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Recognizing the People Who Show Up

A reflection on the 2026 Vital Village Unsung Hero nomination opportunity and why Kathryn Ratey came to mind.

Why this moment mattered

The Vital Village Summit agenda included an opportunity to nominate someone for the 2026 Unsung Hero Award. Seeing that opportunity made me reflect on the people whose actions make a meaningful difference for children and families, even when their work goes unrecognized.

During a conversation, a staff member from The Home for Little Wanderers mentioned helping a father going through a divorce find resources. That moment resonated with me. It brought me back to 2022, when I was searching for resources throughout Massachusetts and beyond, contacting organizations and trying to find a workable path to parenting time with my son.

The person who came to mind

I remembered Kathryn Ratey (Kat), who supported me through the Boston Suffolk County Family Resource Center, connected with The Home for Little Wanderers, in 2022. She listened, reached out to multiple visitation resources, followed up, and took the extra step of putting our contacts and her outreach into a written timeline.

That written record mattered. It documented that I was seeking solutions and making efforts to remain involved in my child’s life, despite barriers in the process. It also showed me what meaningful support can look like: not simply handing someone a number, but following through and recognizing the person behind the request.

What an unsung hero means to me

An unsung hero does not always make headlines. Sometimes it is a professional who answers the next call, contacts another resource, keeps a clear record, and treats a father’s effort to be present for his child as worthy of attention. Kathryn’s support stayed with me long after those conversations.

As I continue building Father On The Move, I want to recognize the people whose everyday acts of service strengthen families and remind us that accountability, collaboration, and compassion belong together.

Recognition note

This reflection explains why I considered Kathryn for the Unsung Hero nomination opportunity. It does not imply an award was received or confirm Kathryn’s formal involvement with Vital Village Network.