

## **Media Alert**

### **The Largest NAZ Graduating Class Signals Parents are Leading Wave of Community Change in North Minneapolis**

In the wake of the recent spate of violence in North Minneapolis, families in the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) are taking a disciplined approach to ending the violence by dismantling the “cradle to the grave and prison pipeline,” and replacing it with a path to college. NAZ Family Academy is ground zero for this movement.

#### **Who/What:**

A group of North Minneapolis parents are graduating from an intensive training program and becoming leaders in the transformation of their homes and the neighborhood into a college-going community. NAZ is celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> graduating class from Family Academy parent education and empowerment classes. More than 50 parents and their young children will graduate together. The popularity of Family Academy is growing and this is the largest graduating class ever.

The NAZ Family Academy helps parents break the cycle of multigenerational poverty by teaching best practices that support children on the path to college graduation, starting at birth. The keynote speaker is a NAZ-enrolled mother who said Family Academy helped her significantly change the way she approached parenting her young son, and he began reading at a young age.

Key legislators will attend who showed their support for early childhood and “cradle to career” initiatives during the last session: Sen. Bobby Joe Champion (event speaker), Rep. Raymond Dehn, Rep. Joe Mullery, Speaker of the House Paul Thissen, and Rep. Ryan Winkler. Other elected and public officials who will attend include: Executive Director of Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Cora McCorvey, Assistant Hennepin County Commissioner Kevin McHenry, Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, and Secretary of State Mark Ritchie.

#### **Location/Timing:**

Saturday, July 12 at 1 p.m. (ceremony from 1-1:45 p.m. with interviews to follow)  
Capri Theater  
2027 West Broadway Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN 55411

#### **Interview Opportunities:**

Join the graduation of parents and their children from NAZ Family Academy and meet the team that is partnering with them to succeed, including NAZ President & CEO, Sondra Samuels, Family Academy Director Andre Dukes. NAZ parent Danisha Mack will be on hand to discuss the impact of the program on her family.

All children will wear shirts that feature the year they will graduate from a four-year college.

**Background:**

NAZ Family Academy offers 8- and 12-week parent education and empowerment courses that teach best-practice skills. These classes are highly effective. Participation has been shown to significantly impact parenting knowledge and behavior (77% proficiency vs. 24% proficiency among a control group).

The unique Family Academy curriculum was designed through a partnership between NAZ and the University of Minnesota's Center for Early Education and Development (CEED). Curriculum combines evidence-based best practices with the real life experiences of NAZ families. The parenting strategies are presented in ways that are relevant to lives of NAZ families and that value parents' unique strengths. This curriculum is designed as a model to be replicated by other low-income communities. It is continually tested for effectiveness.

Family Academy is taught by NAZ and Minneapolis Public Schools ECFE staff.

**About Northside Achievement Zone**

The NAZ Promise Neighborhood is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization and a collaboration of organizations and schools partnering with hundreds families in a geographic "Zone" of North Minneapolis to prepare children to graduate from high school ready for college. For more information, [visit the-naz.org](http://the-naz.org).

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