



For immediate release
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FATHERHOOD RECOGNITION HONORS FIVE BROWARD BRIDGE INMATES
~Despite Incarceration, Men Strive to Be Good Fathers ~

FORT LAUDERDALE – The 14th Annual International Fatherhood Conference has honored five Broward Bridge inmates as “Favorite Fathers of 2012” during the 14th Annual International Fatherhood Conference, held this week at the Westin Ft. Lauderdale. The Broward Bridge is a facility within the Bridges of America network of transition facilities, and houses over 170 men who are participating in therapeutic, transition, re-entry and work release programs as they near the end of their prison sentences and prepare to return to society.

The National Partnership for Community Leadership has chosen the five honorees based upon the following criteria of being responsible fatherhood: consistently demonstrates love and support of his children; a motivator/encourager; protects child(ren)s welfare; trustworthy; values the importance of education: is a good role model; and works in partnership with the mother of his child(ren).

Currently participating in the various transition programs offered at The Broward Bridge, the five men honored for their pursuit of model fatherhood behavior are:

- Claude Wright, father of three boys
- Tim Martin, father of one daughter
- Nick Copertino, father of one daughter
- Mark Anderson, father of one daughter and a new grandchild
- Agustin Diaz, father of two boys

“I’m so proud of these men for this recognition,” said Lana Patterson, Facility Director at The Broward Bridge. “They are each so humbled by the honor and look forward to putting their newly developed skills in fatherhood to work with their families upon their release.” Each inmate completed a letter as a part of their nomination process discussing their previously, often fractured relationships and their plans for better family dynamics as a result of the various counseling sessions and parenting classes provided by the Broward Bridge.

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These “Favorite Fathers” are currently serving time for various convictions, and have worked diligently to improve their parenting skills, family relationships and role modeling in a value-added service provided by collaborative partners at Family Central of Broward County. As one Favorite Father stated: “With all the tools that I have gained, I know I can make sober, positive differences in my daughter’s life...and soon in my new grandchild’s.”

The recognition event was held on June 12, 2012, during the four-day conference, led by Dr. Jeffrey Johnson, president and CEO of the National Partnership for Community Leadership. “There is no greater responsibility,” stated Johnson, “than that of fatherhood. We are extremely proud of these five men for their commitment to their families, their communities and the betterment of society.”

About Bridges of America

Bridges of America was founded by Frank Costantino, an ex-felon who served a 22 ½ year prison term for burglary and other related crimes. Upon his release, Frank founded "Christian Prison Ministries" to share the Gospel with other prisoners. Through these visits, Frank listened to their concerns and fears of returning to society, and determined something was needed to bridge the gap. In 1980, Frank opened up the first "after-care" resident program in Orlando to provide that bridge. The Bridges of America contract with The Florida Department of Corrections for The Orlando Bridge began a partnership that provided a work-release program with a substance abuse overlay to address drug and alcohol problems.

What started as a local ministry has now parlayed into a worldwide vision that serves over 10,000 inmates and offenders daily. Lori Costantino-Brown, Frank’s daughter, now continues to provide the vision and leadership of Bridges of America. In Florida, multiple Bridges facilities are located in Orlando, Bradenton, Broward, Auburndale, and Jacksonville.

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