Beyond the Walls: Strengthening Family Relationships with Museum/Prison Partnerships

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This agreement is entered into this 9th day of May 2019 by and between you all, youse, you'uns, yinz, & y'all (hereinafter "The Community") and Janella, Lauren, Adrienne, Saleem, Heidi, & Leslie (hereinafter "The Presenters") regarding information The Presenters are choosing to share with The Community (hereinafter "The Ideas").

• The Presenters are excited(!) to share with you, The Community, with the mutual understanding that you are our friends and that you will act in our best interests.

• Basically, The Community won’t do things including, but not limited to:
  • Adapting some or all of The Ideas for your own purposes without a professional heads-up
  • Choosing to share some or all of The Ideas with those who are not bound to this agreement.
  • Failing to do your best to protect and respect The Ideas.

• This is a "warm blanket" agreement with which, by requesting The Community's agreement to it, The Presenters are helping ourselves sleep at night by placing a small amount of formality on the sharing of The Ideas. The Presenters firmly believe The Ideas will only improve as a result of having shared time and space together with The Community today.

Generously adapted from http://friendda.org/
Be Kind To All
You're A Good Person
Truth and Love For All

Keeping Families Intact
Creating Spaces for Families Impacted by Incarceration
Why Families Impacted by Incarceration?

- Incarceration affects families
  - Mass incarceration leads to high rates of parental incarceration
  - Risk Factors

- Benefits of maintained parent/child relationship
  - Lessened affect on child
  - Reduced recidivism
  - Higher enrollment in programming

1 in 28 children have a parent who is incarcerated
How can play experiences, modeled by children’s museums, but designed for prison visiting rooms, improve parent/child relationships and outcomes for families impacted by incarceration?
Takeaways

- Be Flexible
- Find the Need
  - There is not a “one size fits all” for CM/Prison partnerships
- Talk to families
Power of Play: Partnership with Rhode Island Department of Corrections

Heidi Brinig
Director of Families Together
• Welcome over 170,000 visitors annually from New England and beyond.

• *Families Together:* partnership with the Department of Children, Youth & Family Services

• Approached by RI Department of Corrections to make family visitation more playful
The Therapeutic Value of Play

• Positive shared experiences
• Build relationships through play
• Connect and find common ground
Play in DOC Visitation

- Supporting play in Saturday visitation
- Helping Correctional Officers recognize the signatures of health play
Imagination Playground
(Big foam blocks go through metal detectors!)
Successes

• Building report and relationships

• Participating in Women’s Health Fairs

• Bringing Imagination Playground to visitation in men’s facilities for Father’s Day

• Assessing and procuring craft materials, games and toys for each visitation space

• Distributed passes for children to visit the museum; building pilot membership program
Successes

• Free museum admission for Correctional Officers’ appreciation week

• Providing activities for Correctional Officers’ family picnic and holiday party

• Consulting on a new playground for Minimum Security facility

• Piloting professional development workshop for DOC staff and Correctional Officers
Challenges

- Navigating a multi-layered, complex state system
- Practicing patience with the slow pace of progress
- Building trust and report with the community organization running the visitation program
- Responding to change in leadership at the DOC
- Accessing DOC facilities after security incidents
“Museums, in partnership with social workers and social service and community agencies, are helping people cope and thrive in circumstances ranging from personal challenges to social injustices.”

- Lois Silverman
The Social Work of Museums

Heidi Brinig
Director of Families Together
Brinig@ChildrenMuseum.org
A Citywide Resource for All Families
350,000 visitors annually  50,000 free or reduced admission
Background
As part of the Mayor’s overall city-wide expansion of criminal justice initiatives, the NYC Mayor’s Office, and the NYCD approached CMOM to create a first-of-its-kind program that brings together incarcerated women and their children at the Museum for a series of monthly arts-based programs designed to support the development of a healthy bond between mother and child – one that can be sustained and built upon beyond incarceration.

Purpose

to support and nurture positive parent-child relationships between incarcerated women and their children.
“We know that the children of mothers who are incarcerated are more likely to be incarcerated themselves ... and if the bond between mother and child is broken or damaged, it has lifelong consequences.” NYC First Lady Chirlane McCray
Partners: It Takes a Village
NYC Department of Correction, NYC Mayor’s Office and CMOM
Program Model Pilot: Crafting Family Connections
Monthly 2-hour program for mothers, children and custodial caregivers
Museum Closed to Public
Membership for families and custodial caregivers
City and Private Funding
Road to CMOM
6 months of internal and external conversations & meetings
Armed Guards in the Building
Safety Concerns for Staff
Legal Considerations
PR/Media
Hurdles and Challenges
Coordinating Arrival Times
Limited Movement throughout CMOM
Too many “special guests”
Staff Considerations and Training

Arts-based approach
Multiple learning styles
Responsive program model
Wide age range 1-14 years old
We’re All in this Together
Corrections Officers
Food and Family Time at CMOM
National CM Model

When the city needed a safe, nurturing learning environment to reunite incarcerated women and their children they turned to CMOM. -First Lady Chirlane McCray

Replication: Kansas City, Chicago
Next Steps
Monthly Program funded for 2 years
Father’s Program
Permanent exhibits & graphics installed at Rikers
Media Coverage

CNN Video Link:

CNN Article Link:

Times Link:
Chicago Children’s Museum
Illinois Priority Populations

• In 2013, the Illinois Early Learning Council approved recommendations regarding underrepresented and underserved populations.

• Identified eight priority populations and encouraged communities and individual early care and education programs to increase their service to these populations.

• In 2019, recommendations updated to 11 populations and 5 community factors.

• Purpose is to drive resources and attention towards improving access to high-quality, responsive services for children and families with the highest needs, and to promote coordination and alignment of services.
CCM Priority Populations

Remain committed to reaching all children and families, with a particular focus on serving:

- Teen parents and their children
- Foster families and children in state care
- Children with disabilities
- Families living in deep poverty
- Children with incarcerated parents

When possible address Early Learning Council’s community-level priority risk factors:

- High unemployment/poverty rates
- High rates of substance use
- High rates of community violence
- High incarceration rates
- Rural isolation
Chicago Children’s Museum
Beyond Incarceration 2019 Pilot

Three core programs:

1. Series of six child—custodial caregiver art explorations and an art showing
2. Bi/monthly museum-based family visitation with incarcerated parent
3. Four field trips with extended family and support network, especially in communities disproportionately affected by incarceration.

Six-month estimates:

- Impact: 115 Children, 30 Incarcerated Parents, 150 Extended Family and Support Network, 20+ Corrections Officers
- Per session budget: $790 (art exploration), $5,721 (supervised visitation), $870 (field trip)
Lauren Zalut,
Director of Education and Tour Programs

Eastern State Penitentiary
Historic Site

Philadelphia, PA
Mass Incarceration Isn’t Working
Over 270,000 visitors in 2018

66% say not personally connected to criminal justice system.
Family Weekends: 
Pets in Prison

Please join us to learn the unique stories of animals who lived behind Eastern State’s walls.

Saturday and Sunday
Aug. 9 and 10
and
Saturday and Sunday
Sept. 27 and 28

- Solve a mystery about Eastern State’s most famous four-legged resident, Pep the Dog.
- Participate in animal-themed activities and a scavenger hunt.
- Discover how animals continue to play a role in prisons today with New Leash on Life USA.

Eastern State Penitentiary
America’s Most Historic Prison
2027 Fairmount Avenue, Philadelphia, PA
Prison Food WEEKEND
Saturday, June 6 – Sunday, June 7
Learn about and taste Nutraloaf from around the U.S.
“I’ve been here three times before and this is the most impactful visit I have experienced – how can I help people returning from prison?”
“I left there knowing what my daughter just learned. Her little mind just broke through numerous barriers. But, even more barriers were broken because over the years I have tried to keep my daughter from learning that her own uncle, my baby brother, is in the middle of a ten year prison sentence. Last night she learned the truth of where her uncle has been and I owe it all to this woman and her openness, her honesty, her bravery and her kindness… I will forever remember Sharmaine.”
Supervisor, Education and Community Engagement

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site (ESPHS) seeks an outgoing, engaging, and creative Returning Citizen to join its education department. This person will coordinate the innovative and award-winning Returning Citizens Tour Guide Project and support education and community engagement efforts for public programming.
Animated films by currently-incarcerated artists projected onto Eastern State Penitentiary.

August 15 – September 12, 2019
EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY

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