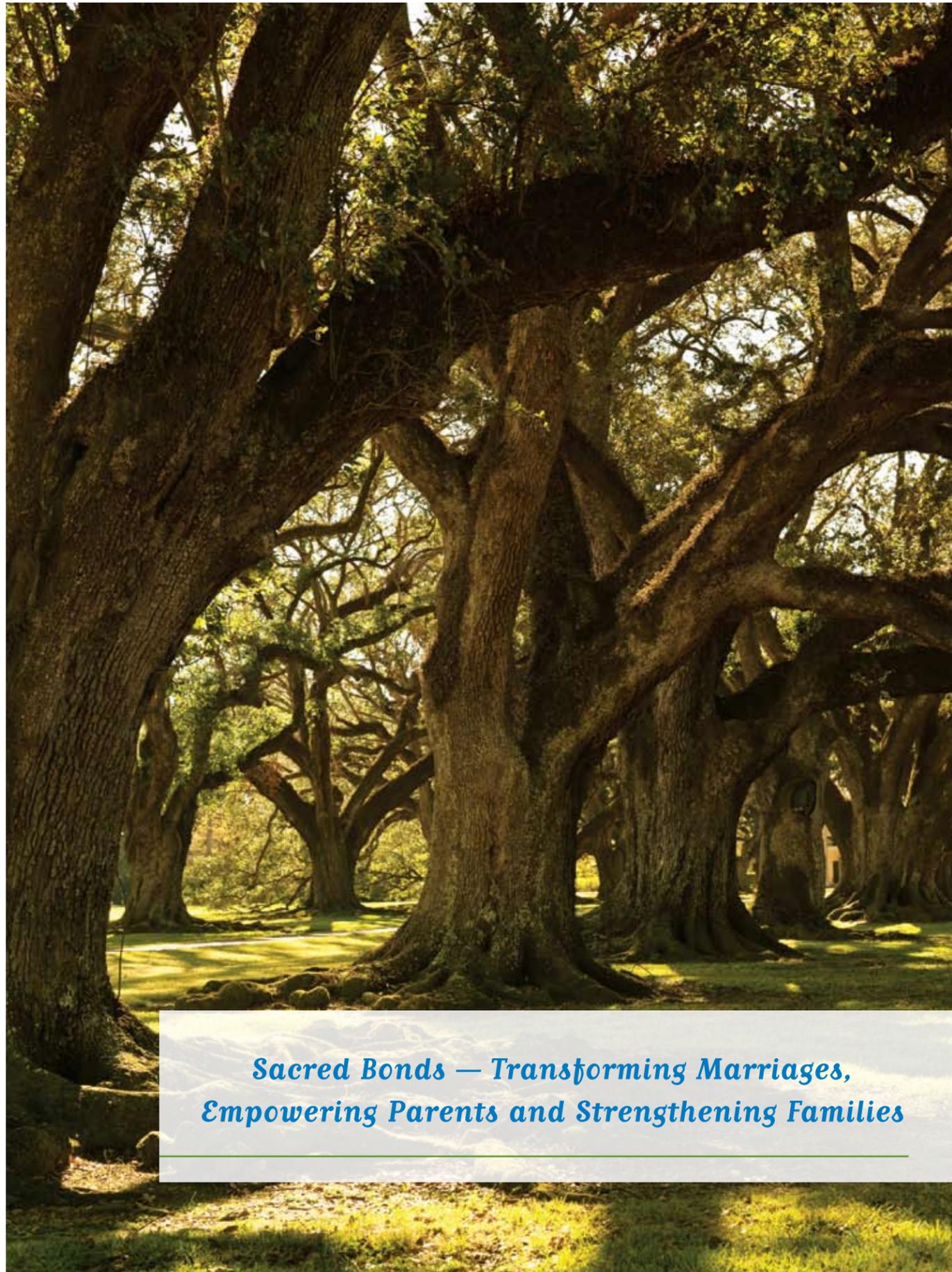


NCAAMP

The National Center on
African American
Marriages and Parenting



***Sacred Bonds — Transforming Marriages,
Empowering Parents and Strengthening Families***



Statement of Values

Our country is in a period of numerous crises — economic, healthcare, energy, education, etc. The crisis in the American family is another. Over the last several decades there have been significant increases in divorce, separation, children born out-of-wedlock and raised in single parent homes, cohabitation, and domestic violence. There have also been decreases in parental involvement, marriage rates, marital quality and family extendedness.

We are also in a critical moment in the history of American people of African descent. We are in a period where the zeitgeist — the spirit of the times — is shifting in the black community. There is growing recognition and acknowledgement among African Americans of the crises and unique challenges that we face at this stage of our history and of unacceptable and increasing racial disparities with regard to major indicators of quality of life such as employment, poverty rates, social and criminal justice, health, and education.

There is growing recognition and acknowledgement among African Americans of the crises and unique challenges . . .

As with all Americans, one of the most pressing challenges for African Americans is the breakdown of the family. It is unacceptable, for example, that 72% of Black children are born out-of-wedlock and raised in single- parent homes. This has financial, physical health, mental health, educational, and crime implications for far too many children and adults.



*Let us examine the place where we
nurture and socialize our children to
have good and productive lives.*

We know that we cannot expect true development, progress and empowerment if our most basic social institution — the place where we nurture and socialize our children to have good and productive lives — is in disarray or is nonexistent. Strong, healthy, loving and stable black marriages and families are the foundation for strong, healthy, loving and stable black children, communities and a strong nation.

The current crisis in Black marriages and families in some ways paints a dismal picture for the future of Black Americans. Yet, with every crisis and challenge come opportunities — opportunities to see problems and solutions more clearly:

- To see the strengths that sustain marriages and families in the midst of daunting and destructive social forces acting against them.
- To build on strengths and to excite the public not only to eliminate the crisis in marriage and families but to transform this crisis into conquest.
- To exercise our dominion over these foundational institutions and ensure that they are better than ever.

There is emerging now in our country new thoughts, new ideas, new attitudes, new leaders, new actions and a new determination and vigilance to address this crisis. More Black people are and will be standing up and standing firm to address this issue — and to address it in ways that are steeped in African American traditions of survival, struggle, progress and overcoming against all odds. This is also a tradition of personal responsibility, social justice, moral integrity, self-reliance, self-determination, and with a deep-rooted spirituality.

There is also great opportunity to strengthen marriages and families among African Americans (and all Americans) because of our deep yearnings and desire to marry and value for the institution of marriage and for family. A 2006 gallop poll revealed that most Black Americans highly desire and value marriage and family, even more than other groups.



Although the desire for marriage remains high among Black Americans, the hope for marriage and particularly healthy and lasting marriages has declined. Many African Americans, especially youth, are losing hope that healthy marriages and families are attainable goals.

Hampton University refuses to stand by and watch, as Black family disruption and hopelessness increase, without stepping forward to seize this opportunity to use our institutional and human capital and influence to help strengthen marriage and family relationships. We are confident that as we do this important work of strengthening marriages and families, the lives of African American children and adults will improve.

For example:

- Fewer Black children will live in poverty
- Fewer Black boys will be delinquent, angry and getting into trouble with the law
- Black children will have better educational outcomes — with more graduating from high school and college
- Black boys will have higher levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-control
- Fewer Black females will have teenage and out-of-wedlock births
- Black families will be better off economically and
- There will be lower crime rates in Black communities



ON SOME POSITIONS, COWARDICE ASKS THE QUESTION, "IS IT SAFE?" EXPEDIENCY ASKS THE QUESTION, "IS IT POLITIC?" AND VANITY COMES ALONG AND ASKS THE QUESTION, "IS IT POPULAR?" BUT CONSCIENCE ASKS THE QUESTION "IS IT RIGHT?" AND THERE COMES A TIME WHEN ONE MUST TAKE A POSITION THAT IS NEITHER SAFE, NOR POLITIC, NOR POPULAR, BUT HE MUST DO IT BECAUSE CONSCIENCE TELLS HIM IT IS RIGHT.

Martin Luther King



TO THIS END
WE COME TOGETHER TO DEVELOP
**THE NATIONAL CENTER ON AFRICAN
AMERICAN MARRIAGES AND PARENTING**
AT HAMPTON UNIVERSITY



we

Believe that

- Black marriages and families are in crisis as evidenced by dramatic increases in divorce, separation, cohabitation, out-of-wedlock births, individuals who never marry, and levels of domestic violence. There have also been decreases in parental involvement, marriage rates and marital satisfaction.
- Marriages and families have weakened for all racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. over the last four decades but that African American marriages and families have been disproportionately impacted.
- There are some historical and current-day societal forces that affect Black marriages and families more and differently — factors associated with education, employment, healthcare and the criminal justice system.
- The weakening of Black marriages has serious implications for the well-being of Black children, adults, families and communities and for society at large. It leaves African Americans vulnerable to increasing economic hardship and poverty, and to social, psychological and health-related problems.
- Children are in need of mothers and fathers who love one another and love and care for them.
- To strengthen black families, we will need to look at what has historically kept them strong while considering the current predominant social, cultural and environmental factors affecting all marriages and families.
- Strengthening marriages and families is not the only solution to the problems that African Americans face but that it is an essential part of the solution.
- Most African Americans value marriage and family and want to marry and have a healthy family.
- Marriage matters and that healthy marriages provide a firm foundation for healthy men, women, children, families, and communities. Healthy marriages are the foundation for creating healthy families and thus socializing subsequent generations of African Americans.



- Culture matters and that there are some cultural differences among African American and other racial/ethnic groups that differentially affect their marriages.
- Values Matter and that there is a need to identify, retain and promote values that affirm and support healthy marriages and families and help to reinvigorate marriage and other family relationships. There are many African American core values that help explain the countless examples of healthy and thriving Black marriages and families (both past and present) and attest to the resilience of African Americans.
- Environment/context matters. Communities, economic and educational opportunities and resources, crime rates, healthcare, societal values, and the like are all a part of the environment and context in which Black marriages exist and by which they are affected.
- African Americans must give voice to their relational problems to strengthen marriage and other family relationships.
- Spirituality matters — a focus on spirituality and a practical spirituality are essential to strengthening Black marriages and families.



we

do Not Believe that

- African Americans or their marriages and families are inherently conflicted, pathological or dysfunctional.
- African American marriages and families are any more or any less conflicted than the marriages of other racial/ethnic groups.
- We are unable to effect change or that efforts to strengthen families are hopeless.

Therefore, we are resolved in our commitment to

- Renew Black America's vision and hope for the institutions of marriage and families.
- Increase marital satisfaction
- Increase parent involvement in the lives of their children
- Increase parenting effectiveness
- Decrease the out-of-wedlock birth rate
- Reduce the divorce rate.



we

Recommit ourselves to the dream of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King



LET US STAND WITH GREATER DETERMINATION. AND LET US MOVE ON IN THESE POWERFUL DAYS, THESE DAYS OF CHALLENGE TO MAKE AMERICA WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE. WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AMERICA A BETTER NATION.



8

the

Vision

A country where most African American children are born into intact families and raised by their married parents in loving, nurturing and safe homes and where most married African Americans enjoy loving, peaceful and stable marriages that inspire and support their personal development, empowerment and human dignity.

the Mission

To strengthen families in the African American community by

1. Helping African Americans gain essential knowledge, skills and other resources required for building and sustaining healthy marriages and practicing effective parenting; and
2. Increasing public awareness of the status and value of healthy African American marriages and parent-child relationships and of the importance of effective cultural and societal supports for these families.



9

Objectives

the NCAAMP will . . .

... **Conduct and disseminate empirical research** on Black marriages, parenting and families.

... **Significantly increase the number of African Americans with training in marriage and family therapy and research** and provide curricula in Black marriages, parenting and families.

... **Provide African Americans and those serving African Americans with current information** about what it takes to have healthy marriages and to be effective parents.

... **Promote values and behaviors that increase personal development** (including character and personal and civic responsibility) among African American youth and young adults, while providing them with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about healthy relationships.

... **Raise awareness and foster discussion** on the status and importance of healthy marriage and parent-child relationships and facilitate collaborative marriage, parenting and family strengthening efforts among individuals and groups.

The NCAAMP will ultimately give more African Americans access to essential information, skills, and models that will help them to have healthier relationships, marriages, and families and be more effective parents and in time increase the number of children being raised and nurtured by their married parents.



Components

Research

Conducting, archiving, synthesizing and disseminating scholarly research on African American marriages, parenting and families.

- Research briefs, reports, and peer-reviewed/academic journal articles, marriage and family trends/fact sheets
- U.S. Marriage Index

Training

Significantly increasing 1) the number of African Americans with graduate training in marriage and family and 2) the number of Americans with access to marriage and family education that specifically focuses on Black families.

- Undergraduate track and Master's -level program in Marriage and Family
- National curricula on black marriages, parenting and families

Resources

Providing African Americans and those serving African American populations with current information about what it takes to have a healthy marriage and family and access to resources that might help them to have healthy marriages and families.

- Information brochures, pamphlets, reports that target a lay audience, including black churches (members and pastors)
- Center website
- Social networking
- Sunday school, and Bible study curricula that focus on Black marriages, families, and relationships

Youth

Promoting values and behaviors that increase healthy personal development, including character and personal and civic responsibility, among African American youth and young adults, while providing them with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about healthy relationships, including skills and knowledge that can help them eventually form and sustain healthy marriages and families

- Information brochures, pamphlets, reports that target teens and young adults
- Youth section on website
- Social networking
- Youth Relationship Conference
- Personal and relationship-development mentoring program

Public Awareness

To raise awareness and foster discussion on the status and importance of marriage and family and facilitate collaborative marriage and family strengthening efforts among individuals and groups.

- National Marriage, Parenting and Families Summit
- Outreach and collaborations with faith-based communities primarily through the Hampton University Ministers' Conference
- Media campaign

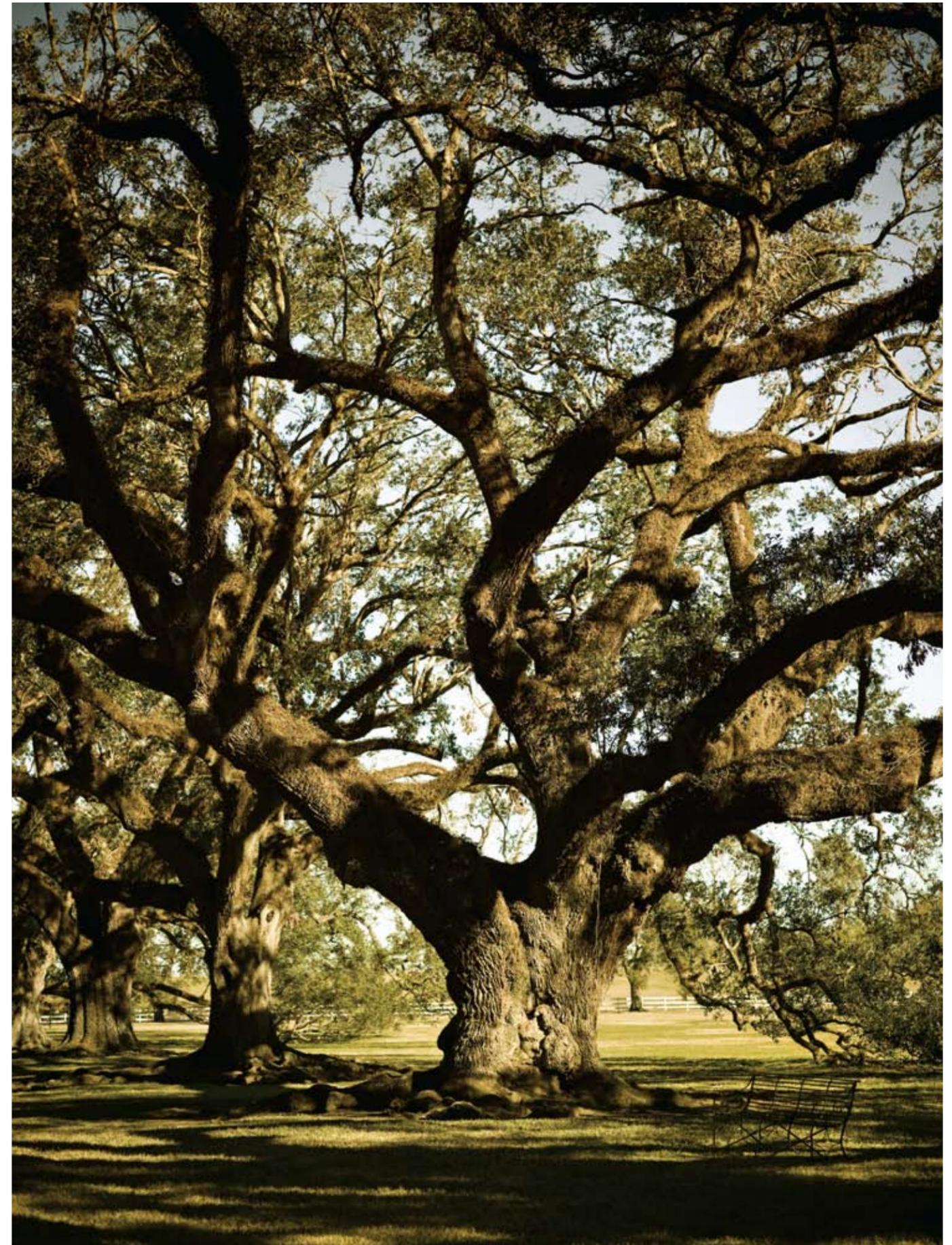


Partners

THE NCAAMP WILL COLLABORATE WITH PARTNERS AS IT DEVELOPS AND IMPLEMENTS PROGRAMS.

Partners to date are:

- The Hampton University Ministers Conference
- The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
- The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
- Howard University Department of Psychology
- The Institute for American Values
- Urban Ministries Inc.
- The Marriage CoMission





Hampton University is one of the finest private universities in the USA, dedicated to the promotion of learning, building of character and preparation of promising students for positions of leadership and service. In carrying out its mission, the University builds character and ignites in students a passion for life and infinite possibilities.



NCAAMP

The National Center on
African American
Marriages and Parenting

Hampton University
Department of Psychology
Hampton, VA 23668
(757) 727-5301
(757) 728-4912
Fax: (757) 728-4903
ncaamp@hamptonu.edu