

EDUCATION NEWS



REV. MOSES CARTER (left) of True Fellowship Church, assists with the Parenting Awareness Month in Indiana (PAMI) Fair, standing with (l to r) Mary Vaughn, Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson and Rev. Rev. Emmanuel Vaughn.

Indiana Parenting Institute forms grandparents partnership

By Carmen M. Woodson-Wray
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With the month of April being designated as Parenting Awareness Month in Indiana (PAMI), it was fitting that the Indiana Parenting Institute (IPI) celebrate it with its 8th annual Parenting Fair.

The Indiana Parenting Institute (IPI) is a program that delivers evidence-based, skill-building in the form of parenting education programs, practical and relevant information, instructional guidance, inspiration, encouragement and hope for today's 21st Century family relationships.

The PAMI Fair recently held was educational and a family resource that included giveaways, entertainment and games for every member of the family.

The fair was at First AME Barber Youth Center and was not just a growth opportunity for its attendees, but also an opportunity to celebrate people raising children in Northwest Indiana and a way to promote family togetherness.

Jena Bellezza, marketing and community relations director for IPI Institute said the purpose of their organization is to deliver parenting education programs and provide support services and resources. She said, "Our goal is to educate and engage parents and the community by advocating for the prevention of the maltreatment of children."

The fair was a great opportunity for IPI to partner with the Grandparents Raising Children Organization and collaborate on their programs that are both relative to family structures.

The Grandparents Raising Children Organization is a program that advocates grandparents/kinship raising grandchildren and other family members.

Mary Vaughn, director of Grandparents Raising Children and the first lady of First AME Church, said the opportunity to partner with IPI was a chance for the two programs to bring more people, agencies and information together for the community. She said, "With this fair, we were able to get more information out to both parents and grandparents."

Vaughn said Grandparents Raising Children is a very viable organization relative to life as it is today. It is an outreach organization that represents different areas in Northwest Indiana.

Vaughn said, "We are reaching out to grandparents in the Gary community and surrounding areas by offering programs and activities that provide positive support for our youth, young adults, parents and grandparents. Our program is focused on keeping the community physically, mentally and spiritually fit by reuniting the family."

Vaughn said within the Gary community there are grandparents raising their grandkids because of unforeseen circumstances such as a parent's abuse of drugs or alcohol, abandonment, incarceration, mental illness, unemployment, divorce and death.

She said, "Our grandparents just don't want to see their grandkids go into the system or into foster care, so they take them in and sometimes the parents too."

Both organizations used the fair as a way to maintain the structures of families through both the parents and grandparents.

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