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HELPING FRAGILE FAMILIES

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. HASKINS: My name is Ron Haskins. I'm a senior fellow here, and along with Belle Sawhill, we run something called the Center on Children and Families, and we're about -- in December, we will conclude our 11th year. I happened to think of that when I went to bed last night, 11 years, a long time. I'm also a senior consultant at the Annie Casey Foundation.

So welcome to Brookings. We have an extremely interesting event this morning. I'd especially like to congratulate the audience for coming in the rain. We notice that we get about 20 percent fewer people whenever it rains, so the hearty ones are here and the less hearty are not. It's their loss.

We're here to release another volume of *The Future of Children*. This volume is devoted entirely to fragile families and mostly the Fragile Family Study, which we'll hear a lot about in a few minutes, and related literature as well in many of the chapters, and Irv Garfinkel will summarize those in just a moment. But it's 5,000 families selected that are representative of births outside marriage and to married couples in large cities in America, so it's really, for all practical purposes, it's representative of unwed families and married families in the United States. And the families are followed until the children, the birth is -- the child grows to age five.

And there have been scores of publications, but to my knowledge, this volume of *The Future of Children* that is available out there is the first time that a lot of the information has been pulled together in one place. I think there's way

more information about the Fragile Family Study in this volume than anywhere else.

And it is truly astounding, the range of topics and the range of issues that have been covered in these -- by the various Fragile Family Studies. There's information -- a lot of information on the parents, about the characteristics of the parents, about parenting, a lot of information about the children. And I think that really is one of the most important contributions of this study, is that we can link parents with kids, so that's a really important thing to be able to do.

So I really think that this is an amazing study. And to give you an idea of the depth of it, I have -- or the breadth of it, I have an e-mail here I got yesterday from someone named Colter Mitchell. Colter Mitchell was a geneticist, and after the study got going, they decided to take hair samples and do DNA studies to relate differences in genetic conditions to behavioral conditions, which is, you know, this is very much on the frontiers of social science. So here's what they're doing. In one paper we show that the serotonin transporter gene, 5-HTT something, that I've always looked into -- haven't you, Irv? -- moderates the effect of SCS on postpartum depression.

Similarly, in another paper, we examined if children's serotonin transporter gene, 5-HTT, and four dopamine system markers -- DRD-2, DRD-4, DAT-1, COMT -- we all know about those -- moderate the effect of parents SCS on the internalizing and externalizing behaviors of the children. So that will just

give you an idea I think of how vital this study is and how much we're learning from the study, as you'll see in a few minutes.

So today's event, first we're going to have an overview of the volume that Irv is going to do. And he will talk both about the Fragile Family Study itself and about all of the papers in the volume, so you'll get two different types of information here. And then I'm going to give a brief overview of our policy brief. Many of you know that whenever we publish an issue in *The Future of Children*, we also write a 3,000 word policy brief which makes some recommendation on how we should change policy, so I want to describe to you what we're recommending about the policy.

And then I think the most interesting part of the program, we have parents who participated in special programs for fragile families that were part of the Bush Building Strong Families Initiative: one set of parents from Oklahoma, along with the director of the Oklahoma program, and one set of parents from Baltimore, along with the director of the Baltimore program. I'll introduce them momentarily. And I'd like to give a special thanks to the parents for coming today and to the directors of those programs.

And then after, we'll give the audience a chance to talk to the parents as well. And then we're going to have a panel to reflect especially on the policy brief and the policy recommendations and we'll recognize them at the appropriate time. And finally we'll have a chance for the audience to ask questions of the panel.

So now let me tell you about Irv Garfinkel. Irv, I thought of this last night, I figured this out. Irv and I have known each other for 35 years. I first met him when I was in Chapel Hill. Thirty-five years, oh, my god, we're older. Irv, we're at least tied, I happen to know that, I looked into this.

So Sara McLanahan, who is the editor-in-chief of *The Future of Children*, and Irv are really the driving forces behind the Fragile Family Study. Sara intended to be here today, but she's ill and couldn't do it, so she told Irv that he would have to come.

Now, for those of you who don't know this, his name is Garfinkel and her name is McLanahan, but they do practice what they preach. They study marriage and they got married, so they're married to each other. So Irv had no choice but to come today. Sara said, Irv, you're doing it. And Irv is just recovering from an illness, so I really appreciate you coming down here for that.

I want to mention one thing about Irv in lieu of giving you all kinds of background information. And you make take offense at this, but I have here a book that Irv published within the past year, *Wealth and Welfare States: Is America Laggard or Leader?* This is a magnificent book. This book puts the U.S. social policy, especially insurance programs, education, and public health, in international perspective, and it compares us with other English-speaking nations and with European nations and Scandinavian nations, and really is an eye-opener. I found it extremely disconcerting. In fact, for years I've greatly enjoyed disagreeing with Irv, and I kept looking for stuff to disagree with him in

here and found way too little to disagree with, so it is a disturbing book.

So Irv is the Mitchell I. Ginsberg Professor of Contemporary Urban Problems at Columbia. You have to have a Ph.D. just to say that. And he's one of the editors (inaudible), so, Irv, thank you so much for coming. (Applause)

MR. GARFINKEL: So it's a great pleasure to be here. I thought Ron was going to introduce me as his favorite socialist, which he has a very good debating point, I always call him my favorite Neanderthal. But we do go back a long way and I appreciate the introduction.

I just want to say one thing about the DNA studies. I think dandelions and orchids -- and that's actually the title of one paper, not ours, but some other that we are replicating. So it turns out that genes, which we think of as being "bad genes" are really "sensitive genes," and they really are orchids. They're like orchids. So what we're discovering in one place after another is the interaction between the gene and environment. And if you've got a good environment and you're like an orchid, you will flourish, but if you got that orchid gene and you have a tough environment, you will die at the extreme. So it's very interesting what we're finding. And if you just keep in mind dandelions can survive anywhere, orchids really need good conditions. That's it for DNA. I'm not going to say anything else about that, but since Ron raised it.

So the -- what I want to do today is just describe the major elements of the Fragile Family Study, and then focus in, narrow in on *The Future of Children* volume. So what motivates the Fragile Family Study is the increase

in unmarried births. And you can see from this slide that all populations -- whites, blacks, Hispanics -- the rate of growth for all those three populations in non-marital births has been the same. The black and Hispanics started at higher levels than the whites and are still at higher levels, but the growth rate has been the same. So throughout the entire population, we have a growth in non-marital births, and now we're up to a little -- just around 40 percent, the most recent data.

So the chapter summaries. The first chapter is on parental relationships, McLanahan and Beck, then mother's economic conditions and resources. Let me say just a little bit about each of these. So the main thing -- or actually I'll show you some slides that will elaborate on these.

The fathers, we had a chapter on fathers' capabilities and contribution, one on race and ethnicity, one on incarceration, one on prevention, one on unmarried parents in college, and finally one on marriage and fatherhood programs. So I'll say a little bit about each of those.

So the major finding at the beginning of the study was high hopes at birth. And it was quite astounding that when we found nearly half of the couples, non-married couples now, were living together at birth, previous estimates indicated it was no more than 40 percent, and we now have confirmed this figure nationwide. And another 30 percent were in a visiting relationship. And nearly 10 percent were still friends, and only about 10 percent have little or no contact at the birth.

Father involvement was remarkably high at birth. You can see from

these figures that the proportion giving money, help in another way, proportion that visited the mothers in the hospital, all very high. I want to call your attention to the bottom lines there. Whether the mother says she wanted the father to be involved and whether the father -- whether she reports that the father wants to be involved, over 90 percent.

So clearly, these couples want to make it -- there's high involvement, high commitment at birth -- but they don't. Over the course of the first five years, there's very high instability and growing complexity. And the first set of bars shows the proportion of the relationships, and these are the non-marital births, that end depending upon their relationship at birth. So the marrieds at 5 years, 20 percent have divorced; the cohabitating, 40 percent have split; for those who were in a visiting relationship, it's closer to 80 percent that the relationship has ended; and for those who had no relationship, they continue in that vane.

They then also go on to form new partnerships. Again, the bars show you that those relationships hold: the marrieds will have the least repartnering, and those that had no relationship at birth will have the most repartnering, and they have new children as well. So the new relationships and the new children both, which are both positive events, but they complicate matters in terms of the initial family that we focus on and study, that focal child, if you've got another relationship, you've got new children coming in, it just complicates life dramatically. So we knew a lot about single mother's

capabilities, we knew quite a bit less about the father's capabilities, because the fathers don't live with the children, and if you use normal surveys, they're not identified.

And one of the things that the Fragile Families did so much better than any previous study is that we got a huge portion of the nonresidential fathers, the non-marital births, the fathers of the non-marital births, we interviewed 75 percent of them at birth, and over the course of the next few years, we got up to 86 percent. So of all the fathers who parented a child out of wedlock, we've interviewed them, 86 percent of them at least once. And this slide shows you that their capabilities of both the mothers and the fathers are quite low as compared to the married couples. And I want to underline why that's important because a lot of people think, well, if only these unmarried parents would get married, they would be just like the married parents, as successful, as educated and so on, and it's just simply not true. They're different populations and they're just far more disadvantaged.

You know, we used to think of the unmarried parents, Dan Quayle campaigned against the television personality -- I'm drawing a blank -- Murphy Brown. Well, there are practically no Murphy Browns. Less than three percent of unmarried births are college-educated women. So if you look at the age, the unmarried parents are younger, and they're more likely to have had a teen birth than the married parents, dramatically more likely to have had a teen birth.

The proportion that have a child with another partner -- we call that

multi-partner fertility -- is really high. And again, it's an element of complexity. It's complex, it's hard. It's hard enough making a good marriage when there are just two of you. When there are lots of other potential partners and ex-partners, it just complicates life dramatically.

The race composition is quite different. The immigrant is somewhat different, where the unmarrieds are actually less likely to be immigrants. Education, quite different, it's almost the reverse pattern, that the marrieds are more likely to have a college degree and the unmarrieds more likely to be dropouts or just barely have a high school degree.

You can see all the figures. I want to go to the bottom line on this slide, parent's past incarceration. You can see that the unmarried fathers, it's nearly 40 percent of the unmarried men have been incarcerated at one point or another. This is actually a slight underestimate. This only counts the portion where either the mother said the father had been incarcerated or the father himself said he had been incarcerated. When you look more closely and use some other data, it's actually 50 percent. By year five, half of the unmarried dads have a history of incarceration.

Despite the fact that the fathers live apart from the children, it's pretty remarkable how involved by year five they are. So one-third live -- a little more than a third lives with the kid. Of the nonresident fathers, nearly three quarters have seen the kid in the past year and half in the past month. And the portion, this is not shown here, but for those who do see the child, the average is

like 12 days a month, so it's not trivial. If the dad is involved, he's involved pretty heavily. So child wellbeing, that's I think probably what we care most about. What we know is that the instability and the complexity of these fragile families affects cognitive ability. There's lower test scores, more asthma, more obesity. In terms of mental health for the mothers, there's more depression and anxiety. For the kids, there's more depression and anxiety, as well. There's more aggressive behavior, especially the boys, and more attention problems. And we can show, and this is described in the volume, that all of this is related to instability, especially instability, and the complexity.

So summing up, children born to unmarried parents begin life with many disadvantages, and these disadvantages pile up, they accumulate over the first five years of their life. And knowing that such a high fraction of our nation's children are born into fragile families, and knowing that these children face many obstacles should cause serious reflection on what we mean by equality of opportunity.

And the last four papers of the volume turn to what can be done. And in terms of prevention, reducing early childbearing is a strong recommendation. Rethinking incarceration policies, I would put that a little more strongly. If we as a society cannot figure out how to reduce mass incarceration, I don't think we stand a prayer of dealing with these families successfully.

And we also talk about -- there's a chapter on increasing opportunities for community college. And finally, in terms of amelioration, all of

those first three are prevention, but in terms of amelioration, there's strengthening the safety net, some recommendations about that, and learning from marriage and fatherhood programs. Thank you.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you, Irv. As I mentioned before, whenever we issue a volume in *The Future of Children*, we always accompany it with a 3,000 word policy brief because, after all, we're in Washington and our claim to fame is that we know something about policy. So in this case, we did issue a policy brief and it's in your materials. And I want to describe this brief to you and especially our policy recommendations.

And then after we hear from the parents, we'll have a panel, and the panel will focus primarily on the policy recommendations. Irv gave you a brief introduction, and I'll say just a little bit more about them.

So we always start in policy with a problem and the problem is we have too many kids in fragile families. And Irv has already summarized some of that information for you and I'll summarize it just a little bit more. I think if you reflect on what we've learned from this study about the situation in which these children are reared, you will -- it will be very easy for you to see that we have serious problems and that there are big societal concerns here that we all ought to be concerned about and something that we should try to do something about.

Irv mentioned, you know, parents with lower education, single-parent childbearing, and the complexity that Irv showed, which, by the way, I don't think anybody had a very good idea. We certainly couldn't put numbers on

it until the Fragile Family Study: very high rates of poverty, and longer term, longer time periods in poverty, and then many impacts on the children, especially school achievement.

Irv already showed this, but we now have 40 percent of American kids born outside marriage. The rates are higher among minority groups than they are among whites, but as Irv pointed out -- and very few people seem to appreciate this -- the increases are actually almost equal among the various subgroups. So whites have very high rates of increase, even though there's still big differences in the absolute level. And the bottom line here is that we wind up at any given moment about -- more than a quarter of our kids live in single-parent families who are at various disadvantages that Irv has already described. And I'm going to say a little bit more about in a few minutes, and this is at any given moment.

So if you look over an entire 18 years of the child's -- of childhood, you will find, especially for black kids, it's probably more like 80 percent during the course of their childhood. And average across all Americans, it's probably close to half of our children are exposed to the kind of conditions that Irv described. So this is a crucial issue. We ought to do something about it.

Now, I want to emphasize four findings from the Fragile Family Study Irv has mentioned, so these are ready. This is the most optimistic thing I think that we found, and that is that the couples really do have close and caring relationships in the beginning. Half of them live together; another 30 percent say

that they're in love with each other, they seriously discuss marriage -- 87 percent of the fathers, 70 percent of the mothers. I think that was a surprise, that sex difference, that men are even more likely to talk about marriage and to give them a better chance of getting married than the women are, which is quite interesting.

So the thing that's important about this to me is that this looks like something to start with, that these are not people who are unfamiliar with each other, and, you know, there's lots of common lore about one-night stands and so forth are just not true. The couples are committed to each other, they often have been in a relationship that's lasted a year or more, they live together. So this is raw material that we should be able to build on, and that really is part of the reason we're here today, about how we can build on that.

The second finding is that the demographic characteristics and the human capital characteristics of the parents complicate getting good jobs, forming stable families, and performing successfully as parents. And Irv went through several of these already, so I don't need to repeat them, but if you can think of a problem that adults can have, it's overrepresented in this group. And so at the time that they're trying to parent and having serious economic problems, often they also are -- suffer from a whole range of problems that are known to be related to their own wellbeing and to the wellbeing of their children.

And then third, I think the most important finding of this study is the complexity of these relationships, the number of changes. The one that really amazes me is that by the time the child is age 5, 60 percent of the moms have

had three or more relationships, which I think there's good reason to believe -- I would not call this absolutely a slam dunk yet, but I think there's very good reason to believe that what really affects children is the number of changes and the lack of stability and the times that they have to adapt to new adults, especially new love interests of their mother living in the household. And going through that and trying to work that out, especially if they're trying to maintain a relationship with their own father who's outside the household and may also be involved in other relationships is a very difficult proposition.

Irv and I, our numbers are the same, but I would emphasize that half the fathers see their kids less than once a month at age five, and it continues to grow after that. So even though I agree that there's a surprising amount of connection between the fathers and children, there are still huge numbers that are more or less completely disconnected, and you cannot help but think that this has an impact on the kid's development, so there are lots of disadvantages here.

And not surprisingly, finally number four, this summarized -- by the way, I want to emphasize this chapter in the book by Jane Waldfogel, Ann Craigie and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, which is I think the best -- it's the best short summary I've seen of what we know about the effects of single parents and especially never married parents on children's development.

There have been 14 studies so far from the Fragile Families data that look at health outcomes or intellectual outcomes or social outcomes of the kids, and almost all of them, as you can see by this chart, have found that there

are negative impacts of either the complexity described or the fact of living in a single-parent family. And we knew some of this before, but I don't think anybody had an idea about how serious these issues were. So clearly, we have big problems as a society, and these individual families have problems that we would like to be able to help them solve. So here are things that we recommend that we think would make a difference.

The first is to prevent unwed births. And, of course, this is something that we've been concerned about for many years. Belle was one of the original founders of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unwed Pregnancy. The unwed is added in there because we realize that as teen pregnancy declined, guess what, non-marital births among 20-somethings increased. So it's almost like you were delaying the inevitable. Maybe that's not an accurate summary, but if you look at numbers, that's what it looks like. So we need to do a lot more on preventing unwed births. I'm not going to say much about it, because fortunately, Adam Thomas is here, one of the country's leading experts on this issue, and he will tell you some -- and one of the authors of the chapter in the volume, and he will tell you in much more detail that we actually have very good evidence that we know what to do to reduce non-marital births, and we have at least three strategies that there's evidence for.

We also recommend prison sentencing reform; Irv talked about this just briefly. We specifically recommend that the mandatory sentencing laws be repealed, and especially in the case of nonviolent crime. Way too many of these

young men are put in jail.

And, in addition, I want to call your attention to a very important fact, which is we published a previous volume maybe a year and a half or two years ago of *The Future of Children* about prevention in child abuse and neglect, and there are very good chapters in there on adolescents. And they show that community programs that work in the community with the parents and with the children, many of these studies are random assignment studies, they meet the, you know, they're the gold standard of research, and they show that this approach for nonviolent offenders, of working in the community and working with their parents is much more effective. There's less recidivism, all kinds of advantages as compared with kids who wind up with prison sentences.

So I think this is a very important piece of information. It's an example if we did more with these community programs, and I think we can develop even better programs than we have now. I think we're fairly early on in developing these programs, so we could do a lot better job and keep these kids out of prison. We say in the policy brief that being in prison is like the scarlet A: it's very, very difficult to get away from it. It affects especially the prospects for subsequent employment, so we really should do something about prison sentencing. And there are other things we ought to do to help people who are in prison as well, but keeping them out I think is the first step.

And then finally we want to experiment with Building Strong Families, which I'm going to talk on in just a minute. Now, we're going to get

more information about all of these, so I'm going to go through this very quickly, but I want you to see how our argument fits together.

First we got the Building Strong Families program, marriage education, a lot of evidence that this works for middle class families. We now have very nice random assignments in military families. So these kind of group programs that you hear more about and you'll get to talk to people who are in the programs, and they emphasize communication, showing affection, managing conflict and so forth, they have been shown to be effective, primarily in middle class families. So now we're trying to apply them to low income families, and curriculums have been adopted and so forth. So that's a crucial part of the Building Strong Families program.

Secondly, there's a family coordinator, we don't have good evidence on this, but having visited many of these problems and talked to the participants, this is a crucial position. This is the quarterback. This is the person who knows the families, who works with the families, and I have seen several instances in which the families come to absolutely adore the coordinator. The coordinator really gives them good advice and helps them, and especially for the third part of the intervention, which is referring them for services.

I have a feeling this is the one that's least likely to actually occur. And besides that, a lot of the services at the local level stink. And so even if you get referred and show up at the service, it's not necessarily going to do a lot of good because a lot of our services are not very effective, so that's something

else we need to work on.

So that's the model of the Building Strong Families program. We have these large random impact studies that are extremely appropriate, exactly what we need to be doing. Building Strong Families was evaluated in eight sites, and it was found that there was no overall impact on the parents, but there's several impacts, very interesting impacts and important impacts for black couples, and there are lots and lots of impacts in the Oklahoma program, and that's one of the programs that's going to be represented here today.

So what we would like to do is slightly modify the Obama Initiative. Obama has proposed, and we have someone here from the administration that will introduced later who will talk about this proposal and defend it, although I don't think there's much to defend because we're not attacking the proposal, we're saying that about ten percent of the \$500 million over three years in the proposal should be devoted specifically to marriage programs.

Under the Obama proposal, marriage programs would be permitted in part of the program, but under our proposal, ten percent of the money at least would have to be spent on these marriage programs.

And in particular, what we would recommend is programs like the Oklahoma model, maybe there are good things in other models, too, we ought to be experimenting with that. And I would especially point out that this is exactly consistent with the stance the administration has taken on many other social programs. This administration is greatly distinguished by the fact that it is

emphasized data and replication and implementation in accord with successful models way more than any other administration, and I think in the long run this is going to be a very important contribution to social policy, and that's what we're recommending here.

We shouldn't give up on these marriage programs because they're so important and we at least have some evidence from good studies that you'll hear more about later that these programs could work.

So if we implemented all four of these recommendations, I think we'd believe strongly that we would be able to have good impacts, whether they would pay for themselves at another issue, but we ought to keep looking at it.

All right. So now we're going to go to our panel of parents and program directors, so if they would come up.

(Pause)

MR. HASKINS: Again, I want to thank the parents for coming today and thank Mary and Joe. Let me just say a few words about Mary and Joe and they will introduce the couples and divide the time in any way they choose. I know Joe and Mary both extremely well, they are amazing people. Mary Myrick is the head not only of the BSF program in Oklahoma, but several other programs, as well.

She has her own company, primarily a private sector company. And I would say that she's certainly the queen of social intervention programs in Oklahoma City, and as far as I can tell from the number of times I've visited

there, she's queen of the state. It's amazing, the range of her influence. So let me give you some advice. If you disagree with her, do it gently. You do not want Mary Myrick on the other side of a debate.

And then Joe Jones, if Mary is the queen of Oklahoma, Joe is the king of Baltimore. Joe not only is extremely influential in intervention, helping low income families, but also in politics in Baltimore, and it's been a great privilege to know him over the years, even though he constantly harasses me about being right of center. Can you imagine anybody doing that? I just don't understand it, Joe, but I've learned to live with it.

So, Mary, let's start with you, and then we'll go to Joe, and thank you for coming.

MS. MYRICK: Okay. So I'm going to give you just a quick overview of Family Expectations, the program that we're talking about today, and going to spend most of the time introducing you to Brandon and Victoria.

So Family Expectations is a program for married and unmarried couples having a baby in the state of Oklahoma, and most of the families in the program are funding their birth with Medicaid.

It's a research informed program, so we're the only program in the country that's part of both the Building Strong Families program and the Supporting Healthy Marriage program. So if you came into Family Expectations and you were unmarried, you got random assigned into one program, and if you were married, you got random assigned into the other. So we thought we liked

random assignment and thought we'd do a lot of it.

We also have a National Research Advisory Group that includes Ron Haskins, Theodora Ooms, Robin Dion, Barb Goldman, lots of people that you all know, that have kind of guided the development of the program. We use the Becoming Parents curriculum, it's a 30 hour curriculum that is delivered at a pretty rapid pace. Families get that curriculum, most of them get it in ten week sessions, each of those sessions last three hours. So they come in in the evening, we feed them dinner, have dinner together, kind of a family time, and then they have about a three hour sessions over ten weeks.

Most of our families don't get that curriculum consecutively, so they miss, their lives are crazy and chaotic, but we have enough classes that they're able to make up their missed classes, and most of our couples who actually start coming actually go back and get that missed curriculum in other sessions.

We also do have the family sport coordinators for families in our program. And they do individual office visits with couples, where they work in those one-on-one sessions on couple relationship issues. They also make referrals, so you'll hear a little bit more from Brandon and Victoria about how that goes.

In Oklahoma, we take voluntary engagement seriously. We know that people are busy and there are lots of reasons not to come to something that's really good for you. And so we do things, like we've created a very home like environment for our couples, so most people who come there just want to be

there because it's a nice place to be, kind of a rest from a chaotic life. We have a very customer service oriented staff, so we hire people based on their ability to really have a service attitude for the people who come through our doors. We offer incentives in our program, both cash, and we have a store called The Crib, where it's sort of a mini version of Babies-R-Us, and as people participate in the program, they earn what we call crib cash, and that crib cash can then be spent in the store to purchase things for the upcoming baby.

You don't have to be a first time parent to be in Family Expectations. Many families benefit even though they've already had children in learning our curriculum.

We also have a lot of people who make Family Expectations work, so we have a very rigorous intake process which includes domestic violence screening and other things. They're then referred to a family support coordinator and then assigned to a work sub series.

In Oklahoma, the researchers, indeed, did find a consistent pattern of positive impacts. I just love saying that after worrying about that for three years. So I want to introduce you to Brandon and Victoria, a couple that sort of represent those impacts.

I will quickly tell you that the report about Oklahoma is on this little CD, and please take them so I don't have to carry them home. So I want to introduce you to Brandon and Victoria, and I just want to, first of all, just have them tell you just a quick little bit about themselves, how they grew up.

MR. EDWARDS: Hey everybody. I'm Brandon Edwards, and first of all I want to say thank God for this opportunity.

MR. HASKINS: Brandon, hold that mic right --

MR. EDWARDS: Okay. Is that better? All right. Like I said, my name is Brandon Edwards, I want to thank God for this opportunity and for this woman I married, for the Family Expectation, it's a good opportunity.

I was from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, born and raised. My mother and father never were married, so, you know, I kind of took up on the opportunity, I'll get later on into that about the marriage, you know.

My grandmother raised me, I went to high school, got my diploma. I didn't go right to college right after high school, but this program, it made me think more like, you know, especially as raising my kid, it made me want to go back to school, so I'm going to do that, and open more doors and support my family. And there's just so many -- I can sit here all day and tell you all the kind of advantages I have.

MS. MYRICK: No, you can't.

MS. EDWARDS: Hi, I'm Brandon's wife, Victoria Edwards. I grew up with my mom and my dad raising me. I have five brothers and sisters. All my sisters had kids in high school, I'm the only one who didn't because I wanted to be my daddy's favorite, because I am. What else? Brandon and I have been married for two months. We met in November, started dating in January, and we've been inseparable ever since. And we came to this program with high

hopes and got everything, even more than what we expected. So that's a little bit about me. Who's next?

MS. MYRICK: All right. So, first of all, maybe, Victoria, I think you're the one that found Family Expectations, so you might just tell people how you learned about it.

MS. EDWARDS: Okay. When I first got pregnant, I didn't want to tell my mom right away until I had all of my information so that way I could at least have some things done so she wouldn't have to antagonize me about that. So I went to DHS and I got all the little pamphlets that I saw because I wanted to get the, you know, care and find out about WIC and things like that. And then I saw this little lady holding her stomach with a man behind her on this little poster thing, so I grabbed that, and I started reading about it, and I told Brandon about it, and at first he was like, oh, I don't want everybody in our -- I was like, Brandon, this is for your son, do you love your son, do you love your kid, and so he did it.

MR. EDWARDS: I did it, learned a lot, I'm glad.

MS. EDWARDS: And then we went.

MR. EDWARDS: Yeah.

MS. MYRICK: Okay. So what was it like when you went to your first class?

MR. EDWARDS: It was --

MS. EDWARDS: Weird.

MR. EDWARDS: -- it was weird and nerve racking because there's

a lot of couples, and so I seen the reclining chairs and I let my seat back --

MS. EDWARDS: Then he was at home.

MR. EDWARDS: -- then I was relaxed and I started taking notes.

MS. EDWARDS: It was just a little nervous -- it was a little nerve racking because it was like so many people that we just -- it was like an environment we weren't prepared for. And so when we got there, our teachers, like we call them our marriage mentors, they -- they kind of just made us feel right at home, like you guys can sit at the table if you want to, you know, you all can conversate with us, you know, we want to have your input. So I mean I'm a talkative person, so once you allow me to talk, then I'm going to take full advantage of it.

MS. MYRICK: And so let's talk a little bit about meeting your family support coordinator.

MS. EDWARDS: Dee.

MS. MYRICK: So Dee was your family support coordinator?

MR. EDWARDS: Yes.

MS. MYRICK: Do you want to tell us about your relationship with her?

MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, Dee is --

MS. EDWARDS: We love her.

MR. EDWARDS: -- she's the bomb.

MS. EDWARDS: After we got married, we got married at the

courthouse, and she was the first person we called. We didn't even call our parents.

MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, we didn't call our parents --

MS. EDWARDS: We were like, oh my God, we've got to call Dee.

MR. EDWARDS: We've got to call Dee and let her know.

MS. EDWARDS: And she's like, you didn't even tell me you were getting married, and like she's just -- she's like, I don't know, she's just great, we can talk to her about anything. At first, Brandon was very hesitant to like let his walls down and, you know, let her enter into our relationship, but, you know, I just think -- I know everybody has problems, so if I have some -- I know you have some secrets that you have, too, so I mean I don't mind.

MR. EDWARDS: She gave us a lot of input on the company and outside business.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, she just -- she helps a lot, I love Dee, she's my buddy.

MS. MYRICK: So let's talk about what you learned in the classes and then what you might have practiced in your one-on-one time with Dee. So what particular lessons do you remember about?

MS. EDWARDS: We learned about speaker/listener.

MR. EDWARDS: Speaker/listener.

MS. EDWARDS: And that's like whenever you're talking, it's like -- it makes your relationship so much better because you have to understand what

each other is saying. It makes you repeat -- like you're summarizing what somebody just told you. It's kind of weird at first to be like, oh, so when you said that, this is how you felt, but once they understand it, it makes you feel so much better.

MR. EDWARDS: Arguments, they decreased.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, everything --

MR. EDWARDS: We learned about time out -- time out thing, where we took a time out -- I'm going to take a time out, come back, and when you come back, we talk about it and resolve it, then we do the speaker/listener, and then at the end of the night, everything is all right.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, the time outs, Brandon always makes me laugh when we do time outs because I'm so pregnant, when I go -- I'm like I'm taking time out, and I'll go walk around, he'll be like, don't just leave for 30 minutes with my baby in your stomach and I don't know where you're at, so I don't care -- five minute time outs, that's it. He's very serious about time outs.

MR. EDWARDS: That's about it.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, that's like a little bit of the whole thing.

MS. MYRICK: Okay. And then you all -- so kind of the history of your relationship, you met at a club in November, you got -- started dating in January, got pregnant in April, joined Family Expectations in May, got married in August, is that right?

MR. EDWARDS: August.

MS. EDWARDS: Uh-huh, August 25th.

MS. MYRICK: The baby will be here in January?

MR. EDWARDS: Yes, January 16th.

MS. MYRICK: So what happened about the marriage part? So
you --

MR. EDWARDS: I didn't like to talk about marriage that much, she
did, she always had the marriage books, and I was like --

MS. EDWARDS: Bridal.

MR. EDWARDS: -- okay, the bridal books, and I was like, okay,
and then we went to this class, and the statistics about, you know, the married
couple and the unmarried couple, you know, how much it would benefit for the
child, and I took advantage of that, so not just -- I did that because I want my
child to be, you know, raised to be a man.

MS. EDWARDS: And because you love me.

MR. EDWARDS: And because I love her so much. I'm going to
get in trouble for not saying --

MS. EDWARDS: And my dad, he's very big on marriage. Like I'm
my daddy's little princess, so he always was like, you know, if you find that guy
and he really truly loves and cares about you, he'll want to marry you.

MR. EDWARDS: He married us, he's actually a pastor.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, he married us, he's real cute.

MS. MYRICK: And so all these people out here, really smart

people who influence what happens all of the country, is there anything you wanted to say to them about Family Expectations?

MS. EDWARDS: Family Expectations is probably one of the best things that I have ever experienced, honestly. It kind of changed my perspective. Even though my parents have been married for 21 years, it let me see all the problems and things that I could not have because I'm already prepared for them, I've already read about them, I've already, you know, tried new experiences and new things and new experiments to keep myself from being in that situation. It like helped us -- it helped us -- like our relationship sometimes I feel is better than my mom's and dad's, after 21 years, so I'm kind of like, oh yeah, we're going to be good, 21 years, we're going to be --

MR. EDWARDS: A lot of advantage -- a lot of advantage.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, it's just, I don't know, it helped us get off to a good start with our kid. The Crib is lovely. Babies-R-Us has nothing on The Crib.

MR. EDWARDS: That pamphlet -- The Crib -- playhouse --

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, we got a lot of stuff for the baby.

MR. EDWARDS: A lot of diapers.

MS. EDWARDS: And it was just -- it's a great program. Like our little marriage mentors and everything, they're great, Boston and Kelly.

MR. EDWARDS: Boston and Kelly.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, they're great. You can talk to them about

anything. I cried our last class, our ten weeks, because I thought I was never going to see them again.

MR. EDWARDS: I said, stop crying, we're going to see them some more, stop crying.

MS. EDWARDS: He was babying me. But it's just great.

MS. MYRICK: So the last question, when you think back, you can try to think ahead five years from now, when you think back about your experience in Family Expectations, what will you remember about it?

MS. EDWARDS: I will remember all the classes that they taught us.

MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, I love visual, they have a lot of visual and hands on.

MS. EDWARDS: Uh-huh.

MR. EDWARDS: And a lot of research, reading the books. It made me want to read books. Like I said, I'm going back to school, so it's training me more to get my thoughts and read them, so --

MS. EDWARDS: It just, I don't know, it was just so much -- it was so much better, it was like a breath of fresh air, like a refreshing drink that you've never had or something like -- it's just -- it was great.

MR. EDWARDS: Like seeing your son for the first time, or a rainbow for the first time.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, it's like, I don't know, it's just -- what I

remember the most is the things that we learned in class, because it prevents a lot of problems, like stuff that you don't even have to argue about, it kind of just eliminates them, because it gets you prepared for them, it gets you prepared for the baby being into the world and everything, so --

MR. EDWARDS: Yeah.

MR. HASKINS: Now, before we go to the next couple, Brandon, I really want you to tell me the answer to this; did Mary tell you to compare her program to a rainbow?

MR. EDWARDS: No -- no -- no, sir, that's just off the --

MR. HASKINS: Joe Jones.

MR. JONES: Good morning, everybody. Hi, I'm going to just give you a little snapshot in terms of the Center for Urban Families. The first thing I want to do is to talk about imagery, all right. The Center for Urban Families, if you think about the way in which our social welfare system has evolved over time, usually when we talk about a center that has the word families in it, that's usually code for women and children. We were originally called the Center for Fathers, Families and Work Force Development, and you couldn't say that three times if you tried. And so we went through this process to rebrand the organization, and in October, 2007, we rebranded it to the Center for Urban Families.

However, the tag line is helping fathers and families work, because we believe that it's important for the community to understand when we talk

about families, that context includes father in a very direct and intimate way.

The second thing is, I want to give a working definition for responsible fatherhood, because there's no universal definition for it, but it is, in my estimation, the complimentary relationship between a mom and a dad raising their children regardless of their romantic status, right.

At the Center, we do a handful of things; one is we provide services to fathers who are either connected or at risk from being disconnected from their children and to get them to manage the relationship with the child's mother so the child will have access to both parents over time, especially and including the fathers. Secondly is our Family Services Division, and there are two pieces to that, one is our Building Strong Families program. A lot of the tenants that Mary mentioned are exactly the same in Baltimore with the exception of a different curricula.

The curriculum that we use in Baltimore is actually over 22 weeks long, it's called Loving Couples, Loving Children, which was developed by Doctor John Gottman.

The other thing that's kind of nuance for us in Baltimore, we developed a model we call Couples Employment. For us, what we try to do is find a blend of the relationship skill building and the economic information and supports necessary for families that come from the Baltimore environment to receive the kind of support necessary for them to move from and through relationships into the labor force and up the wage scale.

And that is much easier said than done, however, we don't believe that we can provide these services to families in a genuine way unless we blend these approaches. And I'm pleased to introduce my colleague from Baltimore, Mr. Will Davis, who heads up our Couples Employment program, who's joined us here. The other thing that we do is work force development. Everybody, every family, every individual, men and woman who come to the Center are exposed to and eligible for free services in terms of getting into the labor force. A subset of those folks we put an additional investment in in terms of developing the hard skills and additional education in partnership sometimes with the community colleges and other partners to help them in terms of their mobility.

The other part that we do is alumni services. Once folks graduate from our respective programs, they go into what we call alumni services, so that we can follow them long term and then begin to surround them with all the other supports that we in general take for granted around financial literacy, education and all the supports and connections to resources in a network that will help them to sustain the progress that they made.

I want to talk a little bit about the way in which we believe services should be provided to families. There's this real big debate, and in terms of, you know, disadvantaged families, and are people too disadvantaged to receive these kind of services, and just from a general standpoint, I would say there is no way that I could ever support wanting and acknowledging that we have poor families who have children, and they would have had those children independent

of whatever we think, and whether or not we should provide services to them because they're too disadvantaged versus trying to identify a set of people who are a little bit more advantaged. We've got to figure out how to work through that.

It's complex, the stuff that we're talking about is very, very complex, multiple partner fertility, those issues when you have couples who have children by multiple partners, but they still care about each others, issues of intimate partner violence that exists, not just intimate partner violence, when we think about a community like Baltimore, you think about community violence, and all of those things that are necessary, we are really encouraged by the partnership and work that we're doing with the domestic violence community with respect to their interest in trying to impact working with couples who are in intimate partner violence relationships, but they are committed to stay with one another.

And we as practitioners don't necessary have resources to deal with it, but our DB partners are very much interested in exploring this and we're interested in working with them to understand how that happens. But with respect to the general programs that we operate, I did want to introduce Angelalecia and Henry, who have joined me, and ask them to talk a little bit briefly about themselves, and then I would ask Henry if he could go into how he actually got connected to the Center for Urban Families.

MR. DOWNS: Good morning. I'm Henry Downs, I'm here with my girlfriend, Angel. I'm 29, me and Angel have two kids together, and I was pretty

much introduced to the CFUF Foundation through a pamphlet I received on, you know, finding jobs and a couple of the social services that was available in Baltimore.

I tried on my own to try to find employment for like a month or two and it was just going no where, so I said, well, let me try to find some help. And I heard about this program, so I said let's give it a shot. And once I entered this program, I didn't realize what I was walking into as far as just a positive foundation of resources that, in the city of Baltimore, that you really -- it's hard to find, that you wouldn't know exist.

And, you know, really it was for a personal, you know, standpoint of trying to find employment to try to help myself and my family, but I just realize I found really just a whole bunch of resources as far as personal and financial to help me and my family to build on what we're trying to do.

MR. JONES: So, Angelalecia, how did you all come to be a part of the family services work through BSF and couples appointment, how did that kind of come about?

MS. TYDINGS: Well, once Henry completed -- well, started to strive and I saw that things were going well and he was really, you know, gung ho in doing it, and he really enjoyed doing it, I thought it was a good idea for me to start, as well, so I could work on my education and further my education, and I could, you know, we could meet at a financial state and education state so we could support our children together.

MR. JONES: And so when you think about the relationship skills building, the whole notion of marriage, and just unpack the whole conversation about marriage, how does that play out in the community where you all have grown up, in your personal lives and in the community in general? Is marriage a part of the conversation and how did that play out once you all came to CFUF and to BSF and Couples Employment?

MS. TYDINGS: Well, marriage was something that Henry and I had already talked about before, but it's not something that you see in the neighborhood a lot or that it's in regular conversation. But, in addition to the resources that we had with education and helping build our finances so we can raise our children together, there was -- marriage was also an option, and it was - - they highlight it on being an option and how you can work towards doing that and the other skills that you would need within your relationship to help it work and make it strong, build it.

MR. JONES: So when you think about this whole notion of your economic circumstance and your need to build your skills around a relationship, would you say you do one versus the other, compliment one another, how would that play out for you all in your relationship in terms of what you would say to policy-makers, many of whom are in the audience, with respect to how you should approach this work?

MR. DOWNS: I mean it's in a relationship with two people, you know, trying to survive. You know, the economical point is a huge factor,

because if you guys are, you know, trying to work together and make finances meet, and, you know, you're having your troubles and your ups and downs, it's going to bring other barriers and problems into the relationship that sometimes you can't foresee. And so when you're, you know, fighting to pay the rent, and, you know, trying to do other things, and even though you might be making it to pay the rent, you know, it's other stuff you want to do that, you know, I might want to do for her to try to put a smile on her face that I'm not able to do because of the economic situation.

So, you know, it's tough, it's really hard, but, you know, going through BSF, Building Strong Families, it just gives us the support to say, you know, well, just stick it out, fight it out, this is the direction you need to go, and, you know, if you stay positive and focus, it should all fall into place.

MR. JONES: Angelalecia, how is it coming to the Center, being in an environment where you can explore these complex conversations about communication, negotiation, compromising in your relationship, how is it coming to the Center to receive those services versus not coming to the Center? Would you have been exposed to any of this if you had not?

MS. TYDINGS: Definitely not. Without coming to the Center, we would have just -- we were just stuck with our ideas and what we thought would work, and, you know, just coming to the Center has helped us work together and shown us how we can communicate better and listen to each other more so we can work together instead of working against each other.

MR. JONES: One of the tools we use at the Center in our family services work is called our Couples Employment -- our Couples Employment Focus Plan, and that is a tool where we give the couples an opportunity to sit down and put their job and career aspirations on paper, and the things that are necessary for them to realize. Can you all talk about your experience with that tool?

MS. TYDINGS: Well, that tool helped us be able to sit down and actually see the -- you have a vision of a plan of what you want to do with your life always, or most people sit down and you think about what you want to do with your life and how you want to get to that point, but with the plan from the Building Strong Families, it helps you actually see it and envision how you can get to that point.

Usually you can always see ahead where you want to go, but you don't really know what you need to do to get there, and the program helped you really map out and itemize how can you reach this point.

MR. JONES: And, Henry, this whole notion of, we talked about it a little bit, family planning, you know, thinking about contraception and can you talk a little bit about how conversations at the Center happen around family planning and contraception and what's it like for a man to have to even, you know, begin to have to grapple with that?

MR. DOWNS: Well, really -- it really is a thing they talk to you about, because the more children you bring into your family, the more

economical hardship you're going to have. So they teach you that, you know, learning contraceptive and, you know, learning things to kind of help pregnancies is -- really is another financial kind of seed that they plant in you.

And I mean as a choice, you know, you realize -- really you may not realize that, you know, children are, in the long run, are going to be a financial hardship and bring, you know, emotional hardship to a relationship, but once you sit down and you see the other families and the other couples and you see, you know, the different families, you know, as far as the children's size, you see that, you know, kind of the more children, that it is a lot harder to raise the family and do for your family.

MR. JONES: And this is the end because we got the one minute signal, so let's talk about the M word. Have you all discussed marriage, do you aspire to get married, how has that played out for you all personally?

MR. DOWNS: I mean I do, I definitely want to, but, you know, from my experience from seeing my father, he's been married twice, and divorced, and my mother has been married twice and divorced, you know, I have a set goal in mind that when I do it, it's going to be one time and that's it. So I'm, you know, this person to my left, you know, I love her to death, but it's just a couple little things that we're working on that I would like to have in order before, you know, I decide, you know, to make that move, because once I do it, I don't -- I'm not doing with the D word.

MR. JONES: Did you want to add to that or --

MS. TYDINGS: Don't feel obligated, okay, good.

MR. HASKINS: Great, excellent, thank you very much, very informative. Let me just ask a couple questions and then we'll give the audience a chance to ask questions. The first thing I want to ask you about is, so you sat here and listened to these presentations that Irv and I gave about the consequences of kids being born outside marriage and the disadvantages they face. Did you talk about those in the program? Had you thought about those before? Do you think that that would be an effective approach to young parents who had a baby outside marriage, that they need to solve a lot of these problems for the sake of the baby?

MS. TYDINGS: I definitely think so. We had discussed them before, but not in depth. The program showed a lot of other barrier that you may see that -- that you may not see that may be there and that may pop up and that you have support and you have people around you that can help you work those things out.

MR. HASKINS: Yeah, go ahead.

MR. EDWARDS: What was the question?

MR. HASKINS: About the kids, the effects on kids of --

MS. EDWARDS: That are unmarried?

MR. HASKINS: Yeah.

MR. EDWARDS: Okay, yeah. Going to school, they're not really educated. I guess they're lower educated, you know, if the parents are not

together or not. And whenever the parents are together and they see other parents going to college and they want to do the same thing, that'll push -- that'll push them to -- drive them, since they see their parents going to college, both of their parents going to college, it'll make them want to go to college and make them be proud that their parents are in college and it'll just trickle down.

See, my father, he didn't go to college, he barely finished high school, don't tell him I said that, but he barely finished high school, and see, I finished high school, like I said, I didn't go to college right after, but I am, and for the sake of my family, and I want to stop that trend, I want to stop that barrier that we had as an Edwards, the man in the Edwards family, the youngest, so I want to make sure I marry the wife that I have, God bless me with this, I'm thankful.

MS. EDWARDS: You're right.

MR. EDWARDS: A kid -- a kid, and just I see us going further -- a lot further in the future.

MS. EDWARDS: And for me, it's just my parents have been married for 21 years, and they both were in previous marriages and have kids with previous people that they were married with, and I just -- I didn't like all the drama, the constant, you know, that's my daddy, that's your daddy, blah, blah, blah, we all have the same daddy. Like I didn't like any of that and I don't want my kids to ever have to deal with that. If I have kids by one person, it's going -- I'm not having anymore kids, we'll have to tie up these tubes, I just can't do it.

MR. HASKINS: Do you think it would be -- would this be an

effective thing to emphasize with parents?

MS. EDWARDS: That's --

MR. HASKINS: Somebody knows what I want. An important part of this question is, for all four of you, if you have something to say about this, do you think this would be an effective way to reach out to young parents and say, here's why we want to help you in this program, to help you with an employment plan, with a financial plan, parenting and all that, and if you stay together and both of you are committed to the child and work out your relationship with a commitment to the child, that that is going to be a selling point for the program and would make people come?

MS. EDWARDS: Yes, because I have friends that -- like my friend, Crystal, her mother has always taken care of her and her father hasn't been around, he's an alcoholic and all this other stuff, and I see how it effected her to a very strong degree. Like she's so serious about keeping her daughter and her boyfriend, Ryan, they're trying to, you know, work for their relationship and keep it together and, you know, do whatever they can, and she always wants her -- her daughter's father to be in her life because of the simple fact of, you know, how her life was.

And so being in the program and them giving you the statistics and the numbers and being actually able to see it, and if you really care about your child or yourself, I mean you're going to try your best to make sure that it works and that your actions don't effect your child because it could effect your child's

future.

MR. EDWARDS: I mean I think it would be, because honestly, I guess, as a young age, you don't really I guess understand the road that you're about to travel, you know, when you're first having a child, because I guess you don't really understand all the hurdles that you have to come over the years.

So I guess if you did put, you know, some of the obstacles you face, and more just, you know, the safe sex thing and understand that, well, you're going to have to worry about how you're going to provide and things like that, I think it would deter a lot of young teens from, you know, as far as having, you know, kids at an early age.

MR. HASKINS: Okay, good. So please -- audience questions. Right here. When the mic comes, please ask a fairly short question so we can hear from the panel rather than from the audience, and why don't you set the example? Tell us your name.

MS. KLINE: Hi, I'm Ann Kline. I'm a development specialist that works with several non-profits. My question is to Joseph Jones and Mary Myrick. What is the estimate cost for whether it's the couple or the individual to go to a given program, number one, and what's the return of investment? If I were a funder coming to you, what would be my return of investment?

MS. MYRICK: I think during the Building Strong Families study, I think our program ended up costing about \$10,000 a family, the family stays in for about a year. We I think have our cost down to about \$8,000 a family as we

figured out some things over time, so I think we've made some progress in that.

Just an example of that, I think our Human Services Secretary talks about, again, if a couple comes to the program, gets married, combines their income, and doesn't have to use DHS subsidy child care, that'll save about \$8 to \$10,000 a year in just that cost alone. So, obviously, the cost of parents cooperatively working together to begin to assume some of the costs that the Human Services System currently has to bear, child support costs, et cetera, are the kind of things that I think Human Services agencies look to as the cost benefit.

MR. JONES: I would just add that the costs in Baltimore are a little lower just in terms of the model, but the -- you're talking about a random assignment research project, so inherent in that is a very huge investment that's necessary to tease out the lessons from operating such a model.

But when you talk about return of investment, and you heard both Irv and Ron talk about the high end cost of ration rates, particularly among African American men, I can tell you that having a young man like Brandon, excuse me, like Brandon and Henry, and their peers, engage in these kind of activities, one, they are not engaged in illegal activity in the street, they're setting an example for their peers in the community, and more importantly, they're setting examples for their children, who will be in a relationship with them over time. That means that if they are consistently involved in the life of those children over time, the likelihood that those children will grow up to be teen parents or

parents before they are prepared to be parents, then we begin to, you know, save, you know, very high tax payer investments that can be redirected into other resources.

Right now we're really in the early stages of understanding what it takes in this country to even work with low income men, and so I think we've got to continue to unpack that, but if you just think about the return on investment in terms of a guy being in a relationship with his partner and they're consistently involved in a life with their children, preventing their children from having children early, right, not being incarcerated, right, being in the educational system.

One of the things that these two folks over here didn't say, they're both -- Henry is working, he's also an entrepreneur, Angelalecia is about to go back to the work force. She just, you know, their youngest is, what, seven months --

MS. TYDINGS: Two and a half months.

MR. JONES: Excuse me, two and a half months, so she has not been in the position to work, although when she gets back, she is going to begin our career path program. So you can see that, you know, just anecdotally, there is a lot that we can gain from these type of investments, but we still have much more to learn.

MR. HASKINS: Another question from the audience. Someone needs to -- questions. Okay, right here on the aisle. Thank you.

MR. SAELENS: Hi, Drew Saelens from the Men's Health Network.

Brandon and Henry, I want to ask two quick questions. What's your preferred method of communication, how would you have wanted to find this program, a community center, a Google search, a pastor, et cetera? And two, did you get any peer pressure from your friends networks not to join, or do you -- and/or do you feel like a community leader at this point now that you've developed these confidence and skills that you've gone through the program?

MR. DOWNS: Me personally, I guess I would rather found out more really from I guess someone I know, because if you from someone you know, you can kind of have a little bit more of a trust factor and feel a little bit more comfortable walking in the door and you'll get a little bit more of an expectation of what to expect, because my way of finding out was from a flyer, so it was just me going off, you know, my premonition of, you know, I'm going to try this and see if it works, where if it was through someone else, you know, you can expect this, this is going to happen, you know, so you're like, okay, yeah, I can do this. But as far as the second question, I'm -- I'm not really -- I mean as a community leader and as far as the peer pressure, I mean I knew other people. I mean it's like once I graduated, you start to find out more the other people that graduated from the program.

And I've told other people about it, and just it's -- it's just that if you don't want to make the change regardless of what someone else says to you, if you don't want to do it, you're not going to do it. So I done told people about it and told them that it's a good thing if you're looking for a job, if you're trying to

make changes, this is definitely the direction to go.

So, you know, definitely it's a positive influence on other folks, but it's really, you know, if they personally choose to go or now.

MR. EDWARDS: And what I want to say is, the program, I found out about it on a flyer, you know, when I was in the hospital.

MS. EDWARDS: DHS.

MR. EDWARDS: The DHS, I found it on a flyer, and I read. I like to research a lot of stuff, so after I researched and seen how much of the help -- I'm a person that always love help because I love to help people, so I seen that opportunity, so okay. First -- first one in there, I was a little nervous, whatever, but then I got, you know, shook it off and I learned a lot.

And the second, I really -- there's a lot of negativity, you know, around everybody, and so when people say you shouldn't do this or you shouldn't do that, you know, they always say don't deny it until you try it, and so I took that and I started to wake up every day with a positive mind, you know.

I figured if you got a positive mind, you'll go further, instead of negative, you'll stay in negative mode, you never will progress. So you get that in your head, especially the man, so I have a positive mind frame, and so I did that, and ever since then, it's good.

MR. HASKINS: Okay, over here.

MS. TAKAS: I'm Marianne Takas from Strengthening Young Families. I was very encouraged to hear Joe Jones talking about the way CFUF

incorporates two different aspects of challenges facing couples, both relationship issues and also the employment issues, and to hear the panelists talk about how those two aspects really work together and enhance one another. I want to ask both of the leader panelists, have you ever considered a third aspect that, of course, all the families also face, is challenges with parenting, child health and safety and parenting issues? Have you thought about or looked into a program that incorporates all three aspects? And I'd like to ask any of the participant panelists if you think that that would be a useful model, if you could be addressing in the same place parenting and relationship and employment issues?

MS. MYRICK: The program does actually have a very strong parenting component to it, so the curriculum has relationship, education, plus infant development as part of what they learn in the workshop. And then after they finish the core curriculum, the 30 hours, for up to a year they can participate in what we call ancillary activities, so every month every family is mailed a nice flyer that says here's all the things that are available and we teach, you know, infant Q's, infant nutrition, parenting, we've done nurturing, I can't think of the name of that program all of a sudden, but lots of different parenting curriculums are offered through that, school readiness programs, et cetera. So there's a lot of other things that happen. We try, similar I think to what Joe does, is to be sort of a one stop place where people can intersect with lots of different kinds of information.

MS. EDWARDS: And that's also something that you learn in your class. Like in the ten weeks class, you learn a lot. In ten weeks, you are taking in a lot of information. You learn about not only your relationship, but you learn about the financial side of getting married, of, you know, everything that you'll need with your finances, you learn about babies and how they can swim, like you learn all kind of things about babies, like it's weird, and you just learn so much.

So they pretty much sum it all up with what you're going to -- what you're getting into, your new life of what it's going to be like as a parent.

MR. HASKINS: Another question, right here. Oh wait, go ahead, right there, there's one right on the edge, yeah.

MS. CRADDOCK: Kathryn Craddock, American University. I actually interviewed a case worker, counselor in a program that I was introduced to at Brookings, and one of the -- two issues arose, one is that the parents who were participating in the program usually were on their second or third relationship already by the time they got into that particular program, so they already had children by other parents, and I wondered if you could speak to that, whether there's anything that can be done to attract people earlier. And second, when I asked what the major problem that they confronted was, they said infidelity, and so I wondered if you -- how you deal with that issue, because apparently that broke up a lot of relationships, even second and third relationships.

MR. JONES: Well, infidelity happens almost in every sector about

society, it's not germane to the folks that, you know, we serve in our programs. I mean, you know, look at the media on daily sports, entertainment, politics, I mean anybody that happens to be a human being is subject to be, you know, exposed to infidelity. It's a very sensitive issue, it's one obviously that we experience, but the healing process is something that really is, you know, there's a process that you can go through, but, you know, you need to have people who are trained.

One of the things that's really critical is having people who have the credentials to take people through a process, so that when you unpack things, you don't leave people with a hole, so it goes unaddressed. So having master's level facilitators are critical to this process. But I also think having partnerships in the community, particularly with the faith community; the faith community can be a very, very critical part, but one of the challenges that we face with our relationships with the faith community, particular in a community like Baltimore, the faith community is so overwhelmed dealing with issues that range from HIV and Aids to now with the economy, you know, in its current state, dealing with, you know, foreclosures and other issues that impact their ability to do deep investments in the issues that impact our families.

But clearly, you know, they're well positioned to do so. We are fortunate that right across the street from our Center is New Shiloh Baptist Church, it's one of the mega churches. They have a number of ministries that we are able to partner with to get that kind of support in addition to the folks we have

on staff. And I think it's those kind of partnerships that community based organizations need more assistance in terms of capacity building to understand how you address those issues, because it's easy to say someone has been, you know, unfaithful in a relationship, but it's much harder to identify resources and ways in which to address it.

MS. EMO: Hi, this is (inaudible) Emo from the Corporation for Enterprise Development. I feel like this panel is very enlightening. To the practitioners, I just wanted to know if you have ever addressed immigrant populations, because they often times go through hurdles that might be a little bit more complicated because they're new to American society, they have more traditional obstacles in terms of telling their parents they're pregnant or getting services, so I just want to know if you've had any experience with that.

MS. MYRICK: In Oklahoma, 25 percent of our participants are Hispanic and we deliver curriculum in Spanish with Spanish workshop leaders and have family support coordinators, and most of those folks are immigrants, so that would be our immigrant experience, would be mostly Mexican, and we do deliver a range of services to them in Spanish.

MR. JONES: And the majority -- the overwhelming majority of the folks in Baltimore are African American, with some white couples, very few Hispanics, although we do have a growing population of Hispanics in Baltimore, not necessarily in the CFUF service delivery mix.

MR. HASKINS: Okay, one more question. Let's see, raise your

hands again. All the way in the back.

MS. MORRIS: Hi, thank you. I'm Willa Morris, I'm a social worker here in the District, and my question is more about the practical nature of the programs in terms of providing transportation support for the folks going back and forth to the sessions, and then also child care during the sessions, for those couples that already have young children. Thank you.

MR. EDWARDS: The transportation deal, we have a truck, so they provide gas, a little gas card, a \$10 gas card, and there were times where she didn't want to go home, I didn't want to go home, we was living with our parents, so she didn't want to go home, I didn't want to go home, so we'll have to -- we didn't have jobs then, and so we'll still find ways to get there, get \$5 to get there, you know, then when we get there, we get a \$10 gas card. And then the second question is --

MS. EDWARDS: Or if you didn't have a car, they would get a taxi for you to take you there and to bring you home.

MR. JONES: In Baltimore, we actually -- for this couple, they have transportation, but for many of our couples, they don't, we have passenger vehicles, and we have a pretty -- kind of what I would call elaborate, although some people would argue that it's not elaborate, but it's our transportation system where we pick couples up and we bring them to and from the Center.

But we also have a child care facility. We're fortunate, we just built a new facility in Baltimore. We contract with a child development specialist who

come on and provide support to the families and to their children while the parents are in the session, so they don't necessarily have to be, you know, worried about -- or be distracted from -- by the children as they're trying to receive the services. So, yes, we provide transportation through van transportation, as well as on site child care.

MS. EDWARDS: Yeah, and they have a daycare, too, and the parents can see through the like two-way mirror, where the workers can't see you, but you can see them, so if you're worried about your kids, you can go peek in, and it's while you're in the class. If you have a meeting, you can drop them off, come pick them back up, and that'll be --

MR. EDWARDS: Very convenient.

MS. EDWARDS: It's just like a real daycare, it's pretty cool.

MR. HASKINS: Okay. So please join me in thanking the panel.

Let me thank the panelists again.

(Pause)

MR. GARFINKEL: Good morning again. I think we should get going. We have three new panelists who I'd like to introduce. So Martha Coven is -- actually, I think you're the author, or one of the main authors of the President's Proposal on Marriage. And Rob Wood is at Mathematica, and he was involved in the evaluation of the marriage programs. And Adam Thomas is here at Brookings, and he's one of the co-authors of one of the chapters in The Future of Children volume, the chapter on prevention.

So with that, I think, Martha, do you want to go first?

MS. COVEN: Sure, glad to, thank you, thanks for having me here and being part of this terrific event. So what I thought I'd do is just to briefly talk about the broader lens through which we look at the responsible fatherhood issues very turning very specifically to the President's Proposal for an innovation fund, which I think is the very specific topic we're covering here. Why is this issue so important to the President? Of course, it's part of his personal story, and you all have heard it, having an absent father, being himself now the married father of two girls and wanting to be very involved in their lives.

It's also -- the responsible fatherhood issue sort of sit at the confluence of two major issues in our society. One of them is the extreme lack of economic opportunity in many disadvantaged communities across this country that existed long before the recession hit, and that combined with the unsettling trends and breakdown of families that Irv and Ron recited so clearly.

Being able to address these issues together in combination really could help provide a different future and a better outlook for the children in these families, as well as their parents.

As Ron and Irv both noted, this is a particularly urgent crisis in the African American community. And we are on the cusp of having a majority of the babies in this country who are born being babies of color, so this is our future, and there's no question that that future will be brighter for those children if they have two parents, in most cases, and two parents who are both financially and

emotionally involved in supporting them. I really was struck by what the parents on the panel, or the -- the couples on the panel before us said. I think Victoria and Brandon both spoke very clearly about the benefit to their child of being involved in one another and being, again, both emotionally and financially able to contribute to their child's wellbeing.

And I was really struck by Henry's comment about wanting to put a smile on his partner's face. I think that's what children need to hear and see and that's what this is all about. Kids notice all of this, and this is part of contributing to their wellbeing.

So that's where we come with this, what are we doing. There's really two ways that the President and the Administration are approaching these responsible fatherhood issues, one is on the policy front, and that's really where I work, and I'll focus on that in just a moment, but first there is a public engagement element to this.

The President wants to and is using his bully pulpit not just on Father's Day, but in other settings, as well, to try to stimulate a national conversation about this and encourage people to be thinking about their responsibility towards their children. There's a direct engagement of fathers that we're doing through the Department of Health and Human Services, a sort of postcard campaign that's going to lead to people being able to get information and ongoing communications and help them personally stay connected, and we're building partnerships with groups all across the country, you know, the NFL

Players Association, there are lots of organizations interested in trying to be part of this broader responsibility fatherhood movement.

And my colleague, Joshua Dubois, who runs our faith based and neighborhood partnerships office has really been in the leader in that effort, and he's been working with the President on fatherhood issues for a long time.

On the policy agenda, there are, of course, many aspects of what the administration has done already, is seeking to do that are to the benefit of the couples that we're talking about today, stabilizing the economy so that we can get jobs created again, providing access to affordable health care, many of the men were talking about here, didn't have it, will have the prospect of having that health care after health care reform.

Even, you know, Wall Street reform legislation that's trying to crack down the predatory lending that can often trap people, there are a lot of ways that we can try to encourage a better environment for, again, these dads and moms to be able to support their children. But very specifically, there's four areas that we're working in that are responsible fatherhood initiatives.

One, of course, is the ongoing work around reentry. I think there were different issues raised by Irv about -- and Ron both about sentencing issues, but certainly we have the reality of many people coming back into society and the barriers that they're facing, and many of the people coming back in are dads, and one of the hardest things is for them to reconnect with the labor force and reconnect with their families, that's got to be part of any responsible

fatherhood initiative.

Job opportunities and job training are really important. We've secured funding for a dedicated initiative at the Department of Labor around transitional jobs. There's been some recent evidence showing that it's challenging to figure out exactly how to make a transitional jobs initiative, have the impacts that we want, but we're committed to trying it, particularly with non-custodial parents as a pathway to get them more securely into the labor force, and that's a project that will be launched in this coming year. And thirdly, we are -- we're launching a sort of new cross cutting project of creating an inner agency working group to look at are there sort of artificial policy or programmatic barriers we've created as the federal government to -- making it so that parents can meet their obligations to their children and dads can be involved in their kids' lives. And we're going to be looking across program, across agency at what kinds of issues we can -- we might be able to address there.

But finally, and this is what I'll focus on, is really our commitment to develop and support the next generation of fatherhood and healthy marriage programming. So on that, let me recap where we are and then where we're headed. Ron very briefly touched on this.

In 2006, there were a large number of five year grants made to a number of groups across the country to do either responsible fatherhood or healthy marriage programming. Those were five year grants that are coming to their natural end this year. The evaluations will roll in over the next several

years, we've gotten just the first one that was touched on, and that covered Mary's program, the first phase of the evaluation of that program. But the grants themselves are coming to their natural end of a five year cycle. This presented an opportunity for us to think about what the next generation of responsible fatherhood and marriage programming might be. And reviewing the experience of the last five years and what a lot of people have written and observed about these programs, we essentially came to three main conclusions that led to design changes going forward for us.

The first conclusion was that in order to take these promising interventions to scale, which is ultimately the point of this, not to have boutique programs around the country, but actually think about how to take something that we are encouraged by and, again, bring it more broadly -- make it more broadly available.

You have to engage with the major institutions in our society that are actually reaching these fathers and families, including the places they're going for services, like the work force agencies, like TANIF, the Health and Human Services programs, like the child support agencies.

We have a quarter of all children in America, and half of all poor children connected with child support already, and they're custodial/non-custodial parents, as well. So we are really interested, we want that community based organization partnership to be very strongly there, but the next generation, we feel, is starting to meet more directly, delivering and connecting people to these

services through those much larger institutions like child support agencies, but not exclusively child support agencies.

The second conclusion we reached is that there is still a need to build the evidence base here and to be very rigorous about how we approach that. There was some rigor in the approach to the marriage programs, there was much less in the approach to the fatherhood programs. We need to be much more mindful of that going forward.

And a third major conclusion is that it's important not to neglect the custodial parent side of the equation here. And particularly one of the weaknesses we found in the TANIF program, which is serving many more of the custodial parents, is that it hasn't done by and large very well for parents facing the greatest barriers to self-sufficiency, and we're concerned about the outcomes for their children, many of whom are ending up in foster care, because their families can't provide or care for them.

So what we came up with, as Ron described to you, is a \$500 million fund that we divided into two equal streams. These would be three year grants to states, a requirement of strong partnerships in community based organizations. Half the funding would go to state initiated comprehensive responsible fatherhood initiatives, including those with the marriage component, and half would go to state initiated comprehensive family self-sufficiency demonstrated to address, again, custodial parents or couples facing these kinds of challenges.

The last thing I'll say in terms of describing the proposal, and I'm sure there will be much more discussion of it, is that the prior approach was very focused on funding a -- to finding a list of activities that could be funded and making grants off of that.

We want to shift this towards outcomes. It's part of a broader trend, and the approach the administration is taking is social policy, which is to say we're not sure exactly what the answers are, so let's focus on what we want to achieve, what kinds of outcomes do we want to achieve for children, what kinds of employment outcomes do we want to achieve, and then not be so prescriptive about the path to get there, not say it's either fatherhood or it's marriage, say you mix and match from the approaches you can take, you mix in some employment, you take this, let's unleash the creativity and see what kinds of results we can achieve. That's really the approach we're taking and the reason that we're trying to do some of this or silo crashing in our proposal.

The final note I'll make is that that being said, there are some assurances we think need to be strengthened going forward, particularly strengthened protection against domestic violence. There are some core elements that do need to be in these programs, but by and large, we, again, really are trying to unleash some further creativity going forward. Thanks.

MR. GARFINKEL: Thank you, Martha. Rob.

MR. WOOD: Okay. Good morning, everybody. It sounds like you can hear me. So I'm Rob Wood, I'm the Principal Investigator of the Building

Strong Families Evaluation, which is the national evaluation that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is conducting that looked at Mary and Joe's program and a number of other programs implementing that model.

These results were released in May, and you should have handouts that were in the materials that were available as you came in; if you didn't get those, you may want to get those on the way out. It provides a little more detail about the study that I'm going to be able to give you this morning. So you heard from Mary and from Joe and from the couples about what Building Strong Families is. It's a voluntary relationship skills, education program for unmarried parents, and the core of the program are these group sessions run by trained facilitators where they teach these relationship skills, education skills.

And so how do we evaluate that program? Well, first, eight local organizations agreed to participate in the study and to implement the BSF program model, and Mary and Joe represent two of those eight organizations.

The program was then evaluated using a rigorous, random assignment research design, where couples who applied for the program were placed randomly either into the BSF group that could receive program services or a control group that could not. And so we could then estimate the effect of the program by comparing the outcomes of those two groups.

So more than 5,000 couples were randomly assigned across the eight programs, and we're surveying couples at 15 and 36 months to see how they're doing. The results that I'm going to talk about today are based on the 15

month survey. So what did we find when we examined the effects of BSF on couples' relationships at 15 months? Well, we began our analysis by looking at effects averaged across all of the eight programs in the study, and when we combine the data in this way, we actually find no effects of BSF on the key outcomes of interest.

In particular, we find no effect on couples' relationship status, like how likely they are to still be together at the 15 month follow-up or how likely they are to be married to each other. We also find no effects on the quality of the couples' relationship. These are things like how happy they are together, how well they manage conflict, or how well they co-parent together.

And similarly, we find no effects on measures of father involvement. So when we average the results across the eight programs, the main takeaway at 15 months is no effect of BSF on these key outcomes.

So next we looked at impact separately for each of the eight programs in the study, and here a different pattern emerges. Across most of the programs we still find no effects on these key measures, but there were two notable exceptions. There was Oklahoma, with Mary's favorite phrase, a consistent pattern of positive effects, and then there was also Baltimore, which had a number of negative effects. So let me tell you a little bit more about what we saw in those two programs. So I'll start with Oklahoma. In this program, we saw positive effects in a number of outcomes at this 15 month point. First we saw positive impacts on the likelihood that couples were still together at follow-

up. We also found that the program improved all five dimensions of relationship quality that we examined. It also had a positive effect on co-parenting and father involvement. However, the Oklahoma program had no effect on marriage at the 15 month point.

So now let's turn to Baltimore, where we have a different story. In Baltimore, BSF actually reduced the likelihood that couples were romantically involved at 15 months. It also had a number of other negative effects, including a negative effect on co-parenting, on father involvement, and also on intimate partner violence.

So these very different patterns of results raised the questions of what's going on in these two sites, why do we see success in Oklahoma when we don't see that in other places, and why do we see these negative effects in Baltimore when we don't see that in other sites.

Of course, we can't answer that question definitely, we can't be certain the reasons why one program was successful and another one wasn't. Instead, what we can do is, look at what's distinctive about these programs and then think about what factors may have contributed to the pattern of results that we see. So let's start with Oklahoma and what's distinctive about that program. Well, first, it's the only program that used the becoming parents curriculum. And one of the distinctive features of becoming parents is that it's shorter than the other BSF curricula and it's also delivered in longer sessions.

This made it possible to complete the curricula much more quickly

in Oklahoma. Couples in Oklahoma could complete the curriculum in ten weeks, and I think there was even a way they could complete it in six weeks, while in the other BSF sites, it took five months to complete the curriculum, so that's a big difference. And this difference may have contributed to Oklahoma's much greater success at getting couples to actually complete the program.

In addition, the Oklahoma program also served low income married couples in the same groups as the BSF couples, and no other BSF program did that. These married couples were not part of our sample, as Mary mentioned, they're part of another research study, but they did attend the same group sessions as our BSF couples attended, and their presence may have influenced how effective those sessions were. So what about Baltimore, what's distinctive about that program? Well, Baltimore used a curriculum that was used in several other sites, so it's not distinctive in that way. In fact, what seems to be distinctive in Baltimore is not how they ran the program, but who they served.

In particular, on average, Baltimore couples had less committed relationships when they applied for BSF than couples in other programs. In addition, the couples were more economically disadvantaged, and this was particularly true of the men. So the Baltimore program served a distinctive population, and this may have influenced the pattern of effects we observed there.

I wanted to highlight one important subgroup result. We looked at the effects of BSF for a number of subgroups, and in general we find few or no

effects on key outcomes for these groups.

The strongest exception to that pattern is for African American couples. For these couples we found positive effects of BSF on relationship quality, as well as a number of other related measures. So BSF had some success with this large subgroup of couples. I wanted to end with a few conclusions that you can draw from these interim results. I think, first, our results suggest that it's hard to make this approach work. The BSF model was implemented by eight local programs, and seven of them did not succeed in their primary objective of improving the couple relationship.

Our results also suggest that this approach may not be right for all unmarried parents. One of the eight programs, the program in Baltimore, had a number of negative effects. The Baltimore program served a distinctive population of unmarried parents, including those with less committed relationships, and also a group of very economically disadvantaged fathers. These results may suggest that this approach isn't appropriate for this particular group of unmarried parents.

And finally, these results suggest that the BSF model can work. One of the eight programs, the program in Oklahoma, had a consistent pattern of positive effects. We also find positive effects for African American couples. These findings suggest that the BSF model can work in some circumstances and for some couples.

MR. GARFINKEL: Thank you very much, Rob. Adam.

MR. THOMAS: Thanks, Irv. First of all, there are an awful lot of genuinely heroic single parents out there who are going above and beyond to raise their children, hold down a job, and attend to all of the other household responsibilities that are divided up in married parent families.

But as Irv and Ron pointed out earlier this morning, on average, kids in single parent families tend to fare less well, often substantially less well than kids in married parent families along a variety of dimensions. So I am very much in agreement with the proposals and several of the chapters in The Future of Children volume that we're releasing today, that we provide additional support to unmarried parents and their children, and that we do whatever we can to increase fathers' involvement in these children's lives.

But at least as important as those measures, in my estimation, is that we also think really hard about what we can do to prevent fragile families from being formed in the first place, in other words, what can we do to create situations in which people wait until they're really ready to become parents and are married or at least in a stable, long term, committed relationship before they actually have children. So I'm going to be focusing specifically on policies that can help to reduce out of wedlock child bearing. And not to belabor the obvious, but there are two things that have to be true, two criteria that have to be met in order for an out of wedlock birth to occur, first of all, you have to have a birth, no rocket science there.

Secondly, the parents in question need to be unmarried. So I want

to focus on these two pieces one at a time, and I'll focus on the second one first, because we already had quite a bit of discussion about marriage today.

I will just piggyback on some of the comments that have been made earlier to say that based on the evidence in the Mathematica evaluation, which I think is an excellent study, and a lot of other evaluations, we have some hints, especially from the Oklahoma City study that we may be moving in the right direction, but I think that an objective reading of the evidence suggests that we do not yet have an evidentiary basis to allow us to say we know how to do this well on a systematic basis and should allocate substantial additional numbers of public dollars to doing more of this.

So I view marriage promotion programs as being more still in the R&D category. I do think we should spend money to evaluate new strategies, but I don't think that we're ready to ramp these programs up yet. On the other hand, I think we do know quite a bit about ways of preventing pregnancies. So I'm going to talk very briefly about four strategies for which there is a pretty strong evidentiary basis that they work.

Number one, Irv and others have been a leader in this research field, have shown that stricter child support enforcement tends to be associated with reductions in out of wedlock child bearing. Number two, there have been evaluations in a number of different localities over time of mass media and social marketing campaigns that are designed to encourage healthy behaviors. Some of those campaigns have specifically encouraged contraceptive use, most often,

more specifically condom use. And the evaluation literature on those campaigns suggests that if they're well designed, they can, in fact, have an effect of reducing the frequency of unprotected sex, which presumably has implications for the rate of out of wedlock child bearing, which I'll get back to in a second.

Number three, as Ron and others have mentioned, there are also what are called teen pregnancy prevention programs. This is a pretty broad category. This is what some people think of as sex ed programs, although I think that's too narrow a description. These are programs obviously geared at teens, some of them implemented in school settings, other in community settings. Some of them have sort of more of a classroom curricular focus, others are more interactive, some have sort of a youth development perspective, others focus more specifically on contraception.

So there's a wide variety of programs under this umbrella, but there have been a lot of evaluations of these programs using random design, which is the gold standard for social science research, it's the technique that Rob and his colleagues used at Mathematica to evaluate Building Strong Families.

And the results of these evaluations suggest that if these programs are well designed, they can, in fact, have quite substantial effects on teens rates of sexual frequency and contraceptive use.

Fourth, and finally, we provide subsidized family planning services to low income mothers, states and the federal government do, via Medicaid. And over the last 15 years or so, about half of states have been granted waivers to

expand the pool of mothers to whom these services are provided. There was a good study a couple of years ago of the effects of these expansions, and the study showed that these expansions had substantial effects on contraceptive use, rates of birth and rates of abortion. So we have evidence about policies that work. So what I did with my co-authors -- is Emily in the room?

Emily Monea and Belle Sawhill, who were my co-authors on the chapter that we contributed to The Future of Children volume, is, we took this evaluation literature and plugged it into a rather sophisticated simulation model of family formation to try to think about what the implications would be if we took these programs to scale on a national level, funded them at substantial levels, and what we found is, two findings I want to mention, number one, we found that these programs would have notable effects in terms of the incidents of out of wedlock child bearing, teen pregnancy, the number of children born into poverty, and a variety of related outcomes, that's number one.

Number two, and probably most importantly from a political perspective, our results also suggested that even if you use a pretty conservative set of assumptions about these policy's effects, they would still more than pay for themselves, that for every dollar that you invest in these programs, you get a return of at least \$2, often substantially more, because the kinds of pregnancies that these policies prevent are the kinds of pregnancies that are disproportionately likely to be publicly subsidized if they occurred in terms of prenatal care and deliveries and benefits and services for mother and children

after their birth.

So these policies I think are smart public policy, they're good for kids, and they're good public investments.

The last thing I want to say is that I think -- I'm happy to report that I think we're moving in the right direction on this front. I wish we had spent a little bit more time complimenting our discussion of marriage, what the administration and Congress have been doing about pregnancy prevention.

The most important innovations in the recent past have been in the Health Care Reform bill, two pieces in particular. There are a couple of different provisions that expand family planning services under Medicaid. One of the biggest pieces of those is a state option that allows states that have not yet expanded their services to do so. So it's really up to states now, the ball is in their court to take this option up and expand their services. So I think states will find that to be a very worthwhile investment of their dollars that they do it.

Number two, the bill sets aside \$75 million a year to fund evidence based teen pregnancy prevention programs, which our results suggest is very sound policy. I think the administration should consider trying to ramp up that level of funding in the future.

There have been no major efforts to, at the state or local or federal levels, to fund any publicly subsidized mass media campaigns encouraging safe sex or safe sexual behavior, but I think that's also something worth thinking about.

So my bottom line is that policies to prevent pregnancies I think are smart policies, they pay for themselves over time, they're good for kids, and I think we're moving in the right direction, but we still have a lot of work to do. Thanks.

MR. GARFINKEL: Well, thank you very much, and thank you, Martha and Rob. My job is to stimulate a little discussion, and so I'm going to start with a question to Adam, but it really comes from Ron Haskins earlier who said, what's the good of delaying birth for a few years if they're just going to be a non-marital birth a couple years later?

MR. THOMAS: Well, first of all, a substantial share of out of wedlock births are to mothers whose first birth occurs when they're teenagers. So if you can simply delay child bearing until people escape their teenage years, there's a chance that you may actually have a substantial effect on peoples' lifetime trajectories.

Secondly, if you can delay -- so it's hard to say. We try to incorporate some of the limited evidence that exists into our analysis. It's hard to say when you prevent a pregnancy, what share does prevent a pregnancy would be delayed as opposed to averted all together, and among delayed pregnancies, by how long would they be delayed?

The evidence suggests that if you prevent a birth to a teen, you're going to delay pregnancies by maybe on the average of -- on the order of four years for an adult, maybe two or three years, these are very rough estimates, but

it's as good as it gets.

And so I think that if you can prevent pregnancies even for that limited amount of time, you'll give young adults and adults more of a chance to get their feet on the ground and get to a point that they're actually more capable of taking care of kids if they get pregnant.

MR. GARFINKEL: Anyone else on the panel? Ron, did you want to -- no? Okay. Then let me shift and ask Martha a question. What are the prospects, do you think, for the legislation on the innovation fund?

MS. COVEN: That's a great question. There's one sure thing at this moment in Washington, which is that it is very uncertain what the next month will hold. And we do have sort of the beginnings of a dialogue on Capital Hill about adopting some of the features of the innovation fund as part of some kind of end of year legislation.

There is I think bipartisan interest in at least sort of changing a bit of the mix of funding so that perhaps to a sort of half fatherhood, half marriage, but still separate funding streams approach. That's not what we had suggested, but that may -- that's one of the early compromises that was floated in legislation this fall.

I think there's also some openness to making more flexible the use of the marriage resources, even if it does remain in a separate funding stream, which I think is important, because, again, we don't think the job at the federal government is to lock in a certain set of activities and put on blinders and say just

do that and let's hope it works. We're much more interested in more flexible approaches and focusing on outcomes, and we would have more ability to do that with the pending proposal.

We at the moment don't have strong support or the likelihood I think of getting the significant increase that we were looking for, but you never know. There's \$150 million that I think will be almost surely in some form, again, made available to the administration in the coming year to continue this initiative, and exactly what the details are are still to be worked out.

MR. HASKINS: Let me add a couple things to that. First, the original idea I think was that the administration was going to take their proposal and replace -- and let me make a distinction here that I think has not been too clear. There's a very sharp distinction between the programs we're talking about, the 125 or so marriage programs that are all around the country and are run by community organizations and these research programs, Building Strong Families programs, they are completely separate, so we don't have really any evidence on this network of 125 programs. I think that is a very serious flaw. The reason for our counterproposal to what the administration proposing is not to rescue those programs. We don't have any idea if they're any good, so we ought to start over again, that's the first thing.

The second thing, it's clear now because of all the -- maybe I shouldn't say clear, it seems likely now that because of all the issues in Congress, and a lot of pressure from outside Congress by republicans who have

influence, especially the republicans in the Senate, that they would strongly object to getting rid of all 125 of those programs and replacing them with the Obama Initiative. I mean I just think that that's a -- it would be stopped in the Senate, I think that's a very high likelihood.

So the administration has wisely, as far as I can tell, negotiated with people on the Hill, and there is a possibility that there would be some compromise, the administration would get part of what it wants, but not completely replace the marriage programs, that seems the most likely outcome now.

But then next year when we do -- this is part of TANIF, which has to be reauthorized, and Congress is not going to do TANIF, so they'll have to do it next year, or they should do it next year, and then maybe this would all come up again. So we're going to fight this battle more than one time. So in that spirit, I would say my own feeling, not speaking for Irv or the other authors, I'm close to the administration here. I think I like the overall administration and proposal, you know, there's some issues here, but the money that we're spending on the fatherhood programs and the marriage programs fail utterly in one crucial respect, and that is, we're not learning very much, because they weren't designed that way.

So they need to be redone, and that's the part of the administration I really support, that we do things where we get evidence to see if they actually work like we have in the Building Strong Families program, and that's why I urge

the audience to recognize the distinction between this network of 125 programs that we don't know much about and the Building Strong Families, we know a lot about. Almost everything we know about the effects of these programs if from Building Strong Families.

So that's the route we ought to take. And I further would say that the Oklahoma results and results for black provide modest encouragement. We've had many, many big intervention programs that the first time out, they didn't work at all, we got almost no significant effects. Oklahoma looks like it's a very viable model, it's had powerful effects, especially for a program that's only been up and running for a year, so we ought to expand that, we ought to focus on that, and we ought to move forward with more research and maybe even a random assignment context and learn more about whether we could generalize the Oklahoma program to other programs.

And finally I want to add just one thing that I think is really crucial that has not been mentioned here, Rob can give details if he wants to. The attendance in these eight programs was pitiful, lousy, rotten. Some of these programs, hardly anybody came. Build it and they will come, no way, they didn't come.

Now, maybe that's inherent in the programs, and you can never get parents to come, but if you look at Oklahoma, you look at Baltimore, you think, yeah, we can get these parents to come, we've got to do a lot of the kind of stuff they talked about, and then we can find out if they really work. I think this has not

been a really robust test of the potential successful -- how successful these programs can be.

MR. GARFINKEL: Mary or Joe, any comments on this, any thoughts?

MR. JONES: I mean I think, you know, we're looking at an investment that's sort of like the first generation of work in this area, right. Just some packed TANIF program, as an example what I mean by that. We have a TANIF program that provides support, and rightfully so, and I'm talking about women at the time of pregnancy.

What we don't have is an opportunity within the current TANIF program that we know of where when a mom who's pregnant goes into the TANIF office to apply for benefits, that the father of her child is with her, nor is that system set up, resourced and trained, to work with the father, the expectant father, relative to his needs and to look at that family as a family unit, so that when the case worker interviews the mom, she's also interviewing the dad, or at least is encouraging the mom to have the dad participate, and there's a family service plan that's designed to work with both parents at the same time.

What we have is a system right now is, we're saying to the mom, we'll provide benefits to you, but we want you to give up your man, right, and she has to go home and explain, yeah, I got benefits, but you also have child support obligations, which is right, but we really need to have this guy at the table with her at the time of the birth, right, because we know that the fragile families

research shows us that 80 percent of these couples are in a romantic relationship at that time. I think it's an excellent opportunity to build on some of what is known with respect to what's happened at BSF, some of the other marriage programs. Yeah, the evidence is not there, but this is the first generation, the first investment.

And I will tell you, and I can be corrected, with respect to the investments that have been made in the responsible fatherhood programs, to my knowledge, this is the first time in the history of the United States of America that we have had dedicated funding to unpack the issue of father absence with respect to low income men in our country.

We've had previous administrations to work on it in terms of engaging private philanthropy, the Congress being interested in terms of having hearings, introducing legislation, didn't pass, private foundations redirected their resources, the field kind of regressed, the previous administration made this particular investment, and now we have this opportunity with the Obama Administration to make a significant investment around evidence based practice to understand the needs of fathers with respect to how they can be influential in the development of their children.

First generation, we cannot quit on what we are learning, however, there does need to be more rigorous evaluation of all of the programs that we're talking about.

MS. MYRICK: I think the only thing I'd add is that of the 200

marriage and fatherhood programs that are funded that are not like Building Strong Families, I think there are some good things happening in those programs. I think there has to be a better job to telling the story about what's happening, and the administration is I think going to focus this year on telling some of those stories. So it won't be as rigorous evaluation, but there certainly has been some learning going on in those programs and maybe there are some things that can be learned from them.

The other thing I'd say is that I am absolutely convinced, because I run programs that are for all different kinds of moments in time, that this moment of birth is a really meaningful time to continue to think about interventions, both for married and unmarried couples, and that it's clear to me that families are forming or not forming and that fathers are making important decisions about what the relationship with their children will be for the rest of their life. And so, obviously, people can come back and decide those things later, but really helping people navigate through this one year period around pre-birth, post-birth I think has significant long term benefits to both families and society and we should maintain a strong emphasis on thinking about interventions for this time period.

MR. GARFINKEL: All right, thank you. So I think it's time to open to the audience questions. Yes.

MR. VANN: Hi, I'm Nigel Vann with the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. I have two questions really, one for Rob, I'm just wondering, why would the finding that some of the Baltimore couples don't stay

together, why that's necessarily negative, because that could be positive, you know, if they take a look at their relationship and figure out it's not the best relationship for them, as long as we can then work with them on good co-parenting.

MR. GARFINKEL: Question, not a statement.

MR. VANN: Okay, so that's the question. And the other question is just you, Irv, I'm just wondering if we want to include low income married couples as part of a fragile family, as well, for future policy?

MR. WOOD: So I think what you're thinking about is that maybe these are kind of tenuous relationships, they were going to break up anyway, and maybe they just said it's happened more quickly, so I think one thing that will be interesting to look at is to see what happens in 36 months, we'll have another look at that point to see if it's sort of a different pattern at that point.

It's important to note, though, that it's a whole set of results, it's not just sort of they're more likely to break up, dads are less involved, there's an increase in intimate partner violence, so there's a cluster of things that just aren't what we want to see, so I think that it's beyond just the fact that the couples are more likely to not be together.

MR. GARFINKEL: So I'm not sure what the question was to me, but since I'm not an administrator, I wouldn't include low income married couples as fragile families. Obviously, they're troubled, they're low income. Yes.

MS. LUCAS-SMITH: Hi, I'm Katherine Lucas-Smith here from the

Corporation for Enterprise Development. And the question that I have is kind of bringing the conversation back around to some things that were mentioned earlier, but discussed a little bit less, and that is that families are too big, there are too many children for the amount of money coming in to support everyone, including the parents adequately, and contraception isn't necessarily being used in a lot of cases, and I think other research has shown that contraception is widely available, so my question is to Mr. Thomas, on the policy side, what can we do to make sure that, if it's available, it's actually used? That's kind of a missing link.

And also for Mr. Jones, on the program side, what can be done to kind of make those links really work, particularly in a case where there is a fragile family with the first child and trying to limit family size from that point?

MR. THOMAS: So roughly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, which, if you stop and think about it, is kind of an astounding statistic. And, you know, I think your question is a really good one, and I am sorry to report that on behalf of the research community, that we don't have a great answer for your question, and as a result, I don't -- we have pieces of answer to your question. There are some people, it's not a huge chunk of people, but there are some people for whom a lack of access to contraception does appear to be a problem. The flip side of that is, when you expand access to contraception, you do see increases in contraceptive use and reductions in unintended births and pregnancies. So not necessarily enormous reductions, but

somewhat of a reduction, so that's part of it.

I also think that, to a certain extent, there's an education piece here which you see with the teen pregnancy prevention programs, there are myths out there about side effects of contraception that are simply incorrect, there are people who are not aware of the importance of taking contraception on a regular basis.

If you look at some of the -- I would recommend you to check out, if you're interested in this, look at some of the survey reports that are available on the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancies web sites, look at what people say about -- what they think about what kinds of contraception work, what kinds of contraception don't work, how well they need to be used.

People are actually willfully misinformed often times about how to use contraception and the importance of using it correctly, so I think that's another piece, which is why, in part, I think teen pregnancy prevention programs have the effect that they do. And third and finally, and I actually think this is probably the biggest piece of the equation is, there's a more fundamental structural problem that leads to a situation in which I think a lot of people just don't have a great deal of motivation to use contraception.

I mean if you think that your life -- if you think your life isn't really going to turn out to be a terribly promising endeavor anyway, then you're going to be less likely to try to structure that life carefully.

So I think a big piece of the story is what Irv talked about earlier in terms of incarceration rates for young African American men, I think it's jobs, I think it's general economic outlook and convincing people that if they play by the rules, they're going to have happy and satisfied lives. So I think that's a really easy thing to do, I'll leave it to Martha to figure out how to take care of that in the next week or so and then we'll have this all wrapped up.

MR. JONES: Yeah, I would agree with most of what Adam said, but I would also say that, you know, there are very few tools available to community based organizations to be able to impart the kind of information around family planning and contraception to the folks that we serve, particularly in environments like Baltimore. I'm really pleased that in partnership with the Annie Casey Foundation and the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Unplanned Pregnancy, we have developed a set of modules on family planning that we recently concluded testing on, all right, that we are going to make widely available for free to communities across the country.

And so what I hear from a lot of my colleagues and my peers from around the country, we don't have the information or the tools available to be able to introduce this to the population of folks that we serve, particularly men, and so I think we have one of the tool -- first time tools available that are just being widely disseminated and available for our practitioners.

MR. GARFINKEL: Down front.

MR. GOOD: I'm Josh Good with ICF, we do a lot of the technical

assistance work with some of the healthy marriage and responsible father grantees. A pointed question for Martha, around that particular issue you raised about, look, if we're going to take this to scale in broader ways, one of the encouragements is to work with systems, TANIF and one stop centers, child welfare, et cetera. Can you just share any, you know, more concrete thoughts about what you all have in mind and particular ways that you'd be encouraging through the (inaudible) policy council otherwise some of these federal systems to be attractive to -- attractive partners to community based programs like the ones that we're talking about today?

MR. GARFINKEL: Can I just piggyback on that and ask you to particularly focus on child support, because that's come up several times and I have particular interest in that.

MS. COVEN: I think we talk about child support for the same reason Jessie James robbed banks, we're talking about child support because it's where the kids are, he robbed banks because it's where the money is. I think you can't escape the fact that most of the folks we are talking about are connected to the child support system.

And we have I think in our -- the head of our child support agency here, Vicki Turetsky would tell you this, when you talk to child support program administrators, they don't -- they've moved from just an enforcement mindset in their thinking about the kinds of services they want to provide and the ability -- the connections they want to make with the families they're reaching. And the

enforcement is absolutely very important, that's how we're getting resources to you, the custodial parents, but these things are connected, and we know that if there's a way to show some of these dads, in particular, sometimes their moms, but some of these dads that there is a way to address their employment or educational challenges, a way to build a healthy relationship with the other parent and with the children, that that's a pipeline into a much more -- into a situation where they're much more likely to be contributing financially to the children's wellbeing.

And I think we don't want to lose what is important here, which is the community connection, but we would be fooling ourselves if we said we're going to continue to let all that happen just at the community level, and we're going to have these big, large public institutions that are interacting with millions of these families every day not be part of that.

We've got to find a way to put these things together, and I think that's where we're looking for, it's not just child support, we're looking for lots of doors, we're looking for those willing administrators who want to work with a Mary, with a Joe, with someone else to figure out how to combine their services, and there are a lot of different approaches to that, but I think our feeling is, you can't just leave those to entities any longer.

MR. GARFINKEL: All right. One last question, way in the back.

MS. WILEY: Tisha Wiley from the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research at NIH. One thing I was struck by as Mary was talking about

her program was your focus on staffing your program with people who are really customer service oriented. I was wondering if that was something that was looked at in this evaluation or how much that's happening in some of these programs that maybe aren't showing the same effects, because that's something where you can intervene from a policy perspective and really make a difference. So if you could speak to if that was part of the evaluation or if there's any work around that.

MR. WOOD: I guess that might be to me. That sounds more like an implementation question, and I'm more on the impact side, but I would refer you to our implementation study, which has a lot of detail about how each of the programs operated and could kind of help tease that out I think.

MR. GARFINKEL: Well, thank you, and would you all join me in thanking the panel and the audience.

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