

# Healthy Kent News Release

## Dads Count! Fatherhood Coalition Challenges Fathers to be Involved with Their Children at 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference

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Grand Rapids - When fathers are involved, they leave a legacy to their children and communities thrive. Absent fathers also leave a heritage. Fathers who are not present cost the United States an estimated one hundred billion dollars a year in the form of poverty, substance abuse and juvenile delinquency according to the National Fatherhood Initiative.

As a father, how would you like to be remembered? Healthy Kent Dads Count! Fatherhood Coalition is challenging fathers to ask themselves this question at its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Focus on Fathers Conference – “Shaping Lives, Building a Legacy.”

“We are saying to the men of Kent County, ‘It is time to make the choice and do what is right, for their children, for the community and for themselves.’” says Cole Williams, one of the speakers at this year’s event. Williams, a Grand Rapids native, uses his experiences as a teen dad to help African American males by being a foster parent, teacher and mentor.

“A Father plays an important role in the relation identity of a child,” says Brian Pruitt who, with Williams will also be speaking at this year’s conference. “When the father is not there, young people tend to struggle with who they are.” Pruitt is a former All-American football player from Central Michigan University who grew up in a single parent home. Today he is an author, speaker and founder of [The Power of Dad](#).

Those who attend “Shaping Lives, Building a Legacy” will be challenged to think about how the things they do will affect future generations and how their actions now can prevent important societal issues such as teen pregnancy, high school dropout rates and behavioral problems within the family.

The conference takes place Saturday April 23, 2016 at New Hope Baptist Church, 130 Delaware SW, Grand Rapids Michigan from 8am to 3pm.