

# Edwardsville Children's Museum to Crown the Dopest Dad in Ed/Glen

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EDWARDSVILLE – On Sept. 3, 16 dads from the Edwardsville area stepped into the ring to compete virtually for the title of “Dopest Dad” in Ed/Glen and all the bragging rights that come with it. After two weeks of competition and more than \$20,000 raised

for Edwardsville Children's Museum (ECM), eight of these incredible dads and community leaders will go head-to-head in a bracket-style matchup to get one step closer to the crown.

The only nonprofit children's museum in the Metro East, ECM launched the Dopest Dad Contest to help fund its current operating needs and future growth. Over the past two years, ECM has undergone a complete renovation with new hands-on exhibits and doubled the numbers of guests who have come through its doors—all while operating in the black thanks to its supporters. Since COVID-19 hit, however, ECM has been forced to close temporarily and suspend all in-person fundraisers. With proceeds from the Dopest Dad Contest, ECM can ensure the Museum will be even bigger and better when it reopens.

During the Dopest Dad five-round competition, area residents can vote for their favorite dads at <https://e.givesmart.com/events/ihu/>. Each vote is \$5, and fans can vote as often as they like. The winners of the Elite Eight bracket will move on to the Final Four on Sept. 24, and for the top two contenders, the Championship starting Oct.

### **The Elite Eight includes:**

Dr. Aaron Omotola, BJC Healthcare

Chad Opel, CFP and Philanthropist, Visionary Wealth Advisors

Scott Wetzel, Cassens

Matt Warren, Carrollton Bank

Dr. Allen Duncan, Liberty Middle School

Bob Marcus, The Gori Law Firm

Dr. Ryan Cleland, Infinite Wellness Center

Nate Tingley, Edwardsville Parks & Recreation

“Every vote placed helps ECM continue to offer learning opportunities for children across the Metro East,” said Dr. Abby Schwent, director of ECM. “Proceeds from the Dopest Dad Contest will provide operating support to get ECM ready for our reopening, grow our scholarship fund which covers field trips for schools serving low-income students, and allow us to expand our exhibits and programs.”

In addition, ECM is currently partnering with the City of Edwardsville and the Edwardsville Community Foundation to transform the 135-year-old Nickel Plate Railroad Station into an interactive learning environment for kids ages eight and older. ECM is working with PBS on this new project to develop STEM-driven exhibits and activities that will engage, inspire and excite every visitor.

The Dopest Dad Contest is sponsored by J.F. Electric, Cassens, Edwardsville Bank, Weinheimer Opel Law Firm, Butler Marcus Group – RE/MAX Alliance, Holmes Insurance Agency, Ltd., State Farm – Rick Marteeny, First Community, Global Brew Tap House, SHC Foundation, Alton Memorial Hospital, Town and Country Bank, Busey Bank, Carrollton Bank, Infinite Wellness Integrative Medical Center, and Ellsworth Insurance Agency. Round sponsors include Zeal Marketing & Consulting, Queen Bee Consulting, My Pocket CEO, and First Bank of Waterloo.

*About Edwardsville Children's Museum: Edwardsville Children's Museum is committed to stimulating curiosity and cultivating learning at the age of wonder. ECM believes that kids of all ages learn through discovery and hands-on play. All exhibits and programs are designed to build happy and curious learners from ages six months to 60 years. Families are invited to explore ECM's exhibits, discover its seasonal programs, or become members for year-round learning fun. For more information, visit [www.edwardsvillechildrensmuseum.org](http://www.edwardsvillechildrensmuseum.org).*