



**Strafford County Department of Corrections**

# **Family Newsletter**

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Dear Families,

As you all remember, I have told everyone about congressional legislation that provided grants to assist facilities with pre and post-release services that would utilize progressive ideas to reduce recidivism and provide for more success for inmates upon release.

The new initiative that I now am introducing to you will encourage the criminal justice system to develop and discuss more cost effective and creative ways to address the high incarceration rate of our fellow citizens. I hope that these types of discussions, involving all aspects of the justice system and communities at large, will bring even more progressive hope for families of those incarcerated. In many cases families will be invited to share how they might assist in this successful re-integration as well.

Sincerely,  
Marilyn Allen

**This article is reprinted with the permission of Senator Webb.**

## **Criminal Justice Tour of Virginia Underscores Need for Reform**

*"It is in the self-interest of every American that we truly reform our system"*

Last week, while Congress was adjourned for the district work period, I visited various facilities related to the criminal justice system during a week-long tour through Virginia. With an eye toward reforming our system, the trip provided an opportunity to take a first-hand look at the problems and potential in our jails and rehabilitation programs.

The sobering experience of walking through the Richmond City Jail fortified my determination to get the legislation that I introduced--the National Criminal Justice Commission Act--passed this year. It is in the self-interest of every American that we dedicate time and energy to truly evaluate and reform our criminal justice system. The National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2009 (S.714) establishes a blue-ribbon commission charged with conducting an 18-month, top-to-bottom review of the nation's entire criminal justice system and offering concrete recommendations for reform. I'm pleased to have 23 cosponsors on the bill, including Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy and Ranking Member, Arlen Specter, who is the lead Republican co-

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sponsor of the bill, and seven additional members of that all-important committee. The bill has also received initial support from the White House, the Department of Justice, and numerous criminal justice organizations.

My tour began at the Bragg Hill Family Life Center in Fredericksburg, followed by a visit to the Richmond City Jail and tour of The Healing Place, a Richmond-based rehabilitation facility. I concluded the trip in Charlottesville at the annual conference of Virginia-based federal public defenders and Criminal Justice Act (CJA) panel attorneys, who represent indigent defendants, where I delivered the keynote address.

Facilities like Bragg Hill in Fredericksburg and The Healing Place in Richmond are great models of how we can affirmatively address criminal justice matters nationwide. The commendable work being done in these facilities underscores the interconnectivity of issues facing our local communities. The U.S. criminal justice system is in serious need of repair, and the people we met with last week understand first-hand the need for comprehensive approaches and solutions.

At the Bragg Hill Family Life Center last Tuesday, I met with program staff, program participants, and partner organizations. The Center, housed in a building that once served as a regional juvenile detention facility, provides a variety of education, nutrition, wellness, employment training, and social services to disadvantaged citizens of the Fredericksburg area. Bragg Hill places special emphasis on increasing family and community stability in order to provide positive opportunities for at-risk youth and adults facing social and economic challenges.

The unfortunate reality for many communities is that local jails and prisons serve as economic engines. Turning them into places like the Bragg Hill center--a former juvenile detention center that now offers at-risk youth and adults affirmative life choices--should be one of our ultimate objectives.

The final stop of my week-long tour was the second annual Frank Dunham Criminal Defense Conference in Charlottesville. There I laid out the details of my legislation before 125 private and public defenders who represent indigent defendants. The conference attendees were thoughtfully engaged in the issues presented, and I look forward to working with groups from all sides of the political and ideological spectrum to pass this legislation.

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The National Criminal Justice Commission Act is the result of decades of investigation and more than two years of intensive fact-finding in the U.S. Senate. In the 110th Congress, I chaired a number of hearings of the Joint Economic Committee that examined various aspects of the criminal justice system and also conducted a symposium on drugs in America at George Mason University Law Center.

Our failure to address the issue of criminal justice threatens every community in the United States and begs for the notion of fairness. I am hopeful we will get the legislation passed and enacted into law this year.



FRC volunteer Jim and Ralph with the Easter Baskets

## Easter at the FRC

Easter baskets for the families were passed out from Friday through Sunday of Easter weekend



FRC volunteer Heidi with the Easter Baskets



The winners of the coloring contest were notified. There were many happy children and patient parents picking up their prizes. The winners were given gift certificates donated by an FRC volunteer.

Thanks to Flor for her generosity.



## Lucky Bike Winner

The winning name was chosen last week by Officer Kennie, pictured left with FRC volunteers Kara and Amanda. The winner was notified the same day by Kara, pictured right.



## Love by V.B.

What is love anyway? I'm still trying to figure this out.  
From what I know, love is being with someone  
You think you trust, someone who loves you back.  
Love is an emotion. Love is in the tears  
That stream down my cheeks.

Love gives, love takes, love hurts and feels good.  
Love is forgiveness. Love is companionship  
and compassion. Love is anger and happiness  
Love is frustration and patience.  
Loves is confusion and sometimes love sucks!

In order to live life we must experience it,  
Whether the love we feel is for our mother, a child,  
Or even a pet. No one has to be in a relationship  
to feel love. Sometimes in order to truly love yourself  
you must stay single and sit with yourself.

If you are patient, love will come along. Maybe I've known  
What love is all along. Love is the ability to be happy  
with myself by myself. Relationships come and go,  
But I'm stuck in this skin for life. So, I might as well  
make the most of this relationship and be happy.

## Picking Up Pieces by P.M.

Everyday I ask myself why  
Why do I keep coming here  
No matter how hard I try  
No matter how scary the fear

Bound by my poor choice  
Regretful every single day  
Can't anyone hear my voice  
How long do I have to pay?

I've lost everything that I love  
No one will be around  
Only a light of hope above  
To pick me up when I'm down

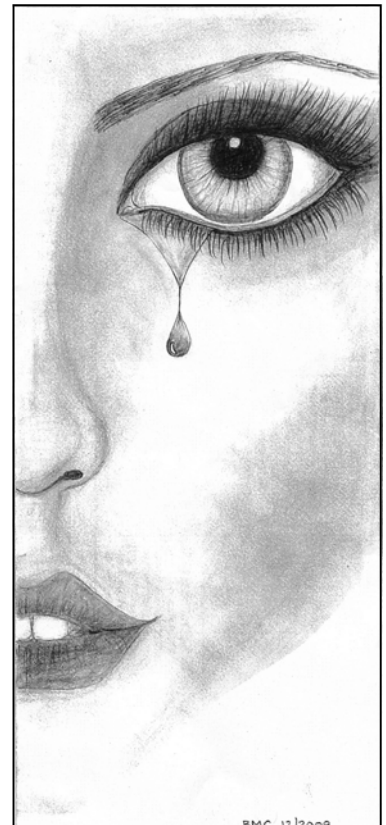
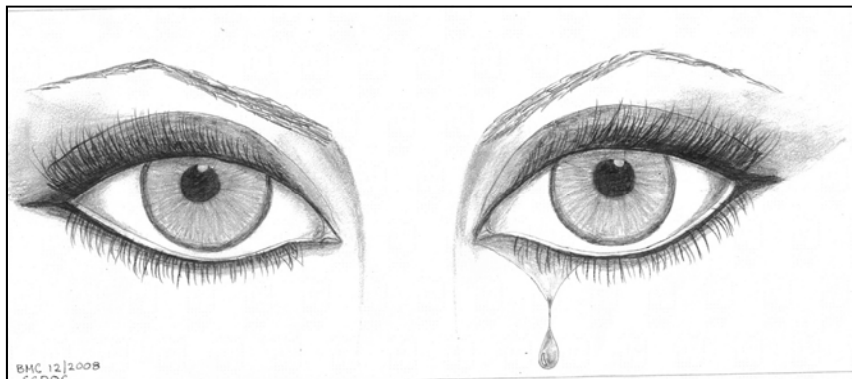
Maybe this is God's plan  
To keep me safe from harm  
And make me a better woman  
Cradled by God's arms

It's time to learn a new way  
To focus on what I need  
Maybe this is where I stay  
Until I can find me

## New Artwork

Thanks to BMC for submitting the first artwork since our art contest several months ago. Appropriate art submissions by inmates for publication in the newsletter are welcome. We are hoping to receive a submission for each newsletter and are hoping to hold another art contest in the near future.

We are also looking for someone to do a cartoon strip as well. The former volunteer is not able to do it anymore. Please send a sample to Marilyn Allen if you would like to draw a comic strip for the newsletter.



## Thanks to All



We would like to thank all of the inmates who order pictures as well as the families who support their loved ones financially which affords them the opportunity to order pictures. Pictures are \$1.50 for each 4 x 6 color photo and they are taken every week. Pictures can be ordered by simply filling out a Photo Order Form. All proceeds from the purchase of pictures go directly to help keep the Family Reception Center open.

The FRC is staffed completely by volunteers and without their support we would not be able to keep the center open.

### Regret by V.B.

My one regret in life is that I'm not somebody else.  
Instead of loving me, I was liking someone else.

Looking in the mirror and realizing what I see,  
So much pain, so much hurt, an empty shell of me.

Sometimes my anger is so easy to hide,  
Although I don't know how long I will stay buried inside.

I want to lash out, but I'm not sure on who—  
In the mirror, the one staring back at you.

All the doors are closed and there is no where to run,  
My life is hectic, controlled and no longer fun.

If I choose to be someone else, that's the choice that I make,  
But if I'm not myself then you can call me fake.



### from the Programs Department

The programs department would like to remind **ALL** inmates to continue to strive to obtain their GED while incarcerated at SCDOC. A GED can be very helpful not only to county inmates but to federal inmates as well because it is required before you can receive any vocational or job opportunities.

A GED will get you into any college should a person wish to fulfill that dream.



## Upcoming June Events



### Family Barbeque at the FRC

There will be food, fun, and special activities for the kids.

Date to be announced soon.

### Annual Inmate and Staff Barbeque

Date to be announced soon

