



# 11<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NEW YORK FATHERING CONFERENCE 2026

*FATHERHOOD IS MORE THAN A TITLE - IT'S A LIFESTYLE*

## A CALL TO ACTION!

**Mentoring Men, Strengthening Families,  
and Transforming Communities**

**MARCH 17, 2026 | 8:30AM - 3:30PM  
Westchester County Center**

**REGISTER TODAY!  
Tickets: \$35 includes  
Breakfast & Lunch**



<https://newyorkfatheringconference.org/>



# 2026 11th Annual Fatherhood Conference

## Mentoring Men, Strengthening Families, and Transforming Communities

Tuesday, March 17th | 8:30 a.m. - 6:30pm

### Program Overview

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Registration, Breakfast and Exhibits

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Welcome, Greetings and Introduction of Speaker



Frank Williams, Jr.  
Executive Director,  
City of White Plains  
Youth Bureau



Ken Jenkins  
Westchester County Executive



Justin Brasch  
Mayor,  
City of White Plains



Leonard Townes  
Commissioner,  
Westchester County DSS



Dr. DaMia Madden-Harris  
Commissioner,  
New York State  
Office of Children & Families

9:30 a.m.

Keynote Speaker, Joshua Dubois, CEO Values Partnerships

9:45 a.m.

Plenary Panel 1 – Strengthening Fathers as Partners in Education

10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Break/Exhibits

11:05 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.

Plenary Session 2: Workforce and AI

11:50 a.m. – 12:30 a.m.

Lunch/Exhibits

12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Featured Speaker – Tony Porter, CEO a Call to n

1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Plenary Session 3 - Municipal Leaders Strengthening  
Programs and Services that Impact Fathers

2:15 p.m.

Break

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Plenary Session: Wrap -up/Next Steps/Closing

# WELCOME TO THE 11TH ANNUAL NEW YORK FATHERING CONFERENCE

## A CALL TO ACTION! Mentoring Men, Strengthening Families, and Transforming Communities

On behalf of the New York Fathering Conference Planning Committee, I am honored to welcome you to our 11th Annual Conference. This year, we focus on the transformation of fathers and communities, recognizing that fathers are essential to the success of our families and neighborhoods.

Now more than ever, our fathers need us—and we need them. Their involvement is critical to the success, health, and well-being of our families and communities. With this in mind, we have planned a dynamic conference featuring inspiring speakers, engaging panelists, and impactful workshops.

We are honored to welcome **Joshua DuBois**, CEO, author, and media commentator. Joshua is one of the nation's leading voices on community partnerships, issues impacting African Americans, and the role of faith in the public square. He previously led the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships under President Barack Obama.

We are also pleased to have **Tony Porter**, author, educator, and activist, who is internationally recognized for his work advancing social justice. As the co-founder of A Call to Men, Tony has been a powerful voice in preventing violence against women while promoting healthy, respectful manhood. His 2010 TED Talk was named by GQ Magazine as one of the "Top 10 TED Talks Every Man Should See."

Today's conference will feature panel presentations from area mayors and local school superintendents. In addition, participants will be able to attend workshops focused on **Workforce Development and AI, Financial Literacy, Mentoring, Physical and Mental Health**.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the New York Fathering Conference Planning Committee for their unwavering investment in our fathers, their families, and our communities. We hope you enjoy today's conference and leave inspired. By working together, we can—and will—transform our communities.

Sincerely,

*Frank Williams, Jr.*  
Chairman, The New York Fathering Conference Committee  
Executive Director, White Plains Youth Bureau, PHD

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**9:30 a.m.**

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER JOSHUA DUBOIS**



Joshua DuBois is one of America's leading voices on community partnerships, religion in the public square and issues impacting African American men. He is the best-selling author of "The President's Devotional: The Daily Readings that Inspired President Obama" (2013). Joshua led the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships in President Obama's first term and was called the President's "Pastor-in-Chief" by TIME Magazine. He spearheaded the White House's work on responsible fatherhood, grassroots community partnerships and religion in foreign affairs, and brought together religious leaders from across the ideological spectrum to tackle the nation's biggest challenges. Joshua now leads a consulting firm - Values Partnerships - that creates faith-based partnerships for the public, private and non-profit sectors, teaches at Princeton University, and is the weekly religion and values columnist for The Daily Beast. Joshua is a frequent media commentator and his work with faith-based organizations has been profiled in The New York Times, The Washington Post, ABC News' This Week, PBS News Hour, CNN and elsewhere.

He has also authored four cover stories for Newsweek magazine, including a seminal piece entitled "The Fight for Black Men" which historian Taylor Branch called "stunning."

**9:45 a.m.**

### **Plenary Session 1**

#### **Strengthening Fathers as Partners in Education**

#### **How are Schools Working with Fathers? Education Leaders in Conversation...**

*Moderator:*

**Don Simmons, Sr., Director, Black & Hispanic Male Initiative, Westchester Community College**

Father engagement in schools is a powerful yet often underutilized force in shaping student success. When fathers and father figures are meaningfully involved in their children's education, students show improved academic performance, stronger social skills, and greater confidence in school settings. Building intentional pathways for fathers requires schools to move beyond traditional involvement models and create welcoming, flexible, and culturally responsive opportunities for engagement. This means recognizing diverse family structures, work schedules, and lived experiences, and ensuring fathers feel seen as essential partners rather than occasional participants.

This workshop focuses on practical strategies schools and communities can use to strengthen fathering engagement. Participants will explore approaches such as father-friendly communication, inclusive school events, mentorship opportunities, and collaborative decision-making that invite fathers into the educational process in authentic ways. By fostering trust and shared responsibility between schools and fathers, we can build sustainable partnerships that support children's academic growth, emotional well-being, and long-term success creating pathways where fathers are empowered to lead, advocate, and engage with confidence.

#### **PANELISTS:**



**Dr. Joseph L. Ricca,**  
Superintendent,  
White Plains City School District



**Dr. David Mauricio**  
Superintendent,  
Peekskill City School District



**Dr. Corey W. Reynolds**  
Superintendent,  
New Rochelle City School District



**Dr. Lorenda Chisolm**  
Superintendent,  
Greenburgh Central School District

11:05 a.m.

## Plenary Session 2

### AI for Fathers Families, Practical Tools for Work, Home and Growth

## Dan Lopez Chief Technology Officer

Founded and operate Dan's Career Corner, a career coaching business dedicated to empowering job seekers and career changers with personalized guidance and AI-informed strategies. With over a decade of experience guiding organizations and professionals toward growth. Uniquely positioned at the crossroads of workforce development, technology adoption, and inclusive coaching. AI is showing up everywhere, but it doesn't have to be confusing or intimidating. This session offers fathers and families a clear, practical introduction to what AI is - and just as importantly - what it is not.

Designed for beginners with no technical background, the session focuses on positive, real-world ways AI can be used as a helpful tool in everyday life.



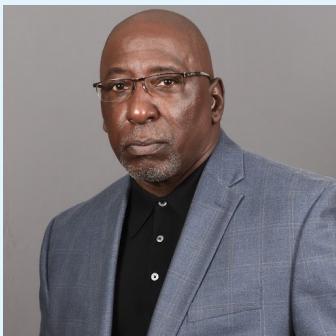
Participants will see how AI can support personal growth, learning, and economic mobility, with examples that are relevant, realistic, and easy to apply right away. During the session, we will explore how AI can help with career and financial goals, such as improving resumes, practicing for interviews, and identifying training or career pathways. We will also cover every day uses, including planning your week, saving time on paperwork, and getting support while learning new skills. Participants will leave with a plain-language understanding of AI, reusable prompt templates for

job search, skill-building, and daily planning, and simple guidelines for safe use—what information to share and what to keep private.

12:30 P.M.

## FEATURED SPEAKER TONY PORTER

Tony Porter is an author, educator and activist working to advance social justice issues. As the co-founder of A CALL TO MEN, Tony is internationally recognized for his efforts to prevent violence against women while promoting a healthy, respectful manhood. Tony's 2010 TED Talk has been named by GQ Magazine as one of the "Top 10 TED Talks Every Man Should See." Tony is an adviser to the National Football League, National Basketball Association, National Hockey League and Major League Baseball, providing policy consultation, working extensively with player engagement, and facilitating



violence prevention and healthy manhood training. He is an international lecturer for the U.S. State Department, having extensive global experience to include Brazil, India and Africa, and has been a guest presenter to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Tony has worked with the United States Military Academy at West Point and the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. He is sought after for his in-depth understanding of the collective socialization of men, and has served as a script consultant for the Emmy Award-winning television series "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit." Tony is the author of *Breaking Out of the Man Box* and the visionary for *NFL Dads: Dedicated to Daughters*.

***Tony Porter is an educator and activist who is internationally recognized for his effort to end violence against women.***

1:15 p.m.

**Plenary Session 3**  
**Mayors and Town Supervisors**  
**Transforming Communities by Strengthening Fathers**  
**and Providing Pathways for Success**

***Moderator:***

***Rev. Dr. Erwin Lee Trollinger, Jr., Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church & President of the Ministers Council of White Plains and Vicinity of White Plains***

Mayors and Town Supervisors are uniquely positioned to strengthen fathers and shape the conditions that allow families to thrive. Local government is often the first point of connection for residents seeking support, opportunity, and stability. By prioritizing father engagement through policy, partnerships, and public

messaging, municipal leaders can help normalize father involvement and reinforce its importance to community well-being. When cities and towns lead with intention, they send a powerful signal that father's matter—not only in their households, but in the future of the community as a whole.

**PANELISTS:**



**Paul Feiner**  
Supervisor,  
Town of Greenburgh



**Yadira Ramos-Herbert**  
Mayor,  
City of New Rochelle



**Shawyn Patterson-Howard**  
Mayor,  
City of Mount Vernon



**Justin Brasch**  
Mayor,  
City of White Plains

2:30 p.m.

**BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

**Breakout Session 1:**  
**Mental Health and Its Impact on Fathers, Families, and Communities**

***Facilitator/Moderator:***  
***Yocasta Jimenez, LSMW,***  
***President CEO Teens Under Construction***

**PRESENTER: Dr. Roger Ball,**  
**Supervisor of Social Workers,**  
**New York City Department of Education, Borough of the Bronx**



Fathers play a critical role in shaping the emotional health of their families and the stability of their communities. Yet many men carry unresolved trauma, chronic stress, grief, and untreated mental health challenges that quietly impact how they relate, parent, lead, and cope. This workshop explores how trauma and mental health affect fathers' emotional regulation, relationships, parenting, and intergenerational outcomes. Participants will examine how unaddressed mental health struggles can show up as withdrawal, anger,

control, substance use, and family strain, while also highlighting the resilience and healing potential within men when properly supported. Attendees will gain practical, trauma-informed strategies to reduce stigma, strengthen emotional wellness, support healthy attachment, and engage fathers in culturally responsive ways. The session equips mentors, faith leaders, educators, and community partners to strengthen families and build healthier, more resilient communities by investing in the mental and emotional well-being of fathers.

## Breakout Session 2::

### Strengthening Our Communities Through Mentoring and Male Support Networks

**Facilitator/Moderator:**  
**Dr. Jim Isenberg,**  
**Co-Founder Grandpas United**

#### PRESENTERS:



**David Vandiver, Coordinator  
Sigma Beta Club/Founding  
Mentor, Phi Beta Sigma  
Fraternity, Inc.**



**Dennis McGloster,  
Mentor Rockland Omega  
Academy (ROAD) Xi Lambda Xi  
Chapter Omega Psi Phi  
Fraternity, Inc.**



**Irvin Crusoe  
Director of Guide Right Kappa  
Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. New  
Rochelle - White Plains Alumni  
Chapter, Inc.**



**Mark D. Clarke, EDU Leaders  
Consulting Group, President  
& CEO, Member Alpha Phi  
Alpha Fraternity, Inc.**



**Martin McDonald  
Executive Director & Founder  
Black Diamonds Academic Suc-  
cess, Inc.**

This workshop is designed to highlight the critical role that mentorship and positive male relationships play in building resilient, healthy communities. This workshop explores how intentional mentoring can support personal growth, emotional well-being, leadership development, and accountability among men and boys. Participants will examine the social and cultural challenges that often limit healthy connection, while learning how trust, guidance, and shared experiences can create pathways to positive change at both the individual and community levels.

Through interactive discussion, real-world examples, and collaborative activities, the workshop equips participants with practical tools to create, sustain, and strengthen male support networks. Attendees will learn strategies for fostering safe spaces, encouraging open communication, and promoting mutual support across generations. By the end of the workshop, participants will have a clearer understanding of how mentoring and male support networks can reduce isolation, strengthen families, and contribute to stronger, more connected communities overall.

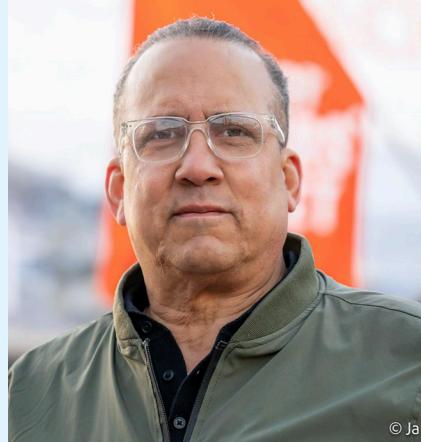
## Breakout Session 3: Strengthening Fathers and Families Through Outdoor Engagement: Hiking, Camping, and More

**Moderator: William Walker, Manager,  
White Plains Youth Bureau Fathering Initiative**

### PRESENTERS



**Saul Martinez**  
Social Worker



**Bill Bastson**  
Executive Director, Nyack  
Chamber of Commerce



**Shaunqui Harris**  
Independent Filmmaker,  
writer and Musician

This workshop explores the physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits of spending time in nature, with a focus on encouraging Black and Brown families to access the incredible natural resources available in their communities—many of which are free or low-cost. Participants will hear inspiring stories, learn practical tips for exploring local parks, trails, and waterways, and discover ways to make outdoor experiences enjoyable

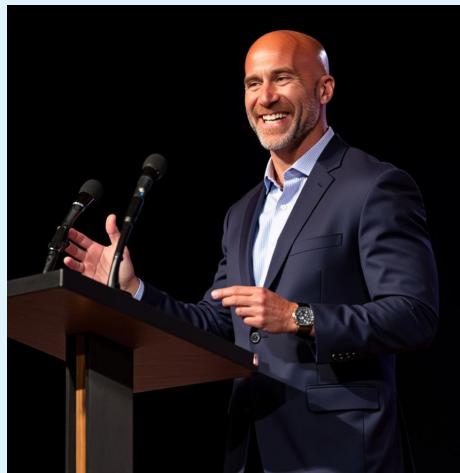
and accessible for all ages. Beyond recreation, time outdoors supports mental clarity, stress relief, creativity, and a deeper connection to the natural world. By highlighting both the joys and the accessibility of nature, this session aims to empower families and individuals of color to embrace outdoor life and encourage community-wide participation.

## **Breakout Session 4: Boys will be Men.: 8 Lessons for the Lost American Male**

**Facilitator:  
Deacon Dewitt R. Smith**

**Presenter:  
Vince Benevento, LPC,  
Founder Causeway Collaborative**

Vince Benevento, LPC, is a licensed counselor in both NY and CT, a husband, father, speaker, and entrepreneur. He holds a BA from Wesleyan University and a Master's in School Counseling from Fairfield University. Vince possesses nearly 20 years of experience working specifically with men and young men as a coach, mentor, and therapist. The organization Vince founded and has directed for the last 15 years, Causeway Collaborative, has supported over 2000 men and young men from 14-30, effectively changing the way that therapy has been done for guys who have been resistant to help over that time. Now, Vince hopes to share key lessons with men who seek to become



better versions of themselves and those who love them. Boys will be Men: 8 Lessons for the Lost American Male explores essential information pertaining to men's mental health, accumulated over nearly two decades by Vince Benevento, LPC, a leading expert on Men's issues. By weaving case studies with his own lived experience, Vince chronicles essential lessons learned for young men, and their loved ones. Vince's direct candor and thoughtful examination

of the challenges facing men in our society will provide practical tools and beneficial guidance for anyone looking to support men in the journey to becoming their ideal selves.

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## **Breakout Session 5: Transforming Our Communities Through Trade and Apprenticeship Opportunities**

**Facilitator/Moderator:  
Wayne Woodbury**

**Presenter:  
Anthony Rooney, MPA,  
Founder, College Client**

One college per month closes in America. Does a 4-year college education, especially in the private sector, make sense anymore? Since the summer of 2020, students have been reevaluating the importance of pursuing bachelor's degree programs in academic areas unrelated to STEM. Furthermore, as technology progresses, skilled trade programs that grant graduates with "raw" hands-on skills that cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence (A.I.) have increased in popularity. Essentially, we need to encourage students and families



to take a more practical approach to the college selection process; an approach that is both career driven and economically realistic.

Anthony Rooney is a seasoned higher education professional with over ten years of sales and recruitment experience. He collaborates frequently with youth organizations and school districts, offering comprehensive college + career workshops focusing on public speaking, entrepreneurship and trade skill development.

# 2026 NEW YORK FATHERING CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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**FATHERHOOD:  
MORE THAN A TITLE  
IT'S A LIFESTYLE**



A photograph of a smiling father with a beard holding his young daughter. The father is wearing a light blue polo shirt, and the daughter is wearing a yellow dress. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

**National Fatherhood Initiative®**  
[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

**JUST THE FACTS**

Involved dads improve their children's **overall emotional and social well-being.**

Source: Adamsons, K., & Johnson, S. K. (2013). An updated and expanded meta-analysis of nonresident fathering and child well-being. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 27, 589-599.



A photograph of a father helping his daughter with homework. The father is wearing a plaid shirt over a white t-shirt, and the daughter is wearing a pink tank top. They are both looking down at the work on the table.

**JUST THE FACTS**

Children who live with their dads **do better in school.**

SOURCE: Whitney, S., Prewett, S., Wang, Ze, & Haiglin C. (2017). Fathers' importance in adolescents' academic achievement. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 8(3-4), 101-126.

**National Fatherhood Initiative®**  
[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

A father is a man who expects  
his son to be as  
good a man as he meant to be.

*- Frank A. Clark*

