

## What is a Marriage Initiative?

A Community Marriage Initiative is a collaborative way for organizations, leaders and individuals from all walks of life to create a community marriage policy that encourages preparation for marriage, strengthens existing marriages and helps even the most troubled couples restore health in their marriages. It establishes guidelines to maintain a marriage safety net for on-going education and support of couples in any age and stage of marriage.

### WHO WE ARE

The **Tri-County Marriage Initiative** is a grass-roots coalition of citizens from Oakland, Macomb and Wayne Counties with a common interest in supporting marital health. We recognize the many positive benefits that healthy marriages provide our families and our communities, and we understand the important need for education and support to stem the tide of divorce.

Marriages that provide for the healthy development of persons are much too important to leave to chance. Therefore, we will work to educate and empower everyone in our communities to prepare for, to strengthen, and to restore health in marriages.

While the Tri-County Marriage Initiative upholds the ideal of the two-parent family, it is not intended to imply criticism of individuals who are members of single-parent families nor to imply that abusive situations should be endured.

## TRI-COUNTY MARRIAGE INITIATIVE CORE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Calantha Asaré,	<i>Wise Virgins Ministries</i>	<i>Wayne</i>
Julie Bock,	<i>Marriage Resource Center</i>	<i>Wayne</i>
Pat Bossio, Jr.	<i>Faith Christian Assembly</i>	<i>Wayne</i>
John E. Duckworth,	<i>Gethsemane Missionary Baptist</i>	<i>Wayne</i>
Nathan Gladish,	<i>Oak Arbor Church</i>	<i>Oakland</i>
Linda Logan,	<i>Faith Tabernacle Church</i>	<i>Macomb</i>
Melvin Logan,	<i>Faith Tabernacle Church</i>	<i>Macomb</i>
Sherry Stockford,	<i>Lakeside Community Church</i>	<i>Macomb</i>
Renaulta Taylor,	<i>Faith Christian Community Church</i>	<i>Wayne</i>
Johnathan Williams,	<i>Kingdom of God Christian Ministries</i>	<i>Wayne</i>

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*WE BELIEVE every marriage deserves our best to ensure success. Our mission is to encourage and provide a comprehensive and effective program of marriage education and support throughout the Detroit Tri-County area in order to stem the tide of divorce and to increase the percentage of healthy marriages for our families and communities.*

For more information contact:

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# TRI-COUNTY MARRIAGE INITIATIVE

## Marriage Matters..



## ...We Care

# MARRIAGE TODAY IS IN CRISIS

Even though marriage continues to be the most popular voluntary institution in the U.S., with over 90% of individuals marrying at least once in their lifetime, divorce ends nearly half of all marriages. Couples are not the only ones to feel the effects, since most divorces involve children—more than 1 million children each year experience their parents' divorce.<sup>1</sup>

Because so many marriages end in divorce, marriage is often seen as a risky decision. Now more couples than ever before choose cohabitation before entering into marriage. The rate of cohabitation has increased 1,000% since 1960. But research demonstrates that living together is not helpful marriage preparation. Instead, trends indicate that couples who cohabit prior to marriage actually have lower relationship satisfaction and increased risk of divorce.

Marriage is in crisis today, and it's going to take a lot of help and support from individuals, couples and groups to bring about substantial change. Fortunately, there is a growing grassroots effort to do something to uphold the institution of marriage and restore the value of marital fidelity. People from all walks of life and all across the nation are joining to support community marriage initiatives like the one described in this flier.

You can help! We invite you to learn more about marriage education activities in the Detroit metro area and consider how you can be a part of a culture of change.

Please find the complete list of references on our website:

[www.Mlmarriage.org/Tri-CountyInitiative.html](http://www.Mlmarriage.org/Tri-CountyInitiative.html)

## Powerful Benefits of Marriage

- Children who live with their own married parents are healthier physically and emotionally than children who do not<sup>3</sup>
- Marriage increases the likelihood that fathers will have good relationships with their children<sup>4</sup>
- Married men earn 10% - 40% more than single men with similar education and job histories<sup>5</sup>
- Young married women are 1/3 less likely to experience relationship violence than young cohabiting women<sup>6</sup>
- Married people live longer and are emotionally healthier than divorced people<sup>7</sup>
- Higher marriage rates strengthen our communities<sup>8</sup>
- Children who live with their own married parents are less likely to have lower grades, less likely to be held back, and less likely to drop out of high school<sup>9</sup>



## The Costs of Divorce

- Family fragmentation costs Michigan governments and taxpayers **over \$1.6 billion** per year<sup>10</sup>
- 76.2% of families living in poverty in Michigan are in unmarried households<sup>11</sup>
- 67.4% of children living in poverty in Michigan are in unmarried households<sup>12</sup>
- Boys raised in single-parent homes are twice as likely to have committed a crime that leads to incarceration by the time they reach their early thirties<sup>13</sup>

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## Tri-County Marriage Initiative

### *We Believe...*

that as religious and community leaders, we have a responsibility to raise the standard for preparing, strengthening, and restoring the marriage bond of husband and wife to build marriages to last a lifetime.

### *Therefore We ...*

- Encourage courtships of at least one year
- Promote sexual abstinence outside of marriage
- Recommend a premarital preparation process of at least four months, and at least four sessions focused specifically on the marriage
- Recommend the use of a pre-marital inventory for all engaged couples
- Encourage the bride and groom to focus more on the marriage than on the wedding
- Recommend mentor and accountability couples to work with engaged couples, newlyweds, and troubled couples
- Recommend annual retreats to enrich established marriages
- Make available resources and services to help troubled marriages
- Establish support groups for step/blended families
- Collaborate with other churches, organizations, and government officials to share resources that support marriages and families