

# FAMILIES AND CORRECTIONS JOURNAL

Family-based reintegration:  
The “original” circle of support and  
accountability.

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



Volume 15 Number 2  
Summer, 2012

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**The mission of the Canadian Families and Corrections Network is “Building stronger and safer communities by assisting families affected by criminal behavior, incarceration and community reintegration.”**

**The CFCN is a registered Canadian charity, registration number 875428062RR0001.**

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## Victims to Receive Additional Information due to Changes to Corrections and Conditional Release Act

By Christina Guest, NHQ Victim Services, CSC  
and Louise Leonardi, Executive Director, CFCN

Parliament recently passed Bill C-10, the *Safe Streets and Communities Act*. The part of this bill that has the greatest impact on victims is the part that makes amendments to the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)*. As of June 13, 2012, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) can share more types of information with registered victims and more people will be eligible to register as victims.

The CSC and PBC "Victim Request for Information" form has been updated on the CSC Victim Services website.

The CCRA already clearly recognizes the interests of victims of crime and their part in the corrections process. Bill C-10 will now extend that by enshrining in law the victim's right to attend and make statements at Parole Board of Canada hearings which has been the practice at the PBC for many years.

The changes to the CCRA also expand the range of information that may be disclosed to victims by CSC or the Parole Board of Canada. They may share:

- the name of the institution where the offender is incarcerated
- the reason why an offender is transferred from one institution to another
- advanced notice, whenever possible, of transfers to minimum-security institutions
- information about the programs (designed to address the offenders' needs and contribute to their successful reintegration into the community) in which the offender is participating or has participated
- any serious disciplinary offences committed by the offender
- the reasons for any temporary absence

In addition, if offenders withdraw their participation from a Parole Board of Canada hearing 14 days or less before a hearing date, the PBC may proceed with a review and make decisions on their case. Proceeding with the review will ensure that victims do not travel to attend a parole hearing that may be cancelled at the last minute. Victims are also allowed to request information on why a parole hearing is waived. (Note that this does not apply if the withdrawal is for reasons beyond the offender's control).

Correctional Service Canada will continue to provide registered victims with ongoing information about temporary absences, travel permits and transfers as these events happen. Information about an offender's program participation and serious disciplinary offences will come by the way of an annually written summary report.

Another change broadens the definition of the victim. If a victim of crime is deceased, or not able to act for themselves, anyone who has custody of, or is responsible for, a dependent of a victim is eligible to receive information about the offender. For example, someone who has legal guardianship of a minor may now register as a victim with CSC or the PBC.

For more information visit Victims Services at the CSC website

[www.csc-scc.gc.ca/victims-victimes/index-eng.shtml](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/victims-victimes/index-eng.shtml)

or the Parole Board of Canada at

[www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/victims/victims-eng.shtml](http://www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/victims/victims-eng.shtml)

It is the intention of Victim Services to treat victim with respect and fairness and to promote the interests and the role of victims in the correctional process.

## Family Orientation Project Perspective

By Janet and Harry Kuperus, CFCN Family Orientation Coordinators  
Edmonton, Alberta

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As the new Family Orientation Program Coordinators at the Edmonton Institution for the past four months, we'd like to share our experiences with the program and some of the comments we've received from the participants. Although we have both been retired for a few years, we were attracted to the position advertised by CFCN. Our past experience has been in teaching, preaching and pastoring. These occupations had given us opportunity to relate to people who were incarcerated and their families. Through the years, we have been energized by the power of compassion and the desire to be an influence for good. In retirement we have nurtured this energy by volunteering for M2W2 and various organizations. When we heard that CFCN needed someone to do its teaching at the Edmonton Institution, it seemed to fit with our aim of doing some good.

Doing good, however, is not like taking a load of compost, mixing it into the garden, and knowing that one has done good to the soil. Doing good in the prison context, it seems to us, is part of the Spirit's work to change a person's feelings from despair to hope, from banishment to restoration. All of this is a challenge at the best of times. The material of CFCN is excellent in its purpose of helping the prisoners to do right so that things will go right for them, to become better, not bitter. How does this good seed of CFCN take root in a soil that has been hardened and trampled upon for many years?

We decided to follow the Aboriginal tradition and sit in a circle. Since one of the teaching goals is for the prisoners to value their relationship with their extended family, our icebreaker has been for each one of us in the group to say a few words about one person that is dear to us that we carry in our hearts. This is not an easy exercise because many of the men say they have no one they relate to in their extended family. What was surprising, or maybe not so surprising, is that many speak about their mothers. As one person in our last group said, "We are a 'mom' range. This reminded Harry of his work with World War II veterans, who told

him that when a soldier was wounded or dying, he would often call for his mom. It is painful to see the loneliness of those who feel cut off from their family and friends. It's hard to have hope when one hasn't had contact with family for many years, or when the crime was such that one is banished from the extended family or reserve. But in our teaching, we fan the flickering flames of family ties. After one session, one of the young men said, "I haven't had contact with my adoptive family for 15 years. Do you think they would want to hear from me?"

We also provide information about many community organizations that can support them through their incarceration and release, such as prison and community chaplaincies, the John Howard Society and the Salvation Army. In the evaluations one prisoner wrote that what was interesting in the presentation was "the help that is out there upon release," and another wrote, "supportive connections." We are glad that there are places where food, clothing, shelter and counseling are provided freely in our society!

The Family Orientation Coordinator project through CSC Chaplaincy branch provides a family, restorative justice-based orientation for offenders, and their families who are an asset to successful community reintegration.

Part of the "hardness of the soil" in the prison setting takes the form of the masks that the prisoners may wear; for example, the "nasty and cruel" mask when relating to the guards, the "con artist" mask when relating to the parole officers, the "subservient" mask when cow-towing to the heavies on the unit, the "denial mask" when confronted with their crime. Denial seems to come naturally to human beings. A personal story comes to mind. We built a little fence around our rabbit coop at home, and a few days later Harry noticed that the back of it was bent out of shape. So he said to our six year old grandson, "It's a good thing you bent it in the back, not the front." He responded, "I didn't do it,

the rabbits did!” The Restorative Justice portion of the CFCN presentation invites them to take off the mask of denial and to “man up” to the crime. “You mean you want me to rat on myself?!” was how one inmate responded to the CFCN Family Orientation Coordinator who preceded us. The CFCN materials teach that being accountable for one’s actions is the basis of Restorative Justice.

CFCN describes Restorative Justice as first of all asking the question “who has been harmed?” It is encouraging when program participants say things like, “I never before thought about the psychological damage my crime may have caused.” The inmates are also challenged to recognize the harm that their families experience, even if they are not the direct victims of the crime. As one inmate put it, “...I am not the only one being punished for my actions.”

Another RJ question is “How can the harm be healed?” We talk about victim-offender mediation programs, and there are inmates who find this the most interesting part of the presentation. We encourage them to pursue this with the institutional chaplain.

The Family Orientation Project is offered at seven intake units in each Region of CSC:

- Springhill Institution, Atlantic
- Centre regional de reception, Quebec
- Millhaven Assessment Unit, Ontario
- Stony Mountain Institution, Prairie
- Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Prairie
- Edmonton Institution, Prairie
- Regional Reception and Assessment Centre, Pacific

Marshall McLuhan said, “The medium is the message.” From some of the comments we have received it appears that we are not adding to the hardness of the soil. The material is appreciated, and packages are being sent to families. We enjoy doing the presentations and we get positive responses, from “Thanks for coming” to “Enjoyed the program” even “Love you guys!” May the good seed being planted take root and grow in the lives of these often forgotten men.

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## Happy Anniversary to the Canadian Families and Corrections Network!

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Did you know?



December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CFCN. Rev. Chris Carr one of the original (and current) Board Members tells us that ‘the network began with six people who met in 1990 because they shared the conviction that sound loving family relationships are important and that prisoners’ families are too often overlooked in the rehabilitation process’. CFCN holds true to these beliefs today.

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## Canadian Families and Corrections Network Leadership Change

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The Board of Directors of the Canadian Families and Corrections Network is pleased to announce that Louise Leonardi is the new Executive Director. Louise brings an extensive experience and background to the CFCN, including previous work with the John Howard Society of Southeastern New Brunswick, Moncton Youth Residences, Eastern College and NeighbourLink. She is a Restorative Justice ‘Community Justice Forum’ Facilitator for the province of New Brunswick and has served as a long-time chairperson of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) at Westmorland Institution. We are pleased that Louise will assist the CFCN to further its services and pilot programs to families who are affected by criminal behavior, incarceration and community reintegration. Louise can be reached by email at [national@cfcn-rcafd.org](mailto:national@cfcn-rcafd.org).

## “Close to Home”

### A New Zealand Family Re-integration Programme for Prisoners

By Verna McFelin MNZM, CEO and Dr. Liz Gordon, Research Director, Pillars Inc. New Zealand

9,000 people are released from New Zealand prisons and correctional facilities and returned to families and communities each year. The process of leaving prison and returning to society has become a significant challenge for our nation. Persons released often have few resources and difficulty finding jobs, housing or help. National studies show that approximately two-thirds will be arrested again within three years of release.

Comparative New Zealand-Canada Statistics  
Population  
4.43million NZ - 34.8million Canada

Little attention has been paid within the Corrections system to the role of the family in the life and wellbeing of the prisoner, nor of the role of the prisoner in the family. With the major research project recently undertaken by Pillars (the organisation that supports children and families of prisoners), over three years (Gordon 2009, 2011) the role of prisoner as parent has become much clearer. Key findings of that report are:

- Over two thirds of prisoners are parents
- Each prisoner who is a parent has, on average, around 2.3 children
- More than half of prisoners’ children live more than an hour’s drive from the prison
- Most do not get to visit their incarcerated parent on a regular basis
- Most children miss their incarcerated parent and wish to see them
- Virtually all prisoners (all except one) indicated that they wish to play a role as a parent to their children in the future

Pillars Inc. was invited by the Department of Corrections to pilot a Family Reintegration Programme here in New Zealand.

Features of the programme are the use of a high quality assessment tool and workbook that have been

developed for other programmes, a significant amount of work with the prisoner and family present, a strong focus on planning re-integration and the use of a range of agencies through the Strengthening Families ([www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz)) process to facilitate prisoner re-entry.

This approach allows for the particular issues facing individual families to be addressed, and for families to have access to the resources of a wide range of government and non-government agencies. The programme involves significant pre-release work and also post-release guiding and support.

The goals of the programme are:

- To re-establish parental roles and responsibilities
- To overcome challenges and barriers to family and community reintegration
- To effectively re-unite parents and children
- To offer referral linkages to prisoners transitioning back into the community and their families
- To provide pre and post-release support for successful re-integration to reduce the likelihood of recidivism

Comparative New Zealand-Canada Statistics  
Incarceration Rate  
199 people NZ – 117 people Canada  
Rates are based on 100,000 population  
[www.publicsafety.gc.ca](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca)

The driving force of the project was Verna McFelin, Chief Executive of Pillars, and while there was some collaborative work in developing the project, Verna identified the effective materials and programmes and worked out how to deliver the programme.

The project materials were researched and analysed. A wide range of good quality materials were already available and had been tested and these will be used at various points through the pilot project. **A core tool is: “Time’s Up: A Reintegration Toolkit for Families” used with permission from the Canadian Family and Corrections Network. This resource has a very strong family re-integration focus.**

Selection for the programme is made by a community-based co-ordinator, in consultation with the Corrections case manager about four months from the prisoner’s release date. Selection criteria:

- Prisoners must be a parent of a child and be intending to be an active parent on release
- The prisoner must be intending to live in the Canterbury region (to ensure access to ongoing services)
- The prisoner must have family support and must declare their intention not to re-offend

Separate meetings are held with the prisoner and the family to increase the insight of both parties into the issues they are facing in terms of integration and to finalise a detailed integration plan and prepare for the Strengthening Families meeting.

Strengthening Families (SF) is an existing multi-agency process which provides the framework and expertise to help families get co-ordinated access to services. It also harnesses the resources of both government and non-government agencies re-integrative support, which is efficient for Corrections.

Apart from the agencies, the family will be introduced to agency ‘guides’ who will offer support to the family. For example, the Prison Fellowship’s Target Communities project has made a commitment to provide the service to one family for at least 12 months after release.

The Strengthening Families meeting, co-ordinated by the Pillars team, will take place at the prison approximately six weeks before the prisoner is released gathering all relevant agencies, family and support people. The re-integration plan developed will provide the basis for planning action and allocating tasks.

In the following six weeks, the prisoner will prepare in a range of ways for re-integration into the community. This may involve reading around parenting (Pillars has

access to a range of resources and workbooks on fathering after prison, for example), some study, work-related tasks or other preparation, with the assistance of the co-ordinator. A ‘ready for release’ resource will be developed to guide this work. One week prior to release, a final re-integration meeting will be held between the prisoner and the family to identify and resolve any final barriers to a successful re-integration.

The co-ordinator will meet with the family within one week after the prisoner is released for the Strengthening Families Review to consider:

- Issues relating to the plan
- Any problems or needs encountered so far
- Toolkit issues
- Checking the lead agency supports are in place (for Pillars, this includes child mentoring and family support services)
- Reviewing the role of re-integration guides, such as Prison Fellowship
- Arranging the Strengthening Families review

Pillars Inc. says “our interest in using the CFCN toolkit was two-fold:

- It covered all the domains needed for an assessment for a planned family reintegration and is one of the most extensive toolkits we have seen.
- For a number of years, New Zealand Corrections Department have used innovations that have come out of Canada.... Canadian programmes are well respected in our Corrections system.”

A review of the SF process will be held within six months of the original meeting, with agencies, family and natural supports coming together to test the success of the process. This review will provide the opportunity to consider the effectiveness of the wrap-around service, whether goals have been met, and identify any further unmet needs or problems. If all the re-integration plan goals have been achieved, this constitutes the end of the process. If, however, ongoing needs are identified, these are put in place and expert support and guidance remains available to the family.

To learn more about Pillars Inc., their services and programs, please visit their website at [www.pillars.org.nz](http://www.pillars.org.nz).





**CFCN Annual General Meeting  
to be held in Shediac, New Brunswick in September 2012.**

Plan to come early and enjoy the beach, food, music,  
Acadian Culture and other local attractions before the AGM.  
Shediac Bay Artist Studio Tour and the Shediac Autumn Community Day  
are both featured the same September weekend.

**Notice of Annual General Meeting**

**Canadian Families and Corrections Network /  
Regroupement canadien d'aide aux familles des détenu(e)s**

**Friday, September 14, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.**

**Seely's Motel Conference Room**

21 Bellevue Heights Shediac, New Brunswick  
(506) 532-6193

**Dinner speaker - Gisèle Smith**

District Director, Atlantic, Correctional Service Canada

A light meal will be served.

The general public is welcome and interested attendees are asked to RSVP, before September 10, 2012 for meal planning. Questions and RSVPs to [national@cfcn-rcafd.org](mailto:national@cfcn-rcafd.org) or at 1-888-371-2326.

CFCN membership and donation forms will be available at the door.

## Memberships (new and renewals) and Donations April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013

**Please find enclosed my membership fee:**

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership:                        | \$30.00          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Patron:                             | \$175.00 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organization / agency membership:  | \$65.00          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student / senior / underwaged / Prison group: | \$10.00          |

**Please consider a further charitable donation to the CFCN to assist in our unique approach to crime prevention and harm reduction. You will receive a charitable receipt for the full amount of any donation of \$10.00 or more. I wish to include a further charitable donation of:**

\$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**I wish to make a donation in memory of:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I would like this donation in memory to appear in an upcoming issue of the CFCN's Families and Corrections Journal.

**Please send my tax receipt for income tax purposes to:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Canadian Families and Corrections Network:  
Building stronger and safer communities by assisting families affected by  
criminal behavior, incarceration and community reintegration.**

**Canadian Families and Corrections Network  
Canadian charity registration number 875428062RR0001  
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