

Community dinners promote family time and honor county leader Chad Earl

Dinners do make a difference and so did Chad Earl, a community leader whose presence was felt countywide.

Monday, September 26 is Family Day: A Day to Have Dinner with Your Children™. Mr. Earl was planning a Family Day event for the city of Lorain when he unexpectedly passed away last Aug. 30. He was just 39.

This year's Family Day events honoring Mr. Earl's legacy of family involvement will be held 5-7 p.m. Monday, September 26 at the following venues:

- Oberlin: Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 47 Locust St., Lorain
- Lorain: Greater Victory Christian Ministries, 559 Reid Ave.
- Elyria: Salvation Army, 716 Broad St.

You can become a Family Day STAR, by signing the simple pledge form at the dinner events or logging onto: www.ct-cloraincounty.org:

- Spend time with my kids by having dinner together
- Talk to my kids about their friends, interests and the dangers of drugs and alcohol
- Answer their questions and listen to them
- Recognize I have the power to help



Chad Earl

keep my kids substance-free

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University launched Family Day in 2001. Youth who regularly eat dinners together are less likely to drink, smoke or do drugs. Something as simple as family meals can have a direct and long-lasting impact on the lives of youth in keeping them substance-free.

Family meals remind us to take time from our hectic lives to talk with our children about their day, their lives, friends and school. Ask questions and listen to them. The meal isn't as important as the connections that are made and the time spent together.

Chad Earl knew how to make those important connections. He had a special gift for connecting with youth and was involved in many organizations. He was a member of 100 Men of Lorain, working to stop violence in Lorain; he headed the Boys to Men Ministry at Oberlin's Mt. Zion Baptist Church and active in the "See Something, Say Something" campaign encouraging people to report criminal activity, including underage drinking, through an anonymous tip line.

He was also an active member of Communities That Care of Lorain County, a countywide coalition working to prevent underage substance abuse. The coalition has promoted Family Day and family dinners as just one way to stay involved in your children's lives.

This coming Monday, September 26, sit down to dinner with your family. Share something about your day, the challenges and successes. Or, next Monday, September 26, join us at one of the three community dinners honoring Mr. Chad Earl's legacy. Dinners do make a difference. Start now.

For more information on Family Day: A Day to Have Dinner with Your Children and the three community dinners held on Monday, September 26, contact Catherine Gabe, 440-282-9920, or cgabe@lorainadas.org.