: 1) clarify and modify their relationship beliefs and expectations, 2) improve their communication skills, 3) improve their problem-solving skills, and 4) increase intimacy and enhance commitment.
- PREP is education, not therapy.
- PREP is appropriate for distressed and non-distressed couples.
- Lay people and therapists can become PREP instructors.

PROGRAM 7 PREPARE/ENRICH

www.prepare-enrich.com/indexm.cfm

Life Innovations
P.O. Box 190
Minneapolis, MN 55440-0190

Toll Free: 800.331.1661
Phone: 651.635.0511
Fax: 651.636.1668
Email: cs@lifeinnovations.com

Brief Summary of Program:

- PREPARE/ENRICH is a program based on a set of five inventories that examine major relationship issues a couple may experience.
- PREPARE/ENRICH helps couples: 1) explore relationship strength and growth areas, 2) learn assertiveness and active listening skills, 3) learn how to resolve conflict, 4) discuss issues related to their family or origin, 5) discuss financial planning and budgeting, and 6) focus on personal, couple and family goals.
- These inventories must be administered by a trained PREPARE/ENRICH Counselor and combine four to six feedback sessions in which the counselor facilitates discussion between the couple based on their inventory results.
- PREPARE/ENRICH counselors include lay people, clergy and therapists.

PROGRAM 8
Relationship Enhancement

www.nire.org

National Institute for Relationship Enhancement
4400 East-West Highway, Suite 28
Bethesda, MD 20814-4501

Toll Free: 800.4Families
Phone: 301.986.1479
Fax: 301.680.3756
Email: niremd@nire.org

Brief Summary of Program:

- Relationship Enhancement is both a psycho-educational program and a brief therapy model that employs a skills-training methodology for empowering even the most distressed couples and families to resolve problems on their own.
- Couples learn to resolve issues, restore intimacy and increase relationship satisfaction.
- Families learn to improve communication, effectively resolve conflicts, and manage family transitions.
- In addition to the psycho-educational programs, individuals/couples/families may elect to participate in supplemental therapy to help develop effective coping skills and empower change in one's self and relationships.
- Relationship Enhancement is facilitated by both lay-leaders and therapists.

PROGRAM 9**Worldwide Marriage Encounter**

www.wwme.org

Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Inc.

Suite 106

2210 San Bernardino, CA 92404-4666

Phone: 909.863.9963

Fax: 909.863.9986

Email: officeadmin@wwme.org

Brief Summary of Program:

- Marriage Encounter (ME) is a weekend experience that emphasizes personal reflection and communication between a husband and wife.
 - ME is most often held in a retreat setting away from the distractions and tensions of the couple's everyday life, allowing the couple to concentrate on their relationship.
-

- A clergy person with volunteer couples who have experienced ME and received additional training lead encountering couples through the weekend process.
 - A series of presentations helps couples examine themselves, their marriage, and their relationship to God and the world.
 - There is no specific age or religious background requirement. All faiths are welcome.
 - Marriage Encounter is not marital therapy and is not appropriate for couples with severe marital distress.
-

Appendix C

Community Healthy Marriage Initiatives

(By State)

ALABAMA

Alabama Community Healthy Marriage Initiative

Francesca Adler-Bader, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, HDFS

Director, Center for Children, Youth & Families

Specialist, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service

286 Spidle Hall, Auburn University

Auburn, AL 36849

334.844.3234

adlerfr@auburn.edu

The Children's Trust Fund

Dept. of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

Marian Loftin, Director

P.O. Box 4251

Montgomery, AL 36103

334.242.5710

marian.loftin@ctf.alabama.gov

Madison County Coalition for Healthy Marriages

Deborah Preece, Coordinator

7308 Wood Creek Court

Owens Cross Roads, AL 35763

256.519.7100

preeced@comcast.net

mcchm.org

ARIZONA

Strong Families Flagstaff

Bob Tures, Program Director

P.O. Box 696

Flagstaff, AZ 86002

928.773.7833

skills@strongfamiliesflag.org

CALIFORNIA**Orange County Marriage Resource Center**

Dennis Stoica, Executive Director

2556 Woodland Drive, Suite G

Anaheim, CA 92801

562.407.0340

Dennis@OCMarriage.org

Sacramento Healthy Marriage Project

Carolyn Rich Curtis, Director

918 J Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

916.972.9227

Carolyn@SacramentoHealthyMarriage.org

Sacramentohealthymarriage.org

San Diego Marriage Resource Center

Cathy Brown-Robinson, MA, LPC

11339 Carmel Creek Road

San Diego, CA 92130-2634

SanDiegoMarriage@cs.com

San Gabriel Valley Marriage Resource Center

Ken Allison

P.O. Box 1600

Claremont, CA 91711

951.545.6146

kla131@yahoo.com

Stanislaus County Healthy Marriage Coalition

Jim Steward

744 Thompson Road

Modesto, CA 95351-4425

209.606.0772

info@stancomarriage.org

stancomarriage.org

DELAWARE**Delaware Healthy Marriage Coalition**

Rev. Robert P. Hall, Executive Director

Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families

240 N. James Street, Suite B1B

Wilmington, DE 19804

302.225.1040

deccf@aol.com

dhmi.org

GEORGIA**Northwest Georgia Marriage Initiative**

Kathy Schleier

1220 Covie Drive

Dalton, GA 30722-2507

706.313.0023

marriageinitiative@optilink.us

IDAHO**Healthy Families Nampa**

411 3rd Street South

Nampa, ID 83651

208.461.5475

hfn@healthyfamiliesnampa.org

healthyfamiliesnampa.org

ILLINOIS**Chicagoland Marriage Resource Center**

c/o Family Ministries

155 East Superior

Chicago, IL 60611

312.751.1002

contact@chicagolandmarriage.org

chicagolandmarriage.org

INDIANA**Community Marriage Builders**

Ann Gries, Ph.D., Executive Director
1229 Bellemeade Avenue
Evansville, IN 47714-2424
812.477.2260
office@marryright.org
marryright.org

IOWA**Marriage Matters of Iowa**

Michael Hartwig, Ph.D.
1100 N. Hickory Boulevard, Suite 105
Pleasant Hill, IA 50327
515.263.3495
mike@ifpc.org

KANSAS**Kansas Healthy Marriage Institute**

Michael Duxler, Ph.D.
Newman University
3100 McCormick
Wichita, KS 67213
316.942.4291, ext. 2190

Catholic Charities

Joyce Webb, Ph.D.
437 North Topeka
Wichita, KS 67202
316.263.6941

KENTUCKY**Bluegrass Healthy Marriage Initiative**

Erik Carlton, Project Director
149 Washington Avenue
Lexington, KY 40525
859.257.7734

Marriage Education and Resource Center, MERCY

Penny and David Hudson

LaGrange, KY

502.939.0121

pdhud9@aol.com

KYMERCY.com

MAINE**Healthy Relationships Initiatives**

Mary Schiavoni, President

1321 Washington Avenue, Suite 205

Portland, ME 04103

207.699.2464

MICHIGAN**Downriver Marriage Resource Center**

Julie Bock, Executive Director

23400 Michigan Avenue, Suite P18

Dearborn Riverview, MI 48124

mrc-wc@spcglobal.net

Healthy Marriages Grand Rapids

Mark Eastburg, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Pine Rest Family Institute

300 68th Street SE, P.O. Box 165

Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0165

616.831.2622

healthymarriagesgr@pinerest.org

healthymarriagesgr.org

Marriages That Work and Family Matters of Southeast Michigan

Joyce E. Faulhaber

517.266.8525

MISSOURI**Ozarks Marriage Matters**

Nikki Rorabaugh, Executive Director
2885 W. Battlefield Street
Springfield, MO 65807
417.823.3469
nrorabaugh@forest.edu

St. Louis Healthy Marriage Coalition

3322 Olive Street, Room 002
St. Louis, MO 63103
314.977.6308
marriage@slu.edu
stl-healthy marriage.org

NEBRASKA**Nebraska Healthy Marriage Initiative**

Doris Lassiter, Coordinator
Doral Group, Inc., Coordinators
Nebraska State Office Building
1313 Farnam on the Mall, 3rd Floor, Box 16
Omaha, NE 68102
Phone: 402.491.4123
Fax: 402.345.0807
dorisslassiter@cs.com

NEVADA**Las Vegas Marriage Resource Center**

Roger Marcussen, Executive Director
2118 Fort Halifax Street
Henderson, NV 89052
702.286.0808

NEW HAMPSHIRE**Community Marriage Initiative of New Hampshire**

Ron Tannariello & Des Coffee
134 Hollis Road
Amherst, NH 03031
603.672.1541
rtannar@verizon.net

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Healthy Marriage Coalition
Rev. Darrell Armstrong, President
Trenton, NJ
609.695.5700

NEW YORK

Healthy Marriage Coalition of Central New York
Patricia Ennis
1342 Lancaster Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210
315.472.6728, ext. 320
pat@thethirdoption.com

NORTH CAROLINA

First Things First of Gaston County, Inc.
Teresa Rankin, Executive Director
P.O. Box 953
Gastonia, NC 28053
704.867.4495
firstthingsf80@bellsouth.net

Guilford County Marriage Resource Center

Family Life Council
301 E. Washington Street, Suite 204
Greensboro, NC 27401
336.333.6890, ext. 227
info@gcmarriage.org
gcmarriage.org

OHIO

Cleveland Marriage Coalition
Sandra Bender, Executive Director
1991 Lee Road, Suite 104
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
216.321.5274
sandrabender@ameritech.net

Columbus Marriage Coalition

Stephen M. Judah, Ph.D., Chair
2290 Pinebrook Road
Columbus, OH 43220
614.451.0116
sjudah@stevejudah.com

Miami Valley Marriage Coalition

Mike & Debbie Nieport
359 Forest Avenue
Dayton, OH 45405
937.224.9654
psalm27@donet.com

Ohio Marriage Resource Center

Dick Cronk, Director
937.890.7078
rcronk@woh.rr.com
ohiomarriageresources.org

OKLAHOMA**Oklahoma Marriage Initiative (OMI)**

301 NW 63rd Street, Suite 600
Oklahoma City, OK 73116
405.848.2171
877.435.8033
okmarriage.org

OREGON**Every Marriage Matters:
Marriage Resources for Clackamas County**

Thomas and Elizabeth Dressel, Directors
1005 Woodlawn Avenue
Oregon City, OR 97045
503.655.1489
ccmp@attbi.com
everymarriagematters.org

PENNSYLVANIA**Greater Philadelphia Healthy Marriage Coalition**

Rita DeMaria, Ph.D.

GPHMC Steering Committee Coordinator

P.O. Box 738

Spring House, PA 19477

215.628.2450

MarriageDoctor@aol.com

pamrc.com

Strengthening Families First:**Berks County's Healthy Marriage and Family Coalition**

227 North 5th Street

Reading, PA 19601

610.376.6988, ext. 231 or 224

strengtheningfamiliesfirst.org

TENNESSEE**Families Matter**

Jim Hunter

Memphis, TN

901.260.8521

First Things First (FTF)

Julie Baumgardner, Executive Director

620 Lindsay Street, Suite 100

Chattanooga, TN 37403

423.267.5383

ftf@firstthings.org

firstthings.org

TEXAS**Greater Houston Healthy Marriage Coalition**

Winnie Honeywell, Chair

Tim Louis, Secretary

Family Services

3815 Montrose Boulevard, Suite 200

Houston, TX 77006

winhoney@archgh.org

tlouis@familyservices.org

VIRGINIA**First Things First of Greater Richmond**

5200 Grove Avenue

Richmond, VA 23226

804.288.3431, ext. 11

info@FirstThingsRichmond.org

FirstThingsRichmond.org

Marriage Alliance of Central Virginia

Larry Compter, Executive Director

21129 Timberlake Road

Lynchburg, VA 24502

434.455.2117

info@marriagealliance.org

WASHINGTON**Families Northwest**

Jeff Kemp, Executive Director

P.O. Box 40584

Bellevue, WA 98015-4584

425.869.4001

888.923.2645

info@familiesnorthwest.org

familiesnorthwest.org

The Philanthropy Roundtable

The Philanthropy Roundtable is a national association of individual donors, foundation trustees and staff, and corporate giving officers. The Roundtable attracts independent donors who benefit from being part of an organization dedicated to helping them achieve their charitable objectives. In addition to offering expert advice and counsel, the Roundtable puts donors in touch with peers who share similar concerns and interests. Members of the Roundtable gain access to the full range of ideas and information on what does and does not work well in philanthropy.

Mission

The Philanthropy Roundtable's mission is to foster excellence in philanthropy, to protect philanthropic freedom, to assist donors in achieving their philanthropic intent, and to help donors advance liberty, opportunity, and personal responsibility in America and abroad.

Guiding Principles

- ⌘ Voluntary private action offers solutions for many of society's most pressing challenges.
- ⌘ A vibrant private sector is critical for generating the wealth that makes philanthropy possible.
- ⌘ Excellence in philanthropy is measured by results, not good intentions.
- ⌘ A respect for donor intent is essential for philanthropic integrity.

Philanthropy Roundtable Services

- ⌘ The Annual Meeting is The Philanthropy Roundtable's flagship event where donors share ideas, strategies and best practices and hear from America's experts in private innovation and forward-thinking policy. Nearly 400 donors from 32 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada attended the 2006 Annual Meeting, "Raising the Bar: Achieving Excellence in Giving," in Charleston, South Carolina, November 9-11. The Fifteenth Anniversary Annual Meeting featured speakers such as Micheal Flaherty (Walden Media), Paul Gigot (*Wall Street Journal*), Julie Gerberding (Centers
-

for Disease Control and Prevention), Tom Tierney (Bridgespan), and The Honorable John Walters (White House Drug Policy Office). Our 2007 Annual Meeting, “Inspiring the Philanthropic Imagination,” will be held at the Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, in Dana Point, California, November 8-10.

- Ⓗ Held across the country throughout the year, our Regional Meetings assemble grantmakers together to develop strategies, programmatic solutions, and effective innovations for local, state and national giving. Donors hear experts in K-12 education, conservation, higher education, national security, and other noteworthy topics and learn how to apply sound policy to their philanthropy.
 - Ⓗ Our magazine *Philanthropy*. Recent cover stories include a groundbreaking examination of donors, think tanks, and the transformation of public policy by John J. Miller, an in-depth look at Walden Media founder Philip Anschutz and president Micheal Flaherty’s vision for transforming Hollywood, and the most significant tribute to the philanthropic achievements of the late John Walton.
 - Ⓗ Our excellent collection of guidebooks for donors, including *Strategic Investment in Ideas: How Two Foundations Reshaped America*, a history of the achievements of the John M. Olin and Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundations; Michael Hartmann’s *Helping People to Help Themselves: A Guide for Donors*; Tom Bray’s *Soaring High: New Strategies on Environmental Giving*; and our latest guidebook, *The Struggle Against Radical Islam*, by Nadia Schadlow of the Smith Richardson Foundation on national security giving.
 - Ⓗ Our work on Capitol Hill to protect the freedom and philosophical diversity of foundations. Our Alliance for Charitable Reform has played a critical role in stopping the enactment of harmful legislation affecting grantmaking foundations.
 - Ⓗ Our Breakthrough Groups in K-12 education, conservation, higher education, and national security—all subjects where we think philanthropy can achieve dramatic breakthroughs over the next decade. Each Breakthrough Group has its own meetings, publications, and other services.
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Qualifications for Membership

Philanthropists who contribute at least \$50,000 annually to charitable causes are eligible to become members of The Philanthropy Roundtable. Members of the Roundtable include:

- ⌘ Individual Philanthropists
- ⌘ Private Foundations
- ⌘ Corporate Foundations and Corporate Giving Programs
- ⌘ Community Foundations
- ⌘ Venture Philanthropy Partnerships
- ⌘ Eligible Donor Advised Funds
- ⌘ Public Charities which devote more than half of their operating budget to grants for external activities

The Philanthropy Roundtable accepts memberships from qualified philanthropists for any amount of \$500 or more. All members receive our magazine, invitations to Roundtable events, and other information about the Roundtable.

The following membership levels are suggested:

- ⌘ \$25,000 and above: Builder. This level of membership is for philanthropists who want to help the Roundtable to grow and flourish. Builders help sustain and advance the Roundtable's major programs and operations.
 - ⌘ \$10,000 and above: Investor. This level of membership is for philanthropists who admire the quality of Roundtable conferences, publications, and customized services and want to enable the Roundtable to sustain them.
 - ⌘ \$5,000 and above: Sponsor. This level of membership is for philanthropists who believe the services and principles of the Roundtable are important for American philanthropy. This is the recommended minimum level of membership for active participants in our Breakthrough Groups.
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- ⌘ \$1,000 and above: Friend. This level of membership is for philanthropists who want to show their appreciation for helpful ideas, strategies, and contacts they have acquired from Roundtable programs and publications.
- ⌘ \$500 and above: Associate. This level of membership is for philanthropists to see if they want to develop a closer relationship with the Roundtable.

Join The Philanthropy Roundtable:

- ⌘ By phone at 202.822.8333
- ⌘ By email at atelford@PhilanthropyRoundtable.org

The Philanthropy Roundtable also accepts contributions from all individuals who would like to help us foster excellence in philanthropy, protect philanthropic freedom, help donors achieve their philanthropic intent, and assist donors in advancing liberty, opportunity, and personal responsibility in America and abroad. You do not need to qualify for membership to financially support our principles and programs.

To provide an individual contribution to The Philanthropy Roundtable, please contact Amanda Telford, Development Director, at atelford@PhilanthropyRoundtable.org or 202.822.8333.

Yes, I want to become a Member!

Name

Title

Affiliation

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City

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Suggested Contribution Levels

- Builder: \$25,000 and above
- Investor: \$10,000 and above
- Sponsor: \$5,000 and above
- Friend: \$1,000 and above
- Associate: \$500 and above

Membership contribution amount enclosed: _____

I have enclosed a check made payable to The Philanthropy Roundtable.

Please charge my membership to the following credit card:

American Express Discover MasterCard Visa (circle one)

Name on Card: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

The Philanthropy Roundtable is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are fully tax-deductible.

REVIVING *Marriage* IN AMERICA

Strategies for Donors

During the last 40 years, the institution of marriage has changed more rapidly, and been challenged more forcefully, than at any other time in human history. For several decades, the impact of this dramatic change in family structure was the subject of vigorous debate among scholars. No longer. A diverse spectrum of researchers now accepts what has been common sense for many: that if we knew how to promote healthy marriages, the lives of our children and the well-being of our communities would be improved.

For the most part, the philanthropic community sat out the social revolution in marriage and the dislocation it has caused for children, adults and communities. Many donors now want to get involved but lack grounding in the issues and key opportunities. This guide aims to provide that grounding. The pages that follow will examine the current landscape, most effective interventions, and opportunities for donors of all sizes seeking to promote healthy marriages in America.

The Philanthropy Roundtable is committed to helping donors achieve maximum impact in the arena of marriage and family issues. We are dedicated to assisting interested donors in determining which types of programs best speak to their interests.



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*Free copies of this guidebook are available to qualified donors.
Nonprofit organizations may access a free PDF at www.PhilanthropyRoundtable.org.*