

News Release



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Black Marriage – What’s to celebrate?

Love, family and potential in the African-American community

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (March 9, 2009) — Declining marriage rates among African-Americans across the nation reveal a shift in values and a seemingly acceptable “new norm”. The Black community continues to struggle with increasing divorces and nearly 70 percent of their children being born out of wedlock, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, with Black women being the most un-partnered group in the country. Thus the question: what’s to celebrate about Black marriage?

Potential – the potential to do better and achieve more is worth celebrating in Black communities across Wisconsin. Studies show that married couples live longer, have better health, higher income, and a greater accumulation of wealth. Couples report healthier relationships and their children tend to achieve more success in life. In communities where marriages flourish, the property value is higher, crime is lower and there are better schools. In communities where marriages fail, or fail to happen, the opposite exists; property values are lower, crime is higher and schools are poor.

The Center for Self-Sufficiency, through its **VOW to Succeed** program, supports the meaning and celebration of Black Marriage Day. According to its president and CEO, Angela Turner, “Now, more than ever, we should take this opportunity to inspire, educate and raise the

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‘esteem’ of marriage in the African-American community. While the potential to do better is apparent, establishing a healthy marriage takes commitment, sacrifice and relational ingenuity.”

The relational ingenuity Turner refers to is taught in the ***VOW to Succeed*** healthy relationship classes provided by the Center for Self-Sufficiency. The classes are designed to help singles and couples invest in and evaluate their relationships. In addition, on Sunday, March 22, 2009, the Center encourages Milwaukeeans to join more than 300 cities in celebrating Black Marriage Day by renewing vows, teaching others about the importance of healthy marriages and taking heed of the following tips:

For Developing a Healthy Relationship/Marriage:

1. VOW to have a healthy marriage.
2. Develop and review your own expectations of your partner.
3. Know and understand your partner’s values and expectations.
4. Attend a healthy relationship/marriage prep class for singles.
5. Surround yourself with friends & family who understand the benefits of marriage.

For Sustaining a Healthy Relationship/Marriage:

1. Fix his or her favorite meal tonight.
2. Examine your own expectations to be sure they’re realistic.
3. Hug and kiss your spouse today, and be sure to say "I love you".
4. Consider new ways to better communicate openly and honestly.
5. Bring back the romance you once had – make time for intimacy.

For more tips and information about Black Marriage Day or to register for classes, please visit www.vowtosucceed.org.

Based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and founded in 1997, the Center for Self-Sufficiency, Inc. is a nonprofit organization making a difference by providing services that promote healthier youth, families and communities. Under the leadership of president and CEO Angela Turner, CFSS partners with federal agencies, states, local governments, and school districts as well as community and faith-based organizations to develop effective service delivery models nationally.

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