



Fathers walk their kids to school

On September 10, I Am A Dream Inc., Passages, Inc. and the Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative presented "Fathers Walk to School Day."

The day was set up to encourage fathers to take a more active role in their children's lives as well as education.

Although "Fathers Walk to School Day" was a countywide effort, with a number of participating schools in the Greater Cleveland area, a program accompanying the walk was held at Michael R. White School on the eastside.

There, administrators and representatives from the sponsoring organizations as well as some community leaders greeted the fathers as they arrived with students that morning.

Executive Director Cleveland Chapter NAACP, Stanley Miller, offered some words of encouragement to the dads. Then, by the end of the morning, the participating men



During a program at Michael R. White School that morning, fathers recite The Fathers Walk Pledge for Fathers and Men.

recited a pledge that promises to support children.

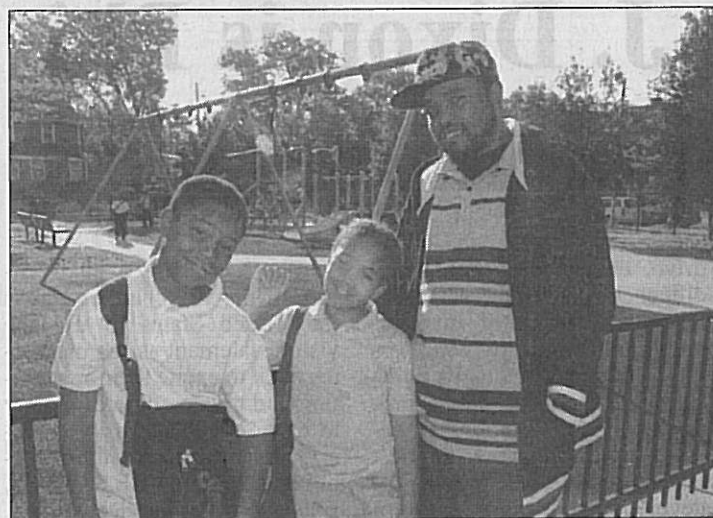
The Fathers Walk Pledge for Fathers and Men:

I will take my children or a child to school and I will be at a school on Sept 10, to encourage all children to do their best every day at school.

I am responsible for the education of my child.

I will volunteer at my child's school three times this school year.

I will pick up my child's progress report or grade report



Thomas Daniels Sr. walked his two children, Dezaray Daniels (fourth grade) and Thomas Daniels Jr. (fifth grade), to Cleveland's Michael R. White School on Sept. 10, in support of Fathers Walk to School Day.

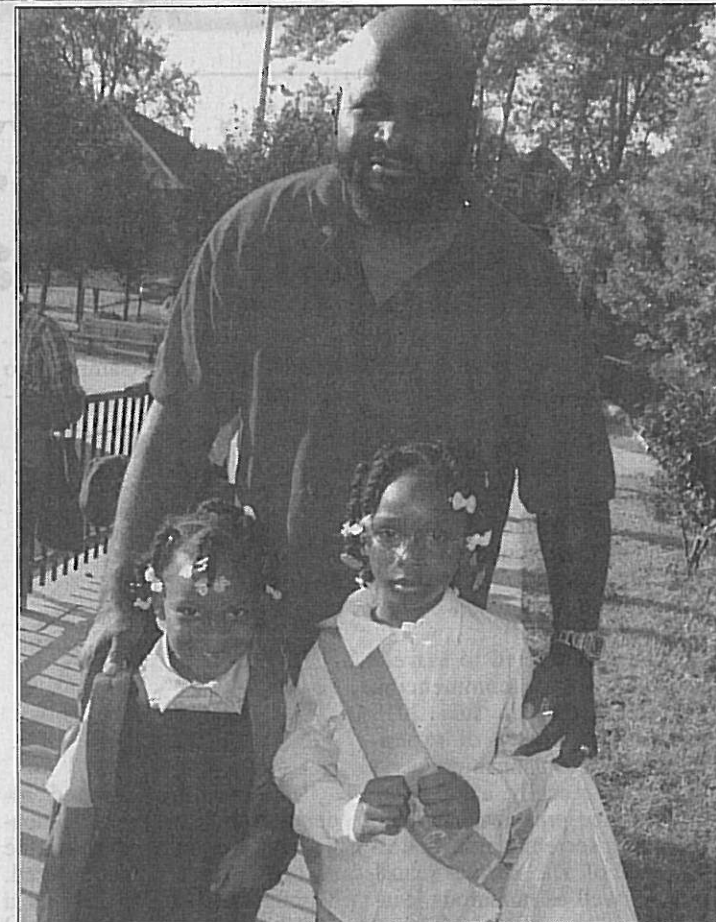
when required.

I will meet with my child's teacher at least two times a year and support them in education my child.

I will teach my child the value of family as well as the value of education.

I will work with my child's mother or guardian to achieve the best academic and social outcomes for my child even if I do not live with my child.

For more information call 216-881-6776 or email info@passages-oh.org.



Kindergartener and third grader, Bracheall and Brianna Smith, was escorted to Michael R. White School by their dad, Tyrone Smith Sr. (PHOTOS BY ERIC BENSON)

Education Law at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

By Jennifer Martinez
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The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland has been providing high quality legal services to low income clients since 1905. As the needs of the community changes so has Legal Aid to meet the emerging needs of clients.

The growing need to provide support to parents as they encountered difficulty getting school systems to provide services to their children led Legal Aid to begin a new practice area for education in 2004.

The Education Law practice at Legal Aid focuses on individ-

ual representation as well as engaging in initiatives to bring about systemic change. Individual client representation includes issues such as getting school districts to evaluate students for disabilities, making sure that schools provide appropriate services to students identified with disabilities, preventing suspensions and expulsions, and gaining access for students out of school.

Special emphasis is placed on insuring that students with mental health or behavioral problems receive special education and other appropriate services designed to keep them in school and out of the Juvenile

Court system.

The practice started with 1.5 lawyers and has grown to include 9 attorneys who include education law as at least a portion of their practice. Currently, one attorney has a practice that is entirely devoted to education issues.

In addition to direct representation, the Education Law practice focuses on community outreach and education by giving presentations to parents and community workers. Teaching them about educational rights helps them to better advocate for children to obtain the services they need to succeed.

Community education also

helps to insure that families know there are legal solutions to the problems they may face in school. The unit has also developed educational brochures to educate parents about their rights.

Finally, the Education Law practice works to identify and address systemic issues to effectuate change for the larger student community.

The group has filed complaints with the Ohio Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education - Office of Civil Rights in an effort to address systemic problems such as failing to provide special education

services in charter schools, segregating special education students from regular education students within school buildings and failing to provide due process notices in Spanish to Spanish-speaking only families.

In addition, the practice works informally with groups within various school districts to obtain changes in the system and ensure better services for all students. The education attorneys are also members of a statewide task force whose focus is on improving the quality of education for all students across the state.

Do you have questions about Education Law? Are you a par-

ent who is having trouble navigating legal issues with your child's school? Feel free to contact The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland: 216-687-1900.

Also, Legal Aid is holding a free brief advice and referral clinic focused on Education Law. The free clinic will be on Saturday, October 17 at Legal Aid's Cleveland Office (1223 West Sixth Street, Cleveland).

The free event is first-come, first-served. Low-income families are encouraged to come with questions or concerns about their child's education.

0% financing Satisfaction guaranteed.