

Man Up.

So...if you're interested in reading up on the entire story of the film (which is a classic case of indie filmmaking...the little/no budget, the networking, the traveling – GO INDIE!)...anyway visit the site: <http://www.manupthedocumentary.com/>.

Filmmaker Tonia Grady said the documentary “is nothing more than a call-to-action by one woman who is watching helplessly as her daughter is caught in the throws of this merciless disease — I like to call fatherlessness...I sink to a new low every time my child asks me, “Mommy where is my daddy, and why doesn't he come to see me?” I have always despised the vicious cycle of fatherlessness, but never did I think that a child of mine would fall victim to it.”

Newark was the 5th city of the 10-city tour. What's interesting is that Newark is included in this tour because of a Newark-based organization's involvement in the film – as an example of solutions. Now, to be honest, I don't think the film covered nearly enough of what this organization – the Newark Comprehensive Center for Fathers (NCCF/Fathers Now) actually does.

But it seems there was a reason for this. “The film was already completed. They found out about us, came out here, and taped for a week,” Lavar Young, Director of NCCF said. “It made sense [to participate in the project]. There are so many fathers that don't have relationships with their children...it's like there this Fatherhood Industry...far too many are not involved. And so the young are leading the young, no values are being instilled in these children. The feelings that come with the lack of a father get suppressed as you get older. This film definitely brought those feelings back to me.” But Mr. Young also spoke from the perspective of the missing men. “Now that fatherlessness is in the media again (noting various PSA's on the issue), we're also bringing to light that historically, fathers haven't received the same support and attention as mothers in terms of services, custody, general assistance.”

I hear NCCF wasn't on the DVD's – heavily pushed during the event...what's up with that?

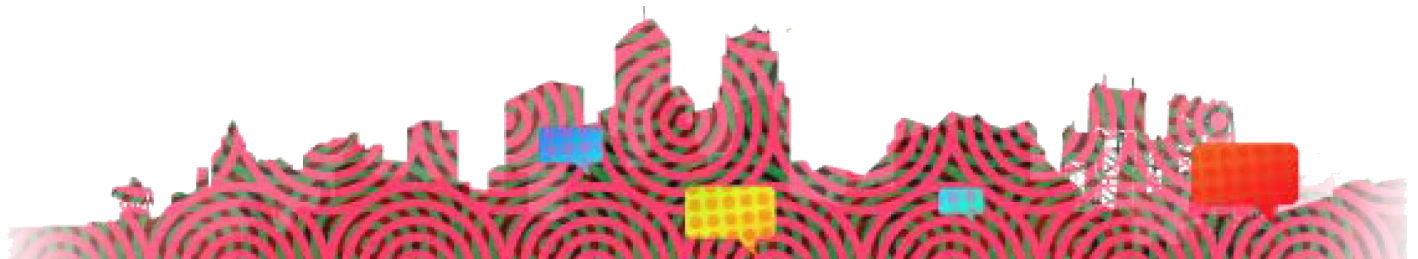
It covered the problems and symptoms pretty well, though in some cases *ManUp's* subjects seemed to equate fatherless children as a sort of a consequence of the pursuit of happiness; and not necessarily irresponsibility or even poor decisions. Case: One



Father's Now Director, LaVar Young engages the audience at the Man-Up: The Exploration of A Fatherless Nation premier about the importance of fatherhood, March 4th, 2010 at the Newark Museum.



Tonia Grady- Man-Up: The Exploration of A Fatherless Nation director and executive producer, Tonia Grady talking with the audience about her vision behind the documentary.



woman had five children (all) by different fathers. Although I understand that most people want a significant other, this seemed a high price to pay for such a quest. The film didn't get into that. I'm not sure that this "societal ill" can ever be healed if such perspectives are overlooked.

I spoke with Tonia Grady later on; my goal was to have her articulate why *everyone* should care about the contents in the film – what if your Dad *was* in your life? After all, while the film was a real tearjerker – listening to little girls and boys talk about a void...In the end how does fatherlessness matter to society?

"It *is* a social issue. Young men who don't have a father will grow up and perhaps become a robber, a rapist, or worse," she said. "Is it really that bad?" I asked.

"Yes."

"What has this film accomplished?" I asked. "This film is providing a platform for the fatherless to speak. You no longer have to keep it bottled up; you are not isolated – 24 million children are without a father right now."

Those were clear answers as far as I was concerned; I was all done. But before I could thank Ms. Grady for her time, she says, "Are you done? I have to go..."

I was thinking, "Is she serious?" I smiled and said, "Yes. Have a nice evening."

Smile.