

## Fathers Go the Extra Mile

Dick Hoyt's track record as a parent stretches over thousands of miles. Hundreds of Boston's business leaders came to honor him at the 10th Families First Fathers' Breakfast on October 21st.



Event Co-Chair John DeVoy presented Dick Hoyt with the *Friend of the Family Award* for his lifetime of exemplifying hope and inspiration as a father. Upon accepting the award, Hoyt shared, "Parenting is stressful, no matter who the child is and who the parent is. We all need support. Do what you can to find the time to just be with your children, playing ball or reading. It doesn't have to be anything fancy or elaborate; just spending time with them shows them you care."



Host Committee members include (L to R) Mike Buckley, Mike d'Hemecourt, Dan Barcan, Co-chairs Dean Atkins and John DeVoy, John Howard, and Michael Kohn.

Henry Grossman, a longtime Host Committee member, explained what brings him and his fellow dads back: "**My table looks forward to this morning event every year. This is a group of friends, a number of whom I only see once a year at the Fathers Breakfast.**"

Thanks to the hard work of the committee, corporate sponsors, table captains, and attendees, this year's Fathers Breakfast was the most successful to date. More than \$110,000 was raised for Families First!

## Families First working Hand-in-Hand with Children's Hospital

Like all first time dads, teenage fathers are overwhelmed by the new responsibilities of parenting. When we work with these parents, Families First changes the lives of not one but two generations of young people who are at extremely high risk.



"Here's a group of young dads who are mostly urban guys — if you just saw them hanging out in the T station you might not feel that comfortable around them," explains Haji Shearer, speaking about the workshop participants in the *Young Parents Program* at Children's Hospital. **Families First partners with Children's Hospital to reach teen parents from low-income and at-risk environments.** Shearer, a Parent Educator with Families First, helps these parents be the best parents they can be. These fathers go to great lengths for their children.

"These guys are loving fathers who would do *anything* for their kids, including sometimes getting off the corner, stopping selling drugs, changing their dangerous lifestyles, so they can be a better a role model for their own children. I think that's one of the most surprising things."

"A lot of times you'll hear a dad say that they feel out of control, or threatened by their child being disrespectful and not following rules." When the child has trouble in school, the father feels judged. He's failing at his job. This is where Families First parenting workshops are so critical. "As a parent starts to feel better about his own parenting skills, his child starts to feel better about the parent, about their home, about their family."

## Families First Workshops: Getting to the Heart of Better Communication

**Marta Rivera, a Families First Parenting Educator, teaches new strategies and skills that parents can try at home.**

During a recent workshop at The Family Center, Marta helped parents develop solutions for their children's recurring difficult behavior. Many of these families face unemployment, domestic violence, and are parenting alone. These extreme circumstances can make it difficult to manage their children's behavior.

Says Rivera, "Communicating family values, teaching acceptable behavior by setting clear limits, being consistent by sticking to what you say, and being 'curious not furious,' lays the foundation for talking so children will listen, and listening so children will talk. A child is never too young to see his or her parent as the role model."

**Your support allows thousands of parents in need to attend these workshops at no cost.  
Thank you.**

## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, November 12th 9:30-11:30  
The Kid's Place, Needham**

**Learn with your children at our workshop**

*In Their World: Play in Early Childhood*

Join us for a workshop about the benefits of play and how it shapes your child's social-emotional development. During the parenting workshop, children will create their own ceramic masterpieces with help from *The Kid's Place* staff!

Contact Families First at 617-868-7687 or visit our website, [www.families-first.org](http://www.families-first.org), for more information.



## Running the Boston Marathon for Families First!



You can join the Families First Marathon team!

Families First has been selected as an official charity for the *John Hancock Non-Profit Marathon Program*. If you've ever dreamed of running the Boston Marathon (or just want to run again), now is your chance!

To find out more visit our website at [www.families-first.org](http://www.families-first.org) or call 617-868-7687.