



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bakerfield Elementary School Hosts Inaugural Million Father March to Promote Male Involvement in Education

Students at Bakerfield Elementary School in Harford County kicked off the first day of school on September 4 in a new and exciting way when they were met with loud cheers, high fives, and smiles from men who participated in the school's inaugural Million Father March.

Bakerfield Elementary is the first Harford County public school to participate in the nationwide movement to increase male involvement. The goal is to encourage fathers and male role models to become more invested in their child's education. Through this process, the school hopes to form stronger ties between the school and community.

Tara Dedeaux, school principal, and Chelsea Davies, Title I teacher specialist, first learned about the Million Father March from a former Bakerfield Elementary teacher. They began talking with Bakerfield families about the importance of male involvement during the 2017-2018 school year. With the help of three Bakerfield Elementary dads, the school community was educated on the impact a male figure can have on a child's education.

"Students who have a male figure involved in their education are more likely to perform better in school and are less likely to have behavior problems," said Dedeaux.

Dedeaux and Davies contacted several local organizations as a way to encourage community support. Local organizations such as the Aberdeen Chick Fil-A, APG Federal Credit Union, Harford County Education Foundation, and Farmers Insurance showed their support through donations and participation in the March.

March participants embarked on a half mile walk through the town of Aberdeen. They began at Aberdeen High School and proudly walked down Paradise Road and West Bel Air Avenue before heading to Bakerfield Elementary. The crowd was met with cheers, honks, and claps from onlookers.

More than 175 fathers and father figures helped kick off the school year, far surpassing Davies' goal of 100 male pledges.

"The smiles on the faces of both the students and men who participated was incredible. We hope that this will continue to promote male involvement throughout the rest of the school year," Davies said.

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Jacob Little, coordinator of Title I, was one of the men in attendance. He was ecstatic to hear one of the county's Title I Schools would be joining this national movement. He, too, is passionate about the positive impact a supportive community can make.

The excitement was shared by students and men alike.

One student shared, "This was a fun way to start off the school year. I never got to walk to school with my dad on the first day. I hope we do this next year."

When asked why he chose to be a part of the Million Father March, Nathan McVey, a parent of several Bakerfield students said, "Because it matters. We matter. The kids draw inspiration and motivation from the examples they see. I hope more men get involved."

Gerard Smith, whose daughter attends Bakerfield shared, "It's my responsibility to show my child that I am there for her. So that children know that we support them all."

"The Million Father March was a true success. Our male role models celebrated and encouraged our students as they entered the building. We are developing meaningful and positive partnerships with our families and the community. I am excited to see the impact this March will have on our students," said Dedeaux.

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