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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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[The National At-Home Dad Network](#) recently wrapped up another successful convention. The [18th Annual At-Home Dads Convention](#) Delivered by [Huggies](#) took place the weekend of Oct. 18-19 in downtown Denver.

More than 70 attendees made the trip from all over the country to network with fellow at-home dads, take part in educational parenting sessions and to simply get a chance to recharge from the day-to-day routine. They also experienced a successful transition to two days of official convention programming.

“I’m not alone,” explained first-time attendee Ryan Rippentrop of Austin, MN on what the Convention taught him. “My ups and downs are typical. I really felt the power of having a group and got motivated to set up a group in my town.”

“A big thank you to all the guys that put this event together,” another attendee said. “You’re an amazing bunch of fathers. You’ve renewed my passion for being an at-home dad and reminded me of why I choose to be home with my kids.”

The event got off to an unofficial start at the Dads’ Night Out on Thursday Oct. 17 at Lucky Strike on the 16th Street Mall in downtown Denver. Around 40 dads attended the gathering at the unique bar/bowling alley. While no one chose to test out their skills knocking down the pins, there was ample opportunity to eat, drink and get to know other fathers who made the journey to Denver for the convention.

On Friday morning, convention goers woke to a light blanket of snow. That didn’t stop a busload of attendees from hopping on the [Banjo Billy Bus](#) and heading to a community service project at the [Food Bank of the Rockies](#) arranged by Huggies. There, the dads helped gather and organize supplies to be distributed to those in need.

Afterward, official programming got off to a rolling start on the Auraria Campus in downtown Denver with a presentation by [Mantherapy.org](#). Jarrod Hindman of the Colorado Department of Public Health talked about the unique website which features several videos from Dr. Rich Mahogany who promotes men’s mental health and offers ways to get help if needed.

The website uses a good amount of humor for an important and sensitive subject and attendees enjoyed the way the message was delivered.

“An innovative approach to help fathers (and men in general) with an often private and taboo subject,” said one convention attendee.

Next was a panel discussion titled, “It Begins with Us,” led by Doug French of [Dad 2.0 Summit](#) and National At-Home Dad Network board members Chris Routly, Hogan Hilling and Al Watts. The discussion tackled a variety of topics on fatherhood, including how we can use our voices to improve the image of dads on the playground, in the media and online.

The afternoon concluded with a talk by Stephanie Jelley and Lisa Duggan of [umojawa.com](#). The presentation called, “Empowering Youth with Mindfulness,” addressed how we view masculinity as well as several child-rearing ideas such as using a talking piece to keep the focus on the individual family member who is speaking.

Friday night was a meet and greet sponsored by [Safari LTD®](#) at the Restaurant Lab on the Auraria Campus where dads got to have drinks and appetizers while further getting to know each other. For the second straight year Safari LTD® sponsored the evening and provided give aways for the dads.

Saturday’s full-day convention lineup shifted to the historic Tivoli Building on the Auraria Campus and got off to a great start with the keynote from [Dr. Harley Rotbart](#) of Children’s Hospital Colorado. He led a very informative and well received talk called, “No Regrets Parenting,” and asked dads to make the most of the long days and short years we experience while raising children.

Rotbart discussed ways we can make every moment we spend with the kids meaningful, even if it’s just in the car headed to another activity.

“This presenter did a fantastic job,” said a dad in attendance. “Our time with our children being ‘kids’ is so short that this really opened up my eyes to how short that time actually is. I plan on spending more quality time with my family as a result of this presentation. I can’t wait to read his book too!”

After that, the National At-Home Dad Network held its annual meeting where Chris Routly of Portland, Ore., and Jim O’Dowd of Boulder, Colo., were re-elected to the Board and James Kline of Apex, N.C., was elected to the board. Raleigh, N.C., was also named as site of the 2015-16 At-Home Dads Conventions. Additionally, long time at-home dad and National At-Home Dad Network and convention supporter Hogan Hilling announced he would step away from the Board. He will remain the media relations chair.

During the annual meeting, the National At-Home Dad Network announced a new trend survey it is conducting in partnership with Dr. Gokcen Coskuner-Balli of Chapman University and an unrestricted grant from [Farm Rich](#) that will aim to better understand stay-at-home dads. The survey, [\*\*Understanding the New Man of the House\*\*](#), will take about 30 minutes to complete.

Next came a break and catered lunch sponsored by [TimetoPlayMag.com](#). Jim Silver, Publisher and CEO of TimeToPlayMag.com, spoke briefly during lunch about his decision to market his website to dads despite all the consultants telling him to market only to moms. He received a loud ovation when he explained how that decision has made his site one of the most visited toy review sites on the Internet.

The afternoon consisted of four separate breakout sessions where dads could choose from a diverse range of topics in which to participate. Topics ranged from cooking to getting help finding work outside the home to age group peer discussions and relationship advice. There were also subjects on literacy, at-home dad fitness and financial planning among many others.

“The convention was very, very positive,” a first-time attendee said. “If for nothing else, spending two days with guys in my shoes meant a lot to me. However, the keynotes, other speakers and breakouts were really good. Much better than I had anticipated.”

The convention wrapped up with the popular post-convention dinner at the historic Wynkoop Brewing Company in the LoDo District of downtown Denver. Dads got one last chance to unwind at the sold-out full course dinner.

“This was a one thousand times better than I was expecting,” said another dad. “I would highly recommend this experience to any at-home dad. I’m already talking about next year’s conference!”

The 19th Annual At-Home Dads Convention will also be in Denver in the fall of 2014.