

**Testimony of Dwayne Grimes on behalf of Dwayne and Brenda Grimes,
Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development (CFWD)
Participants**

*Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee/Subcommittee on Social Security
and Family Policy Hearing on “The Benefits of a Healthy Marriage”
Wednesday, May 5, 2004*

Marriage was something I wanted to do once I got clean. After I had been clean for a while I started thinking about marriage. We had been together for thirteen or fourteen years. I knew she was the one for me. I knew that I was not going to find anyone like her. It was time.

Drug use was the main challenge to us getting married. When I was using I did not have time for any relationship. All of my time was the addiction. When I got clean I started seeing things as they really were. When I first got clean CFWD staff talked to me about marriage. Then I relapsed. After I was clean for a while again I came to my senses.

I really did not get support from family or friends. My family was happy about us getting married but they really did not offer any support. CFWD really supported us. They helped us plan our wedding and even let us hold it at their building.

I would tell people that have been together and are not married to look at the status of their relationship. What is the status now? They have to have understanding. I took my wife through a lot. They have to know each other – physically, spiritually

and mentally. She knows me like a book. Better than I know myself. Couples have to have forgiveness. Leave the past behind and don't keep bringing it up. Kids need their fathers. They need to see them in the home all the time. My kids say I am strict but that is not true. I'm just telling what I know and have been through.

Today my wife and I have been married for three years. We both work. Still struggling but we are still together.