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Lighthouse Youth Services

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“REAL Dads” Third Anniversary Puts Fatherhood Movement in Spotlight
Nationally Recognized Fatherhood Expert To Speak April 6

Cincinnati (April 2, 2010) Lighthouse Youth Services will host Dr. Kirk E. Harris, a facilitator with the National Fatherhood Leadership Group, for an update on the state of the fatherhood movement and REAL Dads graduation celebration on Tuesday, April 6 at New Thought Unity Center, 1401 E. McMillan Ave., from 6 to 8 p.m.

Dr. Harris is considered a national expert on issues related to fatherhood. As a lawyer and advocate, he has worked on a variety of public policy and community issues related to responsible fatherhood, family support practice, community-building, parent-engagement and anti-poverty strategies.

Approximately 27 fathers will graduate from the Lighthouse REAL Dads Nurturing Fathers Class on April 6, which marks the program’s third anniversary and 10th graduation ceremony. In the last three years, nearly 250 fathers have graduated from the REAL Dads program, which has impacted the lives of more than 1,100 children and provided close to \$350,000 in child support payments.

Local hip-hop artist Luis Polo will perform his fatherhood-themed song written for the event at the April 6 graduation. Keith Maupin, a father who lost his Marine son in the Iraq war, will also speak briefly. The event is free and open to the public – reservations are recommended. For more information or to make a reservation, call 513-891-3320, ext. 277.

The REAL Dads program, which began in 2007, is designed for men ages 17 years and up who are in the Hamilton County Child Support system. While public opinion leans toward the position of “missing fathers,” the Lighthouse REAL Dads program helps fathers address personal and system barriers that keep them from being engaged with their children.

“Generally, most people aren’t aware of the scope of work being done with fathers in the name of strengthening families,” said Calvin Williams, director of the Lighthouse REAL Dads program. “The fatherhood field, while about 25 years old, is still developing, and our goal is to reduce the systemic barriers that alienate fathers from being involved with their children.”

About Lighthouse Youth Services

Since 1969 Lighthouse Youth Services has received national recognition as an innovator in services for families in crisis; housing for homeless teens; group homes for young people who need a therapeutic environment; education, counseling and training for youth and families; and foster care for abandoned and abused children. LYS operates the areas only direct access around-the-clock sanctuary for homeless, abused and neglected youth and a juvenile corrections program with double the success rate of traditional institutions.