



Volume 2 • Issue 1 • SPRING 2005

*Monadnock Men's Resource Center
We are committed to providing
all men with a safe space for
growth, sharing, connection
and community building... and
to overcoming men's violence
in all our lives.*

Volunteers Needed to Facilitate Support Group for Local Inmates

Building upon the three-year success of its ongoing weekly support group for area men, the Monadnock Men's Resource Center (MMRC) is planning a similar program to support inmates at the Cheshire County House of Corrections, to begin this fall. Like its established weekly support group, two-man teams of volunteer facilitators will lead this new MMRC program. The organization is seeking volunteers to start training this summer as facilitators for both the new and existing group.

"Our first three years have proven what caring and empathy can accomplish," said Forrest Seymour, co-director of the Monadnock Men's Resource Center, and a trained clinical social worker. "There's great camaraderie among our volunteers, and many of us have

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"Celebrating Fathers" Signature Ad

Sign-On • Support the Campaign • Pass It On!

At a time when the role of fathers is continuing to be examined, debated, and redefined, we at the Monadnock Men's Resource Center would like to affirm our support for fathers who provide loving and responsible contributions to their children's lives.

For Father's Day, the Men's Resource Center will be publishing a signature ad in the Keene (New Hampshire) Sentinel, (circulation 14,000) with the names of men and women who want to appreciate all dads who embody positive fatherhood. Here's a chance to say "thank you" to fathers not only for the big sacrifices, but for the tiny acts of love that often go unrecognized.

Here are the 4 simple steps to signing the ad through our website,

www.mmrconline.org

1. Read the Celebrating Fathers ad text.
2. Email the MMRC with your name as you'd like it to appear in the ad.
3. PLEASE consider a donation to support the ad campaign.
4. Pass it on: Suggest and encourage your friends, family and colleagues that they too might like to sign and support this ad.



If you would like, you may call us on our toll free message system (1-866-969-6672) and tell us you want to support this campaign, with details how we can reach you by phone.



A Review of MMRC Accomplishments and Goals by Jim Duffy

The beginning of a new year is often a time of assessment and planning for the future. This involves looking at where we have been and what we have done, with hopes that it can guide and inform future growth. In the spirit of that tradition, MMRC has done some reflection, recognition and planning of our own. Since 2002, MMRC Volunteers have worked on a number of projects. Here are some of the highlights:

- ❖ Developed a weekly support group for men in the community.
- ❖ Organize, support, and participate in public programs, training and fund-raisers

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The Monadnock Men's Resource Center

Directors

Damien Licata & Forrest Seymour

Steering Committee

Damien Licata, Co-Chair
Forrest Seymour, Co-Chair
Jeremy Youst, Treasurer
Steve Salamin, Secretary
Jim Duffy • Schultz • McKim Mitchell

Support Group Facilitator Team

Jeremy	Jim	Matthew	Don	Rick
Steve	Mark	Wren	Tom	Ralph
	John	Damien	Forrest	

The MMRC Community Newsletter

Jim Duffy, *Editor*
Steve Salamin, *Design & Publishing*

The MMRC Community Newsletter is published quarterly and distributed throughout the region for free.

Please consider supporting our efforts!

- Subscribe for only \$20/year
- Come to a Support Group
- Volunteer as a Facilitator
- Make a Tax-Deductible Donation

THANK YOU!

Monadnock Men's Resource Center

P.O. Box 140

Keene, New Hampshire 03431

Toll Free 1-866-969-6672

www.MMRConline.org



Free • Open • Drop-In SUPPORT GROUP

for ALL Men

Sunday evenings
7:00 pm sharp

at LifeArt

43 Central Square • Keene

MMRC Takes Stand On Same-Sex Marriage

The following letter was submitted to the Keene Sentinel Reader Opinion section

To the Editor,

The Monadnock Men's Resource Center (MMRC) supports the right of same-sex couples to marry, and in doing so, urges that people of New Hampshire ask Senator Gregg and Senator Sununu to vote against the proposed "Marriage Protection Amendment" that it currently before the United States Senate.

This proposed amendment states, "Marriage in the United States shall consist solely of the union between a man and a woman." It seeks to single out gay men and lesbian women for discrimination in our Constitution. No group of people in our modern history has ever been targeted by such an amendment. It is reactive, oppressive, and fails to demonstrate how- in a nation where the divorce rate is at least 50%- it will serve to "protect" marriage by condoning bigotry toward men and women who do not conform to so-called traditions of gender and sexuality.

It is a core belief of the MMRC that all men and women benefit from expanding, not constricting, our vision and acceptance of what is masculine and feminine. We have experienced, through our own lives, and work with other men, how harmful narrow ideas of masculinity can be. Men often feel they can not cry or be emotionally vulnerable, display weakness, or ask for help. Men are taught from an early age to be in control of themselves and the world around them at all times, and to dread being called a "sissy" or "wuss." Men are still being conditioned to believe that force and violence are acceptable means to solving problems. This conditioning may have served some purpose in our past as a species. It is increasingly apparent in today's world that this conditioning harms men, women, children and the world around us.

Women have struggled and achieved much in the past century. They have secured the right to vote, control their fertility, and are striving towards equal pay. We celebrate that. Men, however outwardly privileged, are just beginning to liberate themselves, and to accept that we can shed tears without the fear of being ridiculed, to say no to violence without having our manhood questioned, and to marry whom we choose without fearing for our lives. These freedoms may not be important to all men, but all men have the right to them.

The current struggle over same-sex marriage is at the forefront of all men's and women's struggle for a wider, more accepting definition of masculinity and femininity. All of us should stand together to support this effort. We are all brothers and sisters, whether we call ourselves gay, lesbian or straight. We will all benefit from a culture that no longer demands "men are men, and women are women," and instead proclaims we are all "men of women, women of men."

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*a director's view***A Leader of Men?***by Damien Licata, Co-Director, MMRC*

In taking on the job of co-director of the Monadnock Men's Resource Center I expected that, along with the many hoped for rewards, I would certainly encounter many challenges. Some of these challenges I had anticipated, others, through hubris or naiveté, I did not. Where I have been especially unprepared has been with regard to how difficult it would be to fill the role of "leader" for the MMRC – on organization of presumably like-minded men joined together by a common vision and sense of purpose.

My co-director, Forrest Seymour, and I began meeting over coffee more than four years ago and we talked about our shared vision for a men's organization in the Monadnock area and for what we needed to do to make it a reality. We discussed our views on masculinity in our society and on how best to serve the men in our community. We talked about how we, as men, tend to relate to each other, about our potential to hurt each other and the women and children in our lives, and about men's emotional lives and capacity to be caring and nurturing and vulnerable. For my own part, I was fairly certain I had a reasonable grasp of the issues of masculinity and gender, adequate to the task we were setting for ourselves. What we did not discuss very much, as I remember, was the subject of *leadership*. What kind of leaders did we want to be? What sort of relationship did we hope would exist between ourselves and the organization we were proposing to establish and what model of leadership did we intend to adopt?

It has become clear that, in the role of co-director, I am encountering the traits within myself of which I was previously unaware. These tendencies are, at least in part, the products of a lifetime of socialization as a male in our culture. I refer to an alarming tendency to feel more comfortable with an autocratic style of leadership – wanting to use a unilateralist or authoritarian approach to achieve objectives. I am, of course, talking about dominance and control, two things which many men (myself among them, apparently) have learned to use but which generally results in passive or active resistance and which, in any case, is certainly not consistent with the intent of the MMRC.



From the earliest days, it has been clear that all of us aspire that the MMRC be different from other organizations that we have experienced. We wish to arrive at decisions in important matters through consensus and our intention has been, above all, to be supportive of each other and to always remember and honor the values that inform our mission in our dealings with our community and with each other. Consensus is not achieved through dominance and control. It is achieved through earnest and honest communication and debate conducted in an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect.

The majority of my working life has been spent in organizations made up mostly or entirely of men. A great deal of energy was expended on establishing who had the right to claim the position of "Alfa Dog." This position was often held, not by the best qualified to lead, but by the most intimidating, dominating person – the biggest bully. I don't believe that I am in danger of being that person. The steering committee of the MMRC has been looking at the issue of leadership in general and with respect to the organization. We have been talking about what qualities make a good leader and there are differing opinions as to what are most important, but it is clear that being the toughest guy on the block is not it. It has to do with things like trust, integrity, and character. If I am to have the privilege of being a leader of men I must remember that I am also a man among men and that to lead is not to command but to nurture and inspire. That's a lot harder to do at times. Sometimes I want to say, "Just do it," but we are endeavoring to foster a better way for ourselves and other men to be male in this world – better than the traditional models of tough guy and bully, of might makes right, and of dominance and control. As an organization, the MMRC realizes that it must start with us. As a man, I realize that it must start with me.

"MMRC Takes Stand..." - continued from Page 2

For more information, visit the **New Hampshire Freedom to Marry** website at www.nhftm.org

For more information about contacting our Senators about the "Marriage Protection Amendment," visit the **Human Rights Action Center** at www.hrcactioncenter.org.

In Peace, *The Monadnock Men's Resource Center Steering Committee*



Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.
~ George Washington

"Volunteers Needed..." - continued from Page 1

come to see that facilitating a men's group also brings about grass roots social change."

This new weekly support group at the Cheshire County House of Corrections will be directly modeled on the Sunday night discussions the MMRC currently offers in downtown Keene. Once men have been cleared to volunteer at the House of Corrections, the MMRC will provide them in-depth facilitator training over several weekly sessions. Training will also include an orientation at the House of Corrections.

MMRC co-director Damien Licata explained that the organization is deeply committed to its volunteers, and that volunteers for this new program will themselves need to make a firm commitment.

"The MMRC support group will be an earned privilege for inmates, who express a desire to participate. So, while group participants will be motivated, it will still be important to have a stable and consistent group of facilitators to build trust with these men." said Licata, also a mental health professional. "For the volunteers prepared to help, we have a lot of valuable training and experience to share."

Men 21 and older are sought for this volunteer service. For more information, leave a message for the Monadnock Men's Resource Center at 866-969-6672, or inquire through their website, at www.MMRConline.org, or via email at info@MMRConline.org.



"A Review of the MMRC..." - continued from Page 1

with local, state and regional organizations, including the Men's Resource Center of Western Mass., Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention, Aids Services for the Monadnock Region, LifeArt Community Resource Center, the Cheshire Men's Caucus, and Mothers (and Others) Uniting.

- ❖ Provided education programs and workshops on masculinity and men's violence at Keene State College, Franklin Pierce State College and Landmark College.
- ❖ Given testimony before the New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Men.
- ❖ Develop and distribute the quarterly MMRC Community Newsletter.
- ❖ Establish the MMRC as a New Hampshire not-for profit corporation.

As we, at the MMRC, turn our attention to the year ahead, here is a sample of what we hope to accomplish:

- ⊙ Launch a Father's group.
- ⊙ Explore the possibility of developing a men's group at the Cheshire County House of Corrections.
- ⊙ Develop in-school programs.
- ⊙ Sponsor Gender Conversation Series with Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.
- ⊙ Obtain federal nonprofit 501(c)(3) status.
- ⊙ Seek out ways to connect the MMRC's work with the preservation of our community's environment.
- ⊙ Sponsor public forums.
- ⊙ Develop a fund-raising and membership plan.

If you are interested in learning more about, or supporting the work of the MMRC, whether it be through membership, volunteering, or just spreading the word, please call us toll free at 1-866-969-6672 for details. We thank you for your support and feedback, too!



Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame.
~ Benjamin Franklin