

Families and Corrections Journal

Vol. 13 No. 1 (2009)

Canadian Families and Corrections Network | Regroupement canadien d'aide aux familles des déteu(e)s

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Ottawa organizations discuss incarcerated fathers and their children

Susan Haines, Executive Director of the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice, and Marg Holland, Ontario Coordinator of the CFCN, hosted a meeting of community agencies in Ottawa on October 16. The focus was on service and program needs of incarcerated fathers upon family reintegration.

This meeting is part of the CFCN's ongoing initiatives related to incarcerated fathers and their children. In May, the CFCN published *Jeffrey goes to jail*, a storybook that can be used with children to explain the visiting experience and especially the anti-drug strategy and security procedures used within a correctional facility. Foundational to the CFCN's strategy for incarcerated fathers is *Incarcerated fathers: A descriptive analysis*. This research paper by Lloyd Withers, Executive Director CFCN, and Dr. Jean Folsom, Director of Psychology and Behavioral Treatment Services, Regional Treatment Centre (Ontario) is available at the Correctional Service of Canada's website at www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rsrch/reports/r186/r186-eng.shtml

The Ottawa meeting also served as a follow-up to the CFCN's 2008 "Time Out: Incarcerated Fathers and Their Children" conference in Kingston. At that event, thirty-seven community members gathered to focus on the importance of the father-child bond. Attendees included professionals in the Kingston community, parole officers, Chaplains, Citizen Advisory Committee members, family members experiencing incarceration and other community members.

A father in prison is still a father and children can benefit from a father who is educated about issues such as child development, family transitioning from the institution to the community and strengthening the father-child bond. It is the CFCN's hope that community organizations can work together during release and reintegration with programs and services that are effective in assisting the incarcerated father to influence the life trajectory of their child. This includes the fathers' assistance to increase protective factors related to intergenerational criminal behaviour.

The CFCN received \$500 in financial support from the Father Involvement-Ontario Network to host the meeting in Ottawa.

"Building stronger and safer communities by assisting families affected by criminal behavior, incarceration and community reintegration."



"Contribuer à bâtir des milieux de vie plus stables et plus sûrs, en offrant un soutien aux familles qui doivent composer avec le comportement criminel, l'incarcération et la réinsertion sociale."

Change in the Family Reintegration Project for Women at Joliette Institution

Dominique Péarron, CFCN's Family Liaison Worker at Joliette Institution, has left CFCN and is now employed at Victim Services, Quebec Region CSC. This has meant a change to the Family Reintegration Project for Women and in a short break in services for women and their families Joliette Institution in Quebec. Isabelle Demers will take over the project on January 11, 2010. Isabelle's experience working with marginalized women ensures that high quality work for families will continue.

Krista Poole is CFCN's Family Liaison Worker at Nova Institution for Women. Krista's skills and abilities come from almost seven years as the Executive Director of Central Nova Women's Centre and other positions working with families and children of varied ages. Her experience in the development and delivery of parenting programs has made a difference in the lives of women and their families. This has been particularly evident in her involvement with women with child custody and access issues.

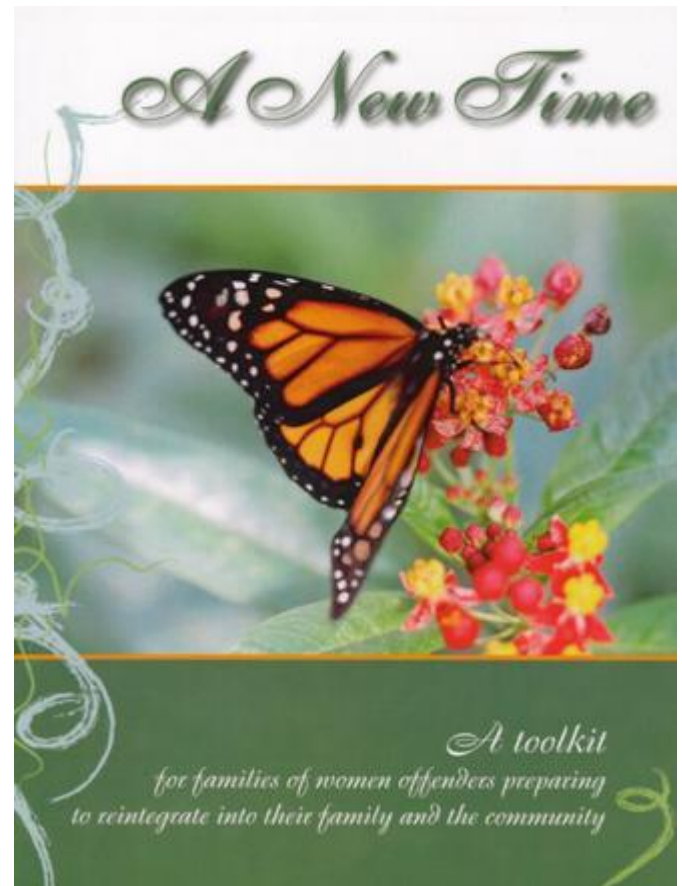
The Family Liaison Workers meet with the women to develop a family-based reintegration plan, based on an individualized family assessment. They then arrange for a community organization to support the woman and her family for the first year of family reintegration.

The families of women who are affected by incarceration and reintegration face some particular family challenges. The CFCN hopes that the FLW project's multi-systemic approach will have an impact on reintegration success and the increase the quality of life for the families in the project.

As part of the project, a toll free number has been established in Atlantic Canada for families searching for information and referral related to family reintegration (1-866-315-8280). Francophone families can telephone the CFCN's information and referral line for services in French (1-877-875-1285).

The Community Family Liaison Worker (FLW) pilot is funded through a contributions agreement with Chaplaincy Branch, Correctional Service of Canada. Inspection reports on Nova Institution for Women and Grand Valley Institution for Women were completed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales in 2005 and the report's recommendations were released in 2006. The reports focused on four practice

areas in what are termed " 'healthy' prison test areas - safety, respect, purposeful activity and reintegration." This included enhanced support to families and it was on this basis that the CFCN requested funding.



A toolkit to assist women and their families was written for the project by Elizabeth Martin and Krista Poole. Free copies of the reintegration toolkit for women are available for families affected by incarceration and reintegration by contacting the CFCN. Organizations can purchase copies for \$10.00 plus shipping costs.

Some U.S. federal offenders now have email contact with their families

Federal offenders at 20 U.S. correctional facilities are now able to send emails to their families and to receive a reply. The email system was put in place to reduce contraband from coming into the institutions through the regular mail. Media reports are that, by 2011, the 114 U.S. federal correctional facilities will have the program in place.

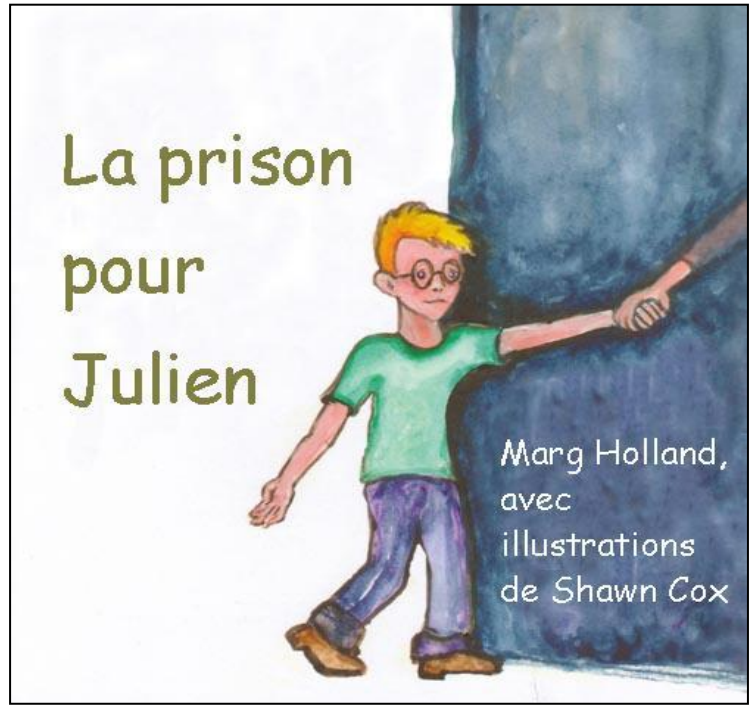
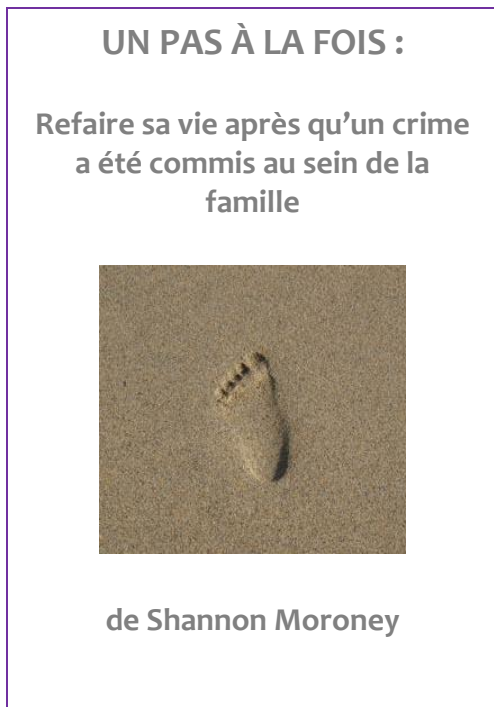
The family member first receives an email from the institution. The email has a clickable link. By clicking on the link, the family authorizes the offender to email the family member. The email address is then added to the offender's official list. Emails can only be sent to addresses on the approved list. If the family member later changes their mind, they can request that their email address be removed. The offender can also receive emails from their family.

The offender does not have direct access to the internet, but writes the email at a computer terminal. Outgoing and incoming emails are screened like regular mail for security purposes. Emails are then forwarded on by staff who operate the email program.

It is not a free service. The offender pays a per-minute fee for using the computer terminal when writing or receiving and reading emails.

French print resources for families

The CFCN is pleased to announce that two of its print resources are now available in French. Its resource for family-victims, *One step at a time: Recreating family life in the aftermath of crime within the family*, that was prepared for the CFCN by Shannon Moroney is now available under the title, *UN PAS À LA FOIS : Refaire sa vie après qu'un crime a été commis au sein de la famille*.



The second print resource, *Jeffrey goes to jail*, the storybook for children about a young boy who visits his incarcerated father, is now available in French under the title "*La prison pour Julien*."

In *One step at a time / Un pas à la fois*, Shannon sensitively discusses how crime perpetrated by one family members against another family member affects the entire family. It contains resources and community contacts that are useful to family members who are victims and who want no contact with the offender. She also discusses the experience of family members who choose to maintain contact with the offender while other family members do not - and with the conflict that this causes within the family.

The effects of the crime on children who are victims is also described.

One step at a time / Un pas à la fois attempts to address a difficult subject with tact and sensitivity.

No less a sensitive subject is that contained within *Jeffrey goes to jail / La prison pour Julien*. Children need to be appropriately prepared before visiting an incarcerated parent. It can be a scary experience, and outside of the regular range of experiences of a child. When a family visits an incarcerated loved one inside a federal correctional facility, the entire family must go through the anti-drug strategy process. This includes search procedures such as the ion scan technology, a metal detector and searches by a drug dog.

Sadly, some caregivers have attempted to use a child to smuggle contraband into correctional institutions. While these caregivers may choose not to prepare their child by reading *Jeffrey goes to jail / La prison pour Julien* with their child, it is hoped that it will be a helpful resource for pro-social caregivers.

There is a 'blunt-ness' to *Jeffrey goes to jail / La prison pour Julien*. It does not sugar-coat the experience of Jeffrey/ Julien as he and his mother go through the search procedures. However, it is preferable for a child to know what the process is, and is about, before they visit. It will still be a stressful experience, but hopefully the stress will be less because of Marg Holland's writing and Shawn Cox's illustrations.

Whole body security scans?

There has been much discussion in the media lately about the use of the latest airport search techniques: whole body scans. There has been no discussion, at least public ones, about the use of this technology to search family members who come to visit at Canadian federal correctional facilities. However, new search technologies inevitably find use within correctional facilities.

According to one CBC report, (Better airport scanners delayed by privacy fears, December 29, 2009), there are two different types of machines that have been developed for whole body or full body scans. One machine uses radio waves to create a 3-D image. Another type of machine uses low level X-rays to produce a 2-D image.

The use of whole body security scans raises significant privacy concerns, including if the scans can be stored, printed or distributed in any way. Privacy concerns also revolve around who can examine the images and whether images of women should only be viewed by airport security officers who are women.

CFCN's Board of Directors seeks individuals with governance skills

The CFCN is seeking dynamic individuals interested in championing the needs of families affected by criminal behavior, incarceration and community reintegration to sit on its national, voluntary Board of Directors.

The CFCN is a growing organization that has a solid reputation of providing essential services to families of offenders, including orientation programs in federal intake and assessment units across the country, Visitor Resource Centres inside federal institutions and family reintegration programs. As such, the Board of Directors has specific needs for Directors at the governance level who have legal, policy and fund development skills.

The CFCN aims to have representation for each province and territory. Currently Director positions are open in British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, PEI, Quebec, Saskatchewan and the Yukon. A complete guide to the CFCN's activities is found at the CFCN web site (www.cfcn-rcafd.org).

For further information on becoming a member of the CFCN Board of Directors, please contact:

Valerie Corcoran (valcorcoran201@hotmail.com) or Alexis Scott (abdume@gmail.com)

Has someone in your family committed a crime?

Is someone in your family in prison?

Do you look after the children of an incarcerated parent?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be on a difficult journey that feels like an emotional roller-coaster. It can be hard to find answers and support.

Canadian Families and Corrections Network
 is a national registered non-profit Canadian charity offering support and information to families affected by crime.

Please visit www.cfcn-rcafd.org or call (toll-free) 1-888-371-2326

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