



clifford  
beers

MOVING FORWARD

## IMPACT

“Dads deserve respect and recognition. Fatherhood engagement work can change things for families by empowering dads to embrace the nurturing role they can play in their children’s lives.”

-- The CT Department of Children and Families

# DADS MATTER!!

When it comes to the growth and development of children and adolescents, fatherhood engagement is a significant influencer.

In January 2019 Clifford Beers (CB) implemented a Fatherhood Engagement Service (FES) through the CT Department of Children and Families (DCF) to expand our access to dads throughout the Greater New Haven community.

The new service engages fathers on a group and individual level focusing on connecting dads with their children, increasing participants' parenting knowledge to help them become great dads, developing a healthy support system, and connecting them with community resources.

The need for this is very real. According to the National Fatherhood Initiative, more than 1 in 4 children live without a father figure in the home. Children living without a dad's presence are more likely to face challenges that include depression and obesity; they are also at higher risk of facing incarceration. So, as you can imagine, Clifford Beers is excited to be moving in this direction!!

The program's Fatherhood Engagement Specialist, **Gerald Scott** serves group participants with professional training and personal experience. "I have four boys and a little girl," he said. "I am beyond grateful that I can be involved with my children's lives, but it wasn't always easy. I'll be able to breathe a lot of life into supporting the group and helping each man be the best dad he can be."

**"When you teach your son, you teach your son's son."**

**The Talmud**



Fatherhood Engagement Specialists Bryant Atkins, far left, and Gerald Scott, far right, with Director of Community and Family Engagement Tirzah Kemp.

Director of Community and Family Engagement, **Tirzah Kemp** is particularly excited to launch this effort.

"For years now I've been working to engage fathers and connect them to community resources, but there are challenges with the men, including things like the stigma attached to getting mental health help," said Tirzah. "To have this program available that has fathers supporting fathers is great, and the sense of community they will build among themselves will go a long way to removing the stigma for them as well as others."

This initiative is a step to #movingforward in extending our outreach.

YOUR SUPPORT of Clifford Beers helps to ensure the success of programs like the Fatherhood Engagement Service. For more on what you're doing to help move children and families toward their best health and wellness, visit [www.cliffordbeers.org](http://www.cliffordbeers.org).

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# Making A Difference: Ted Novicki, Board Member & Devoted Dad!



Ted Novicki and his six-year-old son

Since 2014 **Ted Novicki** has served on the Clifford Beers Board of Directors. In that capacity, Ted has witnessed significant agency growth and change. A busy fellow and avid community volunteer, we were able to touch base with Ted to collect his thoughts on what he's seen and why he remains committed to the children and families served at the agency.

**Ted, you are beginning your fifth year of board service. Before we get to what you've seen at the agency, are there things about your pre-Clifford Beers life experiences that help inform your work with us?**

I know firsthand how important it is to have access to care. I grew up with a brother who was disabled, and we were very fortunate to have community resources. I cannot imagine what it would be like without that support and community, and without a place like Clifford Beers. I believe too many children and families would not get what they need.

**You're on the other end of growing up now -- you're a dad to a six-year-old boy! With our new Fatherhood Engagement Service (FES) up and running, what are your thoughts on fatherhood?**

That's a big question! I think overall fatherhood and being involved in your child's life is a two-way street. I get so much out of it. I teach him, and he teaches me. The benefits of being a dad are never-ending, and with my son and wife we have met wonderful people and created a supportive network

that we've all benefited from quite a bit.

**FES is one of many new initiatives at the agency. What is it like to serve an organization that embraces change so readily?**

Whether it's a new program or an ingrained practice, what the agency delivers is necessary care. The changes and shifts often mean we're using resources more effectively and reaching new populations in the community. It's all very positive and essential to creating healthy communities.

**Can you share what's next for you?**

Well, I'm holding on to the day job at Avangrid which has been a fantastic place to work, but I'm also branching out a little. I started teaching at Gateway Community College, and it's been great to pass on what I know. I'll also continue serving on the boards of those organizations who impact the community, like Clifford Beers.

***"I teach him and he teaches me."***

**- Ted Novicki**



David Cribbins, LCSW, outside Newtown Middle School alongside student art.

The impact one man has had in the community of Newtown, CT is outstanding. **David Cribbins**, LCSW, reported for work on the evening of the December 14, 2012 tragedy and he's been in that community ever since.

Since then David has changed buildings twice with the then 1st graders; today those children are 7th graders, and he is with those students until 2024 when they graduate high school.

"These kids are connected to one another and to the community in many ways," says David. "They received a lot of support from many agencies and organizations, and they absorbed that help. To say that these kids and families are exceptional isn't going far enough. They went through this horrible, horrible thing together, but maybe because of that no one should be surprised if they end up changing the world."

You can read about David and his work on our website at [www.cliffordbeers.org/davidcribbins](http://www.cliffordbeers.org/davidcribbins).

Hello, Friends--

Like you, I'm looking forward to this upcoming spring! It will bring great, new things to my garden, and at Clifford Beers it will bring into focus something we should talk about more: fathers, sons, and men in general!

Our new Fatherhood Engagement Service is underway! We're talking with men about being role models, communicating with their children, best fathering practices, and co-parenting. It's very exciting!! We have added many men to our staff for this dad-based work; yes, blended gender discussions have great value, but so, too, do single gender conversations. There is something to be said about shared experiences and men bonding over parenting skills, their own self-care, and what dads bring to their children's lives. It's really quite beautiful.

I'm also thrilled to highlight in this edition the work of one Clifford Beers man, David Cribbins, LCSW. David was part of our initial response to the Sandy Hook tragedy of December 14, 2012, and he is the sole clinician who remains in Newtown serving teachers, students, and families. Believe it or not, the school children who were in those affected first grade classrooms are in middle school today: seventh grade! Peek inside to see where you can find his story on our website.

David is, of course, one of many men who deliver impact. For instance, our board contains many accomplished men and women, some of whom have been featured here. For this edition we're thrilled to share with you thoughts from Ted Novicki, a board member and himself a father!

Remember that YOU make all these stories possible. YOU are why we can explore a new program, a new story, a new focus. THANK YOU for your support of Clifford Beers.

Warmly,



## 16TH ANNUAL BUILDERS OF HOPE BREAKFAST

FEATURING

**SONIA MANZANO**

*"MARIA" FROM SESAME STREET; AUTHOR,  
BECOMING MARIA: LOVE AND CHAOS IN THE SOUTH BRONX*

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**SONIA MANZANO**



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