

June: Am I my Father's Keeper?



If you enjoy celebrating holidays and observances, then June is the month. June has over 15 holidays or observances from the first day of summer, National Flag Week to National Doughnut Day. June is the month everyone awaits to arrive. Summer vacations can begin and let's not forget Father's Day.

Father's Day is a national holiday dedicated to honoring and celebrating fatherhood, paternal bonds, and the influence of fathers in society. When asked what dad's want for Father's Day, many dads simply say, "I just want to spend time with my family and have fun." What better gift for dads than a project he can share with the kids, family and still have boatloads of fun. The Gift of Health! To quote Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico, *"Recognizing and preventing men's health problems is not just a man's issue. Because of its impact on wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters, men's health is truly a family issue."* Improving men's health is a two-way process that is about creating environments that support the ability of men to access health care efficiently and support health services to treat men effectively. This is why we celebrate Men's Health week in conjunction with Father's Day!

Men's Health week is celebrated annually during the week preceding and including Father's Day. It was chosen for this specific time of year to make use of the extra attention paid to male family members near the holiday. Men's Health week is meant to educate the public about what can be done to improve men's health, provide free and convenient health services to men who wouldn't otherwise receive such care. This week gives health care providers, public policy makers, the media, and individuals an opportunity to encourage men and boys to seek regular medical advice and early treatment for disease and injuries. It is important that men make use of health services as statistics show that men have a life expectancy that is 6 years less than that of women and have higher death rates for each of the 10 leading causes of death.

Men's Health Week will see events taking place around the country ensuring that men can talk to someone face to face and online. These events include educational lectures, free health screenings, health fairs, and seminars. The events are planned so that they are easily attended even by men with a full work schedule.

Locally, Men's Health Week includes a kick off to the Father's Day weekend with a special, free event. The Montgomery County Celebrate Fatherhood Initiative 2013 presents: My Dad Rocks! The event will be held June 14 -15 at the Vineyard Church and Island Park. Beginning at 6pm on June 14th, at The Vineyard Church, Judge Walter Rice will be speaking on the commitment of fatherhood and how it impacts our youth.

Director of Job and Family Services Michael Colbert and the Director of Ohio Commission on Fatherhood, Kimberly Dent will be the featured guest for the evening. The winners of the Fatherhood Art/Essay contest will be announced by David Lawrence, Chief of Innovation for Dayton Public Schools.

Saturday, June 15th the celebration continues with My Dad Rocks! Kick-off of events will begin at 11:30 am lasting until 4:00 pm. The day will start with a magnificent fatherhood rally, along with a cook-out for the family. There will be educational activities, community service agencies providing formative information for fathers, a reading corner for parents and children, and gospel sensation the Ditto Girls will provide the entertainment.

In addition to My Dad Rocks, the Annual African American Wellness Walk will take place on Saturday, June 15, 2013 at RiverScape Metro Park. The 2013 theme is Gentlemen's Health: Walking to Win. Events kick off at 7:30 am with on site registration, music and entertainment. Activities include warm-up and cool down with DK & J Pump fitness, Heart Fair Corner, Men's Health & Wellness Village, Men's Health Seminars, Free Health Screenings, Let's Groove with the Moving for Mobility Dancers, inspirational smooth jazz by recording artist Deron Bell along with fun games and prizes for the entire family. The walk will begin at approximately 9:00 am followed by a performance from the Hip Hop Artist Colb Delion.

Healthy engaged fathers are critical to the financial, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being of children. Fathers are the strength and health of families and communities. Let's not celebrate fathers and men once a year, but strive to become the keeper. It's astonishing what you can accomplish by simply asking for what you want. The key is to be sincere and approach your request by assuming that the person you are asking is just like you - has an inner longing to be of help. So the question is: "Am I my Father's Keeper?" Committed to ensure that my father, brother, husband, cousin, friend lives a healthy committed focus-filled life.

I hope this list has, quite literally, given your more reason to celebrate this month. People create celebrations to give recognition to certain people and things, or just for the plain fun of having extra holidays. Let's hope that this June is the best one yet! After all, it is "National Smile Month."

