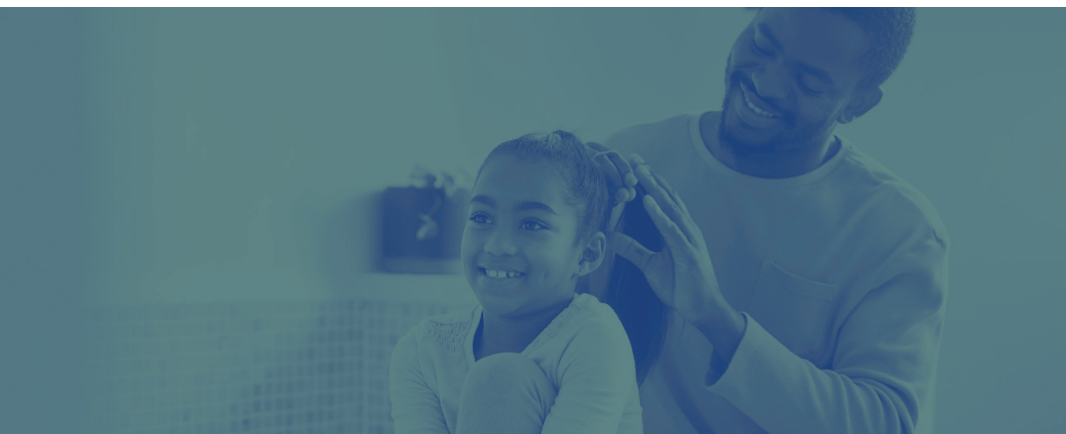




# Inaugural Fatherhood Conference

SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2023

GAYLORD OPRYLAND RESORT AND CONVENTION CENTER



# Welcome Letter



Fellow Tennesseans,

Thank you for joining us for the first-ever Amplifying Fatherhood: Tennessee Fatherhood Conference! As we commence this three-day experience, I want to begin by sharing with you all a vision for the future.

This vision is not only about the future of our state's safety net, but of the whole of Tennessee society. In the 32 years I have worked in human services at the local, state, and national levels, I have seen first-hand the transformational impact a father can have in the lives of his children, family, and community.

I have also come to a few unmistakable conclusions:

- The first is that active and engaged fathers are absolutely essential to the health and wellbeing not only of their own children and families, but also to a vibrant Tennessee society.
- The second is that some areas within society have yet to internalize this truth and, as a result, have inadvertently neglected, forgotten, or devalued the role of fathers to the detriment of their children, families, and communities.

- The third is that the lack of recognition of this truth has affected our laws, regulations, policies, and institutions in ways that have created significant barriers to a father's involvement in children's lives.
- And the fourth is that, despite this crisis of fatherhood that we face, it is not too late for us to act and change course to the benefit of generations to come.

Our vision is simple. Imagine a Tennessee where every father, mother, teacher, pediatrician, human service provider, legislator, and citizen understands, values, and seeks to actively support the essential role of fathers. Imagine a Tennessee that equips fathers with the tools and guidance they need to stand strong as pillars of love and stability for their families.

This vision is broader than government and cannot be achieved by TDHS alone. The Amplifying Fatherhood Conference will mark the point in Tennessee's history that we come together as a united front. Over the next three days, you will hear from experts about the crisis faced by Tennessee and explore solutions, and my hope is that we - together - rise to answer this call to action.

Community partners, we urge you to collaborate with us to bring forth your expertise, resources, and innovative ideas. Legislators, we call upon you to review existing policies and devise updated ones that prioritize and support father involvement. And to every citizen of Tennessee, we invite you to embrace this mission as your own, engage in dialogue and help us find a better way.

Together, let us embark on this journey of transformation. Let us build a brighter future for every child, every family, and every community in our great state of Tennessee.

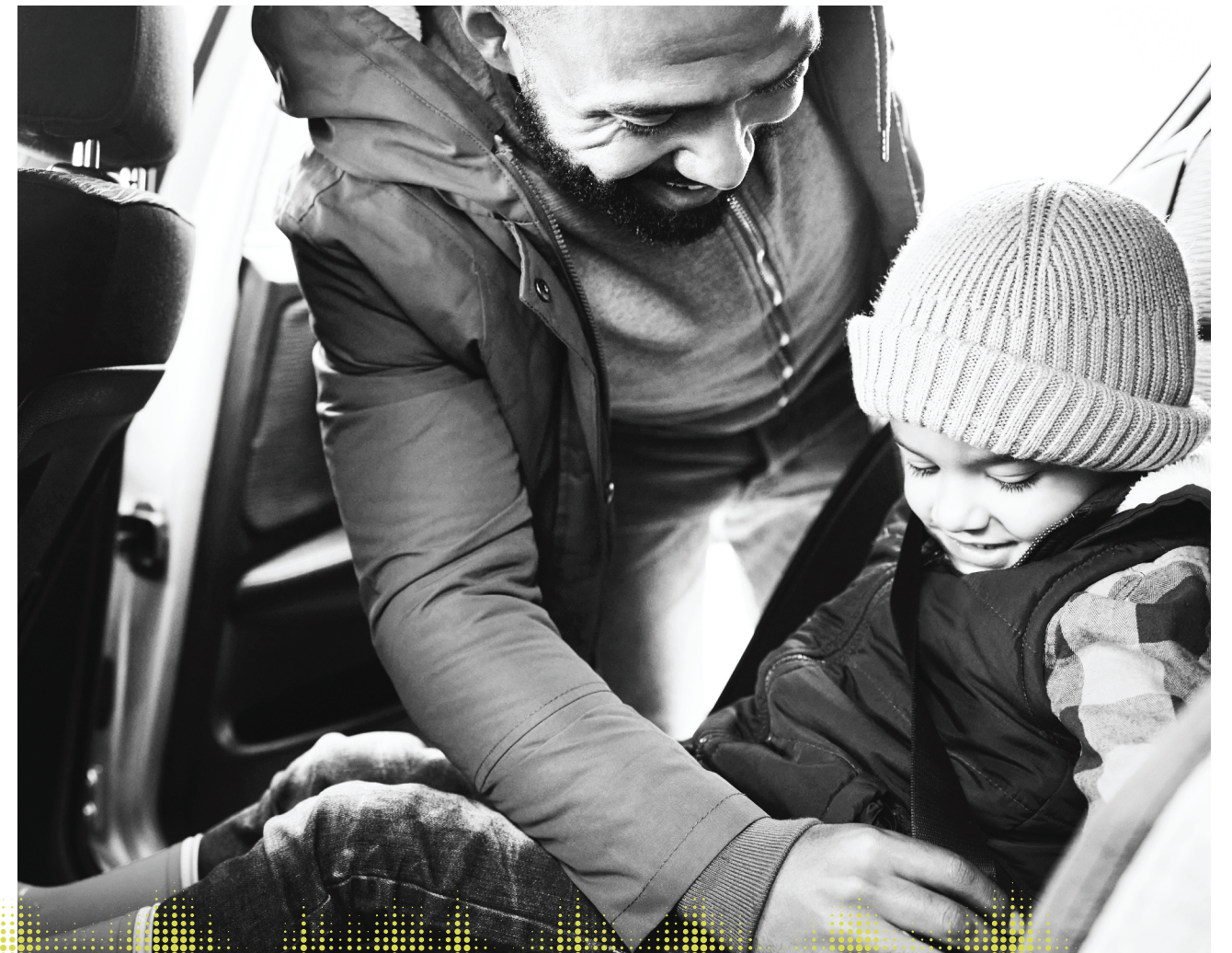
With unwavering dedication and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clarence H. Carter".

Clarence H. Carter  
Commissioner  
Tennessee Department of Human Services

# Acknowledgements

A very special thank you to the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) staff and those involved with setting the agenda, our speakers, and most of all, everyone involved with making this momentous event a great success! TDHS would also like to thank our partners, steering committee, and experts involved in this movement.





# Tennessee Fatherhood Five-Year Strategic Initiatives

We must **mobilize Tennessee society to embrace the essential role of fathers** in their families and in Tennessee society through four strategic initiatives:



## MESSAGING

We must compellingly **communicate the essential role of fathers** to the health and wellbeing of their families, communities, and society.



## POLICY

We must **shape law, regulation, and policy** to facilitate the full engagement of fathers in the lives of their children and families.



## PROGRAMS

We must **invest directly into services** and supports for fathers, expanding what we know works.



## RESEARCH & INNOVATION

We must **identify and adapt innovative strategies** to support fathers in assuming their role in their families and in Tennessee society.

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# Schedule-At-A-Glance

## Sunday, September 24, 2023

5:00 – 7:00 PM	Registration Desk Open	Presidential Registration Desk
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## Monday, September 25, 2023

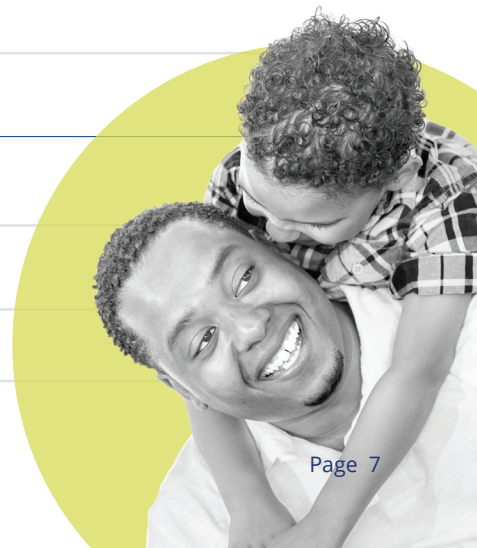
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Registration Desk Open	Magnolia Lobby
9:00 – 11:00 AM	Welcome Plenary	Presidential CE
11:00 – 11:30 AM	Break	
11:30 – 12:30 PM	Amplified: Breakout Sessions	Presidential A, Presidential B, Lincoln C, Lincoln D, Lincoln E, Presidential Chamber
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Lunch	Ravello and Water's Edge
1:30 – 3:00 PM	Afternoon Plenary	Presidential CE
3:00 – 3:20 PM	Break	
3:20 – 4:20 PM	Amplified: Breakout Sessions	Presidential A, Presidential B, Lincoln C, Lincoln D, Lincoln E, Presidential Chamber B
4:20 – 4:40 PM	Break	
4:40 – 5:00 PM	Closing Session	Presidential CE

## Tuesday, September 26, 2023

9:00 – 11:00 AM	Morning Plenary	Presidential CE
11:00 – 11:30 AM	Break	
11:30 – 12:30 PM	Amplified: Breakout Sessions	Presidential A, Presidential B, Lincoln C, Lincoln D, Lincoln E, Presidential Chamber B
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Lunch	Ravello and Water's Edge
1:30 – 3:00 PM	Afternoon Plenary	Presidential CE
3:00 – 3:30 PM	Break	
3:30 – 4:30 PM	Amplified: Breakout Sessions	Presidential A, Presidential B, Lincoln C, Lincoln D, Lincoln E, Presidential Chamber B

## Wednesday, September 27, 2023

9:15 – 9:40 AM	Remarks from Commissioner Carter & Governor Bill Lee	Presidential CE
9:45 – 11:00 AM	Grant Program Launch & Call-to-Action Plenary	Presidential CE
11:00 – 11:45 AM	Closing Remarks	Presidential CE



# About “Amplifying Fatherhood”



The Amplifying Fatherhood Conference celebrates the essential nature of fathers through the lens of music, emphasizing how music is a unifying force bringing people together. The title itself, “Amplifying Fatherhood,” embodies the power to lift up voices without overshadowing any one individual. In its essence, amplification serves as an equalizer, allowing diverse perspectives and voices to be heard with clarity and strength.

Set in Nashville, Tennessee, renowned for its rich musical heritage, the event delves into the organic, dynamic nature of music to draw parallels with the diverse experiences of fathers and families. Music ties communities together. Throughout the great state of Tennessee one can enjoy bluegrass, country, pop, and blues. Music unites families, empowers individuals, and spreads messages that can be hard to say without it.

# Day One: Monday, September 25

**9:00 - 9:15 AM**

*Mainstage Presidential CE*

## Welcome: Many Voices, One State

*Presenter:*



Commissioner Clarence H. Carter  
Tennessee Department of Human Services

**9:15 - 10:00 AM**

*Mainstage Presidential CE*

## The Boy Crisis: The Evidence, Dad-Deprivation Cause, and Multi-Level Solutions

Dr. Farrell will discuss how fatherlessness contributes to the boy crisis: a dynamic where throughout 56 of the largest developed nations and in Tennessee, boys are experiencing difficulties with education, mental health, physical health, and economic stability. He will conclude with solutions that will help build strong dads, strong families, and strong communities of tomorrow and secure the nation's economic future.

**Presenter:**  
**Warren Farrell, PhD**  
Author of *The Boy Crisis*

**Moderator:**  
**Johnny Shaw**  
Representative of District 80,  
State of Tennessee

**Panelists:**  
**Seth Chamberlain**  
Branch Chief, U.S. Department  
of Health and Human Services,  
Administration for Children  
and Families, Office of Family

**Sharmain Harris**  
National Speaker, Father  
Engagement and Justice Reform  
Founder President, Sharmain  
Harris & Associates LLC

**Marcus Meneese**  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Stronger Than My Father

**10:00 - 11:00 AM**

*Mainstage Presidential CE*

## Fatherhood POV: A Chorus of Perspectives

The case of fatherhood is multidimensional. It encompasses the lived experiences of fathers, data and policies that support families, and grassroots efforts that catalyze action. This panel of fatherhood experts will further ground you in the essential nature of fathers to families, communities, and society. Hear how these perspectives unite and harmonize to provide hard-hitting insights about what works for fathers in Tennessee.

**11:00 - 11:30 AM**

## Break

**11:30 - 12:30 PM**

## Amplified: Breakout Sessions

Morning breakout sessions include presentations that amplify data, research, and perspectives behind the state of fatherhood today.

*The details are listed on page 10.*



# Day One - Amplified: Breakout Sessions

11:30 – 12:30 PM

## Side Stage:

Presidential Chamber B

### From Ideas to Action

Explore the state of fatherhood, how you fit into the fatherhood landscape, and ways to put your ideas into action. Dig deeper into the perspectives shared by leading experts, researchers, and practitioners to further generate ideas and identify pathways to success.



**Presenter:**  
**Warren Farrell, PhD**  
Author, *The Boy Crisis*

## Side Stage:

Presidential A

### The Fatherless Factor: Why Dads are an Important Factor in the Family

Consider the crucial role that fathers play in the family unit and the impact their involvement has on children's well-being and overall family dynamics. Delve into the extensive research and anecdotal evidence that highlights the unique contributions fathers make to their children's lives.



**Presenter:**  
**Stewart Perrilliat, PhD, Reverend**  
Founder, Man 2 Man Urban Youth Advocate

## Side Stage:

Lincoln C

### The Impact of Belonging on Children's Early Relational Health and Development

Review research findings about the role of fathers in a child's early emotional well-being and development. Explore the concept of "belonging" and strategies to create an environment that promotes this concept to create a bright future for Tennessean children.



**Presenter:**  
**Keena Friday-Gilbert, MBA, MSW**  
Director of Belonging, Association of Infant Mental Health in Tennessee (AIMHiTN)

## Side Stage:

Lincoln E

### Crisis Point: An Urgent Call for Single Fathers to Save their Children's Trajectory

Learn about statistics and data correlating absence of a father figure with adverse childhood outcomes. Explore the pivotal role of dads and discuss strategies and interventions to show up for kids in single-parent households.



**Presenter:**  
**Robert Beeson**  
Founder, Solo Parent Society

## Side Stage:

Lincoln D

### Faith, Community, Purpose: How Faith-Based Partnerships Can Support Family Ecosystems

Some of the oldest institutions bringing communities together are faith-based. Consider the significance of faith-based partnerships in family support and the role that they play as allies to strengthen fatherhood and families.



**Presenters:**  
**Monty Burks, MCJ, PhD**  
Deputy Director, Tennessee Governor's Office of Faith Based Initiatives  
**Jaime Harper, MS**  
Assistant Director, Faith Based Initiatives

## Side Stage:

Presidential B

### Fatherhood: The Foundation for Building a Legacy of Strong Families for Justice Impacted Fathers

Delve into the data on the impact of incarcerated or previously incarcerated parents on children. Learn about processes for fathers to actively engage in stopping the cycles of self-destruction in their lives and the positive outcomes of fatherhood programs for incarcerated individuals.



**Presenters:**  
**Ron Tijerina**  
Co-Executive Director, The RIDGE Project  
**Catherine Tijerina**  
Co-Executive Director, The RIDGE Project

# Day One - Monday, September 25 (Continued)

12:30 – 1:30 PM

Ravello and Water's Edge

## Lunch

1:30 – 2:00 PM

Mainstage Presidential CE

## Sound Policy: The Role of Public Policy in Supporting Fatherhood

Public policy plays a crucial role in shaping societal dynamics, and the fatherhood movement is no exception. Across the decades, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of engaged fathers in the well-being of children and the strength of families. Public policy can either support or hinder this movement, significantly influencing the outcomes for children and families. Explore the role of policy in civil society and what it means for fathers, families, and children.



**Presenter:**  
**Brad Wilcox, PhD**  
Professor of Sociology, University of Virginia  
Director, National Marriage Project

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Mainstage Presidential CE

## Legislative Panel: Finding Rhythm for Fathers

See behind the curtain and hear how policy is made at all levels and, most importantly, enacted. Recognizing that turning policy into action isn't always easy, this panel brings together policymakers, community leaders, and experts to engage in a robust discussion of making policy actionable.



**Moderator:**  
**Mark White**  
Representative of District 83, State of Tennessee

**Panelists:**  
**John DeBerry**  
Senior Advisor to Governor, State of Tennessee

**Chris Sprowls**  
Former Speaker of the House of Representatives, State of Florida

**Rufus Sylvester Lynch, PhD**  
Chair, Strong Families Commission of Pennsylvania

3:00 – 3:20 PM

## Break

3:20 – 4:20 PM

## Amplified: Breakout Sessions

Afternoon breakout sessions include presentations that identify areas of leading practices that can inform policy and programs.  
*The details are listed on page 12.*

4:20 – 4:35 PM

## Break

4:35 – 5:00 PM

Mainstage Presidential CE

## Chorus of Possibilities: Closing Session



# Day One - Amplified: Breakout Sessions

3:20 - 4:20 PM

Side Stage:  
Presidential  
Chamber B

## The Ultimate Evidence-Based Collaboration Model for At-Risk Fathers

Leverage the evidence-based "Domains of Family Practice" model to discuss key players missing in the conversation for assisting non-custodial fathers and the impact of their absence in providing holistic approaches to assisting fathers.

**Presenter:**  
**Reggie Madison, MA**  
VP of Community Impact & Fathering Director, First Things First

Side Stage:  
Lincoln C

## Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences

Delve into the ways that positive childhood experiences can help mitigate adverse childhood experiences to create healthy outcomes and development in children. Learn about the HOPE building blocks and how they can be used by organizations that serve families.

**Presenters:**  
**Rachel Hanson, MS**  
Project Director, Healthy Start Tennessee Through Centerstone  
**Kimberly Young**  
Program Manager, Healthy Start Tennessee Through Centerstone

Side Stage:  
Presidential A

## Marriage and Fatherhood: What Do We Know About Marriage and Engagement with Children?

Explore research about the links between marriage, residency, and paternal engagement to understand the relationship between fatherhood, marriage, and non-residential fathers.

**Presenters:**  
**Brad Wilcox, PhD**  
Director, The National Marriage Project  
**Wendy Wang, PhD**  
Director of Research, The Institute for Family Studies

Side Stage:  
Presidential B

## Reentry Success Equals Family Success

Hear about the experiences of justice-involved individuals when reentering society, impacts on their families, and resources to support justice-involved individuals in the workplace. Learn about the innovative approach that the Office of Reentry has taken to assist through a labor-focused lens.

**Presenter:**  
**William Arnold, EdD**  
Director, Office of Reentry at the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Side Stage:  
Lincoln E

## Hear the Other Side: A Model for Working with Domestic Violence Offenders

Discuss the importance of reconstruction through forgiveness and reconciliation and explore ways to use the E.A.R model for working with domestic violence offenders or counselees.

**Presenter:**  
**Oliver Williams, MA, Reverend**  
Executive Director, Hope Center at Grace

# Day Two - Tuesday, September 26

9:00 - 9:15 AM  
Mainstage Presidential CE

## Opening Note: Exploring Solutions in Tennessee

9:15 - 10:00 AM  
Mainstage Presidential CE

## The Father Factor: The Impact of Fathers on Their Daughters

Supported and engaged fathers yield high impacts in the lives of their daughters. Dr. Nielsen will highlight the ways that a father impacts his daughter's life, including her physical health, obesity, depression, self control, resilience, cognitive development, and relationships with men. She will also show how our false beliefs about fathers damage children.

**Presenter:**  
**Linda Nielsen, PhD**  
Professor of Psychology, Wake Forest University | Author, *Myths and Lies About Dads*

10:00 - 11:00 AM  
Mainstage Presidential CE

## Orchestrated Success: Women in the Fatherhood Movement

The fatherhood field is comprised of many types of key players impassioned to make change for fathers and families. Women play a pivotal role in the fatherhood movement, from policy, practice, and leadership. Learn the keys to successful programming and movement from four highly-regarded experts in the field.

**Moderator:**  
**Geneva Ware-Rice**  
Executive Director, His Sparrow Family Center

**Panelists:**  
**Avis Files**  
Program Director, Pathway, Inc.

**Cheri Tillis**  
CEO, Fathers and Families Support Center

**Patricia Littlejohn**  
Former Executive Director, South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families

11:00 - 11:30 AM ● Break

11:30 - 12:30 PM ●

## Breakout Sessions: Co-Parenting, Allies, and Fatherhood

Morning breakout sessions include presentations that explore the role of coparents and allies in the context of fatherhood.

*The details are listed on page 14.*

# Day Two - Amplified: Breakout Sessions

11:30 - 12:30 PM

Side Stage:  
Presidential A

## Supporting Parents Who are Paying Child Support

Learn about the approach of the Tennessee Child Support Employment and Parenting Program (TCSEPP) and how it helps fathers become self-sufficient and manage parental responsibility. Highlight how TCSEPP encounters, and overcomes, barriers while providing services for fathers.



### Presenters:

**Debbie Abrams-Cohen, MSW**  
Director, Tennessee Child Support Employment and Parenting Program

**Matt Keller**  
Lead Program Manager, Tennessee Child Support Employment and Parenting Program

Side Stage:  
Presidential B

## One Heart, Two Homes: Co-parenting Kids of Divided Families to a Positive Future

Respect and routine are essential in co-parenting households. Explore the importance of healthy hand-off experiences, and challenges for facilitating these hand-offs, for children that transition between homes during this session.



### Presenters:

**Tammy Daughtry, MMFT**  
Founder, CoParenting International

**Jay Daughtry, MMFT**  
Co-Founder, The Center for Modern Family Dynamics

Side Stage:  
Lincoln E

## Engaging with Fathers: There is Never a Wrong Time

Explore the importance of fatherhood allies in reaching fathers who are incarcerated or in substance abuse treatment. Identify the strategies for allies to reach out to facilities to engage fathers and share curricula that support fathers.



### Presenters:

**Leah Johnson Bleuer**  
Intake Specialist, Healthy Start Tennessee Through Centerstone

**Brooke Garner**  
Community Health Worker, Healthy Start Tennessee Through Centerstone

Side Stage:  
Presidential Chamber B

## From Men to Fathers to Families: Building Wholistic Capacity

Build awareness and understanding of barriers for fathers with lower income in co-parenting relationships. Hear about an innovative service model to increase economic stability, increase child support payments, and build skills for healthy co-parenting.



### Presenters:

**Jeff Johnson, PhD**  
President and CEO, National Partnership for Community Leadership

**Carol Jackson**  
Executive Director, Families Matter Program Director, AFIRM

**Meshia Henderson**  
Vice President, Maximus, AFIRM Project Partner

Side Stage:  
Lincoln C

## Building the Capacity of Fathers: Legal Concerns and Resources

Identify the most common legal issues facing fathers today, strategies and resources to help fathers resolve them, and build familiarity with the Family Centered Legal Solution project.



### Presenters:

**Laura Brown, JD**  
Executive Director, Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services

**Deb House, JD**  
Executive Director, Legal Aid of East Tennessee

Side Stage:  
Lincoln D

## How to Help Grandparents Raise Their Grandchildren

Engage in a faith-based discussion about ways to minister to families in which grandparents are the main caretakers for their grandchildren.



### Presenters:

**Sean Teis, OM**  
President, Life Factors Fatherless Ministries

**Jackie Teis**  
Vice President, Life Factors Fatherless Ministries

# Day Two - Tuesday, September 26 (Continued)

12:30 - 1:30 PM

Ravello and Water's Edge

## Lunch

1:30 - 2:00 PM

Mainstage Presidential CE

## The Voices of Tennessee: Live Podcast Recording

The power of stories can shape perspectives, inspire change, and strengthen communities. Hear a live recorded podcast interview between two fathers about what fatherhood, and fatherlessness, means to them. Allow your own voice to be heard through this interactive session!



### Podcast Host:

**Marcus Meneese**  
Founder and Executive Director, Stronger Than My Father

2:00 - 3:00 PM

Mainstage Presidential CE

## Who's In Your Band? Helping Dad be Dad

There are many factors that contribute to engaged, essential fathers and diverse programs that help to build capacity of fathers. We know that some factors include economic mobility, child engagement and support, and social and emotional support of children. Learn how to build capacity in these areas and how practitioners and community members can best support and empower fathers.



### Moderator:

**Jerry Askew, PhD, Reverend**  
Archdeacon, Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee  
Former President, Alliance for Better Nonprofits

### Panelists:

**Tangler Gray**  
Commissioner, Office of Child Support Enforcement  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**Joe Jones**  
Founder, CEO, President, Center for Urban Families

**Cynthia Osborne, PhD**  
Executive Director, Prenatal-to-3-Policy Impact Center, Vanderbilt University

3:00 - 3:30 PM

## Break

3:30 - 4:30 PM

## Breakout Session: Building the Capacity of Fathers

Afternoon breakout sessions include presentations that highlight the unique ways to build capacity for fathers as parents, community members, and individuals.

*The details are listed on page 16.*





# Day Two - Amplified: Breakout Sessions

3:30 - 4:30 PM

**Side Stage:** **Building the Financial Capacity of Fathers**  
*Lincoln E*

Hear from financial experts with experience helping fathers overcome their financial and life barriers. Build further understanding of the importance in addressing financial education for fathers with low income.

**Presenters:**  
**Lee Molette II**  
Instructor, Financial Empowerment for Life  
**Lawrence Taylor, Jr.**  
Instructor, Financial Empowerment for Life

**Side Stage:** **A Conversation with Previously Incarcerated Fathers**  
*Presidential Chamber B*

Hear directly from fathers who have experienced incarceration and overcome challenges of reentering society. Learn about the Project Return program and the model it implements to empower fathers.

**Presenter:**  
**Larry Craig**  
Director of Social Enterprises, Project Return

**Side Stage:** **Decision vs. Consequences: The Choices of a Father**  
*Presidential B*

Learn about the three Cs (caring, consistency, and courage) of the fatherhood framework and how it supports fathers to make decisions. Join in a discussion about the ways a father's individual decisions and lifestyle choices influence society.

**Presenter:**  
**Marcus Meneese, MA**  
Founder and Executive Director, Stronger Than My Father

**Side Stage:** **If You Build it, Will They Come?**  
*Presidential A*

Explore the development and implementation of multiple fatherhood programs and services. The session will have a particular focus on the challenges and obstacles that organizations face and solutions that organizations can use as they start up new programs.

**Presenters:**  
**Geneva Ware-Rice, MSW**  
Executive Director, His Sparrow Family Center  
**Avis Files**  
Program Director, Pathway, Inc.

**Side Stage:** **Capturing Passion, Willingness, and Building Self-Esteem**  
*Lincoln C*

Hear from an experienced fatherhood educator about working with men and fathers, becoming effective facilitators in fatherhood programs, and ways to help fathers make and reach goals.

**Presenter:**  
**Sam Ford**  
Fathering, Parenting, and Community Educator, Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee

**Side Stage:** **Counseling the Pain**  
*Lincoln D*

Learn from a faith-based discussion with a panel of community leaders regarding their leading practices for engaging fathers.

**Presenter:**  
**Stephen Green**  
Chief Operating Officer, Agape Child & Family Services

# Day Three - Wednesday, September 27

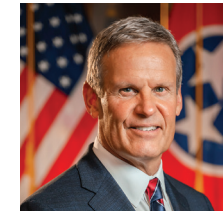
9:15 - 9:30 AM

● **Opening Note: Tennessee's Call-to-Action**

9:30 - 9:40 AM

● **Governor's Remarks**

*Mainstage  
Presidential CE*



**Presenter:**  
**Governor Bill Lee**  
State of Tennessee

9:40 - 9:45 AM

● **Break**

9:45 - 10:00 AM

● **Fatherhood Launch: Introduction of the Tennessee Fatherhood Initiative**

*Mainstage  
Presidential CE*

Dive into the future with the introduction of the TDHS fatherhood grant program and website.

**Presenter:**  
**Cherrell Campbell-Street**  
Deputy Commissioner of Programs and Services, Tennessee Department of Human Services

10:00 - 11:00 AM

● **Encore! Composing Your Call-to-Action**

*Mainstage  
Presidential CE*

After an invigorating three days of learning, inspiration, and solutioning take a step back and consider your call to action. Ready to take action? Join in an interactive activity and declare your commitment to Amplifying Fatherhood!

11:00 - 11:45 AM

● **Reflection and Call-to-Action**

*Mainstage  
Presidential CE*

Leave the conference empowered with connections you've made, insights you've learned, and a clear response to the call to action that is unique to your place in the fatherhood field. Hear from Former Secretary Kay Coles James, a leader with a rich profile in family development, and understand that Amplifying Fatherhood is a call to be answered for Tennessean fathers and families.

**Presenter:**  
**Clarence H. Carter**  
Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Human Services  
**Kay Coles James**  
Former Secretary, Commonwealth of Virginia

# PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES



**Clarence H. Carter**  
Tennessee Department  
of Human Services

Clarence H. Carter was appointed to serve as a member of Governor Bill Lee's Cabinet as the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) in January 2021. Mr. Carter leads the state's second-largest agency with an operating budget of more than \$3 billion and nearly 4,000 employees working in offices in all 95 counties. Through more than 17 programs and services, the Department partners with Tennesseans to facilitate nutrition programs, employment assistance, vocational training, and protective services to enhance their well-being.

Mr. Carter serves as chair of the State's Families First Community Advisory Board and Child Care Task Force, and as a member of the State's Coordinating Task Force; each dedicated to innovation in determining collaborative solutions to better serve Tennesseans. Mr. Carter is a National Academy of Public Administration Fellow and 2022 recipient of the Spirit of Fatherhood Judge David Gray Ross Award from the National Partnership for Community Leadership. Mr. Carter also serves as a thought leader on issues in human services; presenting at national conferences and testifying before Congress.

Mr. Carter has more than 30 years of experience in the public safety net space, including serving four governors, a mayor and in the administrations of President George W. Bush and President Donald Trump. Mr. Carter served as Director of the Arizona Department of Economic Security and Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services. He also managed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and served as the Director of the Office of Community Services. On the local level, Mr. Carter served as Director of the Washington, D.C., Department of Human Services, where he led an initiative to transform the District's shelter-based homeless system to one that assisted those served to finding permanent residency.

In 2015, Mr. Carter founded the Institute for the Improvement of the Human Condition. At that organization, he worked with state and local safety net agencies to meet the emergency needs of socially and economically vulnerable citizens.

Prior to serving as TDHS Commissioner, Mr. Carter served on the federal level as Director of the Office of Family Assistance and Acting Director of the Office of Community Services within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. While there, Mr. Carter led the administration of seven federal programs including the \$16.5 billion Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

Mr. Carter earned his bachelor's degree at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Indiana, Pennsylvania. Mr. Carter has an enduring commitment to transform the safety net by connecting economically, socially, and developmentally vulnerable individuals and families to services that expand beyond their short-term needs, but also position them for long-lasting success.



**Cherrell Campbell-Street**  
Deputy Commissioner of  
Programs and Services,  
Tennessee Department  
of Human Services

Cherrell Campbell-Street has been with the Tennessee Department of Human Services since November 2011, serving now as the Deputy Commissioner of Programs and Services. She has over 20 years of experience in the Human Services sector, with an emphasis on employment services for persons with disabilities and public safety net programs.

Over the expanse of her career, Cherrell has had a proven record of accomplishments in leading and driving several federal and state programs in meeting and exceeding standards of compliance and goals. She has expertise in administering programs for persons with disabilities, community/social programs, and Social Security Administration's disability claims. She manages large budgets, capital projects, develops policies, establishes effective teams, and secures partnerships with private and public stakeholders.



**Rev. Dr. Jerry Askew**  
Archdeacon, Episcopal  
Diocese of East Tennessee  
Former President, Alliance  
for Better Nonprofits

Rev. Dr. Jerry Askew is Archdeacon of the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee and serves on the clergy staff at St. John's Cathedral in Knoxville. Since arriving in Knoxville in 1985, Jerry has served as a university dean, foundation president, healthcare executive, and nonprofit CEO. He has served on the boards of over 60 nonprofit organizations at the local, state and national levels.

Jerry received his BA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was a Morehead Scholar; MS from the University of Memphis; and PhD from The Ohio State University, where he was awarded the Thomas C. Holy Fellowship. He completed further theological studies at the University of the South.

Jerry and his wife, Robyn, an attorney, have two adult children and four delightful grandchildren.

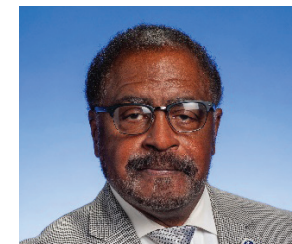


**Seth Chamberlain**  
Branch Chief, U.S. Department  
of Health and Human Services,  
Administration for Children  
and Families, Office of Family  
Assistance

Seth Chamberlain is the Branch Chief for Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) programs in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families' (ACF's) Office of Family Assistance (OFA).

Prior to work in OFA, he was a Senior Social Science Research Analyst in ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE). He has spent nearly 15 years working on federal HMRF programs and evaluations, as well as evaluations of federal sexual risk avoidance education and teen pregnancy prevention programs.

Mr. Chamberlain holds a B.A. from Goshen College and an A.M. from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration. Mr. Chamberlain is happily married and is father to the two kindest and most intelligent girls on the planet.



**John DeBerry**  
Senior Advisor to the  
Governor, State of Tennessee

John DeBerry serves as Senior Advisor to Governor Bill Lee. Prior to being appointed to the position in 2020, DeBerry served in the Tennessee House of Representatives for House District 90 from 1995-2020.

An alumnus of Freed-Hardeman College, DeBerry now serves on the university's Board of Trustees. He has been a minister for churches of Christ since 1968 and currently serves Coleman Avenue Churches of Christ in Memphis. In addition to graduating from Freed-Hardeman, he is a graduate of Memphis State University.

He was married to his wife, Georgia, for more than 40 years prior to her death in 2015. The DeBerry's have two daughters, Chevida and Victoria.



**Dr. Warren Farrell**  
Author, *The Boy Crisis*

Dr. Warren Farrell is an author who has been chosen by The Financial Times of London as one of the world's top 100 thought leaders, and by the Center for World Spirituality as one of the world's spiritual leaders.

Dr. Farrell's books are published in more than 50 countries, and in 19 languages. His most recent, *The Boy Crisis*, (co-author, John Gray), was a finalist for the Indie book publishing award. His other books include The New York Times best seller, *Why Men Are the Way They Are*, plus the international best seller, *The Myth of Male Power*.

Dr. Farrell teaches couples' communication courses around the country, and speaks internationally on the global boy crisis, its causes, and solutions.

Warren has two daughters, and lives with his wife in Mill Valley, California.

# PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES



**Avis Files**  
Program Director,  
Pathway, Inc.

Avis is the Program Director for Pathway, Inc. in Toledo, Ohio. She has worked in the social service arena for over 25 years in the areas of domestic violence, drug addiction, housing and homelessness, and in the area of healthy relationships for 10 years. She has facilitated healthy relationship curricula with her husband Michael for over nine years.

Avis is passionate about adding value in the lives of couples, youth and singles and the community at large, but especially in the African American community in which she lives.

Avis received a B.A. in Human Services from The University of Toledo. She is married to Michael Allen Files and has four children and one grandson.



**Tanguler Gray**  
Commissioner, Office  
of Child Support  
Enforcement, U.S.  
Department of Health  
and Human Services

Tanguler Gray serves as the Commissioner of the Office of Child Support Services at the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Prior to her appointment in the Biden Administration in December 2021, Gray was a deputy commissioner in the Georgia Department of Human Services. She previously served as the director for the Division of Child Support Services in Georgia, with over 26 years of leadership and child support experience there. Gray has served as a member of the board for the National Child Support Enforcement Association, including president and secretary, and is serving a second term as a board member of the Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association.

She graduated from Valdosta State University and has a daughter and a son.



**Sharmain Harris**  
National Speaker, Father  
Engagement and Justice Reform  
Founder President, Sharmain  
Harris & Associates LLC

Sharmain Harris is a speaker, author, and trainer who shares his expertise in fatherhood and prison reentry. After serving time in prison, Sharmain overcame the challenges of a felony conviction and pursued a successful life after prison. He credits his time in prison, specifically the boot camp program, for changing his outlook on life.

Sharmain's path to success after prison started in his role as a Father Involvement Specialist where he successfully recruited and completed over 100 fathers in one year. His turnaround story has inspired many and led to several awards, including the NAACP Positive Impact and the 20 Under 40 award. Sharmain's work ultimately resulted in a full pardon from Governor Tony Evers in Wisconsin restoring all his rights.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Sharmain has a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Business from Carthage College.



**Former Secretary  
Kay Coles James**  
Secretary, Commonwealth  
of Virginia

Kay Coles James is the Former Virginia Secretary of the Commonwealth. She has an extensive background in crafting public policy and in leading nearly every sector of America's economy. She has worked at the local, state, and federal levels of government under the administrations of former U.S. President George H. W. Bush, Virginia Governor George Allen, and former U.S. President George W. Bush.

James has also worked at senior levels in education and the nonprofit world, as the chief operating officer of a national organization for mentoring programs and the dean of the Robertson School of Government at Regent University. She is the founder and Chairwoman of the Gloucester Institute, which offers leadership training to African-American college students.

Kay Coles James is the wife of Charles James, Sr. and the proud mother of three grown children and five grandchildren.



**Joe Jones**  
Founder, CEO, President,  
Center for Urban Families

Joseph T. Jones, Jr. is the founder/CEO of the Center for Urban Families (CFUF), a Baltimore, Maryland nonprofit service organization established to empower low-income families by enhancing both the ability of women and men to contribute to their families as wage earners and of men to fulfill their roles as fathers. Mr. Jones is a national leader in workforce development, fatherhood, family services programming, and through his professional and civic involvement influencing policy direction nationwide.

Mr. Jones serves on several boards including the Open Society Institute-Baltimore, and My Brother's Keeper-Baltimore. Mr. Jones has also served as a White House advisor on fatherhood and community engagement. He has received numerous awards and honors for his leadership including the Johns Hopkins University Leadership Development Program's Distinguished Leadership Award, an honorary Doctorate in Public Service from Morgan State University, the Walter Sondheim Public Service Award and the White House Champion of Change.

Mr. Jones is a graduate of the University of Maryland Baltimore County. He is happily married and has three children. Follow him on Twitter @Joe\_dad\_Joe.



**Pat Littlejohn**  
Former Executive Director,  
South Carolina Center for  
Fathers and Families

Patricia Littlejohn is passionate about helping fathers be their best and is deeply dedicated to the organizations devoted to helping them excel. Patricia has 30+ years of foundation and non-profit leadership, programming, development, advocacy and communications experience and has been an active pioneer and leader in the national fatherhood movement since 1997.

She was responsible for spearheading the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina's multi-million dollar investment to establish South Carolina's first community and faith-based fatherhood programs. She was instrumental in forming a partnership between the Foundation and SC Department of Social Services that led to the creation of the SC Center for Fathers and Families to grow and sustain the Fatherhood Initiative.

Since her retirement on the 20th anniversary of the Center in 2022, she is called upon frequently as advisor and speaker to share the knowledge of building such a network.



**Dr. Rufus  
Sylvester Lynch**  
Chair, Strong Families  
Commission of Pennsylvania

Dr. Lynch is a FATHERIST, Forensic Macro Practitioner, NASW Social Work Pioneer, and former Dean of the Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. Currently, Dr. Lynch serves as a Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) Senior Fellow, with a charge of leading CWLA's efforts to explore the importance of father involvement in the well-being of children.

Dr. Lynch has lectured at over a dozen colleges and universities; authored or co-authored over 30 published manuscripts; and has participated in over 200 professional conferences, workshops, and training institutes. Dr. Lynch has served in senior staff positions in the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of Pennsylvania's State Government and has experience in private industry, higher education, and non-profit management.

In June 2023, Dr. Lynch was the recipient of the Judge David Gray Ross Government Award for Outstanding Government Leadership in Fatherhood, presented by the National Partnership for Community Leadership at its 25th Annual International Fatherhood Conference held in Canton Ohio.



# PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES



**Marcus E. Meneese**  
Founder and Executive Director, Stronger Than My Father

Marcus E. Meneese is the Founder and Executive Director of Stronger Than My Father, Inc., a Christian 501(c)(3) organization created in 2013. The organization's mission is to educate, inspire and transform today's youth to fulfill their God-given purpose.

For the past 15 years, Marcus has actively worked as a youth mentor. He believes his purpose is to coach and develop youth to become responsible adults and good parents, preparing them to become 'Stronger Than Their Fathers'. In 2016, Marcus launched the Hope Leadership Academy, which is the flagship program of Stronger Than My Father. In the summer of 2022, Marcus launched his Stronger Sons mentoring program.

Marcus is a Nashville native. He earned his B.S. degree from Tennessee State University and holds a Master's degree in organizational leadership from Trevecca Nazarene University. Marcus and his wife LaToya reside in Antioch, Tennessee and are the proud parents of two handsome sons.



**Dr. Linda Nielsen**  
Professor of Psychology, Wake Forest University  
Author of *Myths and Lies About Dads*

Linda Nielsen is a Professor in the Education Department at Wake Forest University. She is an internationally recognized expert on father-daughter relationships and shared parenting for children with separated parents.

She is the author of an adolescent psychology college textbook, three books on father-daughter relationships, and *Myths & Lies About Dads: How They Hurt Us All* (2023). Her 2020 book was named one of the top ten books on fatherhood by Book Authority and her 2021 book was honored with a Gold Medal Award from Mother's Choice books. She has served as a consultant for the award-winning advertising campaigns, "Dads who play Barbie" and the Super Bowl "Dad Do's". For more than three decades, she has taught the only college course in the country exclusively devoted to father-daughter relationships.

Her research is cited in more than 15 family law textbooks and in legislative committees in at least 20 countries and 15 states. In 2023 she was awarded the Research Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Parenting Organization.



**Dr. Cynthia Osborne**  
Executive Director, Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center, Vanderbilt University

Dr. Cynthia Osborne is the founder and executive director of the national Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center, home of the 50-state Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap and the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Clearinghouse. She is a Professor of Early Childhood Education and Policy at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College of Education and Human Development. Previously, she was faculty at LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin for over 16 years.

In 2012 Osborne founded and directed the successful Child and Family Research Partnership (CFRP), a nonpartisan research group at the LBJ School engaged in rigorous qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation work for federal and state agencies and large non-governmental organizations to strengthen families and enhance public policy.

Dr. Osborne holds a Ph.D. in Demography and Public Affairs from Princeton University, a Master in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and a Master of Arts in Education from Claremont Graduate University.



**Rep. Johnny Shaw**  
Representative of District 80, State of Tennessee

Representative Shaw has represented Tennessee State House District 80 (currently Hardeman, Haywood and Madison Counties) since 2000. Rep. Shaw was the first African American to represent a rural West TN district since the reconstruction era of the 1860s.

While in the General Assembly, he has been the first and only African American to hold office on the House Finance committee. He has been honored to continue serving on Finance and budget committees (which handles the state's budget) for the past 23 years.

In collaboration with the TN Department of Corrections, he co-founded the TAKE ONE Initiative, a joint effort between Faith-based and non-profit communities to mentor returning citizens from incarceration for one year.



**Rev. Dr. Stewart Perrilliat**  
Founder, Man 2 Man Urban Youth Advocate

Reverend Dr. Stewart Perrilliat hails from Oakland, California - a resilient community facing considerable socio-economic obstacles. Yet despite these odds he overcame them by joining the United States Marine Corps where he rose to Sergeant rank. Now as visionary Founder and Executive Director of "Man 2 Man: Urban Youth Advocate", his focus remains firmly aimed at equipping men to become powerful co-parents through an array of recovery, intervention, and educational initiatives.

Stewart has had an exceptional academic journey, earning three degrees: bachelor's in business administration, master's in theology and Doctorate in Executive Leadership. An accomplished author and ordained Reverend, Stewart offers compassionate assistance through prison ministry at facilities such as San Quentin State Prison and Santa Rosa County Jail. Stewart actively participates in his community via membership in Father's Corps.

Stewart's mission entails strengthening parent-child relationships and safeguarding future generations' wellbeing. To support this endeavor, his credentials are further augmented with certifications from the National Fatherhood Initiative as well as active participation in numerous impactful projects.

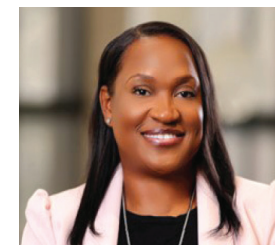


**Chris Spowls**  
Former Speaker of the House of Representatives, State of Florida

Chris Spowls served as Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives from 2020 to 2022. During Chris' tenure as Speaker, he was a champion for childhood literacy, creating the largest program in America for ensuring that children are reading on grade level - The New Worlds Reading Initiative. Spowls serves as chairman of the advisory board for the University of Florida's Lastinger Center for Learning, the home of Florida's New Worlds Reading Initiative.

As a former gang and homicide prosecutor, Chris is keenly aware of the challenges facing our community that stem from fatherlessness or lack of fatherhood engagement. Chris spearheaded the creation of Florida's Responsible Fatherhood Initiative, which invests millions into organizations working to connect dads in the lives of their children and serving fatherless kids.

He has a Bachelor of Arts from University of South Florida, and a Juris Doctor from Stetson University College of Law. He lives in Palm Harbor, Florida with his wife Shannon and their two boys, Prescott and Conrad.



**Cheri Tillis**  
CEO, Fathers and Families Support Center

Cheri Tillis is the Chief Executive Officer of the award-winning and nationally-recognized Fathers & Families Support Center (FFSC), formerly Fathers' Support Center, St. Louis.

Formerly, Ms. Tillis was FFSC's COO, responsible for providing oversight of agency programs and daily operations of its satellite locations and staff. She has progressive experience in multiple roles for FFSC, focusing on building community partnerships, federal grant writing, program development and management. She has also served as the Principal Investigator on several Fatherhood research studies with Mathematica Policy and Research, Washington University Brown School of Social Work and The Brown School Evaluation Center in St. Louis, MO.

Ms. Tillis holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Jackson State University, a Masters of Science in HR Management from Lindenwood University, a Business Management for Non-Profit Leaders Certificate from Washington University Olin School of Business and was a Missouri Foundation for Health Fellow.

# PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES



**Geneva Ware-Rice**  
Executive Director, His Sparrow Family Center

Geneva Ware-Rice is currently the Founder and Executive Director of His Sparrow Family Center, a non-profit fatherhood organization located in Prince George's County, Maryland. She has over 40 years of social services experience focused on child and family services. She has enjoyed broad career experiences in working with children and families as a social worker, teacher, Federal Project Officer, and Branch Chief. She completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, with a minor in Psychology and earned a Master of Social Work degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Ware-Rice also earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from Bowie State University in Bowie, MD.

Mrs. Ware-Rice is a former employee of the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families; Ms. Ware-Rice brings 17 years of Federal government experience in programmatic technical assistance, discretionary grant programs, training, supervision, and leadership to her work. She served for six years as an ACF Branch Chief in the Office of Family Assistance and was responsible for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the \$150 million, Healthy Marriage (HM) and Responsible Fatherhood (RF) discretionary grant program.

Mrs. Ware-Rice passionately believes that the investment that taxpayers make to improve the lives of fragile families and children in the United States of America must be used with integrity and be value-driven. Her energy, dedication, and commitment to excellence have assisted hundreds of federal grantees to implement sound projects and develop knowledge critical to the advancement of service delivery.



**Rep. Mark White**  
Representative of District 83, State of Tennessee

Mark White has represented District 83 in the Tennessee House of Representatives since 2010. He serves as the Chairman of the House Education Administration Committee and is a Member of six other committees and sub-committees. He has carried many bills in support of education reform and economic development, including passage of a Department of Children Services bill to extend Foster Care to the age of 21 in Tennessee.

Mark and his wife established the *Global Children's Education Foundation* to provide financial assistance for impoverished children in Panama. He authored *May I Call You Dad - Why Father's Are Needed in the Home*, which, based on personal experience, addresses the importance of fathers as leaders in the home and the difference one person can make in the life of a child.

He graduated Harding Academy and University of Memphis with a BS in Education. Mark has a Master's in Conflict Management from Lipscomb University. Mark and his wife, Kathy, have been married 42 years and reside in Memphis. Their daughter, Bonny, son-in-law, Mike and two grandsons, Jack and Ty, reside in San Antonio, TX.



**Dr. Brad Wilcox**  
Professor of Sociology, University of Virginia  
Director, National Marriage Project

Brad Wilcox is Professor of Sociology and Director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Family Studies, and a nonresident senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Professor Wilcox's research focuses on the quality and stability of marriage and family life in the United States and around the globe. Dr. Wilcox is the author and co-editor of five books including *Get Married: Why Americans Must Defy the Elites, Forge Strong Families*, and *Save Civilization* (Forthcoming, Harper Collins 2023) and *Gender and Parenthood: Biological and Social Scientific Perspectives* (Columbia University Press, 2013). He has published articles on marriage, cohabitation, parenting, and fatherhood in *The American Sociological Review*, *The Journal of Marriage and Family*, and *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. His research is featured regularly in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlantic*, *NPR*, *National Review*, *Deseret News*, and other media outlets.

Wilcox earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia, where he was a Jefferson Scholar, and his Ph.D. in sociology at Princeton University.

# Hotel and Venue Maps

**ROOM #**    **SECTION**    **FLOOR**    **ROOM**    **NEAREST ELEVATOR**

**KEY**

- Concierge
- Shuttles
- Taxi/Rideshare
- Restrooms
- Elevator
- Escalator
- Accessible Route
- ATM
- Business Center

**WIFI ACCESS**  
Login: Last Name  
Password: Room # (ex: C1234)

**LEGEND**

- Yellow Star: Presidential Meeting Rooms/Registration
- Orange Star: Lincoln Breakout Rooms
- Blue Star: Water's Edge
- Green Star: Ravello

**FOOD & DRINK**

- Cascades American Café
- Wasabi's Sushi Bar
- Solaris Cantina (Lower Level)
- Ravello (Lower Level)
- Conservatory Café
- Bravo Gelato
- Fuse Sports Bar
- Jack Daniel's
- Findley's
- Stax Burgers
- Paisano's Pizzeria & Vino
- Old Hickory Steakhouse
- The Falls
- Conservatory Wine Bar (Lower Level)
- Library Lounge
- Cocoa Bean Coffee House
- American Craft Tavern
- Delta Marketplace / **Delta**
- Carvel / Auntie Anne's
- Cinnabon

**RECREATION**

- Spa & Fitness Center (Level 2)
- Cascades Outdoor Pool (Access through Spa)
- Indoor Pool (Access through Spa)
- SoundWaves (Short Water Attraction)
- Magnolia Outdoor Pool
- Delta Riverboats
- Delta Fountain Show
- Gaylord Springs Golf Pick-Up
- Arcades (Cascades Lower Level and The Basement at SoundWaves)
- WSM 650 AM

**SHOPPING**

- Cascades Necessities
- Magnolia Necessities
- Magnolia Shops
  - Swarovski
  - Savannah's
  - Cowboys & Angels
- SoundWaves Signature Store

**EVENT LOCATIONS**

- Delta Necessities
- Delta Island Shops
- The Opry Shop
- Johnston & Murphy
- Amelia's Boutique
- Kids' Korral
- Crystal Gazebo
- Lion's Head Fountain
- Magnolia Courtyard
- Delta Pavilion
- Delta Landing
- Water's Edge

**Gaylord Opryland App**  
Google Play



**Gaylord Opryland App**  
Apple



# Notes



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