

## Helping Families in Transition

On a Tuesday night in Cambridge, when most families are shifting from dinner to bedtime routines, a group of mothers gather for a parenting workshop. They all live in shelter at Transition House but do not know each other. Their languages, cultures, and backgrounds are different, and they are all tired—tired from school, working, and shuttling children to and from school and day care. But they do it all because they want the best for their children.

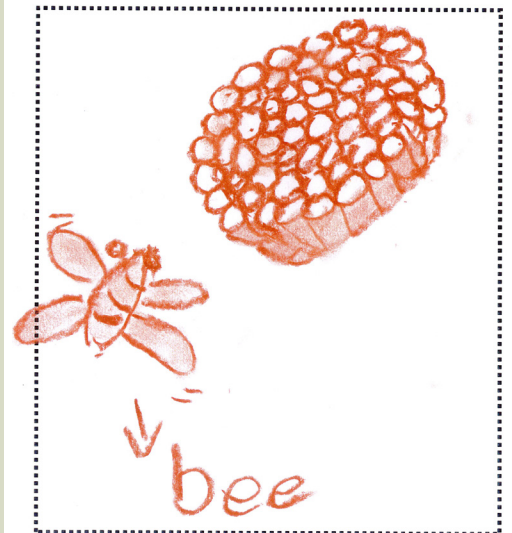
At first Tamika was rushed and skeptical. But soon it is clear this will be a different sort of meeting. She gets to talk about her kids! The Parenting Educator asks: “What is it about your child that brings you joy?” Tamika has a ready answer: “I love to see the joy on my son’s face when I make something good happen.” As Tamika warms to the group, she shares that she works hard to make life better for her son, but constantly feels guilty: that her son’s father isn’t in his life, that she can’t spend more time with him, and that she has trouble setting limits and providing structure in the shelter. Because of you, Families First is there to guide Tamika and the other moms and help them form crucial support networks.

Research shows that parenting is critical to improving outcomes for children who live with the chronic stress of poverty, homelessness, and violence. Because your generosity has allowed us to expand our offerings to more parents living in shelters, Tamika and her friends will fill their tool kits with knowledge and strategies that help them build self-esteem in their children, use positive discipline, and communicate more effectively. They will learn to be even better mothers for their children and to help each other too. When you give to Families First, you are transforming families like Tamika’s. Thank you.

## With Significant Support, More Families Benefit

As the major supporter of our Parenting in Public initiative, the TripAdvisor Foundation is making it possible for Families First to serve more homeless families, like the parents at Transition House. Already we have been able to expand into the high-need community of Brockton, where we began workshops for families living in scattered motel sites. In the coming year, our grant from the TripAdvisor Foundation will enable us to support new workshops at existing and new partner sites, including a domestic violence shelter in Waltham and a transitional housing organization in Roxbury. We are grateful to Rachel and Seth Kalvert for their efforts in helping to secure this generous grant from the TripAdvisor Foundation.

How I see myself as a parent...



This mother says she feels like a worker bee, always tending to the hive, with no time for herself as an individual.

Parents who participate in Parenting in Public workshops are now asked to draw “identity maps” that allow participants to freely communicate feelings and ideas around identity. The medium captures the conflicts and frustrations parents feel. This tool adds richness to our understanding of what parents gain from our workshops, but it is also a meaningful reflection and builds community among our Parenting in Public parents.



## Join Us for the 2013 Fathers' Breakfast!

Fall is in the air, which means it's time for our annual Fathers' Breakfast! The Fathers' Breakfast continues to be a unique event honoring fathers for the important role they play in children's lives. Join us on Friday, November 8, at the Mandarin Oriental for this special morning, featuring remarks from Colin Stokes, who will speak about hidden meanings in popular children's movies. For more information about tickets or sponsoring the event, please visit [www.families-first.org](http://www.families-first.org).



*Families First is grateful to John Hancock for their support of the Fathers' Breakfast.*



## Friends of the Family Generous Donor Event



It was exciting to have all Families First past and current board chairs at the event!

In May our generous donors came out for the Friends of the Family event. Hosted by Ken and Leslie Pucker, it was an evening for us to say thank you and for you to hear how you make a difference for families. Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson spoke about the challenges families living in poverty face, saying, "The biggest predictor of positive outcomes for children is what goes on at home with mom and dad. We need to do whatever we can to make sure parents can succeed."

**Leadership Giving Circle** *In celebration of our 25th Anniversary, Families First is introducing the Leadership Giving Circle to recognize you, our most generous donors. The annual Friends of the Family event is just one benefit for this circle. Visit [www.families-first.org](http://www.families-first.org) for giving levels and benefits.*

### Board of Directors

Elizabeth Cohen, President  
Gayle Dublin, Co-Chair  
Jennifer Kordell, Co-Chair  
Michael Winkler, Treasurer  
Leslie Zients Pucker, Clerk  
Jody Cornish  
Stacy Dell'Orfano  
Dr. Julia DeVoy  
Marjorie Freiman  
Pauline Hargreaves  
Dr. Nancy Hill  
Robert Holmes  
Rachel Kalvert  
Michael Kohn

Jeff Murray  
Russell Oken  
Molly Stearns  
Judith Sydney  
Linda Braun, Honorary  
Susan O'Connor, Honorary

### Staff

Elizabeth Cohen,  
Executive Director  
Rachel Banks  
Susannah Cintron  
Sue Covitz  
Stacey Ellsworth  
Michael Goldman

Rebekah McKinney  
Maureen O'Brien  
Madeleine Otani Oldman  
Magda Rodriguez

### Parenting Educators

Milly Arbaje-Thomas  
Pam Bailey  
Shawne Blake  
Debby Broadley  
Marilyn Buckler  
Carrine Bury  
Yvette Cheeks  
Carol Darcy  
Alejandra Hernandez

Briget Evans  
Roxanne Hoke-Chandler  
Rosalyn Levy  
Lilly Marcelin  
Susan Marx  
Yesenia Menendez  
Michelle Padden-Dragone  
Gail Parsons  
Stacy Randell  
Marta Rivera  
Lilly Vasquez  
Doug Weinstock

## Roundtable Series

The Roundtable Series we started last year is expanding! Topics this year range from Fostering Gratitude in Children to Promoting a Healthy Body Image. At a recent Roundtable we heard from our very own board member, Professor Nancy Hill of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, about her research on how culture shapes the way our children learn, think, and develop values. If you would like to receive updates and invitations to the Roundtables, please contact Susannah Cintron at [scintron@families-first.org](mailto:scintron@families-first.org).