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MISSION

To inspire, resource and encourage all fathers to be more involved in the lives of their children.

VISION

We aim to build better communities by promoting engaged fatherhood.

The three key ingredients for a great place to live are ***robust economies***, ***safe neighborhoods*** and ***strong schools***. But a community without engaged fathers can't hope to have any of these!

"Helping Kids and Communities One Dad at a Time"

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Forging Fathers & Families

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From the Director



As a former history teacher, I've always been fascinated by the strategic decisions leaders make that can change the course of history. At Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1863, a series of such decisions came together under the direction of President Abraham Lincoln and the leadership of Ulysses S. Grant—decisions that helped initiate the beginning of the end of the Civil War.

"The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket."



Simply put, Vicksburg was the key to the Confederacy's supply line along the Mississippi River. Lincoln recognized that the Union could not win the war without gaining control of Vicksburg. In his words, "The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket."

America continues to fight wars against challenges that plague our nation. In 1964, for example, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a "War on Poverty," launching programs such as Head Start, Job Corps, and VISTA. Yet more than 60 years later, we continue to struggle with many of the same challenges.

Today, an increasing number of experts and community leaders are recognizing that fatherhood may be one of the keys to addressing many of these persistent challenges. When fathers are engaged and equipped to succeed, families are stronger, children are more likely to thrive, and communities are better positioned to prosper.

We need to get that key in our pocket.

Jennifer L. Baker PsyD

Jennifer L Baker, PsyD
Good Dads Founder

FORGING AHEAD

The humble forge is an apt illustration for fatherhood. A skilled blacksmith, stained with soot and carbon from years mastering his craft, has a dangerous job. Sweating above the furnace, he heats up his materials to just the right temperature, expertly molding the ore between his hammer and his anvil. Sparks fly, and his forge feels alive.

Likewise, a father has the monumental job of molding the future generation. He forges ahead—despite the challenges and hardships he faces—because he cares about his children. He knows just how much he matters to his kids' wellbeing, and he is willing to put in the work that it takes. Just like blacksmiths, dads are master craftsmen.

That's why we chose this theme this year. A forge is a place of energy. People talk about "forging" a path when they describe trailblazers who make great discoveries that further humanity. We think the amazing work happening at Good Dads is forging a new path for fathers and families across Missouri.

In this trailblazing spirit, we named our latest program **Good Dads FORGE**, for the grant of the same name. The grant, which stands for Family, Opportunity, Resilience, Grit, Engagement, is Good Dads' primary focus for this year: a perfect analogy for the forward momentum we bring to dads and their loved ones.

In the following pages, you'll see all the ways that Good Dads is **forging they keys** we need—and all the ways that sparks are flying at this small but mighty nonprofit.

What Dads Are Saying...



As long as you're there, that's the most important thing. Don't fold.

LEONARD

It's okay to fall. What matters is that your kids see you get back up.

RYAN





No dad is perfect. You learn from your mistakes, and you don't have to be afraid to admit that to your kids.

TAELOR

It's easier to build strong kids than to repair broken adults. That's why dads matter.

NATE





My girls are my reason for being here. Every night I tell them they're my reason for living.

JERAMY

KEY SNAPSHOTS: Good Dads Strong Schools











AT A GLANCE

- Good Dads Strong Schools makes it fun and easy to get all kinds of dads in the same room. By expressly targeting fathers, we send the clear message that father involvement is imperative to a child's success in school.
- Low-tech, highly interactive lessons (like building popsicle-stick structures and folding paper airplanes) are the conduit for character-driven conversations on teamwork, honesty, listening, etc.

THE KEYS IN OUR POCKET

- **745** dads are welcomed into their student's school each month—in just Greene County schools alone. *(avg.)*
- **1000** Greene County students impacted each month *(avg.)*
- **45** participating schools in Missouri









Our families enjoy getting together, and parents leave with ideas for how to continue to engage with their children in healthy and positive ways. Students leave the Good Dads Breakfast with pride, knowing that their dads took time out of their busy morning to enjoy breakfast and play with them. Our campus benefits from opening the doors to dads and families. It's a win-win event!

Rebekah Johnson, McGregor Elementary Principal (Springfield, MO)

FORGING AHEAD...

- Research is underway for a new Strong Schools resource that meets the needs of dads and their preschoolers
- In the 2026–2027 school year, we hope to expand our existing base of dedicated volunteers and Captains
- Your generous gift to Good Dads Strong Schools will allow us to bring the program to more schools and donate more activity supplies to schools in low-income neighborhoods.

2015

Good Dads gets its start as a series of conversations examining the negative outcomes resulting from father absence. Springfield business leaders came together to strategize the best ways to address the needs of fathers in our community.

The Family Support Division awards Good Dads a contract to offer responsible fatherhood services in Southwest MO. The very first cohort of New Pathways for Good Dads came to be in collaboration with Victory Mission, a local men's recovery house. The NPGD program has since grown and evolved.

2018

Research and development began for what would eventually become Good Dads' flagship curriculum: ***Good Dads 2.0.*** This course uses a construction analogy to explore the tools dads can use to build a safe, stable family home.

2019

Serving at-risk dads and fathers of elementary students became the best means of reaching ***all*** kinds of dads and father-figures.

2021

A huge milestone! In just one fiscal year, fathers in the NPGD program contributed more than ***$1 million*** to their Missouri child support cases.

Aiming to replicate the program success at our Springfield headquarters, we developed a sustainable chapter model focused on cross-community involvement. Since then, Good Dads has grown to 20 chapters statewide!

2022

2024

WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2027, we'll have plenty of irons in the fire:
Expect a greater emphasis on the ***+Us*** program, uplifting Chapters of Excellence and much more.

Forging ahead! Good Dads was awarded a federal grant that enabled us to launch two new programs, ***FORGE*** and ***+Us.***

2026

KEY SNAPSHOTS: Programs for Solo Dads









AT A GLANCE

- **New Pathways for Good Dads** launched in 2018 with a small group of Springfield dads. Now, the NPGD program serves fathers throughout Southwest MO.
- The latest program from Good Dads, **FORGE**, allows us to serve any father or father-figure—regardless of his income—in 87 MO counties.

Good Dads opened my eyes to a lot of things ... They taught me how to have a relationship and be intentional with my kids. (Good Dads) is there to help you be better fathers and give you the tools to break generational curses.

Bobby, 2020 Good Dads Graduate









THE KEYS IN OUR POCKET

- **Between July 2025–June 2026...**
  - **506** Missouri fathers started a Good Dads class
  - **34** fatherhood classes and **13** relationship classes started
  - **6** facilitator training events hosted
  - **45** facilitators led a Good Dads class
- Program participants between March 2025 and March 2026 contributed a collective **$1,048,053** to their child support cases. Dads have paid nearly **$5 million** throughout the life of the program.

FORGING AHEAD...

- In Year 2 of the **FORGE** program, we will focus on more extensive data collection in addition to offering classes. This will allow us to do continuous quality improvement and showcase our outcomes more effectively.
- Building new collaboration opportunities with trusted **economic stability resources** in our community means dads can access the highest quality education—improving outcomes and confidence for family budgets.

KEY SNAPSHOTS: Programs for Couples













AT A GLANCE

- **"Now that I've graduated from Good Dads, what's next?"** This is the question we've received from countless fathers. Our new program, **Good Dads +Us**, is our answer to that question.
- This father-focused program also includes a partner or coparent. Participants attend workshops that develop skills in three key areas:
    - Parenting and co-parenting
    - Healthy, secure relationships
    - Financial literacy and economic stability

Steve and Rachel are two enthusiastic participants in our first cohort. They are already practicing the skills they learned in the +Us program. They have done a great job implementing a new family budget plan. They like using the drive home to discuss their workshop takeaways without interruptions.

2026 Good Dads +Us Participants

THE KEYS IN OUR POCKET

- **Between April and September 2026…**
    - **8** couples attended our inaugural workshops at the Springfield Dream Center
    - **#** of hours in a +Us class

FORGING AHEAD…

- **Good Dads +Us** is in its infancy, but this program has enormous potential to increase couples' ability to work together for themselves and their children.
- Our newly revised and updated course, ***Fundamentals for Good Dads,*** is the first of its kind.
- Your support will help Good Dads fuel more classes for coparents and couples. We are excited about expanding the program to more locations in Springfield and beyond.

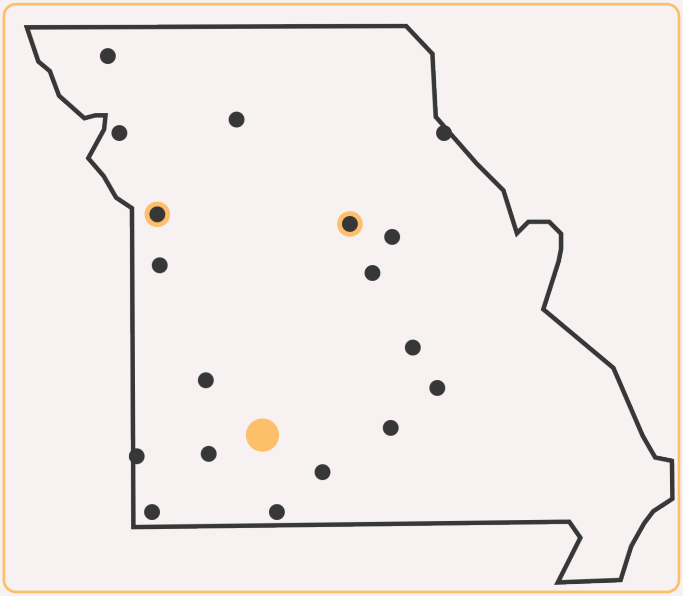
KEY SNAPSHOTS: Good Dads Great Communities



















We are so excited to be bringing Good Dads to Dent County. We have many community leaders who want to invest their time and efforts in this program. We as a new chapter realize how important dads are, and we want to be a resource that improves their lives.

JoAnn Wells, Good Dads Dent County board member

AT A GLANCE

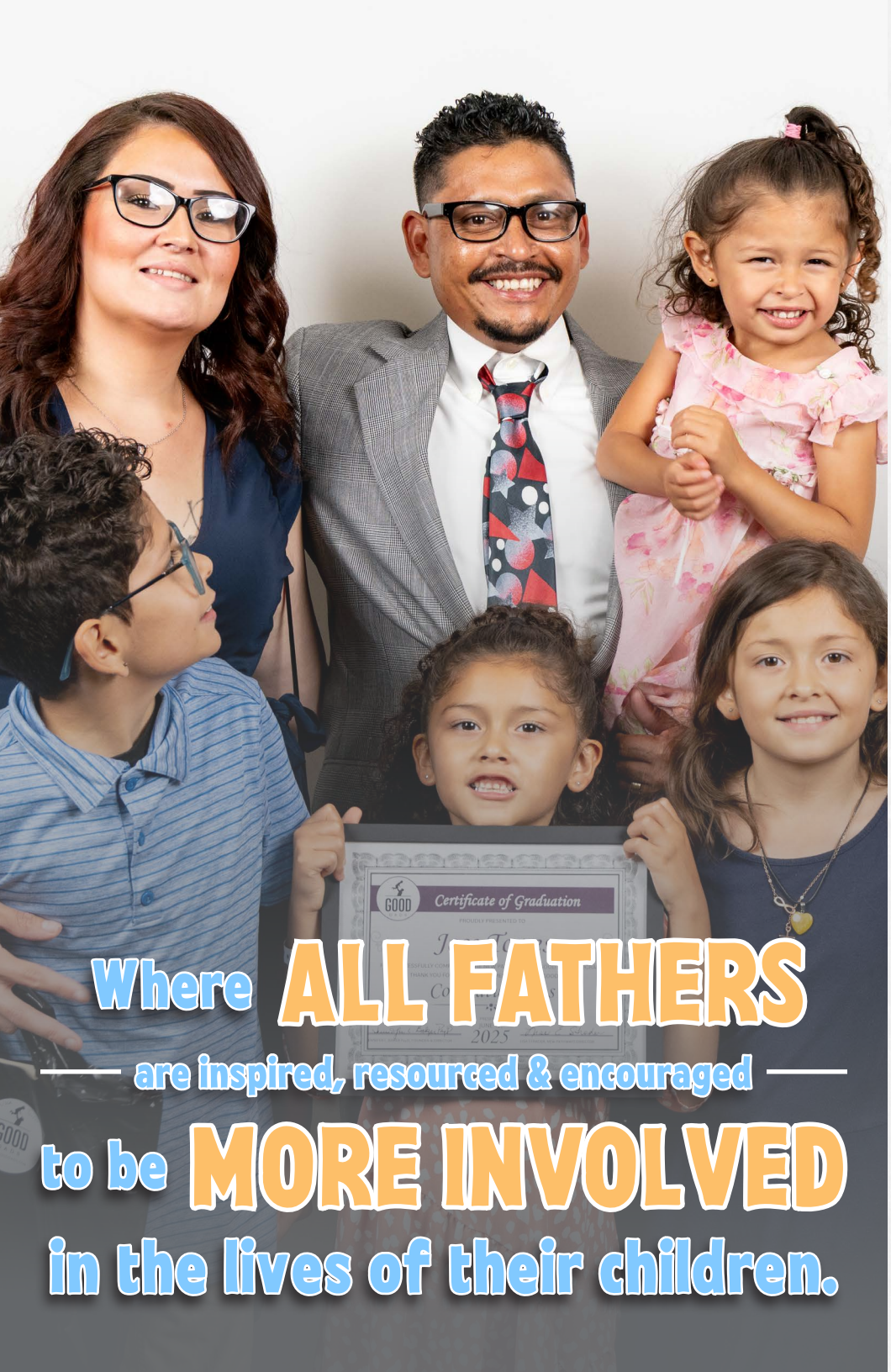
- Good Dads Great Communities helps communities — from tiny towns to large metros — replicate the success of Good Dads. The program enables father-focused individuals to create their own momentum for father engagement, with the support of our HQ.
- Community-building efforts are only sustainable when they have the enthusiastic participation of varied industries and disciplines, which is the motivation behind our unique "Six Sector" model.

BY THE NUMBERS

- **18** chapters statewide
- **200** advisory board members
- **230** estimated father-friendly events (classes, schools, etc.)

FORGING AHEAD...

- In 2027, we will encourage each community to become a "Chapter of Excellence" by maintaining a robust advisory board and hosting their own fundraising efforts.
- Your generous gift to Good Dads will help us forge ahead by offering the Great Communities program to more regions, especially outside state borders.



Where **ALL FATHERS**
are inspired, resourced & encouraged
to be **MORE INVOLVED**
in the lives of their children.

Dads get to be the heroes of their own stories.

When fathers attend our workshops, they forge ahead with...

- Healthy Relationships Skills
- Parenting Skills
- Camaraderie and Mutual Support
- Mentors and Advocates
- Communication Skills
- Money Management Education

Help us forge ahead for fathers and families.

GOOD DADS

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