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Southern New Jersey

PERINATAL COOPERATIVE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAMDEN DADS, KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Fathers on Track Hosts Panel Discussion on Family Law, Child Support

CAMDEN, NJ—Navigating the NJ Family Court system is a challenge for any parent. But members of the Camden parenting group Fathers on Track got some help Wednesday when the Camden Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies-Healthy Start (HMHB-HS) program hosted the panel discussion, “Know Your Rights: Legal Rights for Fathers Concerning Child Support,” at the Walt Whitman Arts Center.

“Responsibility is a core value of fatherhood,” says Fathers on Track Program Coordinator Henry Williams. “We prepare men to embrace that responsibility by learning to make use of the resources at their disposal, and that includes the legal system.”

Fathers on Track is a joint program of HMHB-HS and Planned Parenthood of Southern New Jersey. It serves Camden fathers by providing a support group and educational model for men who face parenting challenges due to a lack of education, employment, opportunity, or legal considerations.

All attendees at the panel discussion are themselves parents. The discussion covered technical issues about out-of-state court judgments and child support responsibilities, but also touched on how a tapped-out parent might handle such things as a request for expensive sneakers.

“In those situations you have to take the guilt away and do what you can afford,” said panelist Patricia Thomas, who is a Training Supervisor and Affirmative Action Officer with the Camden County Board of Social Services.

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Thomas said that although child support and child custody are separate legal issues, both have an emotional impact on parenting.

“Children have a right to both of their parents,” said Thomas. “When parents who are not living with their children every day have to pay out of pocket, they want to have a relationship with their children. So establish a relationship with your kids, and you’ll feel better about where that money’s going.”

For Rasheed Young, a Fathers on Track client, the discussion reinforced some of the lessons he has taken from the group.

“Every father wants to see his child succeed, and to do that, keeping the lines of communication open is important,” Young said. “Fathers on Track is a network of people talking about positive things. It’s about self-improvement.”

Young attended the discussion because he wants to learn more about how to pursue custody of his children. He said Fathers on Track has helped him communicate with kids and with other parents in a way he hadn’t anticipated.

“I found the common ground,” said Young. “Everybody struggles. As men we put up this facade that we’re above the struggle, but we can bring down that wall and learn that other people have problems just like ours.”

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Fathers on Track and Camden Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies–Healthy Start are programs of the Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative (SNJPC).

SNJPC is the state-licensed, non-profit, maternal-child health consortium serving the seven southernmost counties of New Jersey. Its programs and services are dedicated to improving health outcomes for mothers and babies in South Jersey.

For more information about the Cooperative or its services, call 856-665-6000 or visit snjpc.org.