

THE DADVOCATE

THE NEWSLETTER OF
HOUSE OF DAVID, ADVOCATES FOR FATHERS, INC.



Healthy snack ideas. Try these at home and have a child help to give busy hands something to do.

1. Spread peanut butter on apples slices.
2. Spread celery sticks with peanut butter or cream cheese. Add raisins.
3. Mix together a favorite cereal, dried fruits and nuts in a sandwich bag.
4. Microwave a small baked potato, top with reduced fat cheddar cheese and salsa.
5. Mini-pizza: Toast an English muffin, spread pizza sauce, sprinkle with low fat cheese.
6. Sprinkle grated Parmesan cheese on hot popcorn.
7. Blend low fat milk, frozen strawberries, and a banana for 30 seconds for a homemade smoothie.
8. Alternate, on a skewer, grapes, strawberries, and cheeses.
9. Dip fresh vegetables (celery, cherry tomatoes, baby carrots, broccoli) in ranch dressing.
10. Fresh fruit, fresh fruit, fresh fruit.



NOTES FROM THE DESK:

At one of the few gas stations in downtown Baltimore, I met Marcus. I noticed him as soon as I pulled up to the pump. He stood at the pump island behind me and made eye contact. I could barely hear him, but having spent the last 10 years in the area, I knew that he was offering to pump my gas...not an unusual request, given the number of homeless panhandlers in the area and the adjacent residential neighborhoods. However, what made Marcus unusual was that he was a child. I was impressed with this young man's work ethic, his drive, his willingness to work . . . and yes, his hustle. Baltimore is a city of realities, and not all of them are pleasant. The thought of a middle school student offering services to strangers at a busy location, while not favorable, is not unusual. Had it been a summer afternoon, or possibly an early evening, I would have thought nothing of it. However, it was a little after 9:15 p.m. on a Wednesday night during the school year. His shirt, embroidered with the name of a local school, identified him as a middle school student.

Marcus shared with me that he is a 6th grade student, and his goal was simply to "save some money." Our brief conversation revealed that his Mother was aware that he was out, but not exactly knowledgeable of where he was, although he didn't live far. After pumping my gas, I decided to pay in cash, something I rarely do, and asked Marcus if he wanted anything from the station's convenience store. He cautiously and curiously answered me with a request for a fruit punch. I recalled a lesson taught to me by my Grandfather. . . the "New York Handshake" . . . public, mutually respectful handshake with a discreet monetary donation hidden from public view. Marcus wasn't quite sure what to make of this handshake, but he quickly understood when I directed him to go home.

My academic studies have taught me that we often have a tendency to project our values onto others. I'm certainly in no position to access the dynamics of Marcus' household, but I do know that a child of that age during the school year should be at home at that hour and that unsupervised interaction with unknown adults is out of the norm. My drive home was filled with thoughts of Marcus and inquiry into his family structure and dynamics. I wondered what his fuel would be in life. Would his life be fueled by the pursuit of cash without an investment in skills and education? Is there a Father figure present and able to both reward his work ethic, but also to guide his efforts ensuring safety and an awareness of long term efforts? Our culture is changing, but the role and importance of a Father has not. Fathers provide us with an awareness of an internal source of fuel that keeps us driven for the remainder of our lives.

All My Best,
David J. Clements



SUPPORT THE CLOTHING EXCHANGE

In these tough economic times, it is even more important for parents to form support networks. As all parents know, children grow out of clothes most often while they are still in very good condition. Why not donate your gently used children's clothes to House of David so that they can be distributed to Fathers in need? Our take-one-leave-one policy ensures that Fathers, will in fact, "pay it forward."



THE DADVOCATE



LAW & ORDER

Child Support Modifications – How, When, and Why? Matthew Baum, Esq.

How can child support be modified? In Maryland, either parent, meaning either the parent who pays the support or the parent who receives the support, can seek to have an existing child support order modified. The process of seeking a modification begins with filing a formal request with the court. That request is called a “Motion to Modify Child Support,” or something similar. Like all motions, it must be properly captioned, meaning that it must feature the correct details of the case at the top of the first page. It also must be signed by the parent who is making the request and properly served on the other parent. At the end of the document there needs to be a certificate of service telling the court when and by what means the motion was delivered to the other party.

When can a parent ask to have a support order modified? Either parent can ask for a modification at any time. But the court will actually consider a modification only when there has been a material change in circumstances. This means that the parent who is asking for the modification of the existing order has the burden of showing that there has been significant change in one or more factors that directly affects the child’s welfare. If the parent who is asking for the change to the existing order cannot show that there is a material change in circumstances, then the court should not grant the requested change to the order. In general, changes in earnings of 25% or greater, serious changes in the health of the parents or the child, and sometimes the child’s increased age on its own can be sufficient for the court to modify the existing order. Smaller changes in salary and temporary conditions that are not likely to have a significant effect on the child do not support a request for a change to the existing support order.

Why would a parent seek to modify an existing child support order? Modifications are most commonly sought by custodial parents who want increased support contributions. In these cases, the parent who files the motion to modify typically cites the other parent’s increased wages or points to a lengthy period of time having past since the last support order was issued. There are other types of modifications, however. Non-custodial parents who want to lessen their support contributions may also seek modifications. By pointing to their loss of work, decreased pay, sickness, and other factors, they can sometimes convince the court to reduce their support contributions, and thereby avoid late payments, arrearages, and possibly even contempt for non-payment.

While it’s always best to seek the assistance of a lawyer, many of the court clerk’s offices have blank form motions and other helpful materials that may be of use to someone involved in a child support case.

Matthew Baum, Esq. regularly posts articles concerning Maryland family law and other practice areas at baumlawoffices.com.

FATHER IN FOCUS: Floyd Wright



The hardest part of being a Father: Trying to continue to be the Father and keep the line of Father and Daughter open - there is no separation.

The best part of being a Father: Seeing the reflection of yourself in someone else - your thoughts, your movements and your actions.

Words of Fatherhood Wisdom: Just be the Father, everything else will come into place.

Reprint from KRA newsletter on May 5, 2014 – by Marci Dingle

New Community Partner Assists Fathers-in-Need

NOn the way to his 4th-floor office at 200 East Lexington Street, David Clements, Founder/Executive Director of House of David Advocates for Fathers (HOD), always observed a flurry of activity on the 2nd floor. Curious, he paid a visit and discovered the *Work Participation, Placement, and Support Services Program*, operated by **KRA Corporation**, and funded by the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (DSS). Clements was welcomed warmly by KRA staff, who were eager to learn about HOD and how it assists fathers in assuming a more participatory role in their children’s growth and development. Since 90% of KRA/DSS customers are women with dependent children, a potential linkage between the two operations was pretty clear: where there are mothers and kids, there may be fathers in need of assistance not far away - several of whom have already been referred by KRA/DSS to HOD for services.

Eagerness turned into excitement when staff learned that soon Clements intends to apply for a [DOL Ready to Work \(Partnership\) Grant](#), and realizing the value of our long-standing expertise in this industry, asked KRA to collaborate as a partner. Independent of our DSS obligation, KRA will provide case management/workforce-readiness services leading to careers in high-growth industries for Baltimore’s long-term unemployed fathers.

KRA

Developing Workers.
Strengthening Communities.

Do you have an article, picture, or thought you’d like to share? Send to: AdvocatesforFathers@house-of-david.net.