

Because We're Dads: Reaching and Mobilizing Father's to Promote Gender Equality

Father's Day Op-Ed Sample

Father's day! We are grateful for dads. Dads play such a critical and powerful role in our society and we want to add our voices to honor and celebrate both dads and fatherhood. Our community and our state is largely better because of our dads.

Dads do more than father, and their influence goes beyond the value they bring to families. For most men, being a father changes how they see their role as men, including the responsibility they feel for making the world a better place. Becoming a father changes how men play out a lot of their other roles and responsibilities.

To this end, we want to call attention to the roles that dads do and can play to help promote and advance our efforts to achieve gender equality. Gender equality affects dads, regardless of the gender and/or gender identity of your child. We all know (or can assume) the ways that gender equality benefits our daughters and female-identified children. Increasing evidence suggests the concrete and meaningful ways that gender equality *also* benefits our sons and male-identified children. For elementary school children, for example, environments that are gender equitable are showing enhancement in the reading scores of males, a reduction in bullying overall, and increased father involvement in the school programming.

Without this, however, we see our collective sons slowly silence and constrain certain parts of themselves – their gentleness, compassion, caring, affection...and practice a certain form of masculinity – a toughness, and self-reliance that far too often also includes expressions and practices of misogyny.

Fathers have a tremendous opportunity to help expand our efforts towards gender equality. Not only can fathers have a more intentional and deliberate role in their own families, but also in their communities. By more actively, visibly and openly practicing fathering in ways that promote gender equality, fathers can not only be a model for their children, but also help to guide their sons and daughters to being their whole beautiful, complex and magnificent selves. Fathers can also practice this gender equitable fathering as they act in their other fathering roles, to impact wider circles and expand their reach. And by joining forces, fathers can impact on our how social environment.

The New York Coalition Against Domestic Violence and _____ (local DV program) have launched the *Because We're Dads: Reaching and Mobilizing Fathers to Promote Gender Equality* Initiative. *Because We're Dads* will bring dads together throughout our communities, and connect them state-wide to take concrete and meaningful steps towards gender equality. Over the coming months, we'll be providing additional tools, resources and opportunities; as well as be learning from these dads. You can learn more about this initiative by going to <https://www.nyscadv.org/what-we-do/prevention-toolkit/nyscadvs-initiative-because-were-dads.html>, or contact your local program at _____

Join us as we work together to make New York a better, more equitable and more just state of *all* our children.

Happy Fathers Day!