

FIRST THINGS



A publication of First Things First



- **Am I good dating material?**
- **I don't want to keep going out with the person I am dating. How do I break it off?**
- **How do you know if it's luv or LOVE?**
- **What exactly do you mean when you talk about dating violence?**
- **When a girl dresses like that, what does she want?**

These are all commonly asked questions when we teach our relationship skills classes to high school students. In an effort to reach out to teens across the community, FTF has launched a conversation with teens called Talk to Friends. In addition to ads in theaters, on television and radio and in print we have an interactive website loaded with lots of information about healthy dating relationships.

We will host live chats from time-to-time. Our educators will blog on the topics that teens are asking them about. We will have videos addressing issues teens are dealing with right now when it comes to their dating relationships. There is also an "Ask the Experts" page where teens can ask questions concerning dating relationships and our relationship educators will reply with research-based answers.

We hope you will visit the website and encourage your teen to visit it often. If you are looking for resources to help you talk with your teen about dating and relationships visit firstthings.org. We will be updating the parent page regularly with helpful insights when it comes to raising your teen.



FIRST THINGS FIRST presents . . .

MOVIES

IN THE PARK

Looking for fun and inexpensive entertainment for the entire family?

How about First Things First's Movies in the Park?

Grab your lawn chairs and blankets and head to Coolidge Park this July for the seventh season of Movies in the Park. Last year brought more than 15,000 individuals out to see family friendly box office hits on the big screen.

Concessions will be available so just bring your family and friends to the park at sundown (a little after 9 p.m.) July 11, 18 and 25th.

The movies are free and open to the public. If weather looks questionable, tune in to Sunny 92.3 FM to find out if that evening's movie will be shown. **Minors must be accompanied by an adult.**

2009 MOVIES

July 11—*Kung Fu Panda*

July 18—*Wizard of Oz*

July 25—*Madagascar 2*



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 <http://juliebaumgardner.blogspot.com>

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Gifts and Tributes

A gift was given by Willie H. Lassetter in Memory of Donna Jaynes Lassetter.

If you would like to honor a loved one, congratulate newlyweds, celebrate a wedding anniversary, birthday or other special occasion with a gift to FTF, please send your donation and honoree's contact information to FTF, 620 Lindsay Street, Suite 100, Chattanooga, TN 37403. When appropriate, a card will be sent to your honoree.

Your Investment in First Things First at Work

First Things First just completed its fifth wave of research measuring attitudes and behaviors of Hamilton County residents concerning marriage and family issues. The study was conducted among a sample of 1,000 randomly selected adults throughout Hamilton County. We thought you might be interested to know what the latest research is telling us.



Julie Baumgardner
FTF Executive Director



When people need marriage and parenting resources they clearly know that First Things First is available to assist them. **We are excited to report that four out of every five Hamilton Countians (80 percent) when asked about organizations that work with marriages and families cite First Things First!** A whopping 26 percent of those surveyed stated FTF right off the top of their heads (more than doubling unaided awareness from just three years ago).

Television is still the pipeline into people's homes. Three out of every ten people surveyed said they have seen the First Things First show and 24 percent had seen the Moments for Families commercials and associated the commercials with FTF. A total of 18 percent had seen other FTF commercials.

A total of 25 percent of those surveyed were aware of the First Things First column in the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*.

Our media initiatives are clearly reaching people with thought-provoking messages and skill-building opportunities to strengthen their marriage and family.

More than 2 out of 3 Hamilton Countians (68 percent) strongly agree that every couple who wants to marry should be required to complete some type of marriage education before getting married. While this is identical to the 2006 rating it is a significant increase from the baseline of 48 percent in 1997. We have been teaching premarital education classes since 2001. Literally thousands have attended these classes.

Only 35 percent of residents strongly agree that it is probably better to get a divorce than remain married and be miserable if one is in an unsatisfying marriage. This is down from 44 percent in 1997. This is good news because research indicates that most marriages in distress can be revitalized. Our Maximize Your Marriage class offers hope for couples who are experiencing distress in their marriage.

Family remains the top priority for residents in our community. Eighty-percent of Hamilton County residents believe that family is the main building block of a healthy community. Interestingly, there has been a steady increase in family as a priority since 2003. In 2003, less than half of all residents gave a response related to some aspect of family, increasing slightly to 51 percent in 2006 and then to 54 percent this year.

Your Investment in First Things First at Work continued . . .

"We rarely examine organizations that have grown their brand as effectively as First Things First has done. Most brands struggle for a lifetime and never achieve what you have generated in the last decade."
– David Kinnaman,
BARNA GROUP



Two-thirds of residents (65 percent) continue to agree strongly that it is best for children to be raised by a married mother and father.

Most parents (84 percent) say they spend at least 15 minutes in one-on-one

conversation with each child on a daily basis, up from 77 percent in 2006. Two activities that research indicates can dramatically impact the lives of children have **decreased** in the past three years. Reading a book with their child every day dropped slightly to 41 percent. The least frequent daily activity continues to be having a family meal together without the television on, moving from 44 percent in 2006 to 41 percent in 2009.

Overall, 1 out of every 6 Hamilton County residents (17 percent) name First Things First as an organization that provides training and information for fathers. This is up from 10 percent in 2006. In addition to teaching Boot Camp for New Dads and other classes for fathers, FTF currently teaches fathering classes in the

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Hamilton County Jail as well as at the House of Refuge, a facility for men who are transitioning from jail back into the community.

Virtually all residents (97 percent) continue to believe that parents have the primary responsibility for how a child is raised. However, only 55 percent

of residents think the children's parents have the greatest influence. Other influencers include schools, (14 percent), the media (12 percent) and the community (10 percent).

Of those surveyed, 17 percent of residents attended a class or program in Chattanooga geared to help married or engaged couples. According to those who attended a class or program, most were offered by a church (40 percent) or First Things First (19 percent). While many of our classes are taught at FTF, we also partner with numerous churches in the area to teach premarital education and marriage enrichment.

More than 9 out of 10 people surveyed believe that spending lots of one-on-one time with their children is



a very important responsibility of fathers. In fact, this was considered the most important responsibility for fathers, married or divorced. Other highly important responsibilities include

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disciplining children (84 percent) and attending the children's extracurricular activities (81 percent).

The proportion of parents who think it is unrealistic to expect teens to wait until marriage to have sex jumped 10 percentage points from 26 percent in 2006 to 36 percent in 2009. This is an alarming statistic considering sexually active teens continually tell us they wish they had waited to have sex and they wish parents and schools would send a stronger message for abstinence until marriage.

There has been a slow, but steady erosion of parents' communication to their children about waiting until marriage to have sex. In 2003, 85 percent of parents strongly agreed that they encouraged their children to wait, decreasing to 83 percent in 2006 and 77 percent in 2009. The majority of parents (58 percent) strongly agree that schools should teach young people that sex is only appropriate in marriage. This rate has decreased from a high of 66 percent in 2000 to a low of 58 this year.

The proportion of residents who agree with the statement, **there is nothing wrong with a woman giving birth to a child out of wedlock** has increased from 49 percent in 2006 to 55 percent in 2009.

An overwhelming amount of research clearly indicates that children do better when raised by their mother and father in a healthy marriage. The dramatic increase in out of wedlock births to women ages 19-44 and the frightening fact that many people do not see a problem with this should be a red flag for all who are concerned about the future of our children.



This report clearly indicates First Things First is impacting the lives of people and engaging them in healthy conversation on issues they wrestle with on a daily basis when it comes to their marriage and family. A strong foundation for our work has been built over the past 12 years. However, there is still a tremendous amount of work to do. In these roller coaster times where people are questioning the best places to invest, you can rest assured that your return on investment in the work of First Things First is paying significant dividends across our community



Love and Respect Conference coming to Chattanooga

Ask your spouse this question: If you were forced to choose one of the following, which would you prefer to endure: to be left alone and unloved in the world or to feel inadequate and disrespected by everyone?

This question was asked in a national study and 74 percent of the men said that if they were forced to choose, they would prefer being alone and unloved in the world over feeling inadequate and disrespected. While many may believe that love is all you need to make a relationship work, the truth is love alone is not enough.

"Love is especially vital for women, but what we have missed is the husband's need for respect," said Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, author of Love and Respect: The Love She Most Desires and The Respect He Desperately Needs. "What I discovered is that a woman has one driving need and that is to feel loved for who she is, and the husband has one driving need, which is to feel respected for who he is."



Eggerichs contends that a wife needs love like she needs air to breathe. When her husband stands on her air hose by acting in unloving ways, she is not a happy camper. Men need to be respected like they need air to breathe. As long as his air hose is open he is fine, but when a wife starts jumping all over his air hose by being disrespectful, he gets mad. It is critical for couples to decipher this because it is one of the keys to a healthy, long-lasting marriage.

Emerson and Sarah Eggerichs will be in Chattanooga, Friday, October 9 from 6:45 pm to 10 pm and Saturday from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm to present the Love and Respect Conference at the Chattanooga Convention Center. This conference is for singles interested in marriage, couples preparing for marriage and those already married. Tickets are \$35 per person until September 25 at midnight when tickets will be \$45. For more information or to register visit firstthings.org or call 267-5383.

CALLING ALL ATHLETES

Are you up for a good challenge?

The SportsBarn/Quintana Roo Sprint Triathlon is Sunday August 9th. Athletes (and athletes to be) are encouraged to come to the

Chickamauga Dam, then swim, ride, and run to Chattanooga's riverfront and downtown.

The Downtown SportsBarn and Quintana Roo present this exciting event. Proceeds benefit First Things First. Participants will begin at 7 a.m. by swimming a quarter-mile in the Chickamauga Lake, then riding 8.2 miles to downtown Chattanooga via Amnicola Highway. The race will wrap up with a 2 mile run around the riverfront and North Shore. Cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners overall and in each age group.

Start your training now and plan to join us on August 9th!

For more information visit <http://www.sportsbarn.net>



Family University offers a variety of classes to help 21st Century parents in their efforts to be the parents their children need them to be.

July 16

9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

Parenting as a Team . . . Even When We Disagree

St. John UMC
Janet Bales

August 19–October 14th (Weds.)

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Survival Skills for Healthy Families

Ooltewah United Methodist Church
Julie Baumgardner
Childcare provided for children 4 and under

August 20*

9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Learning to Step Together: A Class for Stepfamilies

St. John UMC
Janet Bales

September 10

6:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

When Baby Makes Three

First Things First
Julie Baumgardner and Todd Agne

September 17*

9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Discipline with Consequences

St. John UMC
Janet Bales

October 3

9:00 a.m.–11 a.m.

Coach Dad

Chattem Basketball Practice Facility
Coach John Shulman

October 15*

9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Correcting Your Child Without Criticism

St. John UMC
Janet Bales

November 5*

9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Living with Kids Through the Holidays Without Losing Your Mind

St. John UMC
Janet Bales

**Choose either morning or evening*

COMING SOON!

the **big 6** great **Date**xperiment



firstthings.org



Living Single

Are you:

- Single and satisfied, but would marry if you met Mr. or Ms. Right?
- Single and looking?
- Interested in the pros and cons of living together?
- Starting over?
- Planning the wedding when you just met him/her last week?
- Dating with children?
- Wanting to know the qualities of a keeper?
- Wanting to increase your odds of finding Mr. or Ms. Right?
- Healed enough to love again?

Then . . . this seminar is for you! Come and join us for a day of fun and excitement filled with opportunities for learning how to “follow your heart without losing your mind”.

Saturday, August 8

Location: Brainerd
Crossroads (The BX)
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Lunch is provided

You must pre-register

BOOT CAMP FOR NEW DADS



First Things First is proud to announce new partnerships with Hutcheson Medical Center and Erlanger Women's East to provide more Boot Camp for New Dads classes!

Boot Camp for New Dads is a program in which veterans (new fathers who bring along their infants) orient rookies (fathers-to-be) on the realities of fatherhood.

GUYS ONLY! No women allowed (except for the infants!)

Upcoming classes:

- Saturday, July 18 at Erlanger East, 9 a.m.–Noon
- Saturday, August 8 at Parkridge East, 9 a.m.–Noon
- Saturday, August 15 at Erlanger East, 9 a.m.–Noon
- Saturday, September 19 at Erlanger East, 9 a.m.–Noon
- Saturday, September 26 at Parkridge East, 9 a.m.–Noon

Check firstthings.org for more class dates



SAVE THE DATE

**December 5
2009**

Federal Employee?

56975

You can donate to First Things First through the CFC Campaign!

FIRST THINGS FIRST

A publication of First Things First

First Things First
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Sign up for our e-news today!

to register, visit:

firstthings.org

FIRST THINGS FIRST'S 12TH ANNUAL FALL BANQUET



We hope you will plan to join us for a special evening on Thursday, September 24th for First Things First's Annual Fall Banquet featuring Michael O'Brien.

Michael is a man of many paradoxes. At 6'5" he usually stands head and shoulders above the crowd, but he couldn't be more down to earth. He's an incredibly gifted singer, songwriter and musician. His disarming charm and engaging humility prove him to be anything but a "star". Through his music and his personal story, Michael will share his passion and vision for healthy marriage.

Songwriter Peter Furler says this about Michael, "To write songs like these, you have to believe what you are writing. And to sing songs like these convincingly, you have to live what you are singing. Michael is a man of integrity and character who believes and lives this music."

You won't want to miss a moment of this evening! Call the FTF office today to reserve your space for Thursday evening, September 24th at the Chattanooga Convention Center. Individual tickets are \$37.50 each or you can sponsor a table of eight for \$500.