

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ST. LOUIS YOUTH TAKE THE MIC: 40 Young Leaders Set to Graduate from Intensive 20-Week Empowerment Program



ST. LOUIS, MO — At a time when headlines often overlook the resilience of local youth, 40 young people from the St. Louis area are rewriting the narrative with proven results. On Saturday, June 27th, **Fathers & Families Support Center (FFSC)** will celebrate the graduation of roughly 40 participants, ages 14 to 24, from its intensive 20-week [Youth Leadership & Development Program](#).

This milestone event highlights a new generation stepping into leadership roles to break cycles and build stronger communities, perfectly embodying the organization's mission to offer "Help for Fathers. Hope for Families." The program's impact is clear and measurable: **74% of program participants decreased risky behaviors** over the course of

the 20 weeks, proving that targeted mentorship and life-skills training yield tangible community safety and personal growth.

"For 20 weeks, these young people didn't just show up—they dug deep, challenged themselves, and uncovered their true potential as leaders," said Shan Oliver, Director. "At FFSC, we know that when you empower a young person, you lift up an entire family and change the trajectory of our community. St. Louis needs to hear their voices and see what accountability, resilience, and hope look like in action."

Media Opportunities:

- **Powerful On-Camera Interviews:** Hear directly from youth speakers who have spent five months overcoming obstacles, decreasing risky behaviors, and developing professional life skills.

- **Dynamic Visuals:** Captivating moments including the presentation of awards, certificates, and a celebratory fellowship gathering.
- **Community Icons:** An appearance by special guest **Shorty The Prince**.

"This program gave us more than just skills; it gave us a platform and a purpose," shared Dimetreus Rose, graduating youth speaker. "Over the last 20 weeks, we learned how to lead, how to push through adversity, and how to define our own futures. We are ready to show St. Louis what we can do."

The complete evening lineup includes:

- **4:30 PM – Doors Open:** Guest welcome and media check-in.
- **5:15 PM – Youth Welcome & Dinner:** Opened by youth participants Aiden and Colin Oliver.
- **6:00 PM – Opening Remarks:** Led by Youth Case Manager London Bowers.
- **6:05 PM – The Youth Voice:** Powerful, lived-experience speeches from graduates Dimetreus Rose, Dawane Harrington, and Emily Brock, alongside Special Guest Shorty The Prince.
- **6:10 PM – Presentation of Certificates:** Led by Youth Case Manager Lamarco Aikens.
- **6:20 PM – Presentation of Awards:** Honoring standout achievements, led by Youth Coordinator Shawanda Abernathy.
- **6:30 PM – Closing & Fellowship:** Concluded by Chief Operating Officer Destini Goodwin, followed immediately by a light fellowship celebration.

Event Details:

- **What:** Fathers & Families Support Center Youth Leadership Graduation
- **When:** Saturday June 26, 2026 | Doors open at 4:30 PM
- **Where:** 1518 Washington Ave. St. Louis, MO 63103

Journalists, photographers, and camera crews are invited to cover the event.

For more information about the grand opening or to RSVP, please **FathersSupportCenter.org** or call/text Sid Officer at 314-351-2818.

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About Fathers & Families Support Center (FFSC)

[FFSC is a nationally recognized agency](#) dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty and child neglect by preparing fathers and mothers to be financially and emotionally present. **Since its first class in 1998, FFSC has supported 23,000 men on their journey to responsible fatherhood, benefitting over 57,000 children** with parents who can support them emotionally, developmentally and materially. As a United Way Member Agency, FFSC provides "full immersion" parenting education, legal services, and employment mentoring to foster healthy, cohesive families.

- [Agency Programs and Outcomes](#)
- [2025 Annual Report](#)
- [Watch what we do!](#)
- [Antwane White video](#)

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