

Support for Single Moms Raising Sons: Meet David Miller of *Raising Him Alone*

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WeParent had the opportunity to to interview **David Miller** of the ***Raising Him Alone*** campaign which launched earlier this year. Founded by David Miller and Matt Stevens, ***Raising Him Alone*** is dedicated to researching, designing, and implementing a campaign to support the social well being of single mothers raising boys. Through a series of intense community forums, workshops and support group initiatives, RHA seeks to increase access to resources in the areas of health and well being, educational support and advocacy, and financial literacy. Read on to learn more...

WP: How was the Raising Him Alone Campaign born?

David: Based on our working over the past 15 years with young African American and Latino males. We began to realize that parental engagement was a key area that needed to be focused on. The vast majority of these young males were being raised exclusively by mothers and grandmothers.

WP: Why are you and Matt doing this? What inspired you to take this on in such a big way?

David: While we are both responsible fathers who are vested in the lives of our families and children, we realize that too many boys are growing up without the family support needed to become successful. And, if not us, then who? We get tired of hearing excuses about what's happening and what's not happening in our community. It is time for us to begin to connect the dots. The lives of our children are at stake.

WP: Often, I think that our daughters are forgotten when it comes to assessing the impact of father absence. We forget that our daughters need their fathers, too, and that they often suffer deeply when Daddy isn't there. Why the specific focus on raising boys alone?

David: This is true. Many times our daughters do not get the kind of attention that is needed. I wrote a book several years ago focused on father/daughter relationships. When you look at the data on young males, it is clear that we are losing too many boys to violence, incarceration and hopelessness.



RAISING HIM ALONE

Providing Resources and Support For Single Mothers Raising Boys

WP: You've got a wonderful website with a variety of resources for mothers like recommended reading, tips and your blog. What other support does the campaign offer?

David: We provide monthly motivational messages to single mothers/grandmothers raising boys. We also provide referrals to mothers/grandmothers raising boys. We use our national contacts to try to connect these mothers/ grandmothers to services anywhere in the U.S. It may take us a few days or weeks, but we have already connected over 3,000 families.

In the next few months we will be offering some on-line seminars as well for parents. Through our Facebook page, Single Mothers Raising Boys, we are having some amazing discussions with mothers across the country. Facebook has allowed us to extend these discussions to mothers abroad, too.

WP: I know you've done a few workshops and resource fairs in Baltimore and Jersey. Are you planning to bring them to other cities? What other programs are in the works?

David: We are interested in hosting **Raising Him Alone** workshops in communities across the country. We are interested in focusing specifically on working more closely with churches and community groups. This information is critical to our survival, so we must find ways to better support single mothers and grandmothers, as well as, support the process of reconnecting fathers.

WP: Now, you also published a book as part of the launch. What type of guidance will mothers find in it?

David: Raising Him Alone was released on May 4, 2009, in Brooklyn, NY (available at www.raisinghimalone.com). The book focuses on strategies to support single mothers and grandmothers raising boys. Many of the strategies in the book were based on a series of interviews and focus groups with a diverse group of mothers and grandmothers. The book is a must-read for parents who need a balance in their life to support raising a boy to become a man.

WP: What kind of response are you getting from mothers and children touched by the campaign so far?

David: The response has been overwhelming. We have touched the lives of over 4,000 mothers and grandmothers since the launch of the campaign! We have been able to connect many mothers and grandmothers to vital resources, as well as, help them think more critically about the needs of their sons.

www.RaisingHimAlone.com

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Providing Resources and Support For Single Mothers Raising Boys

WP: What are the biggest themes or issues you're uncovering as you talk to mothers about what type of support they really need and want?

David: Many mothers and grandmothers have contacted us, because they are being physically abused by their sons. We have received an alarming number of emails and calls from parents who struggle with this issue. We have connected many of these moms to social services and domestic violence agencies within their local area.

The issue of reconnecting dads is always an emotional subject. Many of the mothers we have spoken to are bitter and are not willing to work on developing a healthy relationship with their son's father. In many of these cases, we have referred these mothers to counseling services within their local area.

WP: And, what about fathers? Does the campaign do outreach to engage them? What are they saying about Raising Him Alone?

David: We are getting a lot of responses from fathers. Many are seeking ways to get reconnected. Within the next few weeks, we are launching a new website for fathers that focuses specifically on responsible fatherhood. The men are in need of help. Many have realized the mistakes they have made, but are interested in reconnecting with their family.

WP: To wrap things up, what are the key thoughts you'd like to leave with the WeParent family?

David: We would like to partner with **WeParent** and other groups that are providing solutions for families. We must move beyond the blame game and create models that strengthen families.

WP: As the mother of a beautiful boy, I want to thank you for taking this on. So often, single mothers are made wrong and blamed, however subtly or blatantly, for the condition of Black boys as a group in this country. It becomes all about our failing. This campaign really seems to recognize that most mothers are doing the best they can with what they have. They don't need blame, guilt, to be wrong. They need substantive empowering support and upliftment. So, thank you for offering that through the Raising Him Alone campaign.

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