

FIRST THINGS

A publication of First Things First

CALLING ALL DADS!



Join First Things First on Thursday, January 22 for **CHAMPIONSHIP FATHERING**, an effort to change the culture for today's children and the children of future generations featuring Carey Casey, CEO of the National Center for Fathering.

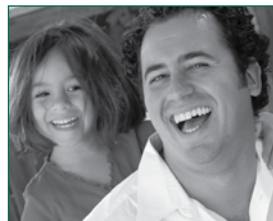
This seminar will encourage men to

LOVE their children, **COACH** their children, **MODEL** for their children, **ENCOURAGE** each other's children, and **ENLIST** other dads to join the team.

"Our goal is to encourage and inspire men to be involved in the lives of their children," said Mr. Casey. "There are 65 million fathers in America and many of them are not involved in the lives of their children. Studies indicate that 27 million children will go to bed tonight without their biological father in the home. We want an additional 10 percent of fathers to step up to the plate in Chattanooga and help change the culture by being Championship Fathers."

Imagine what it would be like if all dads were intentional about being involved in the lives of their children. Every child needs a dad they can count on, and Championship Fathering will help you become the father your children need.

Carey Casey has served in various roles with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, most recently as the president of the FCA foundation. He has also served as chaplain for the Dallas Cowboys, Kansas City Chiefs (a position he currently holds), and the US Olympic Team in the 1988 Summer Games in Seoul, South Korea. Casey has spoken at the World Congress on Sports, the college football Senior Bowl, the Final Four, and the Super Bowl. He played high school football for the team that played in the 1971 State



Championship in Virginia—the real-life game that was later dramatized in the award-winning movie *Remember The Titans*. He was also a running back for North Carolina and helped lead the team to the ACC Championship in 1977.

CHAMPIONSHIP FATHERING will take place on Thursday January 22 from 7pm until 9pm at the Brainerd Crossroads (The BX), next to Brainerd Baptist Church. The cost is \$5. To register visit firstthings.org or call 267-5383.

Flower Fest

Get ready for Flower Fest 2009! First Things First is once again proud to present our annual Valentine's Day fundraiser. This year our goal is to raise \$40,000 within 50 companies throughout the greater Chattanooga area.

You don't have to spend an arm and a leg to show you care. Arrangements are \$15 and will be available for the general public to purchase on our website, www.firstthings.org. Companies are encouraged to participate in this unique fundraiser that provides a benefit to employees while raising funds to strengthen area families.

Special thanks to our 2009 confirmed sponsors as of our December print deadline, WDEF News 12, WUUQ-FM and Jones Printing.

Look for exciting new event information on our website beginning January 1, 2009.

If your company would like to participate in this exciting event, please contact Alishea Hixson at 267-5383.

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Brand New for 2009!

FAMILY UNIVERSITY

Check firstthings.org
for more details!

Happy New Year!!!!!!

I don't know about you, but it seems like 2008 came and went in the blink of an eye. Maybe it's because we were running in so many different directions. From Faith, Family and Football with Roman Gabriel, III, the **Father of the Year Essay Contest**, Flower Fest and National Marriage Week to **Movies in the Park**, Fireproof, Adult Children of Divorced Parents with Bev and Tom Rodgers, **Raising Healthy Kids in a Toxic Culture** with Dr. Meg Meeker, Boot Camp for New Dads and Families on the Run. All of this in addition to offering more than **221 eight hour relationship skills classes** for more than **10,249 teens, individuals and couples** across the community. Additionally, we taught 25 four-hour premarital education classes to more than 300 individuals.

With the launch of a brand new website, FTF has experienced a **273 percent increase in web traffic** with 164,279 hits in 2008 and we completed **68 speaking engagements** for a variety of organizations in the greater Chattanooga area and beyond. We also completed the fourth **Hamilton County Marriage Research Report** and launched a new media campaign.

Many of you invested your time, treasure and talent to help make these resources available and for that we are grateful. **You are making a difference!**

Here's what people are telling us . . .

"I learned how to have constructive discussions with my husband about things I would normally have been too afraid to bring up. I also learned how to get to the root issue and how to think before reacting."

"I feel that we have a great marriage and came to get some icing for our marriage. I got some "cake" instead of just icing."

"This was a great experience that gave my husband and I a practical non-biased way of looking at our marriage. It has challenged our thoughts, encouraged us to take risks, and allowed us to learn to trust and protect each other."

"Thank you for Movies in the Park! It provided our family with four weeks of great family fun."

"Meg Meeker really opened my eyes to how important it is for us as parents to be actively engaged with our kids."

"I was touched and heartbroken by the essays I read. I wonder if these dads really understand how much they impact the lives of their children?"

As we move full steam ahead into 2009 we are anticipating an exceptional year. Carey Casey, CEO with the *National Center for Fathering* will help us kick off the new year with a Championship Fathering seminar in collaboration with numerous community churches and organizations. We are launching Family University, which will offer an array of monthly classes for couples, parents and families. Movies in the Park will return in July and we will expand our Boot Camp for New Dads program to Hutcheson Hospital in addition to Parkridge East and Erlanger.

For updates on 2009 FTF events like National Marriage Week and Flower Fest, be sure and follow us on our facebook group page, First Things First, at twitter.com/ftfchatt, or on our website firstthings.org. You can also sign up to receive our e-newsletter on our website.

Thank you for believing in what we do and partnering with us to make a difference.



Julie Baumgardner
FTF Executive Director

Raising Healthy Teens in a TOXIC CULTURE

Dr. Meg Meeker, author of Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters, Boys Should Be Boys: Seven Secrets to Raising Healthy Boys and Your Kids at Risk spoke at Girls Preparatory School on Thursday, October 23rd.

When it comes to raising healthy kids, Dr. Meeker believes parents consistently underestimate their influence. In spite of the eye rolling, grunts and under the breath comments, kids really do care what their parents think. The key is staying connected.



Dr. Meeker made the following suggestions to help parents connect with their kids:

- If at all possible, be there in the morning when they get up, when they come home from school and at supper time. This is when kids tell us they really connect with parents.
- Ask open ended questions, but don't automatically respond. Parents often hang themselves by reacting to the information their child gives them. Just LISTEN. Sometimes duct tape is useful for helping resist the urge to respond.
- Stop trying to be the perfect parent.
- Pick your battles and keep your eyes on the big picture. A parent's job is to raise a healthy 25-year-old. At 8, 10, 16 and even 20 they aren't there yet. Just because they aren't where you want them to be at 18 doesn't mean you failed. Brain studies indicate that the frontal lobe, the area that controls impulse and emotion, isn't developed until the mid-20s.
- Stop comparing your kids to other children. We tend to compare our kids and convince ourselves we are failing.
- Acknowledge parent-to-parent peer pressure. If we are honest the real reason we over-schedule our kids is because our friends over-schedule their kids. Over-scheduling kids is horrible for everybody. Kids need to learn how to deal with boredom. If we set our kids up to never know how to deal with empty time they will be miserable adults.

Special thanks to Girls Preparatory School for hosting this event.

Staying Sane in a Working Women's World

In the Buff Day Spa provided a wonderful experience for those attending the *Staying Sane in a Working Woman's World* seminar. From paraffin dips to foot massages these ladies were pampered in a relaxing atmosphere. Julie Baumgardner presented secrets to staying sane. Here are a few of the tips she shared:

- Focus on what you can control
- Determine your priorities and live by them
- Housework can wait—spending time with family is more important
- Ask for what you need
- A sense of humor is a good thing
- Enjoy today—you never know what tomorrow will bring



Special thanks to Stephanie Hudgens and Sheena Rowland, owners of In the Buff Day Spa for making this event possible.



4th Annual FAMILIES ON THE RUN



The highly successful, fourth annual Families On The Run was held on Saturday, December 6. With more than 500 in attendance, we were thrilled with the response to this very popular, family friendly event. Families from across the South came together to exercise and to kick off this year's holiday season on the right foot!



Special thanks to this year's sponsors: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee, SportsBarn, Personal Fitness Specialists, Hallmark Insurance, Comcast, Sunny 92.3 WDEF, Coca-Cola, Aquarium Foods, Wally's, University of Phoenix—Chattanooga Campus, Groome Transportation and the Hunter Museum of Art.





Our 11th Annual Fall Banquet was a Success!

On September 18th, First Things First held their 11th Annual Fall Banquet presented by Covenant Transport, event chairs Earl and Cindy Cornette and the First Things First Board of Directors.

First Things First was honored to welcome Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears as the evening's featured speaker.

In addition to Chief Justice Sears' message, Diane Sollee, Founder of the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, shared her excitement about the impact FTF has had locally and across the country. Several individuals and companies were recognized for their support of FTF. **Caldwell Foundation** received the Spirit of the Family Vision Award; **Citadel Broadcasting** was recognized with the Spirit of the Family Partnership Award; **CARTA** was given the Spirit of the Family Impact Award; and the Family Legacy Award was presented to **Mr. and Mrs. Sam Smartt**.

"First Things First is very fortunate to have such significant support in our community," said Julie Baumgardner, President and Executive Director. "However, the journey is far from over. While a tremendous amount has been accomplished since 1997 there is still work to be done. As we move forward, we want to continue to provide our community with excellent resources to help build strong marriages and families."

Andrea Perry, Program Director of WMPZ Groove 93 FM was the emcee for the evening.

The First Things First 11th Annual Fall Banquet was presented by Covenant Transport. Additional sponsors include Anonymous, Chambliss, Bahner & Stophel, P.C., Cindy Cornette and Cornette & Associates, Personal Fitness Specialists, SportsBarn, Wingfield Scale Company, Chattanooga Funeral Home, Crematory and Florist, Joseph Decosimo and Company, PLLC, DV Presents, Mountain View Ford, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Chattanooga Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Cornerstone Community Bank, EMJ Corp., Miller & Martin, Ward and Nancy Petty, Shaw Industries, Yerbey Concrete, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority/Ivy Rose Foundation, Ric and Karen Godwin, and Evans Lumber Company.



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A publication of First Things First

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Chattanooga, TN 37403

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Sign up for our e-news today!

to register, visit:

www.firstthings.org



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, January 24 at Hutcheson Medical Center, 9 a.m.–Noon

Saturday, January 31 at Parkridge East, 9 a.m.–Noon

Saturday, February 21 at FTF, 9 a.m.–Noon

Saturday March 21 at Parkridge East, 9 a.m.–Noon

Saturday, April 18 Location TBA, 9 a.m.–Noon

Saturday, May 16 at Parkridge East, 9 a.m.–Noon

Saturday, May 30 at FTF, 9 a.m.–Noon

Check firstthings.org for more class dates

Before you say I do

Get your marriage off to a great start by learning essential skills to help you build a strong foundation for a lasting marriage.

Faith-Based

Thursday, January 15

David Banks

Thursday, February 5

Pam Johnson

Saturday, March 7

Janet Bales

Secular

Thursday, February 19

Cheryl Robinson

Thursday, March 19

Pam Johnson

Remarriage w/kids (Faith-based)

Thursday, March 5

Janet Bales

Location: TBA

Remarriage w/kids (secular)

Saturday, January 24

Cheryl Robinson

All classes will be held at the First Things First office at 620 Lindsay Street unless otherwise noted