

Literacy Council Promotes Parental Involvement of Jefferson County Inmates

Written By Karen Cable, Literacy Council and Monica Wagner, DPC Director

July 26th, 2009 is National Parents Day and what a better way to celebrate than to recognize the work of the Jefferson County Literacy Council in implementing the Storybook Project. Honoring the value of continued parent-involvement when incarcerated, the Jefferson County Literacy Council (JCLC) has implemented a program that helps parents, especially fathers to stay connected to their children while serving jail time.

The Storybook Project is a family literacy program that is run by JCLC at the Jefferson County Jail. It offers incarcerated parents the chance to voice-record a children's book for their child so that while they are separated, the child can hear their parent reading to them, as well as maintaining a family connection between parent and child.

The program started in February of 2008 and continues at this time. Donated books for children of all ages are brought to the jail so that an age appropriate book can be chosen for their child. Volunteers practice reading the book with the parent and then make a recording. The recording is turned into a CD and the package is mailed or hand delivered to the child by the sheriff's department.

The requirements to be part of this program are simple. The reader must be a parent and be able to read in English. They must also have the contact information for their child and the willingness to record a keepsake for their child.

New volunteers go through one-time, 1 hour training at the jail with a jail sergeant and a JCLC staff member. A tour is given of the jail, along with a background check. Other training is completed volunteers are able to be matched up with a parent. Last year over 50 recordings and books were sent to children of incarcerated parents. It has been a very positive program for JCLC and the Jefferson County Jail.

JCLC is a valued partner of the Delinquency Prevention Council. The two organizations have collaborated on a number of ventures including the Inception of the Reducing Recidivism Coalition and Ride the Rock. If you are interested in become a volunteer or making a donation to JCLC or the Storybook Project, please see the website, below.

*For more information about DPC, please contact Monica Wagner, Director at mwagner@oppinc.com or 920-675-4630.
For more information about JCLC or the Storybook Project, please see the Literacy Council website at <http://www.jclc.us>.*