

THE WHITE HOUSE
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**White House Highlights “Champions of Change”
Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents**

WASHINGTON, DC - On Wednesday, June 12, the White House will honor twelve “Champions of Change” who have dedicated themselves to supporting children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. These individuals, whose biographies are described below, have worked on the front line to ensure that innocent children, nearly 2 million of whom have a parent who is incarcerated, do not suffer as a consequence of adult decisions. The Champions who we recognize today have helped scores of children and their families by minimizing the potential negative impacts of having a parent who is incarcerated, including, for example, financial instability, changes in housing, and isolation due to stigma.

In addition, the White House announced several policy and outreach initiatives designed to improve services and programming for this special population of children and their families and caregivers. These efforts, which effectively leverage a cross-agency approach to problem-solving, include enhanced training and technical assistance for a range of stakeholders; steps to improve facility-based programming and policies, including improved case management; stronger research and data collection; development of a model arrest protocol; and strategies to amplify public awareness, including launch of a web portal capturing key Federal information and resources and a series of myth buster fact sheets to clarify relevant federal policy. More information about this work is available at findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents.

In addition to honoring our Champions, today, Sesame Street launched its “Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration” Initiative, which include multimedia, bilingual (English/Spanish) materials targeting young children of incarcerated parents. These free educational resources will include a Sesame Street DVD, live action film showcasing families and an animated short segment, a children’s story book, a guide for parents and caregivers, and a tip sheet for incarcerated parents. In addition, Sesame has created various digital resources including a *Sesame Street: Incarceration* app for parents to use on tablets and phones and a toolkit on www.sesamestreet.org/incarceration.

The Champions of Change Program was created as an opportunity for the White House to feature groups of Americans – individuals, businesses, and organizations – who are doing extraordinary things to empower and inspire members of their communities.

To watch this event live, visit www.whitehouse.gov/live at 9:30 am ET on June 12th. To learn more about the White House Champions of Change program and nominate a Champion, visit www.whitehouse.gov/champions.

Carol F. Burton - Centerforce

Carol F. Burton has been working with and on behalf of incarcerated parents and their children for almost 24 years. As an innovative change agent, she leads the Alameda County Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, serves as the Executive Director of Centerforce in Northern and Central California and is the immediate past board chair of the Family and Corrections Network. Her responsibilities at Centerforce include the operation of the nationally recognized M.O.M.S. program, a partnership with Oakland Housing Authority to provide stable housing and wraparound services for formerly incarcerated pregnant and parenting mothers and their children. She also has developed curricula and media material, served as an advisor on several initiatives including Sesame Street's "Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration," and was the Director for the country's first comprehensive program and longitudinal study of children of incarcerated parents in Flint, Michigan. Her ability to build strong relationships across systems and translate research into practical, feasible policy recommendations has resulted in practices and policies throughout the country that support children and their families. Carol is a native of Benton Harbor, Michigan and resides in Oakland, California.

Carol Fennelly - Hope House DC

For nearly four decades, Carol Fennelly has been a voice for dispossessed and forgotten people in the nation's capital. For 17 years, she worked and lived at the Community for Creative Non-Violence homeless shelters creating innovative programs and affecting public policy on homeless and housing issues. In 1998, as the District's Lorton Correctional Institution was closing and thousands of DC prisoners were being shipped far from home, Carol started Hope House to help fathers in prison stay connected to their children and families. Through Hope House's Father to Child Programs, thousands of fathers have been able to play an important role in the lives of their children, even from behind bars.

Dee Ann Newell - Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind

Dee Ann Newell is a native of Little Rock, Arkansas. Dee Ann attended college in New York City at Finch College and obtained a Master's Degree in Developmental Psychology from Columbia University. Twenty-five years ago, she was a volunteer, teaching parenting in prison and jail, and began serving the children and caregivers in 1994, founding the only statewide organization to serve these families, Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind. These services have been fine-tuned over the past two decades and have sustained the mission of justice for children and their families, including racial, social, family, economic, health, and education justice that will bring

forth the safety, security and stability of these families and the children. The organization works with families from pre-entry through one year of post-release and longer. Dee Ann is the recipient of a Soros Foundation Senior Justice Fellowship of the Open Society, working with 14 state coalitions to improve practice and policies on behalf of the children of the incarcerated in these areas, serves on the National Re-Entry Resource Center on Families and Communities, coordinates the National Policy Partnership for Children of the Incarcerated, provides training at the University of California at Davis, and serves on the Central Arkansas Re-Entry Coalition Steering Committee.

Elizabeth Gaynes - Osborne Association

Elizabeth Gaynes is the executive director of the Osborne Association, a multiservice nonprofit that implements and champions solutions that reduce the damage caused by crime and incarceration. During her 29-year tenure, Osborne has grown into New York's leading provider of family-focused services to individuals affected by the criminal justice system. Using her own experience raising children whose father was incarcerated for much of their lives, she established FamilyWorks, the first comprehensive parenting program in a men's state prison. In 2004, along with her daughter Emani Davis, she was the first American nominated for the prestigious World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, for defending the rights of children with incarcerated parents. Ms. Gaynes has a Juris Doctor degree from Syracuse Law School.

Wilson Goode - Amachi Program

In 2000, Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr., who is known affectionately as the "father" of the Children of Prisoners Movement in the country, organized Amachi, an effective mentoring program for children of incarcerated parents. He began implementing the program in just four sections of Philadelphia, and soon thereafter it was replicated nationwide with the creation of at least 350 Amachi-modeled programs that have served more than 300,000 youth in all 50 states. Prior to Dr. Goode's work with Amachi, he served as Chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Managing Director of the City of Philadelphia, two terms as Mayor of Philadelphia and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Goode regularly offers his expertise through consulting and speaking engagements, for which he has received numerous awards, certificates, and honors.

Gail T. Smith - Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers

Gail T. Smith founded CLAIM (Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers) in 1985. She convened the Illinois Task Force for Children of Prisoners, Children of Promise, which won improvements including a children's visiting center at Cook County Jail. Among other initiatives, Gail has written and championed legislation to ban use of shackles on pregnant women; promoted community alternatives to prison for parents charged with nonviolent offenses to keep parents and children together; and

worked to reduce termination of parental rights and to promote restorative justice practices.

Nell Bernstein –author of *All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated*

Nell Bernstein is the author of *All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated*, and the coordinator of the San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, which advocates for a Bill of Rights that has been adopted by coalitions and legislative bodies across the country. Published by *The New Press*, *All Alone in the World* was selected as a pick of the week by *Newsweek Magazine*, a best book of the year by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and a top ten book of the year by the *Online Review of Books*, and has been adopted into the curricula of universities across the country. Ms. Bernstein has addressed policy makers, grant makers, criminal justice professionals and the public across the country about the impact of incarceration on families, and made numerous radio and television appearances. Her writing has appeared in numerous national magazines, and she has been awarded both a media fellowship from the Open Society Institute and a Journalism Fellowship in Child and Family Policy from the University of Maryland, School of Journalism. She currently is working on a book on juvenile justice.

Sister Tesa Fitzgerald – Hour Children

Sister Tesa Fitzgerald, a Sister of Saint Joseph of Brentwood, has spent the last 26 years as the founding Executive Director of Hour Children, a nonprofit program based in Queens, NY, that provides comprehensive support within the prison walls and in the community - including prison visitation, supportive housing, job training and placement, mentoring, mental health support, and child care - to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and their children. Believing, wholeheartedly, in a person's potential to change and acknowledging every child's right to a stable and secure family, Sister Tesa lives among and stands beside the families that she serves helping them to achieve their potential.

Yali Lincroft –First Focus and Walter S. Johnson Foundation

Yali Lincroft is a Policy Consultant for First Focus and a Program Officer with the Walter S. Johnson Foundation. In October 2012, Yali helped develop California's "Reuniting Immigrant Families Act," the first legislation passed in the country to address family separation issues as a consequence of immigration enforcement. The bill is being replicated in other states and in federal legislative efforts. She is also the founding member of the Migration and Child Welfare National Network, a coalition of organizations focused on helping immigrant families in the child welfare system.

Claire Walker –Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation

Claire Walker began her career by obtaining her PhD at Columbia University. She then spent the next 45 years organizing communities to advocate for urgent reforms to protect children and families in today's world. She led a neighborhood movement to protect people from needlessly languishing in jail after arrest in Reading, Pennsylvania, created a successful agency to prevent and treat child abuse in Pittsburgh, and for the

past decade has brought together all parts of the Pittsburgh community to address the needs of children whose parents are incarcerated. She retired as Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation in December 2012 and continues to champion incarcerated parents' rights to parent and their children's rights to be parented through her recent appointment to the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board and participation in the work of the Children's Roundtable of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

Ann Adalist-Estrin – National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated

Ann Adalist-Estrin is Director of the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Under Ann's leadership, NRCCFI has provided consultation to government and non-government agencies and community programs in 47 states including Connecticut's state wide Children of Incarcerated Parents Initiative; Sesame Street; Austin Independent School District, Prison Fellowship Ministries and The Red Heart Association of Taiwan. She is author of *The Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children in the Child Welfare System Curriculum* (New Jersey Department of Children and Families, 2011), *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Curriculum* (CWLA, 2004), *Responding to Children and Families of Prisoners: A Community Guide* (FCN, 2003), and *The Children of Incarcerated Parents Library* available online at www.fcnetwork.com. Ann is also a Child and Family Therapist at Samaritan Counseling Center in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania; a trainer for the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program at Boston University School of Medicine; and adjunct faculty at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey.

Susan Phillips

Dr. Susan D. Phillips is known for her seminal research on ways in which parental arrest and incarceration adversely affect children, families, and communities. A number of her studies focus on the relationship between the disproportionate representation of black parents in the criminal justice and black children in the child welfare system. Others examine how parental arrest and incarceration influence children's mental health outcomes of children. Her work emphasizes the application of research to inform public policy and services that promote the well-being of children in families involved with criminal justice system.