

## **Beyond the Stereotype: How a Local Organization is Rewriting the Narrative of Fatherhood for Men Facing Overwhelming Odds.**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Did you know that children without an involved dad are 20x more likely to end up in prison and 10x more likely to use alcohol and drugs and 9x more likely to drop out of school?

**The Hook:** Forget the absentee dad cliché. In St. Louis, Fathers & Families Support Center (FFSC) has been quietly orchestrating remarkable transformations for over two decades, empowering men who've faced prison, addiction, disability, and legal battles to become dedicated, loving fathers. This isn't just about turning lives around; it's about building stronger families and a more resilient community.

**FFSC is proud to share the inspiring stories of five recent graduates who exemplify the transformative power of their programs:**

- **Lamar M:** From a 15-year prison sentence to a six-figure trucking career, Lamar's journey showcases incredible redemption and his commitment to providing for his family while aiming to combat homelessness.
- **Shawn H:** Despite disability and legal hurdles after a long marriage, Shawn fought tirelessly to be recognized as his youngest son's father, ultimately securing 77% custody and prioritizing his presence over financial support.
- **Anthony P:** Leaving behind a past of gang life and incarceration, Anthony, a father of ten, found a new direction through FFSC, transforming his communication and building a stable life for his children.
- **Desmond S:** Once separated from his infant son by incarceration and feeling the absence of his own father, Desmond embraced FFSC's guidance to become a thriving provider and a dedicated, present father of three.
- **Zakiyy J:** Facing heartbreaking denials and legal complexities, Zakiyy's unwavering love for his daughter, amplified by FFSC's legal support and guidance, led to a triumphant joint custody agreement.

**The Angle:** This story will go beyond statistics to showcase the deeply personal journeys of several FFSC graduates. We'll explore:

The Power of Redemption: Featuring Lamar's inspiring transition from a 15-year prison sentence to a successful six-figure career and his commitment to his sons and fighting homelessness.

Fighting for Fatherhood: Highlighting Shawn's determined battle against legal obstacles and disability to secure his place in his youngest son's life, prioritizing presence over financial support.

Breaking the Cycle: Examining Anthony's journey from a past marred by gang life and incarceration to becoming a stable and engaged father of ten, demonstrating the power of positive support.

Finding Presence After Absence: Telling Desmond's story of finding his footing as a dedicated father after being separated from his infant son by incarceration, emphasizing the importance of guidance in breaking negative patterns.

Triumphing Over Legal Hurdles: Showcasing Zakiyy's relentless fight for his daughter's custody, emphasizing the crucial role FFSC's legal guidance played in his victory.

### **Why This Story Matters:**

**Human Interest:** These are compelling stories of resilience, love, and the fundamental desire to be a good parent, resonating with a broad audience.

**Community Impact:** FFSC's long-standing success (supporting nearly 22,000 fathers) demonstrates a tangible positive impact on families and the St. Louis community.

**Challenging Stereotypes:** The story offers a nuanced and hopeful perspective on fatherhood, particularly for men who face significant challenges.

**Potential for Solutions Journalism:** By highlighting FFSC's effective programs, the story can offer insights into successful models for supporting fathers and strengthening families.

This story offers a powerful and hopeful look at the transformative potential within individuals and the vital role community organizations play in helping them rewrite their narratives and build brighter futures for their families.

### **Story Pitches:**

- **Redemption Stories from prison:** Highlighting the journeys of Lamar, Anthony, and Desmond and how they overcame prison and significant adversity to become dedicated fathers.
- **Legal Battles for Fatherhood:** Focusing on Shawn and Zakiyy's fights for parental rights and the crucial role FFSC played in their victories.
- **The Impact of Fatherhood Programs:** Examining the long-term effects of FFSC's support on families and the community, especially given our 27 year history.
- **Breaking Generational Cycles:** Exploring how FFSC helps fathers overcome negative patterns from their own upbringing to become positive role models.
- **The Economic Impact of Responsible Fatherhood:** Discussing how FFSC's employment programs contribute to family stability and the local economy.

FFSC is available for interviews and can connect you with these inspiring fathers.

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Celebrating 27 years, [Fathers & Families Support Center](http://FathersSupportCenter.org) (FFSC) is a non-profit dedicated to supporting men (and women) on their journey to responsible parenthood, improving outcomes for children and strengthening families in the St. Louis bi-state region. Through its comprehensive programs and support services, FFSC has positively impacted over 53,000 children who have more responsible, involved parents today. To date, FFSC has supported nearly 22,000 men who wanted to become more responsible, involved fathers with their children. FFSC's goal is to break the cycle of poverty, child neglect and abuse, and welfare dependence by educating and preparing fathers to become responsible parents with the financial stability to support their children materially and the parenting skills to support them emotionally and developmentally. Our 2024 Program Impact:

- **3% Recidivism rate** for participants of FFSC's Re-Entry Project. 2024 Missouri average recidivism rate is 35%.
- **72%** of participants reported increased co-parenting relationship skills.
- **83%** of participants reported increased parenting skills.
- **75%** of FFSC participants report increased interaction with their children.
- Average wage that FFSC participants earned in 2024 was \$18.16/hour compared to the state's minimum wage of \$12.30.
- **298** participants agency-wide obtained or maintained employment, resulting in \$10.7M reinvested back into the local economy.
- **Between 2019 – 2024, FFSC helped the State of Missouri collect \$5,926,609 in child support** paid by Family Formation participants.
- **ROI:** Fathers & Families Support Center **returned \$16,423,312 to the St. Louis community** on an investment of \$3.5M (our 2024 program expenses).

Check out FFSC's [2024 Annual Report](#).