



## Parents honor Mother's Day by “chalking” for action from Senators Schumer and Gillibrand.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, May 7, 2014

Syracuse, NY (Hanley Federal Building) – Members of the parent's group AKidsRight.Org and also of the Equal Parenting Party hope to see action from Senators Schumer and Gillibrand on protecting Family Rights. They plan to gather in the Federal Building Plaza at 1 PM on May 9<sup>th</sup>, the Friday before Mother's day. Some of the group will use harmless Kid's Chalk to write “I LOVE YOU” messages to their children on the plaza ground.

They hope the senators will issue a joint statement calling for Congressional Hearings into the need for Family Rights protections. The ultimate goal is a “Declaration of Family Rights.” Principles to control the ease of parent/child splits that presently occur due to divorce, separation, or the actions of social services. [

[http://www.AKidsRight.org/parental\\_notification/family-rights-poster.pdf](http://www.AKidsRight.org/parental_notification/family-rights-poster.pdf)

The group will be led by Katherine Neville, a VP for a statewide parent's group (FAFNY) and organizer for the Equal Parenting Party in New York State, and John Murtari, a Coordinator for internet based AKidsRight.Org. Both emphasize the date selected for the event, “It's a gut wrenching pain for any mom having no contact with her kids on Mother's Day – caused by an unjust Court Order.”

Ms. Neville is from Liverpool and a trained paralegal. She spends a lot of time as a “court watcher” and helping local parents with limited resources navigate the perils of Family Court. She became active lobbying for reform in 1996 after watching both her son and brother struggle to maintain contact with their children, *“I saw firsthand the failures and shortcomings of family law to treat mothers and fathers as fit, equal parents unless and until, clear, convincing, beyond a shadow of a doubt, evidence was produced to prove otherwise. . . Change is needed for the well-being of present and future parents and children.”*

Murtari's AKidsRight.Org Group's web site [highlights the NonViolent philosophy](#) and practice Martin Luther King used to break the grip of segregation. It hopes a similar attitude will help bring reform and also healing to parents who are often involved in bitter child custody disputes with each other or social services.

Mr. Murtari, a native of Lyons, New York and a former Air Force pilot and Academy graduate is a local coordinator for the group. He is the President of a small Internet startup company. In 2006 he was involved in a hunger strike which gained national attention and caused a movie producer, Mr. Angelo Lobo, to visit Syracuse and interview Murtari in jail and was used in his documentary, "Romeo Misses a Payment", on the failures of the Nation's family law system. Film trailers including Murtari are visible at <http://www.TheRomeoDocumentary.com/>

In contrast to the bitterness and anger which is normally associated with protest efforts and family issues – the group plans a positive attitude. They are NOT there to condemn the senators as people who don't care about family or children's issues; however, as a natural part of the political process they want to show their concern over the issue and to increase sensitivity to their cause.

**For more information:**

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An electronic version of the release is available at:

[http://www.AKidsRight.Org/actiond\\_syr/Release\\_chalk.pdf](http://www.AKidsRight.Org/actiond_syr/Release_chalk.pdf)

Background information at the web site: [www.AKidsRight.Org/actiond\\_syr](http://www.AKidsRight.Org/actiond_syr)

Additional material on Ms. Neville, attached.

## **Katherine Neville, Co- Vice President – Fathers and Families New York (FaFNY)**

I first became aware of the need for Family Law Reform, in particular, a need for a presumption of equal shared parenting, in 1996 when my son became an unmarried father to my first grandchild, and my youngest brother was going through a divorce; and I saw firsthand the failures and shortcomings of family law to treat mothers and fathers as fit, equal parents unless and until, clear, convincing, beyond a shadow of a doubt, evidence was produced to prove otherwise. Both young men were desperate to continue to be involved in the lives of their respective children post separation from girlfriend/wife; but family law as it existed then, and even now, makes it nearly impossible for both parents to be equally involved, equally a presence, in their child(ren)'s life. It is a legal system created to be adversarial, with a "winner take all" mentality, and the child(ren) are the very real "losers" in the family law arena.

It was then that I became an advocate and an activist for New York State and National family law reform. I, too was desperate to remain a fixture in the life of my granddaughter and my nephew; "bad/unjust," "ineffective," "biased/unequal" family law affects family members other than parents. For many years I have personally observed family and divorce court decimate parent-child and extended family relationships; it is an ugly, for profit, business, and the need for reform is crucial and long overdue. Three of my four children have been, and/or continue to be, forced into the adversarial atmosphere of "family court;" my youngest son has been incarcerated more than once since 2007 for "willful failure" to pay excessive court ordered child support based on imputed income and two of my sons have been the victims of false allegations by their respective exes in order to gain the upper hand in child custody and/or property division/settlement, and so many friends and family members (fathers and mothers) have had the same negative experiences with family courts. So yes, for me and my family, family law reform is very personal. Change is needed for the well-being of present and future parents and children.

In order to facilitate the effort to reform family law, I returned to college and received my degree in Paralegal Studies, but I didn't stop there; I continue to acquire knowledge about both New York and Federal family law, court procedure and other areas of law used in combination with family law. I use this valuable knowledge and the resources it generates to educate and assist FaFNY, individuals, and other like-minded organizations in the effort to reform family law and bettering the circumstances and lives of children and parents. I am a long time member of several NYS and national parental rights organizations with FaFNY being my primary home base organization. Like many other dedicated parental rights advocates/activists I am persistent in regularly writing letters and making phone calls to NYS and federal representatives to inquire about their position on proposed bills involving equal shared parenting, VAWA, child support, and to ask for their support on bills favorable to our position, or their withdrawal of support on proposed bills that are detrimental to our position, as well as attending protests/rallies as often as time and finances allow. I recently accepted the position of Co-Vice President of FaFNY, Co-VP with Holly Sabatelli, and we will be working as a team, together with the organization to advance the effort toward equal shared parenting and family law reform.