



Reconnecting Families and Dads

Kickoff Issue

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What a Father Means: a letter from Quinton Mudd

As we gear up for Father's Day 2014, the planning team wanted to share excerpts of a letter we received from Brooklyn Resident, Quinton Mudd. In the letter, Mr. Mudd talks about having an abusive dad who later left the family and learned the importance of a positive father figure.

Mr. Mudd's experience highlights the need for the Reconnecting Families and Dads. This initiative is not a celebration of fatherhood; it is a program focusing on strengthening fathers so they can have a positive role in lives of their children as well as their communities. You can help by connecting the dads in your area to information on jobs, healthcare and educational opportunities at your PHA's Father's Day event.

Hello Ms. Norcom,

First of all, I just wanted to thank HUD for its effort in providing solutions to the absent father epidemic that has crippled our society for too long.

I have a question. I understand that the focus of your event is the fathers of the community. However, do you offer the opportunity for those who are not fathers to tell their stories? If not, do you have suggestions on whom to go to with such a request?

I say this because although I am not yet a father, I have story, a perspective, and a point of view that I believe would be beneficial to the fatherhood narrative. I am 30 years old, but only recently did I discover how negatively I was affected by my father's absence.

In his letter Mr. Mudd describes a childhood of violent arguments between his parents that came to a head when his father physically attacked his mother. Young Quinton intervened and his parents subsequently divorced. Quinton described his perspective on life without his father.

I personally thought I was fine with him being gone. I didn't have to worry about him causing harm to my mother so I thought that I would benefit from his absence. I secured good grades throughout school and excelled in high school basketball. I managed to get several academic scholarships to a great university and eventually graduated from that university. I thought I was untouchable.

However, I was absolutely exposed throughout my adulthood. I was failing miserably and was making mistakes that a child would make. I was in my mid-twenties when I finally came to the brutal realization that I was not the man I thought my age and achievements were supposed to indicate.

I did some research on some of the issues I suffered from and I eventually read that the common cause to one of the issues within adults was due to the absence of the father during one's childhood. That's when something hit me right in my stomach. Never before did I consider how my father's absence affected me until I read those words. I finally realized how broken I was. It was like I had been walking around with an injury without ever acknowledging the pain caused by the injury.

I then decided I had to do something about this negative trend that exists in our communities. I started mentoring because I knew that millions of children were going through similar dilemmas and I wanted to help them not make the same mistakes I made. I also wanted them to understand their responsibility as men within our communities.

Ultimately, I came to understand how crucial his presence (when he is good) is important to the psychological, social, intellectual, and spiritual development of his offspring. His innate ability to provide the strength, security, moral values, and character within his children often is reflected in their behavior toward themselves and others within our society.

Fatherhood in the News



["Men Making a Difference Day' brings Prince George's County fathers to school"](#)- *Washington Post* (Washington, DC)

["Watch D.O.G.S. getting dads involved in kids' education"](#) – *Kane Count Chronicle* (Arkansas)

["NYer Of The Week: Stevan Lynn Teaches Bronx Fathers How To Get Involved"](#)- NY1 (New York)