



RICHMOND CITY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
RICHMOND CITY JUSTICE CENTER
1701 FAIRFIELD WAY
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23223
C.T. WOODY, JR., SHERIFF

PRESS RELEASE

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SHERIFF C.T. WOODY, JR. HOSTS FATHER- DAUGHTER DANCE AS PART OF 10TH DATE WITH DAD CELEBRATION

This year marks the sixth Dance of Their Own, father-daughter dance, hosted by Richmond Sheriff, C.T. Woody, Jr. behind the walls of the jail. A Dance of Their Own, sponsored by the local non-profit Girls For A Change (GFAC)*, will provide the opportunity for 11 male inmates to share the afternoon with their daughters. This year's dance in the RCJC is one of ten events, which include a community dance, being held in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of GFAC's Date With Dad, and will be part of the 2017 Date With Dad Weekend.

When: Sunday, March 19, 2017

Time: 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Richmond City Justice Center, 1701 Fairfield Way, Richmond

During this event, the fathers, dressed in semi-formal attire, and the daughters, are able to enjoy a meal and live comedy, dance, play games, and participate in other activities aimed at father-daughter bonding and creating special memories, all without the physical barriers that usually exist between them during visits. Michelle Carter, an Olympic gold medalist in the shot put, will serve as this year's special guest at the dance, as well as Date With Dad Weekend events in the community, and hopes to provide further encouragement to the men and their daughters, as her father encouraged her through her life.

A Dance of Their Own aims to mark the beginning of a new, restored, or continued relationship for dads and their daughters. Eligible residents had to be either an active participant in the RCJC's REAL Program or a part of the internal work detail program and then were selected through a voluntary application process.

Men selected to participate in the dance are required to go through over 30 hours of parenting classes sponsored by the Richmond Family and Fatherhood Initiative (RFFI) and facilitated by Johnny Bullock. Classes included topics of trauma, co-parenting, resilience, manhood, value

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systems, understanding child support, community awareness. Speaking on the classes, Bullock commented, “These are resilient men who truly have a genuine desire to develop a more meaningful relationship with their children. They resolve to better themselves in order to do so. I’m so proud and excited to lead this group of men.”

“Numbers and statistics don’t lie; children need their fathers in their lives, and that is especially true with girls and young women,” said Sheriff Woody. “The fatherhood classes these men have taken in order to participate in the dance have given them tools many didn’t previously have. The structure and guidance will help them in creating and nurturing a strong bond with their daughter(s) and other children that will benefit them in the years to come. Events like this are fantastic opportunities to practice what they’ve learned, and I am happy to open up the doors of the RCJC for that purpose.”

History of ‘A Dance of Their Own’

A Dance of Their Own began when a girl taking part in a Girls For A Change program wrote to Richmond Sheriff C.T. Woody, Jr., asking him if a father-daughter dance could be held inside the jail for girls and their incarcerated fathers so they could have a ‘dance of their own,’ like the one the organization had held publicly for a few years. The girls were inspired by a girl in the program who did not want to attend the public dance without her father, who was incarcerated at the time. Girls For A Change CEO, Angela Patton, said that “when one girl first suggested the idea, some of the girls thought it was crazy, asking ‘who is going to allow a bunch of little girls, dressed up, to come inside a jail and dance with their daddies...?’” Sheriff Woody said “yes” to the girls’ request, and the first “Dance of Their Own” was held in the Richmond City Jail in 2012.

*About Girls For A Change

Girls For A Change is a 501c3 non-profit organization whose mission is to support and inspire Black girls to visualize their bright futures and potential through discovery, development and social change innovation in their communities. In doing so, we help girls develop key skills needed for their success.

For more information on the weekend, visit <http://www.datewithdad10.eventbrite.com>.

~~ Media is invited to come. However, in order to attend, confirmation of attendance must be received by 4 p.m. Thursday, March 16. No exceptions. Additionally, press credentials are required for entry. ~~

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