



446 N. 12th Street - Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone: 225-344-6345 | www.obrienhouse.org



MEDIA CONTACT

Ronni Glasper
Development Director
Office: 225.344.6345
Cell: 225.610.2600

ronniglasper@obrienhouse.org

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Saturday, July 19, 2008

Mayor partners with O'Brien House and Quota Club to empower single mothers

BATON ROUGE, LA— More than 236 single mothers filled the Baranco-Clark YMCA on Saturday, July 19, eager to learn how to improve their quality of life. Mayor Melvin “Kip” Holden was one of seven speakers providing practical advice to single mothers.

Mayor Holden opened the conference with a message of faith, letting the audience know that he too was a single parent fully aware of the daily challenges that single parents face. He concluded his address with a commitment to increase employment opportunities for single mothers in our community.

Cassandra Lang, Director of Create Your World Foundation, followed with strategies to becoming a leader. Her powerful message brought participants to their feet as they applauded. “Start by writing out your vision”, she said, “and never stop believing in yourself.”

Laughter filled the room when Katherine Martin, executive director of O'Brien House offered dating tips to single women who are searching for a mate. She attempted to comfort the ladies saying, “Don't lose hope, there are good men out there.”

Officer Carolyn Stapleton presented useful safety tips. Some of the participants said they appreciated the simple tips she gave, like, leaving your first name out of the phone book and off of the mailbox. Stapleton demonstrated how to use air-horns, whistles and mace. She said you can also use your car alarm to prevent an attack.

Quota Club President, Jean Gatz, offered five strategies to better parenting; “1) Ensure you're engaged in healthy relationships, 2) Make sure your kids can trust you, 3) Let your kids see that you're not afraid to ask for help, 4) Make time for God in your life and 5) Allow your kids see that you encourage others.

Dr. Ginger Northern, O'Brien House consultant, began her speech with Marvin Sapp's song, “Never Would Have Made It” which received a favorable applause. Along with the stress management tips she tossed stress-relieving gifts to some of the attendees.

Finally, Ina Navarre, Whitney National Bank and Quota Club member, left the ladies with useful budgeting and financial tips. “Be realistic with your children about finances. It's never too early to start teaching them [your children] financial principles,” Navarre said.

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Several conference participants managed booths and 15- minute sessions on selected topics which included leadership, nutrition, safety, parenting, home ownership, vehicle purchasing and maintenance, GED/Literacy, information technology, career development, legal issues, budgeting and finance.

Conference registrants had great things to say about their experience.

Ann Justino-Issac said initially she was reluctant to attend the conference because she thought O'Brien House only offered help to recovering alcoholics and drug addicts. "I was pleased about the organized structure and valuable safety tips," she said.

Allyson Keaghey, a single mom raising her fifteen-year-old grandson because of her daughter's death, said she was encouraged after seeing that other women who are now successful once had to deal with issues that are similar to the issues single mothers face today. "I will definitely attend the conference next year," she added.

Yolanda Mulkey, O'Brien House Prevention Services Manager and conference coordinator, said the driving force behind the conference is to honor and support the single mothers in our local community. The mission of the conference is to empower the single mother on her journey to independence Mulkey added.

The conference raised awareness about the number of single mothers in our community as reported in the 2007 U.S. Census survey stating that there are 9,755 single mother households out of the 88,725 households surveyed in Baton Rouge alone. On a national level, 13.6 million single mothers live in the United States.

Other community agencies participating in the conference included Capital Area Battered Women's Center, Catholic Community Charities, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Joy Corporation, O'Brien House, Reality House, Sweet Dreams/St. Agnes, The Excel Dancers' Mothers, United Hope Ministries, UREC, Women's Community Rehabilitation Center, Youth Oasis, and YMCA.

This event was sponsored by The City of Baton Rouge Mayor's Office, O'Brien House and Quota International of Baton Rouge.

The 2008 Conference Planning Committee was comprised of Mayor Melvin "Kip" Holden-Co-Chair, Katherine Martin-O'Brien House (OBH) Executive Director & Co-Chair, Brenda Perry-OBH Assistant Director & Conference Co-Coordinator, Yolanda Mulkey-OBH Prevention Services Manager & Conference Co-Coordinator, Kawaina Franklin-OBH, Aaron Escort-OBH, Franisia Netter-OBH, Laney Quiet-OBH, Cherry E. P. Ross-Woman's Hopital, Fannie Terrell-OBH, Rosalind Sibley-OBH, Ronnie Edwards-UREC, Ginger Northern-OBH, Constance Lockman-OBH, John James-OBH, Ellen James-LSU, Nikki Battley-OBH, Lynn Jackson-OBH, Valencia Rhines-OBH, Charlene Gillard-Capital Area Human Services District, Tierra Montgomery-Joy Corporation, Shirley Lolis-Metro Health, Wilfred Lorraine-YWCA Encore Plus & Barbara Varnall-YWCA Family Resource Center.

Photo Attached

O'Brien House – Single Mothers' Conference – July 19, 2008



(Left to Right) Martha Cedetol (Quota Club Member), Fran Reeher (O'Brien House Board Member & Quota Club Member), Katherine Martin (Executive Director of O'Brien House), Mayor Melvin "Kip" Holden, Brenda Perry (O'Brien House Asst. Director), Jean Gatz (Quota Club President) and Ina Navarre (Whitney National Bank and Quota Club Member)