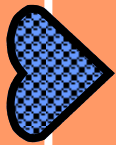




NEW MEXICO MARRIAGES FIRST PROJECT PRESENTS:

MARRIAGE LIFE LINE!



Welcome to the NMMFP!

(Written by Rebecca Holland)

Hello and welcome to this issue of the Marriage Life Line Newsletter! This issue is slightly different from some of the other newsletters you may have received. We want to take some time and explain to you in detail the services the New Mexico Marriages First Project offers. The NMMFP is dedicated to strengthening and preserving marriages and relationships, which in turn adds to strengthening families and communities. The NMMFP is a federally funded grant through the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families that makes resources available to individuals and/or families at little or no cost. The services range from couple/marriage enrichment events and classes to premarital/marriage mentoring services to library resources to website services to promoting healthy relationships and marriages through positive marketing and advertising. The NMMFP staff has unique experience and information that comes from various individual and couple backgrounds. The staff consists of a professional-licensed

counselor, two former public education school teachers, a former city planner from the United Kingdom, a retired state police officer, an information technology specialist, an accountant and a former owner of a large software company. All of the staff work together to meet the common objective of promoting and creating healthy relationships and marriages. The NMMFP is excited to be a part of this positive and proven effort to enhance relationships in the communities of Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties. Whether you are involved in a significant relationship, thinking about getting married, newly married or have been married for quite some time, the NMMFP is here to provide you with valuable services and resources to prepare for, enrich and strengthen your relationship/marriage. We invite you to turn the pages of this issue and become inspired by the services offered by the NMMFP. If you would like to assist the NMMFP by volunteering your services, please contact us at (505) 891-1846.



Announcing: Romance and Roses (See Page 7 for Details)



Romance and Roses, Saturday, April 12, 2008 at the Santa Ana Star Center. \$5.00 per person - don't miss this night of celebration!



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Upcoming events to plan for:

March 29, 2008: Premarital Education Class - FULL

April 12, 2008: Romance and Roses

April 26, 2008: Marriage Mentor Training

May 16, 2008: Marriage Mentor Booster Training

NMMFP Premarital and Marriage Enrichment Classes

(Written by Michael Holland)

Last quarter in the NMMFP Marriage Life Line, I wrote an article about marriage (relationship) maintenance. One of the things I said was, "In most cases, our marriages (relationships) are the last thing we think about that need our attention. We take the relationship for granted and think that it will be 'fine.'" I went on to say, "We expect that our marriages (relationships) will run for 600,000 miles without an 'oil change' or a tune up." Well, the NMMFP premarital and marriage enrichment classes are designed with "maintenance" in mind. These classes are developed for the following purposes: creating an atmosphere where couples can talk, working on issues in the relationship and learning new ways of interacting with each other. The NMMFP offers a variety of classes throughout the year. Premarital couples can attend one of the premarital education classes that are offered 3-4 times per year. The premarital classes last a total of 8 hours and are held either on a Saturday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm or on four consecutive week nights from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Topics covered in the premarital classes include: communication, conflict resolution, anger management, dealing with trust issues and forgiveness, financial management, intimacy and the sexual relationship. The locations for the classes vary and are held in

both Bernalillo and Sandoval counties. Couples who have taken the classes before have commented that they were extremely helpful in beginning the dialogue between each other on the topics presented. In addition, they have said that the classes helped them to prepare for what marriage would look like and learn the skills needed to have a healthy relationship. The NMMFP marriage enrichment classes are offered 2-3 times per year and last a total of 8 hours. Most of these classes are held on Saturdays. These classes, which are sometimes called workshops, are designed to help married couples learn new strategies for communication and negotiating conflicts. They also focus on issues that tend to catch married couples off guard; things like the differences between men and women, personality differences and the way these differences impact the marriage, and the role of different kinds of intimacy in the marriage. Couples have time at these classes to talk with each other and participate in exercises that will strengthen their relationship. All NMMFP premarital and marriage enrichment classes are free of charge, offer free childcare and provide meals and snacks. Consider participating in one of our upcoming classes.



Michael Holland,
Assistant Project
Director



DOES YOUR MARRIAGE NEED A LAUGH?



New Mexico Marriages First

Project (NMMFP) exists to:

Provide culturally appropriate marriage education, marriage enrichment projects, and programs that explore positive relationship models for married couples, engaged couples, couples interested in marriage and teenagers thus strengthening marriage and reducing the incidence of divorce.

*The
NMMFP
Motto:
"I Do! I Did? I
Will . . .
For LIFE!"*

Telling the Community About Healthy Marriages

(Written by Mike Gibson)

During the last year the efforts in marketing NM Marriages First and the services offered has grown ten fold. Our marketing and advertising has expanded into these areas:

- Billboards promoting healthy marriages around the Albuquerque area and on Highway 550
- Quarterly Marriage Lifeline newsletters
- Weekly radio show on Sundays at 8:30am – KKIM 1000am/94.7 FM
- Weekly radio advertisements
- Articles in local newspapers
- Event fliers
- Distribution of NMMFP brochures to businesses, churches, government offices, and community service organizations
- NMMFP website – www.themarriagelifeline.com
- Linking the website with other business and church websites
- Last, but not least – advertising by **word of mouth**

We are currently working with a local television station to begin advertising NMMFP commercials in major marketing time slots.

All of these efforts combined have enhanced our project and has allowed us to reach out to Bernalillo and Sandoval counties. We have established premarital and existing marriage mentoring sessions in each county. We have also held marriage enrichment events in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho and the Pueblo of Jemez.

Still being in the infancy of the project we are pleased with the success of our

marketing and advertising efforts. We plan to expand our marketing efforts to reach as many married and premarital couples who are in need of our services.

All existing marriages are subject to issues that can create stress that will hinder the communication needed to maintain a healthy marriage. With the divorce rate at over 50%, premarital couples need mentoring opportunities to give them the skills needed when their marriage confronts life's trials and hardships.

Marriages in crisis and on the brink of divorce should call us immediately at 891-1846. If you or someone you know have issues within a marriage that is causing conflict, no matter how small, please contact us. We can help with couple to couple mentoring to overcome the issues that are causing conflict or lack of communication. If you are planning on marriage in the near future call us at 891-1846 or visit our website for upcoming premarital classes. Our normal office hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm. Remember, all of our services are **free of charge.**

Mike Gibson,
Office & Public
Relations Manager



*"Remember, all of our
services are free of
charge."*

Visit the NMMFP Website

(Written by Brad Biggers)



**Brad Biggers,
IT Support**



Contact NMMFP if you would like to schedule a marriage event in your community!!

1207 Golf Course Road, Ste. E
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124

Phone: (505) 891-1846

Cell: (505) 401-5734 or

400-9869

Email:

mholland@nm marriagesfirst.org

rholland@nm marriagesfirst.org



Since the beginning of the year the NMMFP has been very busy working on redesigning the website. We have added content, and made the site much easier to navigate. Two of the biggest new features are an on line calendar of events that allows you to download events in iCalendar format to your computer or PDA. We have also added the ability to sign up for select events on line. You have the ability to view all current and past newsletters on line, along with other publications from the office. The latest features include the ability to get a printer friendly version of the page you are viewing, and the ability to email the page to a friend. Some of the

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other improvements that you will notice right away is that navigation around the website is much easier, and there is more content.

We are constantly adding new content and features to the website and have many exciting plans. Be on the look out for an on line photo gallery with photos from many of the NMMFP events. Soon you will be able to find out what others are saying about New Mexico Marriages First in their own words.

If you have not been to visit the website recently please be sure to check it out at www.TheMarriageLifeline.com

What's In the NMMFP Library?

(Written by Lois Coleman)

Most people who walk into our office are amazed that we have a lending library. In fact, we have more than nine hundred books and audio materials. The purpose of this article is to inform you about our library and the services we provide to the community. Our normal operating hours are 9:30am - 4:00pm Monday - Friday. Materials can be checked out for a two week period of time or you are welcome to just come in and browse. Here is a brief overview of the major categories of books in our library.

Ancient Hebrew Texts - Written in Spanish and large print.

Spiritual related books - An assortment of books by Billy Graham along with books that deal with different world religions.

Home school materials - There are books for all grade levels from kindergarten through high school.

Parenting and Families - We have an assortment of books written by Dr. James Dobson. One good book is Solid

Answers which contains principles and concepts drawn from his books over the years.

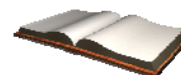
Marriage - We have many different books on marriage. Two books I would suggest are *The Seven Conflicts*, which teaches couples how to resolve the most common disagreements in marriage and *Mars and Venus Together Forever* by John Gray.

Teenagers - We have a wide assortment of materials which focus on a range of problems facing today's teenagers.

Life Issues - If you have gone through some heartache in relationships, I would suggest you read, *The Art of Forgiving*.

Men and Women Issues - Here are a few good books on these issues: *Every Man's Battle*, *Five Love Languages* and *A Woman's Guide to the Family Finances*.

Please come in and check out our library. It is here for your use!





**Rebecca Holland,
Project Director**

*New Mexico
Marriages First
Project Staff:*

**Tony Oliva,
Executive Director**

**Rebecca Holland,
Project Director**

**Michael Holland,
Assistant Project
Director**

**Mike Gibson,
Office and Public
Relations Manager**

**Leonie Oliva,
Project and Events
Coordinator**

**Anita Bruce,
Accountant**

**Brad Biggers,
IT Support**

**Lois Coleman,
Receptionist/Librarian**

(505-891-1846)

Benefits of Premarital and Marriage Mentoring

(Written by Rebecca Holland)

“We have been to marriage counseling before and it didn’t work. What makes you think marriage mentoring is so different?” Good question. Why would anyone want to spent time meeting every other week with a married couple and talking about marital issues or talking about what makes a marriage healthy? What is premarital and marriage mentoring and is it different from relationship counseling? How could it possibly help couples that are preparing for marriage or in marital crisis? Premarital and marriage mentoring is a couple-to-couple relationship that seeks to help couples live out their vision for marriage. Mentoring brings wise advice, personal support, encouragement, and help in hard times to couples who are intent on growing a healthy relationship/marriage. Marriage mentors are couples who are motivated and excited to help guide premarital and married couples through the challenges of married life together. Marriage mentors are not only seeking to help couples through difficult times, but are also interested in helping premarital couples prepare for marriage. They are interested in hearing couples’ success stories, humorous experiences and other aspects of their relationship. Marriage mentors become a resource of support, encouragement and accountability for premarital and married couples. The primary goal of marriage mentors is to help equip couples for a happy, healthy relationship by teaching them vital skills in communication and conflict resolution and by sharing their own life experiences. Mentoring strengthens a couple’s support network by forming a bond with mentors who act as role models. Mentoring is not counseling and marriage mentors are not professionally trained counselors. Mentoring is different from counseling in the following ways: A couple talks to another couple who has most likely shared some of the issues that their relationship has faced. Mentoring can be less threatening than speaking with a counselor (there is a tendency to feel anxiety when working with a counselor). There is less stigma in mentoring as compared to counseling or couple’s therapy. There is less of a power differential – mentoring levels the playing field more than therapy or counseling. Mentoring focuses on a couple’s strengths and deals with issues as they relate to those strengths. Counseling focuses on the issues and how those impact the relationship. Mentoring teaches marriage education and relationship skills vitally needed for a healthy marriage. Counseling focuses on healing from the past and dealing with those issues that may be causing the current relationship problems. Counseling can be very vital in helping couples whose issues are beyond what mentoring addresses. Couples can participate in counseling while also participating in the mentoring process. All of the NMMFP premarital and marriage mentoring services are free of charge. Give us a call at (505) 891-1846 if you would like more information.



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NMMFP Marriage and Relationship Gateway Events

An important part of our activities here at the NMMFP are our “Gateway Events”. These are typically large scale, social events, involving some type of “healthy marriage” educational message, in an informal and entertaining setting. We call these “Gateway Events” as they are often the first way that people come to hear about us and our wider services. Gateway events have two purposes:

The first is to make people aware of the **FREE resources and services** that we offer to couples at all stages of their relationships.

The second is to offer couples a free or very low cost opportunity to get out and have some fun, romance and quality time together – which we hope can only make their relationships stronger. The added benefit is that our “entertainment” which is provided by nationally known speakers and marriage educators always has a “healthy marriage” educational message within it – which again we hope can only be a benefit!

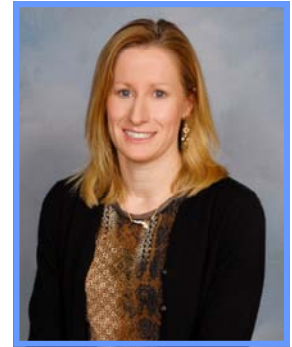
Usually we do not charge or charge a very low ticket price of \$5 per person to attend these events. Obviously this is nowhere near the price of running the events as our costs are hugely subsidized by the Federal grant that we have received.

Did I forget to say that most of our events include **FREE CHILDCARE** for children up to 11 years of age? This is always very popular and gets fully booked to the maximum number of children we can accommodate. We also encourage participants to fill in evaluation forms at the end of each event in return for **FREE GIFTS**. So you can see that your \$5 really is going a long way.....!

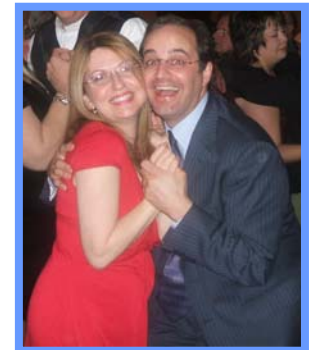
We started our program of gateway events in February 2007 with a Valentine’s celebration evening called “Romance and Roses,” which we held at the Best Western Hotel in Rio Rancho. This event was attended by 125 couples who enjoyed dinner and door prizes before being entertained by marriage educator Kenn Kington and then dancing the night away. This was followed in September by “A Romantic Evening Out of This World” at the Park Plaza Hotel. At this event speaker Michael Najarian spoke on the internationally known book “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus” while Kenn Kington was back by popular demand! We stepped up the size of this event to 250 couples and again, it sold out completely.

Hot on the heels of this event in October 2007 we hosted marriage educator, Mark Gungor at two events. Mark’s show “Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage” is nationally known. On Friday evening he did an event at the Pueblo of Jemez, which also included a buffet dinner and dancing. The following Saturday morning Mark was up early to do a half day seminar at First Family Church in Albuquerque. Both events were very popular and got great reviews from those who attended.

This year we are starting off with another “Romance and Roses” evening event. This time it will be on Saturday, April 12th, and the venue is the Santa Ana Star Center in Rio Rancho. This is our largest venue yet and so we are increasing the size of the event to 375 couples with space for 225 children in our childcare facility! There will be a buffet dinner and marriage educator Jeff Allen will entertain with his unique “healthy marriage” educational humor. We will have live music from The Fireballs – who some of you may recall had a number one hit in the 1960’s with “Sugar Shack.” This will be a great evening out for you and your partner. Tickets are now on sale (\$5 per person) – so we hope you will sign up and join us for Romance and Roses 2008!



Leonie Oliva,
Project and Events
Coordinator



CALENDAR OF MARRIAGE EVENTS

Join Us for the NMMFP "Healthy Marriage Moment" Radio Show on Sunday mornings from 8:30 to 9:00 am on KKIM Radio AM 1000, FM 97.4 or www.kkimam1000.com

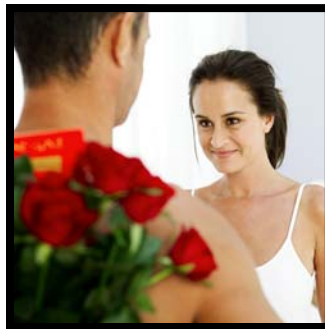
March 2008

NMMFP Premarital Education Class, Saturday, March 29th, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Class will be held at Church Alive!, 4601 Avocet Road NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

THIS CLASS IS FULL!!

April 2008

"Romance and Roses" will be held on Saturday, April 12th at the Santa Ana Star Center in Rio Rancho. Registration for the event has already started and only 375 couples and 225 children will be registered! The event will include: free childcare, a buffet dinner, a humor presentation by marriage educator Jeff Allen and live music from The Fireballs, who had the number one hit in the 1960's, "Sugar Shack." This will be a great evening out for you and your partner. Tickets are \$5 per person. Register now as this event will sell out soon! (505) 891-1846.



NMMFP Marriage Mentor Training, April 26, 2008 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) ***Training is FREE!!***

May 2008

NMMFP Marriage Mentor Booster Training, Friday evening May 16, 2008, 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) ***CLASS IS FREE!!***

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New Mexico Family Council - Best Choice
New Mexico Marriages First Project
1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

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**Your Spring Marriage
Life Line Newsletter
Is Inside!**

To:

**Mark Your Calendar and Plan to Attend
"Romance and Roses" at the Santa Ana Star
Center on Saturday, April 12, 2008!**

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