



Fall 2011

## A Commitment to Children of Incarcerated Parents

*I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.*

#8, Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights,  
<http://www.sfcipp.org/index.html>

This statement summarizes the underlying reasons why Our Children's Place (OCP) has been working to create a residential facility where young children can live with their mothers while the women serve out sentences for non-violent offenses.

In light of the current political and economic climate, OCP has spent the last several months:

- reevaluating the feasibility of a facility in the short term (with more than 2,800 women in North Carolina prisons as of mid-September, including 60 pregnant women as of late August, we know that the need exists but is the right level and type of necessary support in place?)
- meeting with other agencies and individuals working with women in the criminal justice system and their children and asking them two questions:
  - what unmet needs have you identified (what's on your "wish list")?
  - are there ways for OCP to help meet those needs?
- focusing on the question "what does OCP's future, both short- and long-term, look like?"

What we determined from those conversations (and what was confirmed by agency staff members in other states) is that there's a need for more advocacy, information-sharing, brainstorming, education/awareness, research/data collection, and policy work. Clearly, OCP cannot take on all of these! But we can focus on a few areas, all the while not losing hope for a residential facility in the future.

We've decided that one way to advance our education and awareness efforts is to host a symposium next winter and invite individuals and organizations from across the state who are interested in the well-being of children of incarcerated parents – service providers, teachers, caregivers, faith communities, state agencies, other community members, and, of course, YOU!

**What About the Children?  
Symposium on Children of Incarcerated Parents  
Tuesday, 2/14/12  
Friday Center • Chapel Hill**

*continued on next page*

There will be more details to follow. In the meantime, there are ways for you to be involved:

- Add names to our guest list
- Be a sponsor
- Volunteer to be part of the planning team
- Tell us about publicity opportunities
- Help with set up and/or clean up the date of the event
- Attend – and bring a friend!

And please keep doing what you've doing all along – send us articles and links to websites, tell a friend about us, invite us to speak to your group, make a donation in honor/memory of someone special, donate yarn, and the list goes on. We appreciate each and every show of support!

To learn more about what some other states are doing, check out these websites:

- New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents  
<http://nicic.gov/wodp/Default.aspx?View=Program&P=155>
- Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind  
<http://www.arkansasvoices.org/>
- San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership  
<http://www.sfcipp.org/index.html>



With our attention turned to our February 2012 symposium, we have decided not to host our annual Hats Off to the Kids! celebration this fall. But our wonderful hats and other handcrafted items (created by women at the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women, NCCIW, and community members) will still be available at a number of alternative holiday markets. To date, we're scheduled to have a table at the following markets:

- **St. Francis of Assisi Church, Raleigh**  
Friday, 10/21, 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Saturday, 10/22, 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday, 10/23, 8:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- **United Church of Chapel Hill**  
Saturday, 11/19, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Sunday, 11/20, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Holiday Crafts Fair, RTP**  
Thursday, 12/1, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- **Immaculate Conception, Durham**  
Saturday, 12/3, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, 12/4, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- **First Presbyterian Church, Durham**  
Sunday, 12/4, 12 noon to 1:30 p.m.

- **St. Thomas More, Chapel Hill**  
Saturday, 12/10, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Our updated market schedule will be posted to our website ([www.ourchildrensplace.com](http://www.ourchildrensplace.com)) later in the fall.

If you'd like to help staff our table at one of these events or if you know of other events we might be interested in, please contact us at (919) 843-2670 or [ourchildrensplace@gmail.com](mailto:ourchildrensplace@gmail.com).

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## Welcome!

Kristen Smith joined the Board of Directors in November 2010. Currently Director of Public Policy and Member Engagement at the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, Kristen gave this answer when asked why she joined the Board:

" . . . I was in prison and you came to visit me . . ."  
~ Matthew 25:36

My faith – instilled in me by my parents and church community – is the reason why causes to help those incarcerated have become close to my heart. From work at People of Faith Against the Death Penalty to ministry at the Orange Correctional Center, I've learned more and more about the challenges facing individuals who are incarcerated.

Mary Andrews reached out to me first about the mission of OCP, asking me to attend the annual "Hats Off" fundraiser. I was moved hearing the stories of David Crabtree visiting death row inmates and realizing that he could have easily been on the other side of the plate glass and Meg Scott Phipps telling of how Mr. Crabtree had visited her in West Virginia. I realized that these mothers needed to be with their children, or a vicious cycle of recidivism would be repeated.

The mission of OCP came even closer to home more recently. I've been spending time on a weekly basis for the past three years with a young girl who I was matched with through a local mentoring program. We've had ups and downs, but consistently spend time with each other – and she means the world to me. Just recently, she

opened up to me to tell me her father was incarcerated, but coming home this winter. The mission of OCP became even more urgent to me.

Although I have not been on the Board long – and most of my work has been selling knitted treasures – I hope that you will join me in continuing to support the important work of OCP.

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## . . . and Saying Good Bye!

Two Board members, Mary Andrews and Kim Hoke, completed their Board service at the end of September.

Mary has done it all, from chairing the Board to hiring the first director to organizing the first advisory board. Her love of children is reflected in her commitment to providing opportunities for all children, especially those often overlooked. She possesses an uncanny ability to help people from varied backgrounds and life experiences better understand the challenges faced by a group of individuals too often forgotten – incarcerated women and their children. Her tenure has been marked by a spirit and grace respected by those lucky enough to work with her.

The talents that Kim has brought to the table over the past six years are ones that all boards are searching for – a calming presence even under challenging circumstances, the ability to balance an attention to detail with seeing the big picture, and an appreciation for the importance of setting goals and measuring progress. Enhancing all of this is her work in an educational setting where she sees first-hand that children of incarcerated

parents are part of our communities and the need for a community response to ensure their well-being.

Carolynn Crowder finished her time with us as our Program Director last spring. While she was with us she staffed the Program Committee, worked to fine tune the program evaluation plan, including goals, outcomes, and evaluation tools, and researched re-entry, residential treatment, and perinatal care best practices. She also created a "day in the life" detailed schedule for the women in the program.

We will miss Carolynn's substance abuse treatment experience and client-centered focus, her knowledge of services throughout the Triangle, and her unwavering belief that incarcerated women and their young children deserve a voice and access to high-quality programs that will create a brighter future for them.



### From Dorothy's Pen

As incoming Chair, I would like to thank OCP's immediate past Chair, Mary Stowe, for her leadership and commitment to the mission of this organization. I also want to thank Kim Hoke and Mary Andrews for their vision and inspiration over the past seven years. While there is some disappointment that we do not yet have a residential facility in place for incarcerated mothers and their young children due to the economic downturn, we continue to move forward. To quote Winston Churchill, "never, never, never give up." And we are not giving up. We will take this next year to regroup, reenergize, and reconnect to the many wonderful contributors and partner organizations in the

state and nation to ensure that all children have the best chance of a loving relationship with their parents. We know that healthy, secure, loved children do better throughout life, and that parents play a critical role in their children's well-being. So I hope you will continue to support the important work of OCP by offering your time, talents, and treasure. We need you now more than ever.

Dorothy Cilenti  
Chair, Board of Directors

### Sharing Their Time and Talents

Considering how busy people's schedules are, we are always so pleased when someone steps forward and says, "How can I help?"

We are grateful for the following people who helped us over the past several months:

- Collins Pickup and Dave Kyger, Smith Moore Leatherwood LLP in Greensboro – *provided pro bono legal assistance*
- Marvin Taylor – *provided pro bono legal assistance*
- Olivia Griffin – *sorted hats and attached ribbons in preparation for this fall's alternative markets*

### Recommended Reading



- *Diamonds Beyond the Walls* by Miss Veronica with Latisha Sanders and Veronique Link ([www.crusade4hope.com](http://www.crusade4hope.com))

- *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison* by Piper Kerman
- *What Will Happen to Me?* by Howard Zehr and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz

know at ourchildrensplace@gmail.com or (919) 843-2670.

**Agency Director Tapped for State Juvenile Justice Committee**

**Searching for Storage**

We're looking for storage space for our hats (there are about a dozen large plastic bins) and some office furniture from our former Carrboro office. Our current "lease" arrangement for space in a storage unit will end in November. Our preference would be to have space in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro/Durham/Hillsborough area.

Our Children's Place Executive Director Melissa Radcliff has been appointed to a one-year term on the Juvenile Justice Planning Committee (JJPC) of the Governor's Crime Commission, part of the North Carolina Department of Crime Control & Public Safety. The mission of JJPC is to provide resources for youth who are at-risk of becoming delinquent due to individual, school, family, peer or community factors. These resources will also provide services for youth who are delinquent, undisciplined, or involved in the juvenile court process from intake through aftercare.

If you have space that we could use or thoughts on other possible arrangements, please let us

A big **"THANK YOU!"** goes out to the following individuals and organizations for their support donated from January 1, 2011 through June 30, 2011 \*

**Individuals and Organizations**

Anonymous (*through JustGive.com*)  
Kristen and Jonathan Andrews  
Sharon and Ted Bonertz  
Jeffrey Chambers  
Rachel and Sidney Eagles  
Diane Eilber and Gene Medler,  
Janet Eilber and John Warren, and Julie Eilber *in celebration of their father's, Charles Eilber, marriage to Elaine Scagnelli*  
Leslie and Philip Gura  
Anna Hicks and John Ccall Hicks  
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, *ongoing generous supporters of our website!*

IBM Employee Charitable Contributions  
Diana Tolar Parks *in memory of Melonie Taylor*  
Waltraud and Robert Reeber  
Katie and Kevin Reily  
Naomi Slifkin and Glenn Withrow  
Martha and Ruel Tyson  
Jean and Peter Vaughn  
Lynn Wentworth and Jim Ward

**Alternative Markets and H.A.T.S.**

Kimberly and Patrick Jeffs  
Rebecca Leonard  
Rita Bigham Ttee and Eric Bigham  
Mary Stowe

**Inkind Donations (yarn, hats, knitting and crocheting supplies)**

Rose Colagioiovanni  
Jeanette Dunham  
Christine Gellings

Thank you also to Dee Dee Lavinder, owner of **The Red Hen** in Carrboro, and Melissa Russell, owner of **Glee Kids** in Chapel Hill, for letting us have a display of hats in their stores throughout last winter.

\* We've worked hard to create accurate lists and apologize in advance for any errors. Please contact us at (919) 843-2670 with corrections.

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## Fixing Facebook

You may have noticed that there was some confusion with our Facebook page – actually we had two (three if you count our “Causes” page). We’ve fixed that (hopefully!) and are down to just one (two with “Causes”). To find and “like” us, go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Our-Childrens-Place/56782610545>.

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## Some Easy Ways to Support OCP

- Facebook Causes Birthday Wish - [http://birthdays.causes.com/?bws=causes\\_ader](http://birthdays.causes.com/?bws=causes_ader)
- GoodSearch - <http://www.goodsearch.com/>
- [www.justgive.org](http://www.justgive.org)
- \* NEW! \* [www.givingpal.com](http://www.givingpal.com)

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## Going Green

If you received this newsletter in the mail and would like to receive it via e-mail instead, please let us know ([ourchildrensplace@gmail.com](mailto:ourchildrensplace@gmail.com)). We also post our newsletters on our website, [www.ourchildrensplace.com](http://www.ourchildrensplace.com). Thank you for helping us take a little green step!

And speaking of “green” . . . please consider donating your used printer toner cartridges to us. We will recycle them at Staples and earn points for future purchases. If you’re interested, please call us at (919) 843-2670 or send us an e-mail ([ourchildrensplace@gmail.com](mailto:ourchildrensplace@gmail.com)).

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## Board of Directors

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Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, *Honorary Board Member*

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## How to Reach Us

[www.ourchildrensplace.com](http://www.ourchildrensplace.com)

P.O. Box 1086, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

(919) 843-2670 – Telephone

(919) 962-3725 - Fax (please call first)

*Facebook -*

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Our-Childrens-Place/56782610545>

Melissa Radcliff, *Executive Director*  
[ourchildrensplace@gmail.com](mailto:ourchildrensplace@gmail.com)

Jenn Barr, *Administrative Coordinator*  
[ourchildrensplace2@gmail.com](mailto:ourchildrensplace2@gmail.com)

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*Our Children's Place (OCP) is a private nonprofit agency committed to the children of incarcerated parents. We strive to be a leading North Carolina advocate and educational resource focused on these children and the need for a statewide response to ensure their well-being. Our long-term goal is the creation of a residential facility that will allow young children to live with their mothers who are serving a sentence for a non-violent offense.*

(10/4/11)