



# Heritage Keepers® Healthy Marriage Initiative

Marriage Mentor Couples sharing  
their experience and wisdom with another couple.

## The State of Marriage in South Carolina

- 40% of all babies born out-of-wedlock;
- 40% of the state’s children in single-parent families live in poverty.
- 24% of white children and 69% of African-American or other babies born to single mothers;
- SC 41<sup>st</sup> in teen birth rate;
- Nearly 15,000 SC families divorced;
- More than 12,100 children affected by divorce; and

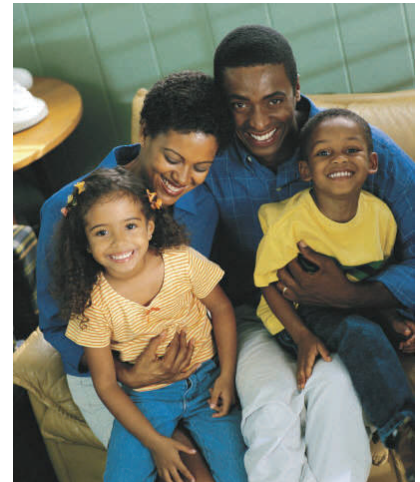
*Compared to this already discouraging data for SC, Charleston faces family formation problems of an enormous scope.*

- 43% of Charleston’s babies are born out-of-wedlock;
- 47% of Charleston’s children in single-parent families live in poverty.
- 71% of Charleston’s foster children are African-American, 25% Caucasian, and 4% of other races;
- 20% of a foster child’s life in Charleston is spent in out of home placement;
- 50% of Charleston’s foster children leave the system without permanent placement.

SC Kids Count,  
SC Statistical Abstract,  
SC Foster Kids Count

Too many children in South Carolina are raised in “Fragile Families”; children born to unmarried or single mothers and into poverty that lasts a lifetime. Often, the parents of these children live together in a marriage-like relationship or the parents have a close relationship but the father lives apart. Many times, the father has little or no contact with either his child or his child’s mother. These “Fragile Families” are particularly vulnerable to a variety of economic and social problems.

*As a result of chaotic family formation, over 70% of children from Charleston’s “Fragile Families” will spend part, if not all, of their childhood in foster care.*



**Sadly, for those couples who do marry, the rate of divorce in South Carolina has climbed to over 50% among the churched and unchurched.**

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Research has clearly shown that children who grow up in low-conflict families with married biological parents do better compared to children in any other family structure. Many of us, with healthy marriages — not perfect marriages — can do much to restore a Culture of Marriage in our society. Young couples deciding to live together, marry or stay married need to see real life couples that have endured the ups and downs of marriage and lived to tell about it! Couples with long term healthy marriages are in a unique position to help other couples build and strengthen their marriages.

Heritage Keepers® Healthy Marriage Initiative, a component of Heritage Community Services, partners with community and faith organizations in several ways. We provide healthy marriage interventions through education, support and mentoring for couples who want to prepare for or strengthen their marriage. Heritage Keepers® provides free marriage mentor training, equipping couples to serve with their local church and/or with Heritage Keepers® couples referred by the Lowcountry Crisis Pregnancy Center, Department of Social Services and other agencies.

For more information about becoming a Marriage Mentor for your church, community or a volunteer mentor couple for Heritage Keepers®, please call:

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