

# Brownfields

## Success Story

### Job Training for Dads in Rhode Island

A non-profit in Rhode Island started a job training program for dads after noticing that many children in its Head Start preschool programs have fathers who would benefit from better job training, and that these men would be better fathers if they grew their skills and had better employment prospects. The dads training program, started by Children's Friend, the oldest child welfare organization in the state, is one of the many job training programs supported by Groundwork Rhode Island, which has benefited from a \$200,000 training grant from the EPA.

#### What is the need?

In 2018, Rhode Island had the 14th highest unemployment rate in the country. The state's four core cities - Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket - all suffer from unemployment and high incarceration and poverty rates. These cities' unemployment rates averaged 5.5 percent, a statistic that does not take into consideration unemployment disparities by neighborhood, race, or past criminal record.

These cities have average median household incomes about \$20,000 below the state average and \$18,000 below the national average. High school and college completion rates are also low. Out of the 19 training participants who graduated from the Children's Friend Dads program since 2018, 13 had a high school diploma or GED, 2 had completed some college, and 1 had a college degree. Out of the same group, 8 had prior conviction records.

#### Partnership Highlight: Children's Friend Dads program

Groundwork RI's partnership with Children's Friend is an example of the kinds of strong partnerships Groundwork RI nurtures within its job training program. Children's Friend improves the well-being and health of Rhode Island's most vulnerable children and their families. Aware that fathers of children in its Head Start program need better jobs and job training, Children's Friend created a paid job training program specifically for this group. The organization works under the belief that fathers who participate in the job training program will also improve the role they play in their children's lives. To this end, Children's Friend provides workshops such as, "A Father's Impact on Child Development", "Helping Your Child Succeed in School and in Life", and "Parenting - A Father's Role."



Fall 2018 Graduates

**EPA Grant Recipient:**  
Groundwork Rhode Island

**Grant Type:**  
Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT)

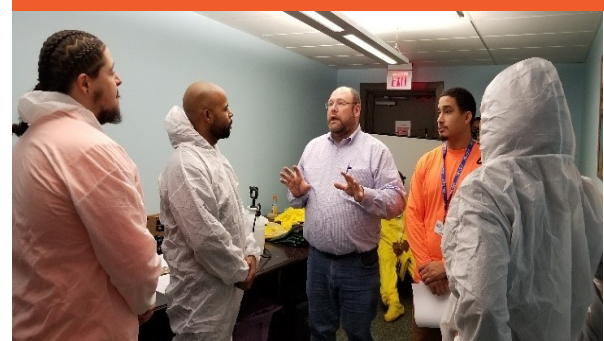
**Partnership Highlight:**  
Children's Friend Dad's Program

**Amount:**  
\$200,000

**Graduate Spotlight:** You can hear directly from graduates of Groundwork Rhode Island and Children's Friend's job training programs in the following videos:

Marc's Story - <https://vimeo.com/242849525>

Javon and Tete's Story - <https://vimeo.com/402875451>



HAZWOPER Training



Composting Exercise

**“Partnering with Children’s Friend has been amazing. We are reaching the exact population we want to be reaching and introducing the Dads to careers and job opportunities most never even realized were possibilities. We love the holistic approach the Dads program takes, taking into consideration the whole person and their families.”**

– Amelia Rose  
Groundwork Rhode Island

**“Through the power of collaboration and the wonderful relationship we have with Groundwork Rhode Island we are truly changing lives, not only for our Dads but for their children as well.”**

- Susan Grant  
Children’s Friend

**For more information:**

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at [www.epa.gov/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields) or contact Dan Rodriguez at 617-918-1060 or [rodriguez.danny@epa.gov](mailto:rodriguez.danny@epa.gov).

Through a partnership with Groundwork RI, the Steel Yard, and Amos House, Children’s Friend provides a 12-week Dads Job Training program that introduces fathers to coursework and field projects in environmental services, welding, and carpentry.

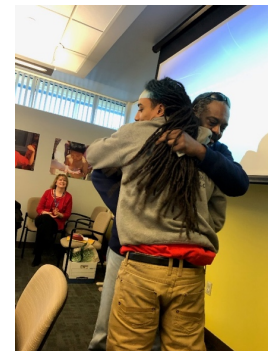
In 2018, Groundwork RI received an Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grant from EPA that has, so far, paid for seven (7) training sessions, including three (3) for Children’s Friend, addressing such topics as brownfields remediation, lead in renovations, wastewater, indoor air quality, erosion and sediment control, and composting. The trainings also included hands-on field projects in areas including general landscaping, urban agriculture and composting, green stormwater management, and brownfield remediation projects.

**Where are they now?**

Out of a total of 19 graduates from the Dads job training program since 2018, 16 completed Groundwork RI’s training portion including OSHA Health and Safety, and 11 have found employment. The Dads have been employed by Children’s Friend in its facilities department and by Groundwork RI on its GroundCorp landscaping team. Graduates have also been employed by RI Hospital, TPI Composites building wind turbine blades, Pathfinder Tree Service in Massachusetts, J&D Landscaping and Lawn Care, Robert Alan Matthews Garden Design, and more.



(Above) Eugene (left) on scaffolding in Tuskegee, AL at Groundwork USA training



Groundwork RI joins Children’s Friend and the other training providers, Amos House and the Steel Yard, at every Dads graduation. (Photos above from the Fall 2019 graduation in February 2020.)