Every Single Kid Empowers Kids with Incarcerated Parents

Every Single Kid believes all children deserve to have happy and safe childhoods. Every Single Kid strives to surround children who have incarcerated parents with the stability, encouragement, and hope they need while facing their parent’s incarceration and after their release. Every Single Kid believes children deserve support in order to break cycles of incarceration and create bright futures for themselves.

Every Single Kid is a nonprofit in Colorado Springs, Colorado that was established in response to the gap of awareness and services for children with incarcerated parents. Founder, Dr. Katelen Fortunati, LCSW, has dedicated her career to working with and empowering children impacted by parental incarceration. Her goal is to establish circles of support for children with incarcerated parents to close the gaps in their lives, build resilience and improve their outcomes.

Every Single Kid has chosen the pinwheel as its logo for its symbolism to “turn one’s luck around”. Pinwheels can be found world-wide representing concepts such as childhood innocence, unseen energy, wish fulfillment, and transformation.
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Combining the symbolism of childhood innocence, movement and animation, and the unseen forces behind our inner voice, the pinwheel symbolizes the idea of powerful energy, strength, and fragility. Pinwheels are created to bear wishes for good luck, longevity, health, and prosperity upon those who hold them.

Every Single Kid wants to help create a world where children of incarcerated parents embody the attributes and wishes of the pinwheel and are supported by their communities.

Every Single Kid wants to help break intergenerational cycles of criminal justice involvement by serving each child’s needs effectively. They recognize that the cycle can only be broken if social, economic, and educational inequities are also addressed.

Visit [www.eversinglekid.org](http://www.eversinglekid.org) to find out more about Every Single Kid’s program and access its resources including:

- Children of Incarcerated Parents: Bill of Rights
- First-person narrative accounts about how parental incarceration affects children and families
- Articles relating to Explaining the Empathy Gap; Trauma, Attachment, and Parental Incarceration; and Mass Incarceration and Transformative Justice
- Resources for Kids
- Resources for Caregivers
- Resources for Professionals

For past issues of this newsletter, parenting handbooks, program resources, and more go to [www.ceawisconsin.org](http://www.ceawisconsin.org)
Correctional Officer Teams with Illustrator to Create Beautiful Kingdom

Jon Hobson has been a Corrections Officer at the Waupaca County Jail in Wisconsin for almost 19 years. Jon is the father of two boys that are now grown, but did not have a little girl. As a first time author, Jon reflects, “I have had this story in my head for a long time. Even though a boy or girl would enjoy it, I guess I was waiting for a little girl after being blessed with two boys. I’ve decided not to wait for a granddaughter and share this story now that I have found the perfect illustrator right here in my home town of Waupaca, Wisconsin.”

A delightful book for any age with a lesson to be learned, *Princess Ivy and the Beautiful Kingdom* is a story with a great underlying message about respect and — you guessed it — poison ivy.

The perfect illustrator Jon found was his friend's son, Carl Anderson. Carl is a young man with autism who had been drawing caricatures of people at Special Olympics events. Carl said he always wanted to illustrate a book. Jon was impressed by Carl’s talented and was lucky to have him agree to team on the book project. Carl brought Jon’s story to life in such a fun and colorful way. Together they both saw our dreams come true.

Jon and Carl hope that those who work with parents who are incarcerated and dealing with their own issues will take a look at *Princess Ivy and the Beautiful Kingdom* and consider using it as an inspiration for their students.

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Scholarships for Children with Incarcerated Parents

Many foundations and non-profit organizations sponsor scholarship programs to reduce financial hardships faced by children of low income families and provide support to increase college graduation rates for low-income students. Some of these programs are aimed at specific ethnic groups or families facing certain economic obstacles.

The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University has identified seven organizations to date that plan to give scholarships specifically to children of incarcerated parents. I added an eighth organization. Here is a list of those organizations and their websites where you can locate more information, eligibility requirements and application forms:

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<th>Scholarships</th>
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<tr>
<td>Available to students in the Washington, DC metropolitan area</td>
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<td>Available to students in the St. Louis metropolitan area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willie the Plumber Scholarship Fund</td>
<td><a href="http://www.willytheplumberscholarship.net">www.willytheplumberscholarship.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Available to students in Utah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children of Incarcerated Parents Scholarships</td>
<td><a href="http://www.childrenofincarceratedparents.com">www.childrenofincarceratedparents.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Available to students in 11 counties in Florida</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children Impacted by Crime Scholarships</td>
<td><a href="http://www.writeaprisoner.com">www.writeaprisoner.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Available to students nationwide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give Something Back</td>
<td><a href="http://www.giveback.ngo">www.giveback.ngo</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available to students in California, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Children of Incarcerated Parents Initiative</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ctcip@ccsu.edu">www.ctcip@ccsu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Available to students in Connecticut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Corrections Education Foundation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ccefscholarships.org">www.ccefscholarships.org</a></td>
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<td>Available to students nationwide</td>
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For more information on these scholarships and other scholarships available to low-income families in general go the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated Parents website, https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/resources/college-and-coip-info/ or Fair Shake website, www.fairshake.net/family-and-friends/.
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Parents Apart Helps Families Adjust to Separation

In an article titled “East Hill Notes: Effective Parenting Classes Increasingly Essential” that appeared in the Tompkins Weekly newspaper, Sandy Repp wrote, “Strengthening Youth, Families and Communities” is a central part of Cornell Cooperative Extension’s mission.

The parenting skills classes offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Family and Community Development program have achieved dramatic, documented results for families across New York’s Tompkins County for almost 40 years. The workshops are designed to help parents understand the reasons behind their current parenting behaviors, and learn new, more effective parenting and communication skills.

One highly effective class is Parents Apart, initiated at the request of local court officials who saw a need for education and support for families experiencing separation or divorce. Parents Apart class topics include how to minimize tension between parents by using specific strategies and communication skills and how to parent when couples are separated or are experiencing high conflict.

Developed by the University of Massachusetts, the six-hour Parents Apart curriculum helps parents and caregivers better understand how children of different ages experience the separation/divorce process and how to keep kids out of adult conflicts.

To assist incarcerated parents and those in re-entry to their local communities who must deal with new and different parenting arrangements, Cornell Cooperative Extension-Tompkins brought its parenting education programs to adults in the local justice system.

A “Healthy Family Relationships” class series was started in 2007 for Tompkins County Probation Day Reporting participants. In 2017, Parents Apart was piloted with separate groups of incarcerated men and women in the Tompkins County Jail.

Response to the Parents Apart class at the Jail was immediate and positive. Cathy Kinder, MSW, who led the first group of 10 men, recalled how participants shared their struggles in relationships with their children’s mothers, and the pain of separation from their children caused by incarceration.
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“They quickly started to open up in a conversational way, seeking affirmation, information and support from me and from each other,” Kinder recalled. “I was constantly adapting the material to include their reality because they wanted to talk about their kids, the mothers of their kids, the way they are perceived by others and society, how trapped they feel, and how hard it is to do things differently.

“One guy said that this class went beyond the subject matter in that it stirred their own need to talk among themselves in a way they don’t often do – about their kids, their hopes and dreams and how they can try out some of the course information.

“Participants recognized their need for more coaching on communication, not just with their children but with the mothers, because if something doesn’t work, they tend to give up or don’t know what else to do,” Kinder concluded.

Parents Apart

*Parents Apart:* is a six-hour workshop certified by the New York State Parent Education & Awareness Program. It is taught by psychologists, family therapists, social workers, and attorneys for parents who want to help their children adjust to their separation and/or divorce. The workshop focuses on the emotional reaction of children to their parents’ separation or divorce, and methods parents can use to help make the transition easier for children.

**Workshops cover the following topics:**

- The emotional reaction of children to their parents' separation and/or divorce.
- The promotion of good parenting to help children adjust after a separation and/or divorce by teaching listening skills and conflict management.
- The avoidance of common pitfalls parents experience during separation and/or divorce.
- The discussions of the mediation, collaboration, among other legal options open to families.
- The exploration of the legal resources available.

For more about Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Family and Community Development programs, visit [www.ccctompkins.org/family](http://www.ccctompkins.org/family) or contact Anna Steinkraus, Family and Community Development Program Coordinator at [ams69@cornell.edu](mailto:ams69@cornell.edu) or Jennifer Gray, Family & Community Educator at [jcg33@cornell.edu](mailto:jcg33@cornell.edu).
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CLiF Builds Connections Between Incarcerated Parents and Their Kids

After attending a seminar presented by the Children’s Literacy Foundation (CLiF), one inmate recently wrote, “Do you know what the best day of my year is here in the prison? It’s not Thanksgiving. It’s not Christmas. It’s the day when CLiF comes to visit. That’s the highlight of my year. I really appreciate all you guys do.”

CLiF’s team of presenters visits the five New Hampshire and Vermont prisons they now partner with through their Children of Prison Inmates program to lead seminars on tips for sharing books and stories with kids, as well as conduct fun storytelling sessions at family visiting days.

At each seminar, CLiF presenters model storytelling techniques and suggest ways to connect with kids over stories, regardless of your comfort with literacy. Even if reading a book seems intimidating, CLiF’s seminars emphasize the special time together talking about stories and the impact that time can have on a child, even if it’s just over Skype or the phone. CLiF also supports the Storybook Program, which allows inmates to record themselves reading and send the recordings home so families can ‘read’ a book together. After each seminar, inmates choose new books to send home to their kids, grandkids, nieces or nephews, and write personal notes in them.
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Studies show that participation in storybook programs helps keep families together and increases the chances of a parent staying at home once he or she is released from prison. Of the inmates responding to CLiF's survey, 98% said the Children of Prison Inmates program has helped strengthen their connection to their children.

The Children of Prison Inmates program inspires children of inmates to read more often, connects children and incarcerated parents through stories, and gives prisoners extra confidence to read to their children, even if they are not strong readers themselves.

Activities and Support provided by CLiF's program include:

- Inspiring storytelling presentations for inmates and their children
- Donating on-site libraries in prison visiting rooms
- Book giveaways: Parents choose brand-new books to send home as gifts; children select new books on visiting days
- Literacy seminars for parents to help them read with their children
- Audio recordings of incarcerated parents reading to their children, so they can share stories from afar

CLiF has provided children’s literacy programs and parent seminars to 17 facilities in New Hampshire and Vermont. CLiF is currently working with the following correctional facilities through multi-year partnerships: Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility, Marble Valley Correctional Facility in Rutland, a women’s prison in South Burlington, Northern New Hampshire Correctional Facility in Berlin, New Hampshire State Prison for Men in Concord, and the New Hampshire State Prison for Women in Concord.

For more information about CLiF's Children of Prison Inmates program visit www.clifonline.org or contact Jana Brown, Program Coordinator at jana@clifonline.org
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Editor’s Message
Another new year has arrived and it is a good time to reflect upon the many things to be thankful for --- family, friends and yes — even our job. As New Year’s resolutions go, if we make them and keep them --- we are fortunate. Breaking them just gives us more practice for the next New Year.

The New Year also brings tax time. People get busy gathering their financial records and preparing to complete their tax forms. Now may be a good time to take a look at the deductions you claim. Many who itemize their deductions realize that by donating to charity, they can trim their tax bill next year.

Many non-profit organizations that provide programming and services to incarcerated parents and their families qualify as IRS approved charities — and they can use your help. Because these organizations are often small, targeted to a specific population and have low overhead, your donation will go a long way.

If you have read about a worthwhile Parenting Skills, Family Support, Mentoring, Parent/Child Literacy, or Re-Entry program in this newsletter or the Prison Parenting Programs resource directory that you would like to help, check with them to see if they are a registered 5.01(3)(c) non-profit organization. If they are, please consider making a donation. Have a wonderful New Year!

- Jerry

The Parenting Connection newsletter is a publication of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Correctional Education Association. The opinions herein are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the CEA-Wisconsin executive officers or the CEA-Wisconsin membership as a whole.

Articles for publication in the Parenting Connection newsletter may be submitted to the Parenting Connection Newsletter Co-Editors: Jerry Bednarowski at jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com or Amanda Hillestad at Amanda.Hillestad@wisconsin.gov.

Co-Editor: Jerry Bednarowski, CEA-Wisconsin Board Member
Co-Editor: Amanda Hillestad, Jackson Correctional Institution