



# Clark County Fatherhood Initiative Marketing Project

*College of Business Administration  
Principles of Marketing  
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***Inspiring Greatness***

# CLARK COUNTY FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

## MARKETING PLAN PROJECT

*Cedarville University*  
*Principles of Marketing Class – Fall 2011*

**Professor:** Bruce Stapleton

**Students:** Nathan Buckner  
Kaitlyn Coughlin  
David Dyksterhouse  
Jessica Hattenfield  
Laura Keeley  
Caleb Maxwell  
Meredith Moline  
Daniel Mullins  
Brandon Rabb  
Kelsey Watkins  
Spencer Wilcox

Jordan Chapman  
Brooke Devereaux  
Eric Foley  
Taylor Jotblad  
Alan Lockwood  
Jessica McCoy  
Tabitha Moore  
Adam Oakley  
Tyler Sherron  
Lucas Wemple  
Benjamin Winston



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## SITUATION ANALYSIS

Eli Williams, CEO and President, Urban Life Ministries, requested that Cedarville University assist his organization in defining a marketing plan for a project he is implementing in Clark County called “The Fatherhood Initiative.” Mr. Williams is requesting a project where Cedarville students can assist in advancing his past and current efforts to better understand and communicate to local fathers on the importance of being a role model and mentor to their children. Also communicating the importance of this initiative to the public and private sectors to help get the message out and drive local and grant funding is a primary interest of Mr. Williams.

Much work has already taken place to educate the local public and gain involvement from local constituencies such as schools, health care, law enforcement and government. This semester project was to focus on the current effectiveness of the resources available today and develop a plan of action to improve the marketing and communications of this program in Clark County.

## GOALS OF THE PROJECT

The project had three primary goals that were consolidated into one overall marketing plan developed and presented to Mr. Williams by the students.

The primary goals include:

1. Complete a marketing analysis that pertains to this program and provide a strategy in how best to address the defined market
  - a. Research the macro and micro-environmental issues
  - b. Review the current studies and information
  - c. Analyze current initiatives and impact
2. Recommend a primary message platform for communicating the initiative  
Outline a branding strategy and communication plan on how to best reach the target
  - a. Clearly define the target market segment(s)
  - b. Review ways of best communicating to this market and the effect of each tactic
  - c. Recommend a branding and communication strategy
3. Create a public relations strategy to implement the define brand strategy and communication plan
  - a. Review public relation tactics
  - b. Identify what tactics have been used to date to communicate this initiative
  - c. Recommend possible PR tactics



## OVERVIEW AND CLASS PERSPECTIVES

The Principle of Marketing class was excited to take on this challenge. This provided them the opportunity to work with the principles they learned in class and implement them in a real world setting. It also allowed them to better understand how marketing is used in a non-profit setting. The project presented itself after the semester had begun and was completed over a six week period.

During the exercise, each student was asked to reflect on their attitudes, beliefs and overall thinking concerning the need for an organization such as the Clark County Fatherhood Initiative (CCFI) and how well the marketing principles they learned during the semester applied to this project. Three separate reflections were taken at the beginning, middle and end of the project. Each reflection helped the students process and absorb the ramifications of their efforts and helped identify the important impact the CCFI has on the local area. Each student gained a renewed belief and understanding on the need of fathers in today's society. Examples of the students' reflections may be reviewed in Appendix A.

The students were divided into three groups of six to seven individuals each addressing one of the project goals listed above. This paper and a presentation were prepared to Mr. Williams at the conclusion of this project. The marketing plan was divided in to four sections:

- Market Analysis and Overview
- Marketing Positioning and Objectives
- Branding Communication Strategy
- Marketing Tactical Recommendations

## MARKET ANALYSIS AND OVERVIEW

Children who grow up without fathers experience significant disadvantages in many areas. Statistically, these children experience greater risk of child abuse, educational difficulties, and involvement in crime. Our study highlights important statistical information relative to these three areas, which show the importance of having a father in the home. Our study also includes a marketing audit of a program similar to Fatherhood Initiative, as well as macro and micro environmental issues, which will provide a better understanding of the need for the Fatherhood Initiative in Springfield, Ohio.

It is extremely important for fathers to be involved with their children and significant others, even at the earliest stages. Facts show how important a father's involvement in the life of his unborn child's life is in regard to the child's life and health. Unmarried mothers have an infant

mortality rate that is 1.8 times higher than married mothers do. Also, according to study from the state of Georgia, children whose father's name is absent from their birth certificate are 2.3 times more likely to pass away before their first birthday, than children who do have a father on their birth certificate. Surprisingly, single parents, who often receive much more education regarding parenting, are more likely to have a child of lower weight and are less likely to receive prenatal care. For men, these statistics should provide a wake-up call that they become fathers, and are critical to the life of their children, even before these children see the light of day.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (P.L. 93-247) defines child abuse and neglect as any "recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation" of any child under the age of 18; or, "an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm" to a child.

Maltreatment is commonly classified into four categories:

- Physical abuse includes punching, beating, kicking, biting or shaking a child.
- Sexual abuse refers to any sexual contact with a child, the simulation of such conduct with a child, exposing a child to sexually explicit material or conduct.
- Child neglect is a failure to provide for a child's basic needs for health care, food, clothing, adult supervision, education, and nurturing.
- Psychological maltreatment refers to behavior such as ridiculing, terrorizing, corrupting, or denying affection to a child.

Compared to living with both parents, living in a single-parent home doubles the risk that a child will suffer physical, emotional, or educational neglect. The overall rate of child abuse and neglect in single-parent households is 27.3 children per 1,000, whereas the rate of overall maltreatment in two-parent households is 15.5 per 1,000.

An analysis of child abuse cases, in a nationally representative sample of 42 counties, found that children from single-parent families are more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than children who live with both biological parents. Compared to their peers living with both parents, children in single parent homes had:

- a 77% greater risk of being physically abused
- an 87% greater risk of being harmed by physical neglect
- a 165% greater risk of experiencing notable physical neglect
- a 74% greater risk of suffering from emotional neglect
- an 80% greater risk of suffering serious injury as a result of abuse
- overall, a 120% greater risk of being endangered by some type of child abuse.

A household missing a father figure also deeply effects the child's education. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, children without fathers are two times more likely to drop out of school. Much of the student's success is associated with the father figure in the household. This means they are more likely to achieve higher grades. Students without fathers, however, are two times more likely to have to redo a grade. Statistics also show that students living with only 1 parent were 13 percent less likely to be read aloud to than those with two parents.

In a two parent household, the average child, under the age of 13 spends about 2.35 hours with their mother and 1.77 hours with their father per day doing activities together. Children with only one parent in the household, usually a mother, have those numbers decrease to .42 hours with their fathers and 1.26 with their mothers. These times that children spend with their parents in close activities helps the child develop important areas such as communication, thinking, socializing, and just having a goodtime. A recent study showed that out of 1330 children that fathers who were involved at a personal level with their children saw that child's success increase significantly. If a father does play a positive role in their child's education, the child feels more positive about his or her abilities.

Recent studies have shown that children, whose fathers are involved and nurture them all throughout their lives, are more likely to have higher IQs. The readiness in academics of the children with solid father figures is much higher as they go to school. Better verbal skills, intellectual functioning, and academic achievement are highest among those with father figures who are nurturing and involved. They are 43 percent more likely to earn A's and 33 percent less likely to repeat a grade. All in all, both parents play a vital role in their child's development when it comes to education, and the absence of either one can have negative effects on the child's future. Children with no fathers are nine times more likely to dropout of school. If a child drops out of school, their chances for success in an economy like ours today are slim.

When a father is absent from the home or is not involved in the lives of his children, he leaves a legacy of non-fulfillment, brokenness, and hurt. Many children do not know how to deal with their emotions and often turn to gangs or crime as a way to release these pent-up feelings. There have been many studies researching the relationship between crime and the presence of a father. It was found that adolescents, particularly boys, in single-parent families were at higher risk of status, property and person delinquencies. Another study asked nearly 14,000 women in prison, and nearly half of them grew up without a father. These studies seem to suggest the fact that there is a high correlation between crime and the presence of a father. Another study of 109 juvenile offenders indicated that family structure significantly predicts delinquency. Using this information, we can see that it is very important to involve the father in the lives of young people, both in the lives of boys and girls. Crime rates across the nation can be cut if we can get the fathers of children to take an active role in raising their own child.

## BOND: A POTENTIAL MODEL FOR FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

In order to better understand what our client is looking for, we also searched for other organizations that were trying to achieve similar goals as the CCFI. Through an online search, we found various programs that appear to be available for men searching for guidance on fatherhood. However, as we researched further, we found that many of these websites were either under construction or simply informative documents that leave no live contact to make outside of the webpage.

One organization, however, stood out as a potentially good model for CCFI. Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny, or BOND, is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization dedicated to “Rebuilding the Family by Rebuilding the Man.” The program focuses on the male’s role in the family. Although they do not specifically identify the father as the main focus, the values BOND encourages coincide with many of the values Fatherhood Initiative is trying to emulate: self-reliance, honesty, and helping others through patience. Reverend Jesse Lee Peterson founded the company, and his church partners with the organization for financial, physical, and spiritual support.

However, there are many differences in the programs BOND offers versus the initial plan for Fatherhood Initiative. The organization owns a home for boys and young men who have experienced foster care, juvenile detention, etc. They are also attempting to start up an academy of their own. In this way, we can see BOND focuses more on all males in the family rather than fathers exclusively. This may be a good philosophy to keep in mind as Fatherhood Initiative takes off. Though it is important to change the thinking and lives of the fathers, we must remember that all dads were sons first.

## MICRO AND MACRO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Our study showed that the micro and macro environments that define Springfield are very typical of the lifestyles of children that grow up in fatherless homes.

Criminal statistics for the City of Springfield, in 2009, reported that there were 4 murders, 43 rapes, 214 robberies, 206 assaults, 1287 burglaries, 2977 thefts, 248 auto thefts, and 29 cases of arson. The crime index is a measure of the amount of crime in an area; the higher the crime index is, the more crime there is. The U.S average is 319.2; however, Springfield is well above that average with a crime index of 614.0. In 2010, there were a total 3985 adult criminal arrests and 480 juvenile arrests. On a macro level, in 2009, there were 6,369 criminal reports for Clark County alone.

The percent of people in the macro environment of Clark County, in 2008, that were living below the poverty level was 13.8 percent. The percent of children under 18 years living below the poverty level in Clark County was 22.1 percent. In 2009, Springfield’s poverty level was 25.6

percent, and residents, with an income level below 50 percent of the poverty level, was 10.1%. 36.1 percent of children, between the ages of five and seventeen, live below the poverty level. For a male, with no wife present, 17 percent live below the poverty level. For a female, with no husband present, 65.3% live below the poverty level, and 18 percent of married couples 18% live below the poverty level.

We also found significant data on the types of family that make up the Springfield area. This is a very important micro environment issue that is impacted by fatherless homes. Married couples with their own children make up 27 percent of Springfield. Male householders with children, but no wife present, make up 3.5 percent of the population. Female householders with children, but no husband present, make up 12 percent of the population, and families with no children make up 57.5 percent of the population.

The education level of children is also significantly impacted when the presence of a father is lacking. Of the 25 and over population in Springfield, 76.6 percent have achieved a high school diploma or higher and 12.7 percent have a Bachelor's degree or higher. The 25 and over population in Springfield makes up around 41,000 people, and of that group, 2,084 has an education level of less than 9<sup>th</sup> grade. There are 7,503 with an education somewhere between the grades of 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> but with no diploma. 15,658 have a high school diploma. There are 8,395 with some college education, but no degree; 2,162 with an associated degree; 2,384 with a Bachelor's degree, and 1,910 with a graduate degree or higher. On a broader level, between 2005 and 2009, 84.8 percent of the population is a high school graduate or less, and 16.0 percent have obtained a Bachelor's degree or more.

Some basic demographic information pertaining to Springfield includes the religious affiliation of the population which is made up of 12 percent Evangelical Lutheran, 15 percent United Methodist, 6 percent Southern Baptist, 25 percent Catholic, 6 percent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, and 37 percent other. 34.1 percent of the population is affiliated with a religious congregation compared to 50.2 percent of the United States population. The racial makeup of Springfield is 76.6 percent white alone, 17.7 percent black alone, 3.2 percent two or more races, 1.5 percent Hispanic, 0.5 percent Asian, and 0.1 percent other race alone.

Finally, we researched information about the Clark County Fatherhood Initiative in Springfield, Ohio. We found that the Clark County Fatherhood Initiative is a partnership between the Clark County Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and Urban Light Ministries Incorporated located in Springfield, Ohio. Urban Light's mission is to "increase the number of responsible fathers, nurtured children, and strong families. Their service area is the Miami Valley, including Dayton and Springfield, Ohio." Their staff includes:

- Eli Williams (Chief Executive Officer)
- Judy Williams (Urban Light Center Director)

- Richard Herzog (Director, “Sonshine Clubs”)
- Darryl Grayson (Trainer, Basic Training for Men)

Urban Light Ministries currently endorses a newsletter called the RFF Dad’s Newsletter. They are promoting NFL, which stands for Nurturing Fathers for Life. Their program totals 39 hours and meets once a week. They hold monthly meetings with other fathers and discuss topics such as: bonding activities, social support for fathers, and leadership training. The program also focuses on the “Sonshine Club” which is an after school children’s ministry. It is held in all ten Springfield City Elementary Schools and is led by volunteers from various local churches.

This concludes our market analysis of statistical information relevant to the Fatherhood Initiative led by Eli Williams in Springfield, Ohio.

## MARKETING POSITIONING AND OBJECTIVES

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

A company’s position is the net of the perceptions held about a company by customers, prospects and influential third parties in its targeted marketplace. Whereas a position is the perceived status of a company, positioning is the development of a company’s desired position. An important aspect to remember in positioning development is that the marketplace determines a company’s positioning options instead of the company dictating its position to the market. Developing a positioning strategy including clear targeted segments and a positioning statement is important for the following reasons:

- Focuses all internal efforts on a common positioning goal
- Directs design of a company’s products and services and the allocation of resources
- Establishes the competitive agenda

The plan should provide the basis from which to keep sales, marketing, strategic communications and advertising “on strategy.”

The projects focus is to develop a marketing plan to assist CCFI to improve their programs success and reach. The following marketing objectives were defined to assist in focusing areas that impact CCFI the greatest. Objectives include:

- Develop a better understanding of CCFI’s primary targets and needs
- Improve CCFI’s awareness to the target market areas
- Outline metrics for measuring success



## MARKETING MIX

The marketing plan must address the key components of the marketing mix to ensure all aspects are reviewed and better understand how each area impacts the others and the total marketing strategy. The four components of the marketing mix include:

- **Product** – CCFI’s Community Action Plan, programs and education
- **Price** – Perceived value of program by the targeted segments. This is difficult to quantify based on their non-profit status and focus on providing education and services for free
- **Place** – Channels of distribution – this is an important aspect of the overall strategy. Currently CCFI has focused their efforts on addressing channel needs more than targeted segment needs.
- **Promotion** – Selected communication media

The key to success is accurately identifying your targeted segments and focusing your marketing efforts on these key areas.

## TARGET MARKETS

The goal of Urban Light Ministries is to assist all fathers who want to build up or improve their relationship with their children. Our primary target markets include fathers separated from the mother of their child, fathers who did not have a “role model father” themselves while they were growing up, African-American fathers, and teenage fathers.

Our first target market is the father separated from the mother of his children, who desires greater involvement in his children’s lives. Approximately 70% of divorced mothers will receive primary custody of their children. To compound this problem, 50% of these divorced mothers deny the value in a father’s continued contact with a child following a split-up in the marriage. This is troubling statistical data. In Springfield, Ohio, about 12% of children live in a home without a father. Under such adverse circumstances, it is extremely difficult for fathers to play a significant role in their children’s lives. Urban Light focuses on the importance of fathers interacting in their children’s lives.

Our second target market is the father who, for one of a variety of reasons, did not have a “role model father” of his own while growing up. In some cases, the father abandoned the mother and child. Other fathers, preoccupied with their work, failed to make time for their children. Sadly, some fathers were deprived of a role model father because their own fathers died prematurely.

Our third market category targets African-American fathers. This is due to the disturbing fact that approximately two-thirds of African-American children live in homes where the father is absent. With such a high percentage of African-American children living in fatherless homes, it is extremely important to reach this group and get the fathers involved productively in the lives of their children.

Our fourth and final primary target market is the teenage father. The teenage pregnancy rate (ages 15-19) in Springfield, Ohio was 81.5% in 2009. This is an alarming statistic. With such a high pregnancy rate, it is imperative to reach the young boys who fathered these children and give assistance by guiding them to become mature adult fathers capable of constructive involvement in their children's lives.

In addition to the primary markets that have been targeted by Urban Light Ministries, further study has identified two crucial secondary target markets that must be accessed pursuant to the successful completion of the goals of the Fatherhood Initiative. These secondary target markets are vital to achieving maximum community participation in the overall endeavor. These two secondary markets that should be targeted are the children's mothers and potential sponsors.

Our organization, Urban Light Ministries, needs to pursue mothers' cooperation actively. According to the statistical data given, 50% of divorced mothers who retain custody of their children deny the value of their former husbands' participation in the lives of the children affected by the divorce. Urban Light Ministries needs to use the influence it has to persuade the children's mothers concerning the importance of allowing fathers to play an active role in their children's lives.

Urban Light Ministries also needs to target potential financial sponsors. With little money on hand to carry out its goals, it is necessary to generate enough funds to keep the program solvent. Therefore, the Fatherhood Initiative must convince local companies that its program will help build a robust community, resulting in stronger individual homes and an overall benefit to the entire area population. Our presentation must convince prospective sponsors that the Fatherhood Initiative will be an asset to the community as a whole, and once they are persuaded, they will be more likely to donate money and support the effort.

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE TARGET MARKETS

One marketing communication option likely to be particularly effective in dealing with teenage fathers is the Internet – specifically social networking sites. This form of advertising is very cost effective and has the potential to reach a great audience. The majority of teenagers use social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. We realize that the Fatherhood Initiative has already been advertising through social networking sites, and we encourage the continuance of this form of advertising. However, to be effective with social networking advertising, active use with it is required. Simply having a page on Facebook or Twitter is not enough to be effective. To



build support for the Fatherhood Initiative cause on a social networking site, a constant stream of updates and information along with media will be necessary to gain and hold the interest of the target market. Once the market's attention has been achieved you will be able to effectively direct information towards them, and they should be more receptive towards your message.

In addition to the teenage fathers market, social media is also a great option for reaching young fathers and potential donors. Most fathers have some form of Internet access. By creating unique or entertaining videos, the Fatherhood Initiative has a good chance of reaching its target market. With effective social media, the Fatherhood Initiative could capture the attention of its audience and convince them that something needs to be done about the lack of fatherly influence in children's lives. It could create an entire movement, similar to the anti-smoking campaign that was conducted several years ago. Hopefully, the use of social media could “convert” a number of people to the Fatherhood Initiative movement. All of these Fatherhood Initiative “evangelists” could then spread the message by word of mouth, and the movement would gain momentum without requiring money for advertising. These social media videos could be posted directly onto the Fatherhood Initiative social network pages. They could also be posted to an exterior site like YouTube with a link to the video posted on the Fatherhood Initiative social networking page.

Another cost effective method of reaching a large audience is the traditional media. The Fatherhood Initiative should attempt to use the media to get word out about their cause. The news is always looking for a story, and the Fatherhood Initiative may be able to provide them with one. When a seminar is being held or funds are trying to be raised, the Fatherhood Initiative should alert the media, who may want to run a quick story on it. The public generally sees the media as more believable than other forms of advertising, and they would respond well to a positive news story. It would raise awareness and create a buzz interest in the cause.

Telephone calls and personalized mail may be an effective way to reach potential sponsors. People that have been through the program successfully in the past may be inclined to donate so that someone else may be helped, just as they once were. These people might also be able to provide contact information for other potential donors. These may include their relatives, close friends, and others that have seen the positive change that the Fatherhood Initiative has made in that person's life. The Initiative, once it has the contact information from these people, could send personalized mail informing the individuals about the Fatherhood Initiative's current activity, and then request funds. Shortly after, the Fatherhood Initiative could follow up with a telephone call and direct people towards their web site where they would accept any donations.

Finally, personal testimonials delivered in the form of pamphlets and other literature would be an effective way of communicating with mothers who are unwilling to let fathers see their children. Mothers often act as gatekeepers, and do not realize the importance of a father's presence in the life of their child. By reading testimonials from other mothers who have allowed fathers to participate in their children's lives, and the positive influence that the father was able to have in

the child's life, mothers may finally realize that a father is something that a child desperately needs in his or her life.

## BRANDING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

### BRAND IMPORTANCE

Sony, Federal Express, Starbucks, Dominos, Disney . . . these names and the symbols used by these organizations trigger emotional responses in people worldwide. These are global brands. The organizations that built these global brands have achieved an image and identity unique to their organizations. The essential elements are **awareness** and **consistent perception** of attributes, personality, values and performance among targeted audiences throughout the world.

CCFI needs to communicate their brand through understanding their target markets and primary channels of distribution.

The brand's physical and perceived attributes provide clues about how CCFI should be positioned in the community's eyes. Since CCFI is a nonprofit with intangible product, virtually all of the attributes attached to the brand are really *perceptions* created by the programs and services themselves and the people and things that provide that service – in other words, *the service experience*.

The CCFI brand cannot be contributed to one program or activity. It's the cumulative impressions of:

- Staff and volunteers treatment of clients, the perceived value of the programs and education
- All advertising, promotion, and interactions used to communicate the message: newsletters, direct mail, personal mail, signage, and menus, etc.
- The organizations professionalism
- Range and variety of programs offered
- Program success and reach

The brand personifies who CCFI is and what it represents to its current and prospective users and support organizations. Successful companies treat their brand as the most important asset of the company.

## BRAND IDENTITY

Since The Fatherhood Initiative title is part of a national organization, differentiation may be difficult to achieve. Let's say, for instance, a Springfield father is searching for help and stumbles across the National Fatherhood Initiative. He then finds out that they do not offer any tangible help or benefits in his area and he abandons the website and moves on. He is forming an opinion that is associated with "National Fatherhood Initiative." An association like this can carry into the brand because of the similarity in names as well as the nature of the two organizations. Probably the most appropriate solution is to always refer to our brand as "The Clark County Fatherhood Initiative." In **every** instance of referring to the brand "Clark County" **must** be used, if "Clark County" is left out then the public will hear simply "Fatherhood Initiative" which can be easily mistaken for the National Fatherhood Initiative.

## BRAND POSITIONING

The relevance of this brand is key because every Springfield father who is disconnected with their child must feel that The Clark County Fatherhood Initiative is for them. The relevance of a brand ties in directly with positioning the brand because most individuals are not interested in the attributes of a brand but what those attributes can do for them. By focusing on what specific attributes of the Clark County Fatherhood Initiative can do for the men that are interested, we automatically create a relevant brand to the clients.

## BRAND PERSONALITY

Giving the Clark County Fatherhood Initiative a personality will be difficult but not impossible. Taglines such as "Desperately needing Dads" or "Loving now, Living tomorrow" can give a personality to the brand that reflects the character of what the brand is attempting to convey. The personality is directly related to the positioning because the attributes of the brand can be seen in its personality as well as convey if the brand is targeted for certain individuals.

## BRAND EQUITY

The value of the Clark County Fatherhood Initiative stems from the perception of what the brand can do for the individual. Having primary and secondary messages that can create value for someone with no idea of what the brand is will immensely increase the brands equity.

## POSSIBLE MESSAGE PLATFORM

Primary Message Example: The Clark County Fatherhood Initiative puts Dads first. We realize the importance of a father in the home and the detrimental effects when there isn't one around. Our purpose is to reconnect Fathers back with their children in order to retain the benefits of traditional family values as well as to benefit the future fatherhood generation.

Some ideas for positioning tag lines include:

- **Turning Fathers into Dads** - through activism, education and opportunities to serve
- **Dad Power – Do you have it?**
- **Fathersneeded@home**  
“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”  
*Proverbs 22:6*
- **Promoting Responsible Fatherhood** (*currently used by CCFI*)

## MARKETING TACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### REVIEW OF CURRENT TACTICS

The Fatherhood Initiative in Clark County has already been using public relations tactics to communicate their initiative to their publics and has successfully reached various sectors through their efforts. News releases about the organization have appeared in local publications such as the Fatherhood News, the Springfield Paper and the Springfield News-Sun, and brochures and pamphlets and brochures have been created to distribute to schools and other publics in order to engage and inform the community. Public service announcements have also appeared on Hot Gospel 20, a syndicated radio program, and also on WEECFM and WHIO FM and AM.

Additionally, the Fatherhood Initiative has held events such as the Clark County Leadership Summit on Fatherhood, a one-day event that invited leaders across sectors to gather together and discuss the consequences of father absence, identify solutions and shape a vision of action for the future. The Fatherhood Initiative has also held other events such as the “My Dad Rocks” essay and art contest and the “Dad and Me” rally and cookout. Each of these events targets current fathers and children, encouraging men in their role as fathers and providing opportunities for them to stay involved in their children’s lives.

The Fatherhood Initiative in Clark County is taking the right steps in using offline public relations tactics. Traditional public relations materials are definitely beneficial in generating initial information about an organization. But as we will see in the following sections, the Fatherhood Initiative must also embrace online techniques in order to reach broader audiences, as we can see through the public relations tactics that similar non-profit organizations are using through the internet.

### TACTICS OF SIMILAR NON-PROFITS

#### NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

First, let us use the example of The National Fatherhood initiative. The National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) was founded in 1993. Since its founding, NFI has reached millions of fathers via

skill-building resources, public service announcements, the NFI website, and other important tools and initiatives. NFI has formulated a strategy to accomplish their mission called the “3-E strategy.” This strategy first utilizes media appearances in which they appear regularly in TV, radio, and print media. NFI has been on the Oprah Show, the Today Show, in the Washington Post, and the Washington times.

The second key component of the strategy is their website in which reaches thousands. Through this website NFI has created a “dad-email” which is a weekly email filled with helpful hints, tips, and tricks just for dads! The third component is their community-based organizations. Besides these three key components that encompass the 3-E strategy, NFI also utilizes public relations by having relationships with a variety of companies and organizations. For example, NFI has partnered with YMCA to promote “Dads Club” and “Double Duty Dad” which are mentoring programs for dads.

By partnering with businesses and organizations, NFI raises awareness to the public square on the need of mentoring and helping assist fathers. Also, NFI has created discussion blogs and a discussion board on their website that allow people to share their own thoughts and opinions. This displays to the public that NFI truly cares for everyone’s thoughts and ideas. Through all theses uses- email, television appearances, website blogs, NFI has managed the communication between their organization and the public. Please note that any information about The National Fatherhood Initiative was taken directly from their website, <http://www.fatherhood.org>.

#### CITY ON A HILL

Next, let us look a little more in depth at what an organization called City on a Hill does and how they use public relations to further their mission. City on a Hill is an initiative in Milwaukee Wisconsin and they seek to educate youth, empower parents to be better parents, to equip leaders for urban ministry and engage churches in social justice. Their mission is simple, their website [www.cityonahillmilwaukee.org](http://www.cityonahillmilwaukee.org) describes it in the following way: “*Our mission is to save the children, reach the parents and change the city.*” The organization has been around since the early two thousands. They have a wide variety of programs that they employ in order to better their community and further their mission.

Currently, they are using several public relations strategies in attempts to garner an interest in their initiative as well as to inform the public about the issues surrounding the community of Milwaukee and teach them about how their organization can help them. Through articles in the local paper, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* they have increased their exposure to not only those who need or want the services that they can provide but also to those who may be potential financiers for the organization.

However, their strategy through the *Journal Sentinel* is not the only piece to the strategy of public relations that they have decided to pursue. They also have made use of radio pieces, for instance [www.radiomilwaukee.org](http://www.radiomilwaukee.org) put together a piece on meeting the needs of the city which included an in depth discussion of some of the things that City on a Hill is doing to better their community as well as several testimonials of individuals in need who had been helped.

City on a Hill also maintains an active presence on both Twitter and Facebook. However, despite their activity level being good, they don't have a significant number of "followers" on Twitter or "likes" on Facebook. It appears as if those who do follow and like them are those who are the supporters of this initiative such as the churches who provide support and the individuals who volunteer their time to help promote the organization. Despite the small number of followers, it is still essential, in my opinion, to maintain a presence on these social media sites. They provide a free way to connect with the public that is interested in the services the organization provides and also connects the organization to those who are interested in supporting the initiative.

City on a Hill in Milwaukee has begun a program called "Passport to Compassion." This is simply an effort to show those who are not mired in poverty what it's like to be stuck in the depths of poverty. This generally creates quite a stir in the media which has led to WUWM, Milwaukee Public Radio to do a piece on them describing what they've done and how it has changed the viewpoints of the citizens in the area. This project called Passport to Compassion is an event which takes and asks the attendees several questions to get them to think about where they are actually located, financially speaking, in relation to the rest of the nation. After the participants get a feeling for how wealthy they truly are, the group is served a meal. However, the meal is not the same for everyone. On one end of the spectrum, participants are fed elegant meals at well-dressed tables and at the opposite end are forced to sit on the floor while they eat microwaved noodles and cold bologna sandwiches. Afterwards, they are all removed to a room where a discussion ensues about how the situation made each person feel and if the event has changed their perspectives on the way they can react to poverty in the city in which they live. All information about the program detailed above was taken from City on a Hill's website <http://www.cityonahillmilwaukee.org> and an article written by LaToya Dennis for WUWM which was accessed at [http://www.cityonahillmilwaukee.org/uploads/city\\_on\\_a\\_hill\\_shine-uwm.pdf](http://www.cityonahillmilwaukee.org/uploads/city_on_a_hill_shine-uwm.pdf).

#### CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST

Campus Crusade for Christ is another non-profit organization that has utilized effective public relations tactics in the past. CRU has been using PR to help them grow in many different ways. One of the ways is by direct PR. They have their faculty, which represents the whole company, meet with others who will have a reflection of CRU. These representatives will address what the company is trying to achieve and also their plan. I imagine that CRU will also talk about the wrongs and will address them accordingly. CRU also promotes themselves and receives donations. CRU will survive solely off of the Donations that they receive from people outside of



the program who have been influenced positively by CRU. As you can imagine, CRU has been discriminated, and has had to deal with the discrimination for a while. They are supported still and are prospering. I think the one thing we can take from CRU is their direct public relations. This will create a word-of-mouth spread of CRU. This is one of the best forms of public relations to spread.

#### RIGHT TO LIFE

Finally, Right to Life is another non-profit organization that effectively utilizes public relations techniques. Right to Life helps spread awareness for the anti-abortion pro-life movement. The right to life organization uses many different public relation techniques in order to raise awareness and create a positive view of the association. Some techniques right to life uses for public relations are:

1. Press Releases- Right to life has on their website a list of the major press publications they have released in the past 6 years, over 148 articles.

2. Right to life also holds many special events such as proudly pro-life dinner, which is a dinner held for those who have decided to keep to the pro-life values.

3. The right to life organization will also organize pro-life protests and have speakers come and give speeches about the right to life message.

All of the information concerning the right to life organization can be found on their website.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research and market analysis our recommendation is to focus CCFI marketing and communication efforts to the targeted segment as define. Many initiatives and programs are already in place and can be leveraged to communicate a strong, clear message of CCFI's objectives. Specific recommendations include:

- Develop a PR strategy and editorial calendar focused on the top one or two target markets
  - Develop a monthly editorial calendar on topics and events to publicize
  - Develop an event communication template with responsibilities defined
- Use tactics to best reach targets and implemented through different channels
  - **Social media** – Facebook (reach); LinkedIn (sponsor/testimonials)
  - **Public Service Announcements**

- **Calendar/Event resources** of local media, e.g., DDN Events Calendar, ActiveDayton.com
- **Testimonials** – success stories; Press releases and video overviews – YouTube, website, email campaign to supporters

## USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Along with Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn should be utilized as well to communicate this initiative and to reach publics. LinkedIn is a social networking website that allows business professionals to make connections with other business professionals, businesses, and other professional organizations. If the Fatherhood Initiative were to create a LinkedIn, they would be able to generate more funds for their non-profit organization and advertise to others as well. With LinkedIn, the Fatherhood Initiative can build a profile that can let others know what they are all about. This may sound a lot like Facebook, but there is a significant difference between a Facebook profile and a LinkedIn profile. Facebook allows one to gather “friends” and is much more casual, where as LinkedIn is for making connections on a professional level. By making connections with other business professionals The Fatherhood Initiative will have the ability to advertise themselves in a professional manner to other businessmen and women and not only network but to also give more people and organizations a chance to give money to their non-profit organization.

Twitter, another social media tool, can be utilized as well. Like Facebook, it should be used in a more casual manner. But it is the perfect instrument to use to give followers news about The Fatherhood Initiative. For example, they could tweet to followers, in 140 characters or less, updates about what’s new at The Fatherhood, tips and words of advice, or just words of encouragement. Twitter is a great tool to spread information about a company that not only takes the company a short amount of time to write it but also the receiver of the message, the followers, will be more willing to read and keep up to date through the short messages through Twitter. Overall, social media is key to advertisement in society today. Your business or non-profit becomes more credible to your followers because they seen that their other friends or followers like and follow your websites.

Social networking sites have become crucial sources of information about products, organizations, artists, and events in today’s world. The Fatherhood Initiative should take advantage of this free opportunity to reach over 800 million active users.

There are more than 900 million objects, such as pages, groups, events, and community pages with which people interact. The average user is connected to 80 groups, events, and pages.

Groups are one way that the Fatherhood Initiative can bring awareness to their projects, by bringing people together who have a common interest. Facebook can also be used to create



events for which fathers can acknowledge that they are attending. The event will be displayed in their upcoming events on Facebook, thus reminding them of their commitment. Yet Facebook pages are the best way for an organization to market itself. One reason is that a page would allow for supporter interactions with each other, encouraging others to be a part of the events as well. The Fatherhood Initiative can also look at this to gain feedback about their events. The Fatherhood Initiative can use its Facebook page as a way to inform users about its purposes and to list tips for fathers. Every time that a new member likes the page, it is visible to all of their friends. As more people “like” the page, the traffic increases. To create a page, first create a profile and then go to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/learn.php> to create a page. Click on “Create a Page” and start filling in your company or brand details.

## FUTURE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION TACTICS

With the limitations of time this projects scope could not address the tactical communication strategy required for consistent brand and message implementation. Our recommendation is to have future classes focus on the following areas:

- Brand Elements – logo, color scheme, etc.
- Level 1 Communications – High Level Overview (all targets)
  - Community Program Booklet/Brochure
    - Highlight major initiatives by target and channel
  - Folder – to distribute materials and education
- Level 2 Communications – Specific to each target
  - Testimonial Slip sheet and Video’s
    - Father’s perspective
    - Child’s perspective
  - Creative Communications Campaign for PSA platform and communications through channels
    - Attention getting
    - “in your face” problem

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## APPENDIX A: STUDENT REFLECTIONS

### PRE-PROJECT

- “Prior to listening to Mr. Williams I didn't think many fathers would actually want to participate in such a program. If they don't have the discipline to be involved in their children's lives, I believed they wouldn't be disciplined enough to attend some classes on being a good father. However, Mr. Williams showed that some fathers do care but just don't know how to be fathers. I was also surprised that the program helps upper and middle class fathers, while I previously believed that the program was designed exclusively for low income fathers.”
- “I think my thoughts changed when I realized that this organization is not really a “church run” organization or it doesn't have a goal of bringing people to the church. Something else that enlightened me a little bit was when Mr. Williams began talking about how there are some other realms of business in the community that are seeking to work together to build on this father-hood initiative.”
- “Yes! My attitude changed greatly in the fact that this is not just another non-profit organization. It was great to hear Mr. Williams background story and how he got involved in this organization. His personal story made the organization that much more personal to me. I realize now the need of this type of organization. I never understand the lack of resources that our in the public for fathers in America. By establishing this organization, Mr. Williams is setting a great example for others. Hopefully through our marketing help the Fatherhood Initiative will be able to expand and grow into an organization helping many within the Springfield area.”
- “I would say that I felt even more of a compassion for those involved in these fatherless-homes, and hearing Mr. Williams talk about it just further emphasized the real-world problem that this is.”
- “After listening to Mr. Williams, I realized the vastness of this problem. He caused me to understand that this program is needed for people of all ages, races, social classes, and religions. Prior to this, I had believed that his program should be marketed towards lower class citizens in areas of poverty. His presentation changed my attitude and taught me that all fathers could benefit from this program.”

## DURING PROJECT

- “This project has made me more aware of children who grow up without a father, or even without a mother. Hopefully, I will be more compassionate and be more willing to reach out to them. I think this project also taught me that I don’t have to be anyone special to make a difference.”
- “Based on the understanding that I have gained, if I were to ever have children I would make sure to invest a lot of time into their lives so they will grow up knowing what a father’s role in the family is.”
- “We have developed a lot of great information involving how we can use public relations to get the message out there. I think that there are a lot of companies that are non profit that succeeded that have some great tips for us.”
- “After working on the Fatherhood Initiative project my attitudes, thoughts and beliefs have not necessarily been changed. Rather, my support of this program and others like it has increased due to the need that I have discovered through research. It is critical that this generation encourage fathers to be present in their homes and to provide training, resources and materials to fathers in order to help be the best dads that they can be. I think the Fatherhood Initiative is a wonderful organization that has and will continue to influence many lives and will improve our communities and our nation.”
- “I have come to realize that is project is more involved than I had anticipated. While working on the branding strategy it hit me that the Fatherhood Initiative impacts people. This project just isn’t about some product or an item that can be sold in stores, the result of this type of initiative changes lives.”
- “I would say that having worked a little bit on this project I definitely realize size of this problem and the huge need to programs like this. Working on this project has really opened my eyes to how much the Fatherhood Initiative is needed. I think that it is a great program with great goal of helping fathers.”
- “The understanding that I have gained while doing this project will hopeful transfer over to my own life. Even in the future I believe that what I have learned will benefit me, and cause me to be a Godly father who is there for his kids and does what is best for them. I have definitely realized how important that is.”

## POST PROJECT

- “Yes I believe that this project reinforced what was taught in class. Researching the market landscape, knowing competitors and target markets, and developing a plan of action based on that information is all a part of the marketing principles taught in this class, and that is what took place in this project.”
- “I do believe that this project has reinforced the principles and concepts that I learned in class. I feel like I learned to implement more general principles rather than specific ones. I was in the Public Relations group so I can honestly say that I really only learned those skills well. I loved being able to use the information we learned in class and implement it into our project. I feel like I have a much better grasp of how to help a company broadcast themselves to the public. It was also cool to use other ways than new ways that involve technology. But going back to the basics and determining how we can use the materials that the Fatherhood Initiative already uses and see how we can make it better.”
- “This project should be continued because it is not simply a simulation or information from a textbook. Instead, it offered a real example for us to see how marketing can be used. Not only did we benefit, but we were also able to help the Fatherhood Initiative organization as well.”
- “This project has shown me the deep importance of knowing your target market. You can have goals and objectives that are very good, but if you do not know to which group you are targeting, then you will not know the best way to implement those goals and objectives most effectively.”
- “Yes, I think that this type of project can be a good thing to get students thinking about practical applications of the things they learn in class. Projects such as this are beneficial to the overall learning experience because it allows the students to get “hands-on” experience.”
- “Absolutely! I actually feel that this project is exactly what I needed to understand what marketing in the real world is like. The group involvement that I have experienced through the Fatherhood Initiative has given me an inkling on how marketing takes place among business attempting to promote their own product or service.”

## APPENDIX B: PRESENTATION



# Clark County Fatherhood Initiative Marketing Project

Principles of Marketing – Fall 2011

*Inspiring Greatness*

## Project Summary

- Provide a “real-world” scenario for students to improve understanding of how to apply marketing principles
- Assist the Clark County Fatherhood Initiative with focusing their marketing messages and energy to improve the reach and funding of their program
- Project was 6 weeks in duration



## Marketing Plan Summary

- i. Investigation
- ii. Objectives
- iii. Marketing Mix
- iv. Specific Tactics

## Situation Analysis

- Understand primary market environment and how others are addressing the market(s)
- Define the primary targets that CCFI should focus on for the best return
- Identify a message platform and branding strategy
- Review possible public relation strategies to best address the targets and increase program awareness to the community and potential supporters

## I. Investigation

- Reviewed the macro and micro-environmental issues concerning fatherless children
- Researched and contacted other organizations providing similar programs
  - National Fatherhood Initiative
  - City on the Hill – Milwaukee WI
  - Campus Crusades
  - Right to Life
- Reviewed Public relations programs currently being used by other non-profit organizations

## Market Overview – Fatherless Children

- Infant mortality of unmarried mothers
  - 1.8 times higher
  - 2.3 times more likely to not make first birthday
- Great risk of abuse
  - 77% greater risk of physical abuse
  - 165% of notable physical neglect
  - 74% greater risk of emotional neglect
- Drop outs -9 times more likely

## II. Marketing Objectives

- Develop a better understanding of CCFI's primary targets and needs
- Improve CCFI's awareness to the target market areas
- Outline metrics for measuring success

## III. Marketing Mix

- Product – Community Action Plan
- Price – Perceived value of program by the targeted segments
- Place – Channels of distribution
- Promotion – selected media

**Key to success is accurately  
defining your target market**

## Influence on Consumer Behavior



## Channel of Distribution

- Business
- Civic
- Education
- Church
- Government

## Defining Target Markets – Initial Process

1. **Adolescent males** – pre-education; abstinence and value of father in the home
2. Dads at Home – **Help Me!** – those looking at how to be a better father
3. Fatherless Children looking for a mentor - **Who's my Dad!**
4. **I want to help, please!** – Divorced Father's looking to help but with little support
5. **Investors/sponsorships**
6. **Why me?** – Father's that don't want anything to do with raising their child

## Target Market 1 – Father's Seeking Help

- Dads looking to be better fathers – late 20's to early 30's; may not be living at home but want to build relationship with their children
  - Messages
    - There is no minimum effort when raising your children and sacrifices must be made
    - Strong relationships with spouse provide example
    - Your quality time with your children is priceless – engaged, caring and loving
    - It's now your time to be the adult and let your child be the kid
  - Media
    - Testimonials from fathers and children
    - Monthly newsletter and meetings to help mentor
    - More family engaged activities within schools or community

## Target Market 2 -

- Adolescent males who are at risk of becoming teenage fathers
  - Messages
    - There are long-term impacts on the decisions and actions you take now
    - Are you prepared for the consequences of financial hardship, limited free time and a major obstacle to finishing your education?
  - Media
    - School flyers
    - Parenting classes in H.S./M.S. curriculum - testimonials
    - Posters at schools

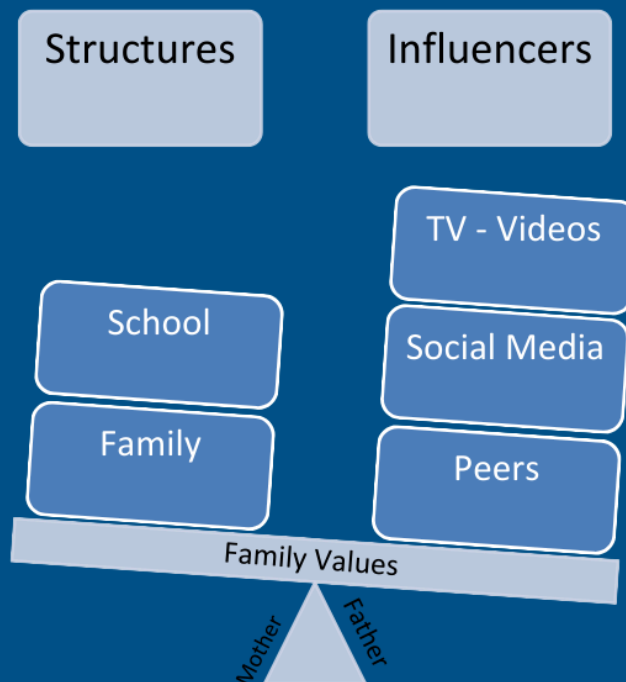
## Other Market Possibilities

- Children who seek a mentor
  - Messages
    - Reaching out to children who need a mentor through lack of figure head in home or improve communication/interaction with the father
      - Reaching out
      - Mentoring
      - Impacting the future
  - Media
    - PR in schools, churches and children-based organizations
    - Word of mouth
    - Organizational meetings

## IV. Tactical Brand Strategy

- **Relevant** - The brand should be more than attractive. It should be meaningful. It should answer the question: "What's in this for me?"
- **Broad** - CCFI's market opportunities are diverse. A number of target markets were reviewed and the brand should be broad enough to speak to the different audiences, while being easily recognized and understood by each.
- **Defendable** - The brand should deliver proof and validation. By reflecting CCFI's internal values and practices, the brand image projects (internally and externally), core competencies and offerings.
- **Unique** - And of course, the brand must be unique. It must set CCFI apart from other organizations and alternatives the prospect can use to fulfill their required needs.

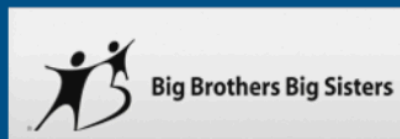
## Mixed Messages



## Brand Ladder

↑	<b>Emotional Value</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong family values with happier children</li> <li>2. Happy, healthy and well adjusted children with the skills to improve future generations</li> </ol>
	<b>Resulting Value</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Less violence and abuse</li> <li>2. Improved mortality rates</li> <li>3. Improved lifestyle of all family members through lower divorce rate</li> <li>4. Improvements in education and drop-out rates</li> </ol>
	<b>Benefits</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One source for information and review</li> <li>2. Educated staff and community on primary issues</li> <li>3. Safe and structured environment for the entire family</li> </ol>
	<b>Features</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Resources for education and understanding of issue(s)</li> <li>2. Impactful education at earliest level to reduce single parent families and teenage pregnancy</li> <li>3. Advocate for family values and needs for fathers</li> </ol>

## Similar Organizations





## Possible Message Platform

- **Turning Fathers into Dads**

through activism, education and opportunities to serve

- **Dad Power – Do you have it?**

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *Ephesians 6:4*

- **Fathersneeded@home**

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” *Proverbs 22:6*

- **Promoting Responsible Fatherhood**

## Public Relations Suggestions

- Develop a PR strategy and editorial calendar focused on the top one or two target markets
  - Develop a monthly editorial calendar on topics and events to publicize
  - Develop an event communication template with responsibilities defined
- Use tactics to best reach targets and implemented through different channels
  - **Social media** – Facebook (reach); LinkedIn (sponsor/testimonials)
  - **Public Service Announcements**
  - **Calendar/Event resources** of local media, e.g., DDN Events Calendar, ActiveDayton.com
  - **Testimonials** – success stories; Press releases and video overviews – YouTube, website, email campaign to supporters

## Example Editorial Calendar

Month	Topic	Events or Campaign
January	Building Skills	NFL Program –Tie to Super bowl
February	Marriage	Enrichment Study/Seminar – Why Knot?
March	Father's Role	Dad's Resource Guide
April	Mentoring	How to identify who needs it - checklist
May	Caring for Fathers	Release "Network of Care" Web
June	Celebrate Fatherhood	Event w/ Testimonials
July	-open summer initiative	
August	-open summer initiative	
September	Abstinence	High School Seminar - Testimonials
October	Gala-Celebrating Success	Testimonials – focus on supporters
November	New Father Initiative	"Owner's Manual"
December	Financial Responsibility	Basic Financial Planning Seminar

## Event Communication Template

- Event Owner
- Primary objective and message
- Date/Time/Location, etc.
- Communication Media with dates and owners
  - Event listings; ActiveDayton.com, Facebook, LinkedIn
  - Press Release and PSA
  - Flyer or other marketing piece
  - Email blast
  - Event calendar

## Future Tactics

- Brand Elements – logo, color scheme, etc.
- Level 1 – High Level Overview (all targets)
  - Community Program Booklet/Brochure
    - Highlight major initiatives by target and channel
  - Folder – to distribute materials and education
- Level 2 – Specific to each target
  - Testimonial Slip sheet and Video's
    - Father's perspective
    - Child's perspective
  - Creative Communications Campaign for PSA platform and communications through channels
    - Attention getting
    - "in your face" problem

## Student Reflections on Project

- Initial
- During
- Post

## Summary and Impact to Class

- Project provided a great opportunity for students to associate marketing principles to a “real-life” situation
- Marketing of a Non-profit is different in the sense you are not marketing a product but the ramification of marketing are just as important
- CCFI has come a long way with their progress and vision – a more focused marketing plan will increase the probability of success



"Marketing is more of an art than a science," Stapleton said. "Like artists that must understand the science of color structure and dimensions, marketing professionals must understand the basic fundamentals before applying them. Having the opportunity to experiment in a structured environment in the application of marketing principles provides a much more in-depth insight and understanding than can be obtained by just reading a textbook."

The Fatherhood Initiative of Clark County hopes to work with other departments at Cedarville such as education, health, criminal justice and Christian ministries in order to further address the issues associated with father absence in the region.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University attracts 3,200 [undergraduate](#), [graduate](#) and [online](#) students to more than 100 areas of study. Cedarville is a Christ-centered learning community recognized nationally for rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. Visit the University online at [www.cedarville.edu](http://www.cedarville.edu).

## More Information

[Department of Business Administration](#)



Cedarville University | 251 N. Main St. | Cedarville, OH 45314 USA | 1-800-CEDARVILLE (233-2784) | 1-937-766-7700

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# Students Design Marketing Plan for Clark County Fatherhood Initiative

<http://www.cedarville.edu/Offices/Public-Relations/CampusNews/2011/Marketing-major-students-fatherhood-initiative.aspx>

## STUDENTS DESIGN MARKETING PLAN FOR CLARK COUNTY FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

by Public Relations

December 13, 2011

Addressing real-life challenges in the classroom, Cedarville University students are partnering with the Clark County [Fatherhood Initiative](#) to help the program develop a marketing plan to reach fathers in the Clark County region.

Based in Springfield, the Clark County Fatherhood Initiative is under the direction of Eli Williams and was established in 2009 by the Clark County Fatherhood Commission. The Clark County Fatherhood Commission has initiated other projects including an annual Celebrate Fatherhood event and an action plan to promote responsible fatherhood. The action plan was sponsored by the [Ohio Commission on Fatherhood](#) and was facilitated by the National Fatherhood Initiative established in 1994. The National Fatherhood Initiative is dedicated to giving children a brighter future by educating and engaging fathers, and the Clark County Initiative seeks to implement this vision by promoting responsible fatherhood in Ohio.



*Eli Williams (center), Director of Clark County Fatherhood Initiative, approached Cedarville University for assistance as they further develop the program. Photo credit: Cedarville University/Scott L. Huck*

"The father absence rate in Springfield is 40 percent," Williams said. "A range of programs and services are needed to increase the number of responsible fathers, because fathers matter greatly in the lives of children. When fathers are responsible, present and involved, children are more likely to experience academic success, avoid drug abuse, postpone sex and reject gang involvement, and they are less likely to be poor or to have emotional and behavioral problems."

Williams and his team approached Cedarville University for assistance with their initiative, looking for guidance as they further develop the program. Cedarville's director of [community ministries](#), John Wambold, and faculty development specialist, [Rebecca Mills](#), began working alongside Williams to identify his interests and the marketing needs of the program. Mills has begun training faculty members on how to use [service-learning](#) as an effective educational tool, and many faculty members joined the service-learning cohort in 2011. The group's objective is to provide a service-learning case study of the Fatherhood Initiative that faculty members can work on together.

"This service-learning project provides opportunities for faculty to become invested in the initiative and engages students," Mills said. "Cedarville student volunteers are an incredible source of collective intelligence and wisdom, and they work hard and are committed to ministry. We hope the experience will make a significant difference in the life of the students and create a few future volunteer task forces in the future."

In the 2011 fall semester, Cedarville's Principles of Marketing class began the process of assisting the initiative by developing marketing plan for the organization. Under the direction of Bruce Stapleton, adjunct professor of business management and marketing, the project allowed students to apply basic principles of marketing to real-life settings. On December 8, 2011, the students presented their plan to Williams and the initiative members including the [Family and Children First Council](#) Executive Director Marilyn Demma and the Clark County Commissioner [Rick Lohnes](#).

"This project allowed students to see firsthand how a real marketing plan is developed and presented to a client," Stapleton said.

"We've looked at a real organization and found ways to help them make actual changes," said Meredith Moline, a junior marketing major. "It has helped us to apply what we are learning in class to a real situation."