

Obama Reflects on His Dad, Proclaims June 19 Father's Day

✖ President Barack Obama has issued a presidential proclamation for Father's Day on Sunday. The president begins his proclamation by declaring that parenthood is the ultimate gift and an incredible responsibility.

"Every day, fathers across our country give everything they have to build a better future for their family, asking nothing in return but their children's love and success," Obama wrote. "On Father's Day, we honor the men in our lives who have helped shape us for the good, and we recommit to supporting fatherhood in our families, in our communities, and across our nation."

In a June 8 *People* magazine article, Obama wrote an essay about his efforts to be a good dad after growing up largely without his father.

"Even though my sister and I were lucky enough to be raised by a wonderful mother and caring grandparents, I always felt his absence and wondered what it would have been like if he had been a greater presence in my life. I still do," he wrote in *People*. "It is perhaps for this reason that fatherhood is so important to me, and why I've tried so hard to be there for my own children."

In his proclamation, Obama points out that a father figure may be a biological father, or he may be a surrogate father who raises, mentors, or cares for another's child. Every family is different, he writes, but what matters is the unconditional support, guidance, and love fathers and mentors give us throughout life.

Obama also highlighted a disturbing trend in the United States: too many children grow up without the support and guidance of a father figure. A father's absence is felt by children, families and communities in countless ways, leaving a hole that can have lasting effects, he wrote.

"On Father's Day, we celebrate the men who make a difference in the life of a child, and we pay tribute to all the fathers who have been our guiding lights," Obama wrote. "In the days ahead, we recommit ourselves to making fatherhood, and the support men need to be fathers, a priority in our nation."