



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Healthy Start Coalition's Father and Child Resource Center tackles the issue of father absence, provides resources for local dads

Amount of father-absent homes in Martin County has decreased by 28 percent

Stuart, FL (June 7, 2012) – Many people know of the Martin County Healthy Start Coalition for the benefits it provides to expectant mothers and their children, but what some may not know is that Healthy Start also has a number of resources for fathers in Martin County.

Created in 2000 by Martin County Healthy Start Coalition to address the issue of father absence, the Father and Child Resource Center (FCRC) provides valuable support to encourage men to become more involved and committed fathers. FCRC offers parenting classes to all fathers, legal assistance for those fathers who are separated from their children and also parenting workshops to other agencies.

Through collaboration with the health department, hospital and the county jail, the nonprofit has been able to increase the number of fathers present in the lives of their children. According to Healthy Start's FCRC Director David Cardno, the number of homes with absent fathers in Martin County has declined by 28 percent between 2000 and 2010. "We want to see every child have an involved father. Our ultimate goal is for the Father and Child Resource Center not to exist." Cardno said.



In 2001 Jorge Figueroa was a father struggling to earn custody of his 4 month old daughter. The health department referred Figueroa to Healthy Start for legal assistance and guidance through the FCRC. By participating in Fatherhood classes and attending Family Law Forum meetings Jorge learned more about the relationship between father and child, and what steps he should take to get custody of his daughter.

“Healthy Start’s Father and Child Resource Center has really helped me become a better father. They gave me hope, counseling and support.” Through the help of volunteer attorneys at FCRC, Figueroa now has full custody of his daughter and with Father’s Day right around the corner, he is thankful that he will be able to spend it with her.

“The Martin County Healthy Start Coalition believes that every child deserves to be raised in a healthier and happier home,” said Healthy Start Coalition Executive Director Scott Berry. “By supporting the efforts of the Father and Child Resource Center, in addition to the services that we are providing expectant mothers, we are furthering that commitment to the children in our community.”





Suggested Photo Caption: With the help of Healthy Start's Father and Child Resource Center, Jorge Figueroa was able to become more involved in the life of his daughter Amanda Figueroa.

About Martin County Healthy Start Coalition

Martin County Healthy Start Coalition is a community-based 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that offers support and education to pregnant women and infants. Prenatal and infant health screenings, childbirth education, counseling services, and parenting education classes are available to families to ensure that all babies are born healthy. All information provided to Healthy Start is kept confidential. Eligibility for services is based on the presence of risk to the health of the mother or infant, not on income level.

Connect with Martin County Healthy Start on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MCHHealthyStart. For more information, call 772-463-2888 or visit <http://www.mchealthystart.org>.

About Father and Child Resource Center

Father and Child Resource Center was created to promote responsible fatherhood in our community and to encourage fathers to play a positive role in their children's lives. Father and Child Resource Center works to ensure that children of the community enjoy healthy growth and development through the emotional, physical, moral, and financial support of their fathers.

Connect with Father and Child Resource Center on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fatherchild. For more information call 772-463-2888 or visit <http://www.mchealthystart.org>.

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