

Four fathers positive influence on others with daily efforts as dads

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Riverbend Head Start & Family Services recently recognized four fathers with the “Dedicated Dad” Award at their Volunteer Appreciation Banquet in April.

The “Dedicated Dad” recognition goes to a positive father or father figure demonstrating a commitment to the learning and development of the Head Start child. To receive this recognition award the father had to have proven or displayed the following throughout the 2017-2018 program year:

Shown examples how the father/father figure has enriched the life of the Head Start child:

Influenced the child's development

Served as a role model

Demonstrated how he positively co-parents

Here is a little information on each of the fathers.

Antonio "Tony" Castillo

Antonio comes to the Granite City Center and plays with the students. He helps clean and set tables during meal times. Demonstrating a strong male presence in the classroom, while also helping out around the center and on the playground with learning and play activities. Antonio helps organize center activities and has demonstrated leadership abilities that in turn.

Tony said by volunteering at Head Start, he has gotten a lot out of it in understanding what the teachers and kids go through in their early education process. He said it helps to understand where his son needs help outside the classroom.

"Head Start makes a lot of difference," he said. "If I had to say something to other fathers it would always be in their children's lives. You can never get that time back if you don't spend it."

Derrick McMillan

Derrick has shown so much commitment to his son's early education by participating in home visits on a regular basis even though he may have just come home from working a 12-hour shift.

He actively participates in the visits and continues to work on activities with his son throughout the week. When he is working around the house his son can be found sticking close to dad and watching what he does. Derrick takes the time to show him what he is doing and finds things on "his level" that he can do so he feels like he is working "just like daddy".

Charles Boyd

Charles is a very dedicated dad. He attends classroom events and is always willing to help out. He is very involved in the parent-teacher conferences and home visits. He participates and gives valuable feedback concerning his son Charles. Charles is also a very active policy council member. The Policy Council actively participates in the development of school readiness goals and helps to assess the program's progress in achieving those goals. The Policy Council also promotes the critical role that parents play in supporting their children's progress towards school readiness. Policy Council members are voted into office by their parent peers.

Charles attends the meetings and then presents some of the information he learned to the parents who aren't able to attend. He's also running a parent meeting when the chairperson wasn't able to attend and did a great job facilitating. He also attends parent committee meetings to help plan events and activities for the center.

"It is very important for me being a dad," he said. "When I lost my mom not too long ago things were little tough for me. My son was a rejuvenation at a rebirth for life. I will have the opportunity to instill the things she taught me in him. Because of her, I can be a better father and dad to him and that means the world to me."

Charles said Head Start is simply an awesome program for young children.

He is an owner of a landscaping company.

Kartez Brown

Kartez is a single parent who is highly dedicated to his children. He left high paying evening job for a lower-paying daytime job in order to spend the evening with his children.

Kartez often drops off and picks up his Center child, always visiting with staff and curious about what his child is learning and how he can contribute to continuing her educational experience at home.

Kartez scheduled and keeps his child's eye specialist appointments so she is able to clearly see and excel in the classroom. He also tries to creatively offer nutritious foods to his picky eater." Kartez completed home activities with his child to ensure she is ready for kindergarten.