

"Working to Keep Fathers and Children Together"

EQUAL PARENTS FOR CHILDREN, Inc.

Rochester Region Chapter of the Fathers' Rights Association of NYS, Inc.

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March 2009

Monthly Bulletin

EPC Vol. 21, #2

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, March 2

A discussion with Susan Horwitz, Ph.D. on issues surrounding Domestic Violence



Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Family Medicine

Division of Family Programs

University of Rochester Medical Center

Trainer, Family Therapy Training Program, Family Programs

Research: Domestic Violence

Dr. Horwitz has taught family therapy seminars and clinical practice in the Family Therapy Training Program at the University's Medical Center since 1988. She has extensive experience as a family therapist, is a consultant to school districts regarding family issues and mental health concerns for students, and provides custody evaluations for the courts. Dr. Horwitz heads a team of therapists who screen and assess partner violence. She heads up the Partner Violence Intervention Project in the Division of Family Programs, which has two missions: community education (primary prevention) and intervention research.

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Super 8 Motel,

1000 Lehigh Station

just West of Route 390

OUR MISSION

To promote meaningful relationships between children and both parents regardless of the parents' marital status



fathers & parenting

NOW HOW MANY VILLAGES DOES IT TAKE?

Excerpted from *The Myth of the Broken Home*

By J. Ornelas

How many villages does it take if all the huts are broken?

This may sound like the opening line of a bad joke (and maybe it is), but the punchline may turn out to be a real gut-slapper. If it took a village to raise a child according to Hillary Clinton in 1996 when the national divorce rate was somewhere around 40%, what does it take now in 2009 when the rate is estimated to be 50% or higher? I conservatively submit that it will now take roughly a village and a quarter per child between the ages of 5 and 17.

According to the 2000 census, New York contains 553 villages. Nine years later, we can only estimate how many have been lost to consolidation or to dissolution because of toxic contamination. Needless to say, we are woefully short of villages. Even if we throw in the towns to which those villages belong, with an estimated four million children under the age of 18 in New York, well, you can see there is a problem with the village solution.



There is no easy way to say this: As a state and as a nation, we are going to have to resort to relying on the family as the primary unit for raising all these children. As reactionary as that sounds, we may have no choice. Consider that the family is fortunately placed strategically to be able to address this problem. If nothing else, there are thousands more of them than there are villages. And, also fortunately, when a home breaks in two, often resulting in remarriage and redivorce, there is a net increase in the number of families. This does not appear to be the case with the typical "broken" village. Perhaps the efficacy of this stop-gap measure-- using the family to raise children-- can be increased by an increase in knowledge gained through examining some of the common misconceptions about divorce and its effects on the family.

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THOUGHTS FROM THE MEDIATION FRONT

by Jack Heister, Founder of The Mediation Center of Rochester

In over 27 years of working with divorcing couples I have heard countless stories from couples who have un-emancipated children and have been separated for a while before entering mediation. Of those who are doing well, that is, who are doing parenting where the children are making successful transitions, I find four elements that are uniformly necessary for successful parenting in divorce.

They are –

- 1) Emotionally stable homes at both parents'
- 2) Physically adequate space for the children
- 3) Predictability in scheduling
- 4) A willingness to make it work

Particularly essential are 1, 3, and 4. The schedule itself is not a major determinant. Sometimes kids are back and forth several times a week. Some are traditional alternate weekends and one midweek evening for the non-residential parent. In some the children spend one-half time with each parent. In some one parent works during the day and the other works at night and the kids are with the parent who is not working.

In all cases it has nothing to do with whether the mother or the father has more time.

In all cases, if the schedule is predictable (and the kids know when they will be with each parent) and there is consistency and love at each home, and there is a willingness by both parents to make it work, the children do well. The children soon understand that the world is not coming apart and that there is a new, consistent reality for their lives, and they start to thrive.

John W. Heister, Ph.D.

Mediation Center, Inc.

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heister@mediationctr.com

www.MediationCTR.com

LAST MONTH'S SPEAKERS

The February meeting of the EPC welcomed member Mark Antinore, working on his Master's Social Work at Nazareth college and Suny Brockport.

Mark discussed his ongoing research into the effects of non-residency fathers with their daughters. Mark will have the results of a survey in May. Mark led a discussion on modes of parenting: expressive vs. instrumental, and quality vs. quantity regarding parenting time.

Type in www.equalparentsforchildren.org and you'll find the EPC schedule for upcoming meetings including a preview of our guest speakers & archived newsletters.

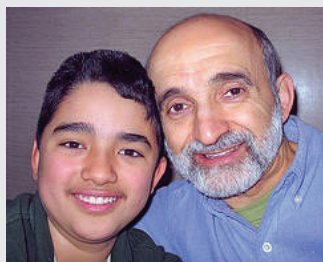
LOCAL UPDATE

John Murtari and A Kid's Right to Both Parents

The Civil Rights and Human Rights Side of Child Custody and Support

John continues to wage his nonviolent, even respectful, war against the injustice of the divorce/custody system, recently calling for a parenthood acknowledgment law. As John puts it,

- BOTH biological parents have a right to know they have a child.
- BOTH parents are presumed FIT & EQUAL (in terms of both physical and legal custody of their children).
- If anyone (a spouse, relative, or Child Protective "services") wishes to challenge that, you have a right to speedy trial, counsel, and the protection of a criminal jury and a unanimous verdict. The "state" needs to prove you were a demonstrated serious and intentional threat to your child's safety and acted with malintent.



John & Dom

• A child has a right to EQUAL contact with BOTH parents. A child does NOT have a right to pick a preferred parent. A child does NOT have a right to parents who always act in the child's best interest.

• In our discussions with ourselves and our public actions, all should be treated with dignity, respect and compassion. We can condemn injustice without malice.

• We identify ourselves as 'parents' seeking reform. Our issue is family rights and the ability

to raise & nurture our own child free of government interference. Our primary focus is NOT men's rights or women's rights or child support reform.

For more information, call the EPC number or visit the equalparentsforchildren.org website or John's website at akidsright.org

New York Shared Parenting Bill

Yet another North American study, this one out of the University of British Columbia concludes that:

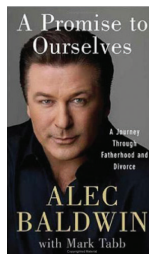
"On every measure of adjustment, children in joint physical custody arrangements were faring significantly better than children in sole custody arrangements."

Children need both parents, both families, and both homes. They need two viable homes and two intact parents. One must not be allowed to cannibalize the other. Until the courts are forced to recognize this truth, there will be only a slow painful end to the divorce and custody mess which children are experiencing. It will come to an end through reform, societal and economic pressures, but not soon enough. Why not preserve our nation's families, though split, and our children now by working for the passage of a shared parenting law? It is what's right, just and fair, and what's best for the children.

To find out how you can help make this happen, or for support in your own shared custody battle, call or write the EPC or visit www.equalparentsforchildren.org

Court Watch Group Forming Locally in 2009

Training is beginning for the Monroe County Court Watch Group. If you would like to be involved in the group, or if you would like the group to attend your Family Court hearings or trial, contact the EPC by phone or email or visit www.equalparentsforchildren.org



Book Review

**A Promise to Ourselves
A Journey Through Fatherhood and Divorce
Alec Baldwin with Mark Tabb**

The Alec Baldwin book "A promise to Ourselves" was an absolute spot-on analysis of the divorce bureaucracy as it exists today. I found myself reliving the nightmares of my own experience. What was also interesting to me was the dates during which Baldwin was going through his ordeal mirrored mine almost exactly. When Baldwin discusses his experience with the powerful and expensive lawyers who begin the process with asset disclosure and figure out how much of your assets they are going to get, and then follows up with his experiences with the powerful court-appointed counselors and Law Guardians, I found myself re-experiencing the same feelings that he was depicting in his book. One of the experiences with the Law Guardian which Baldwin describes as an agenda, was exactly the same take away which I had with my children's appointed lawyer. As a victim myself of the bureaucracy of the court-mandated anger management program, I found myself relating to Baldwin's description of his experiences and conclusions as identical to mine. I think that Baldwin does a tremendous job of pointing out the pitfalls of the system and highlighting the reality of Parent Alienation Syndrome. I think that Baldwin adds some credibility to the fight for equality and the descriptions of the tainted system as we know it. But I also think that Baldwin falls short of identifying the overriding influence of federal mandates which influence court decisions on money issues. Let's face it, most of us are crippled with court ordered child support, lawyer fees, and psychologists' fees, so routinely ordered by administrating judges. I really had hoped that Baldwin would point out why some of the decisions (ie: agenda of court-appointed law guardians) were being made procedural, or routine. It was also my hope that Baldwin would point out some of the correlations to the adage of "following the money trail." He does not mention the billions of dollars which the federal government kicks to the states for enforcing the money collection from the non-custodial parent. In summation, I would recommend reading this before going through the wretched divorce or separation proceedings. Sometimes it is better to know ahead of time and avoid the many misconceptions which people have prior to entering the courts and the systems involved. For this reason alone, it is a must read for everyone touched by divorce and separation.

--Timothy Head

editor note: Copies of the Baldwin book will be available at retail price or below from Equal Parents for Children, visit equalparentsforchildren.org for details

Stephen Baskerville remains one of the most thoughtful, insightful and scholarly writers on family and divorce & custody issues. Here is an excerpt from his most recent article:

Divorced from Reality

"We're from the Government, and We're Here to End Your Marriage."

by Stephen Baskerville

The decline of the family has now reached critical and truly dangerous proportions. Family breakdown touches virtually every family and every American. It is not only the major source of social instability in the Western world today but also seriously threatens civic freedom and constitutional government.

G. K. Chesterton once observed that the family serves as the principal check on government power, and he suggested that someday the family and the state would confront one another. That day has arrived.

Chesterton was writing about divorce, and despite extensive public attention to almost every other threat to the family, divorce remains the most direct and serious. Michael McManus of Marriage Savers writes that "divorce is a far more grievous blow to marriage than today's challenge by gays."

Most Americans would be deeply shocked if they knew what goes on today under the name of divorce. Indeed, many are devastated to discover that they can be forced into divorce by procedures entirely beyond their control. Divorce licenses unprecedented government intrusion into family life, including the power to sunder families, seize children, loot family wealth, and incarcerate parents without trial. Comprised of family courts and vast, federally funded social services bureaucracies that wield what amount to police powers, the divorce machinery has become the most predatory and repressive sector of government ever created in the United States and is today's greatest threat to constitutional freedom.

(full article reproduced at equalparentsforchildren.org)

EQUAL PARENTS FOR CHILDREN BULLETIN

The Equal Parents for Children Bulletin is printed monthly

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J. Ornelas
Editor

Your submissions are welcome at our mailing address or by email:
dadsrochester@yahoo.com



Villages

continued from page 1

Some commonly held misconceptions:

Myth One: Divorce is what “breaks” homes; Divorce is the number one cause of the destruction of the family; One financially sound home is preferable to two; Kids need both parents occasionally, whether they know it or not; Kids know what’s in their own best interest; Kids don’t know what’s in their own best interest; Lawyers in the guise of judges and law guardians have a real handle on that best interest thing.

Myth Two: In a divorce, “nobody wins;” In a divorce, only the lawyers win; In divorce, there is no longer a “family,” per se; The Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution do not apply to children and fathers; This fact is of no concern nor consequence except to the fathers and children directly effected by it; There is a gender bias in the law; There is no gender bias in the courts nor in the application of the law.

Myth Three: Many dads are “deadbeats;” Most of these dads are willfully so, that is, able to pay for two households but neglectfully not happy to do so; The percentage of these dads is significant and is a major cause of crime, welfare, the global recession, problem kids, and unhappy mothers; All dads should be castigated for this on Father’s Day, no less, by all of society and by political and religious leaders of all stripes; There are, by the way, no “deadbeat” non-dad parents, aka moms.

Singly, these myths each present a difficulty for millions of U.S. citizens. Taken together, they constitute a whole syndrome that effectively, steadfastly, works against the bid by the American family to replace the village as the number one entity that “has what it takes” to raise a child.

(read full article at www.equalparentsforchildren.org)

NON-Custodial EITC Revisited

(from December 2008 issue)

To be qualified you must:

- be a New York Resident Taxpayer
- be 18 years of age or older
- be a noncustodial parent and have Child(ren) who do not reside with you
- have paid 100% of the current amount of child support due for given tax year and;
- have earned income less than \$32,341 per year

If you meet these qualifications, you might be entitled to the credit. As a non-refundable credit, you can receive these funds even if you owed no tax in the tax year. To find out more, visit the NY state Department of Taxation and Finance website and complete Form IT-209.

- Gary Castine, CFP, CDFA

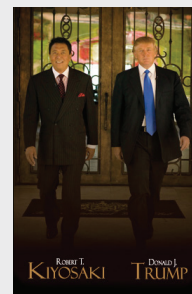
A Father’s Gift

I will fight with the wisdom of my father and the compassion of my mother.

- **Robert T. Kiyosaki**

His father died when my father was 11 years old, which left him as the man of the house with a mother and two siblings to care for and watch out for. It was the defining moment in my father’s life....My father never had the time to complain. He just worked. And that is something to learn from. When I was going through difficult times, I would remember my father’s ordeal and just keep on working through it. I can tell you from experience that perseverance is what is required.

- **The Donald**



Equal Parents for Children

Our Purpose:

We believe that no greater vocation can be had by a woman or man than to be a parent. Our purpose is to promote the equality of that vocation and to offer men and women an organization for the mutual support to pursue their equal rights.



We are committed to:

1. The importance of mothers and fathers and the recognition of the unique qualities that they offer their children
2. Joint custody in temporary and permanent court orders
3. The just enforcement of equal parenting time
4. Professional standards for mediators and a system that would presume mediation over adversarial resolution of domestic matters.
5. The equal parental and custodial rights of unwed parents
6. Equality and fairness in child support legislation



**Your kids
ROUTINELY
Need you**

Don't let that right be taken away!

We need your support!
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MARCH 2009

“Working to Keep Parents and their Children Together”

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Monthly Meetings



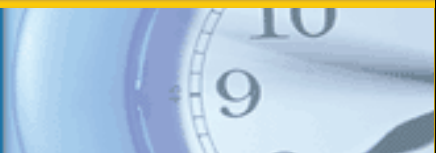
**Peer Support
Speakers
Resource Center**

7:00 PM —9:00 PM
Super 8 Motel
100 Lehigh Station Road
(Off Route 390
in Henrietta)

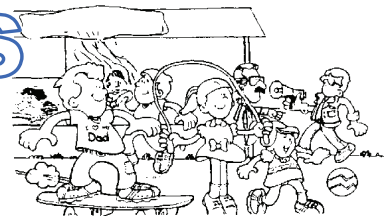
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1st Mondays



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Kids’ Future**
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We would be honored to have you as a member:

New member \$30/year
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