

# DEAR CHURCH FAMILIES:



For the first time, we are able to implement a church-based drug prevention program that works.

And it works extremely well—far better than most other prevention programs.

It's called The Strengthening Families Program. SFP has been around for over 30 years and has been implemented in 38 countries.

More recently, SFP has created an easy-to-implement version of the program: The SFP DVD Family Discussion Group format.

Our families from the church, as well as families from the community, come together once a week. We watch the fun and inspiring DVD, practicing easy, research-proven skills that help us have

**Happier, better behaved kids**

**Happier family relationships**

**Happier marriages**

**Skills needed to keep our kids drug and alcohol free**

## Benefits for Children:

- increases social skills and cooperation
- improves school performance
- reduces misconduct and aggression
- reduces depression and anxiety
- dramatically reduces tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use

## Benefits for Parents:

- decreases stress, depression, and substance abuse
- strengthens marital relationship

## Benefits for Families:

- increases family unity
- improves family management and organization
- decreases family conflict

Interested in starting a SFP DVD Family Discussion Group in your church?

Contact SPSARV: [spsarv@umcmmission.org](mailto:spsarv@umcmmission.org)



## The Strengthening Families Program

Substance abuse and addiction cost the United States over \$500 billion dollars every year, and unimaginable grief and suffering for the addicted and their families. Research shows, however, that most adults with substance use disorders began using in their teens ~ with rare initiation after age 20. Addiction, then, is primarily an adolescent problem, that can be prevented. Research also shows that when parents are trained in the skills of Bonding, setting clear, firm Boundaries, and Monitoring their children's activities to see that they always stay in an alcohol and drug-free social environment, their children rarely use.

The Strengthening Families Program classes, that parents and youth attend together, teach these skills to parents, and teach life skills to youth, and have been shown in multiple evaluations over the past 20 years to prevent youth drug and alcohol use. SFP is a skill-based curriculum, teaching parenting and family relationship skills to parents and youth, and having them practice the skills together during class. Not only is drug and alcohol use reduced, youth mental health outcomes are improved as well. In 2003, Oxford University's Cochrane Review named the Strengthening Families Program the world's best youth drug and alcohol prevention program.

Developed in 1982 under a National Institutes of Drug Addiction grant, the Strengthening Families Program (SFP) was updated in 2012, adding a SFP Home-Use DVD model and a Family Discussion Group model (SFP for ages 7-17) that teach the same skills at a much reduced cost. It can be easily implemented in small churches or training sites with almost the same successful outcomes as the original, more expensive-to-operate program. In 2015, SFP 7-17 added a Christian Companion component, providing Biblical references for the facilitator (aka. SFP Family Coach) to share that support and validate each SFP parent and youth skill.

Therefore, the Strengthening Families Foundation proposed conducting 15 Strengthening Families Program facilitator trainings for the United Methodist Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence in multiple location sites around the US to help alleviate the problems of substance abuse, addiction, and related family violence among their congregations. In March 2016, this proposal was approved for funding by the Global Ministries board of directors.

The facilitator training is provided on-site and lasts two full days. Global Ministries funding covers the cost of providing the trainer, copies of the curriculum and the DVDs. What's needed from the local organizers is a site large enough to accommodate approximately 20 participants. It's also helpful if the local organizers can arrange for coffee breaks for the two-day training.

After receiving the training and reviewing the materials, the trainees, working in pairs or groups of three, will be prepared to implement the 12-session Multi-family DVD Discussion Group. In each session, the facilitators will walk the families through the DVD. Together they watch the DVD, being prompted by the DVD to stop at various points of the lesson in order to practice various skills. A detailed script for each of the lessons provides the facilitator with precise instructions about what to say and how to address common issues. It's the combination of the 2-day training, a careful review of the materials, an easy-to-follow DVD and script that have made it possible for volunteers to be able to successfully implement The Strengthening Families Program.

