



News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALBANY, NY - Fathers and father figures are urged to accompany their children to school at Arbor Hill Elementary School in Albany on Monday, Sept. 8, as part of a national Million Father March. The event is co-sponsored by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) and Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), as part of their joint responsible fatherhood initiative.

"Fathers are essential to a child's development and well-being, and they need to be involved in their children's education," said Gladys Carrión, Esq., Commissioner of the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS). "When fathers take an active interest, children do better in school, have fewer behavioral problems, and are more likely to graduate."

Carrion participated in a similar event on the first day of school in New York City.

"By joining this effort, fathers can send a clear message that they are committed to being involved in their children's lives in a supportive and productive way," said OTDA Commissioner David A. Hansell. "Fathers can also emphasize the importance of an education to achieving economic security by remaining engaged in their children's school through graduation."

Community outreach through posters and fliers is being developed to encourage fathers, grandfathers, foster fathers, stepfathers, uncles, cousins, big brothers, significant male caregivers and family friends in the Arbor Hill area to go to school with their children on Sept. 8 between 8-9 a.m. The Arbor Hill Elementary School is temporarily located at 141 Western Ave. in Albany. For more information about this event, contact Stephon Frost 376-7792.

An estimated 500,000 men from 400 cities across the U.S. are expected to join similar marches as children head back to school. Employers are being asked to give fathers and father figures two hours off to take their children to school. Men are also being encouraged to use the Million Father March as the beginning of a "yearlong" commitment to volunteer and take an active role in school activities. The 2008 Million Father March is managed nationwide by the Black Star Project, U.S.A. in partnership with the National PTA and the National Fatherhood Initiative. This is the fifth year of the march.

OCFS and OTDA are also jointly sponsoring a first-ever New York State Fatherhood Conference, "Responsible Fatherhood: A Road to Healthy Family Development," Oct. 6-9 at The Desmond in Albany. For more information about the conference visit

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/fatherhood/conference.asp>.