



Fatherhood: Built to Protect

September 25, 2026

Children's Board of Hillsborough County

1002 E. Palm Ave

Tampa, FL 33605

Funding generously provided by:

REACHUP



Welcome to REACHUP's 2026 Affirming Fatherhood Conference



Welcome to the 2026 Affirming Fatherhood Conference. We are delighted to have you with us and grateful for your commitment to advancing the role of fathers in the lives of their children, families, and communities. This gathering reflects a shared belief that fathers matter. Our planning committee has thoughtfully designed this conference to provide opportunities for learning, collaboration, and meaningful dialogue among professionals, advocates, and community partners who are dedicated to supporting fathers.

When fathers are encouraged to participate fully in family life, children benefit, relationships grow stronger, and communities become more resilient. As we come together, we celebrate the fathers who have embraced the responsibilities and rewards of active fatherhood. We extend our appreciation to the professionals and organizations that are intentionally incorporating fathers into their programs and services. Their leadership reflects an understanding that family success is strengthened when both mothers and fathers are engaged, supported, and empowered. Thank you for being part of this year's conference. We hope you leave inspired by the connections you make, the knowledge you gain, and the shared commitment to strengthening fathers and families. We look forward to the conversations, learning, and partnerships that will emerge throughout our time together.

Nicola Bailey
President / CEO, REACHUP

Agenda

8:00 a.m. — Registration

8:15 a.m. — 9:00 a.m. — Light refreshments/Networking

9:00 a.m. — 9:15 a.m. – Greetings

REACHUP, Nicola Bailey, REACHUP CEO

REACHUP Board, Marcia McKingley-Lewis, Board Chair

Children's Board, Maria Negron, Director of Programs

9:15 a.m. — 9:25 a.m. — Ice Breaker

9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. — Speaker-Jeff Mortensen, True Focus Initiative,
“Effects of Screens on Children's Eyes”

10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. — Speaker-Special Detective, Hillsborough County
Sheriffs Office, Special Investigations Division, Human Trafficking Section,
Human Trafficking “Tools to Protect your Family”

11:20 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. — Break

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. — Hall of Fame/TEAM Dad Graduation

12:05 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. — Speaker– Rod Z Comedian, “Laughter is Protection”

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. – Lunch

1:45 p.m.—2:30 p.m. — Speaker-Honorable Judge Daryl Manning,
Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court, Hillsborough County, FL

“Transforming the Lives of Fathers, in turn, Transforming Families”

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. — Raffle/Survey/Pledge/Closing

2026 AFC Hall of Fame Inductees



Rev. Dr. James N. Wilkerson Jr.

Dr. James Wilkerson, Jr., born January 14, 1962, A man of remarkable intellect and purpose Dr. Wilkerson pursued higher education with excellence, earning his undergraduate degree from Florida A&M University (FAMU), a graduate degree from Chaminade University in Hawaii, and ultimately a Ph.D. from Global Obed Dei Seminary & University. He was a Certified Financial Educator and Certified Financial Planner, serving with WealthWave in Alpharetta, Georgia. He was a dedicated member of the Board of Directors at REACHUP, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization, where he served a Board Chair; he also was Director at Large for Southshore Falls and a Board Member of Moss Point High School, alumni association.

Dr. Wilkerson honorably served his country for 20 years and retired as a Lieutenant Commander (LTCDR) in the United States Navy. Beyond his professional accomplishments, he answered a higher calling as a licensed minister with the United Pentecostal Church International, living a Spirit-filled, Christ-centered life that inspired many. He was known for his vibrant personality and zest for life-whether riding in his beloved red Corvette, "Roxanne:" enjoying marksmanship, or simply sharing wisdom and laughter with those around him. He embodied qualities of intelligence, optimism, creativity, courage, and strategy. Above all, he was selfless and deeply passionate about uplifting others. Dr. Wilkerson's life was a testament to faith, service, and love.

2026 AFC Hall of Fame Inductees



Florida Black Maternal Health Initiative

Dr. Marshara Fross

Dr. Vickie Dugat

Dr. Roneé Wilson

The Florida Black Maternal Health Initiative (FBMHI) was created in 2023 as a strategy to raise awareness and advocate for the improvement of maternal health outcomes within the African American community.

Our mission is to unite our community across the Tampa Bay area and serve as a catalyst to mobilize in a collective effort towards a brighter future. We aim to honor, celebrate, and acknowledge the strength, resilience, and importance of Black mothers, shedding light on their unique social circumstances and healthcare challenges.

The founders of FBMHI, Drs. Marshara Fross, Vickie Dugat, and Roneé Wilson are intentional in their engagement of Men in the Movement. Each year during Black Maternal Health Week of Tampa Bay, the voices of engaged husbands, fathers, and/or partners are centered in open, community-based conversations about their roles in the prenatal, birthing, and postpartum journey. Men in the Movement is dedicated to exploring how we can better recognize, uplift, and support male involvement.

TEAM Dad Graduates

Milton Hernandez

Adonis Medina

Esteban Xol

Sebastian Carpio

Yuniesky Larrosa

Alvaro Martinez

Juan Martinez

Travis Hill

Victor Espinoza

Diego Guevara

Jose Ocasio

Alisbay Pluma

Bobby Williams Jr

John Jean

Sayed Hashimi

Jose Valdes

Yoshua Cortes

Billy Goldthorp

Shayne Arriola

Sebastian Ortega

Nelson Abreu

Kevin Saname

Andrew Bell



Presenters



Jeff Mortensen is a pioneer in children's vision screening, having brought innovative technologies to market that enable frontline screeners to identify and refer children for much-needed vision care. These technologies are now distributed globally and are ubiquitous in U.S. primary care pediatrics, and widely used in public health initiatives that help equalize access to vision care in underserved communities.

Jeff's impact on the field is recognized through his board service with the Children's Eye Foundation of AAPOS and Preserve Vision Florida. Today, through True Focus Initiative, Jeff speaks to healthcare providers, frontline screeners, educators, and parents on the impact of screen time on children's vision — translating the same urgency that drove his work in vision-screening technology into practical, everyday guidance for the families and professionals who need it most.

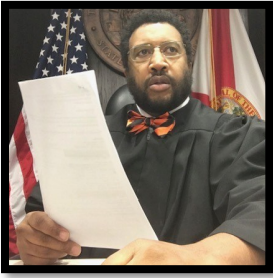


Ryan J. Daniels, Special Detective has been employed with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's office for seventeen years and is a Task Force Officer with Homeland Security Investigations. Detective Daniels is currently assigned to the Human Trafficking Section within the Special Investigations Division and has been working Human Trafficking cases for the past eight years. Detective Daniels has participated in and conducted various Human Trafficking operations that has lead to several successful prosecutions. In 2024 during the Florida Attorney General's Human Trafficking Summit, Detective Daniels was awarded the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.



Rod Z - "Laughter Is Good Medicine" is the belief of this Orlando native who started making people laugh at an early age at family reunions. Whether volunteering in the community or working with his fraternities, Rod always finds a way to make people laugh and enjoy life. He is a graduate of The Great Bethune Cookman University with a degree in Mass Communications. His fellow classmates loved and revered him.

They demonstrated their admiration by asking him to perform at countless club and organizational events on campus during his matriculation, and continue to do so. Rod urges the youth of today to take pride in themselves and to always reach for the stars. When Rod isn't on the road, you may find him working with Coaching Boys To Men Mentoring group, or Saving Our Sons. He works with these groups through the Chi Tau chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated. Rod Z is also proud to be a member of The Hope Church of Orlando. As you can see, he is a very busy man.



Judge Daryl Manning, originally from Queens, NY, has been a Hillsborough County Judge in Tampa, Florida since 2015. He presides over a drug treatment court division and a unified family court division (Dependency). He was a practicing and supervising attorney in the Tampa Office of the Florida Attorney General for sixteen years, where he appeared in state and federal trial and appellate courts.

Judge Manning obtained his Master of Laws (LL.M.) from the Army Judge Advocate Legal Center and School at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA, his Juris Doctorate (J.D.) from St. John's University School of Law in Queens, N.Y. and his Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) from the University of South Carolina, in Columbia, S.C.

Judge Manning was a Judge Advocate (JAG) in the United States Army and served several tours in support of the Global War on Terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait before retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2015 after 30 years on active duty and in the reserves. Among his numerous positions, he served as a prosecutor, a criminal defense attorney and led a counter terrorism team consisting of law enforcement, SWAT and Intelligence agencies. Prior to becoming a JAG, Judge Manning was an Artillery Officer and fought in Operation Desert Storm. Before attending college, he was an enlisted soldier working as a mechanic. He was awarded two Bronze Star Medals for his meritorious service.

Judge Manning was a member of both the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the Florida Board of Bar Examiners, where he served as chair from 2013 – 2015. He was a member of a Florida Bar Grievance Committee in Hillsborough and is a certified Guardian ad Litem. Judge Manning has been a mentor in the Big Brother Big Sister program for many years and currently serves as the Chairman for the Hillsborough County Canvassing Board (Election Board) and the Hillsborough County Community Alliance. As an adjunct law professor, he teaches Criminal Procedure, Alternate Dispute Resolution and Military Law.

Notes



Serving Children & Families in Hillsborough County since 1988

The Children's Board invests in programs to promote the well-being of all children and families in Hillsborough County. Through strategic investments we are ensuring Hillsborough County children get the best possible start in life.

Our funding ensures:

- Children are Healthy and Safe
- Children are Developmentally on Track
- Children are Ready to Learn
- Family Support

Our vision is that Hillsborough County will be recognized as one of the top places in the nation to raise children.

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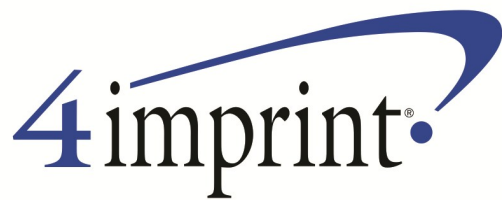
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Thank you for attending our Fatherhood Conference!

We truly appreciate you taking the time to join us and be part of this meaningful experience. Your presence, participation, and commitment to strengthening families by supporting fathers made the conference a special and impactful event.

We hope you left feeling encouraged, inspired, and equipped with valuable insights and resources that you can carry forward in your journey of fatherhood.

With appreciation,

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SAVE THE DATE
AFC SEPTEMBER 24, 2027

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