

### Features

#### 3 Youth with Incarcerated Parents: An Introduction to the Issues

By Elizabeth I. Johnson, M.S., M.S.W.

Parental incarceration affects many families in the U.S. This article introduces the topic of youth with incarcerated parents. It begins by exploring trends in parental incarceration then examines its effects on children.

#### 7 Providing Support to Adolescent Children with Incarcerated Parents

By Ann Adalist-Estrin, M.S.

At a time when adolescents are in need of support—while dealing with parental incarceration—many report that people seem to withdraw, become judgmental, or express difficulty understanding their feelings. In an attempt to change that, this article explores the effects of parental incarceration on adolescents, examines their typical feelings, then provides effective ways to respond to and support these youth.

#### 11 Resilience of Girls with Incarcerated Mothers: The Impact of Girl Scouts

By Darlene Grant, Ph.D.

Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, an in-prison mother-daughter visitation program, was designed using a resilience framework. This article describes the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program and discusses current research findings about the effects of the program on participants' ability to form healthier relationships with their mothers and improve their sense of self and self-esteem.

#### 15 Rights and Needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents

By Cynthia L. Timmons, M.Ed.

The impact of witnessing and living with the arrest and incarceration of a parent is overwhelming for children and families. Numerous efforts have recently begun to assist youth who have a parent in prison. This article discusses two of them: the Children of Promise—Mentors of Hope mentoring program, and *The Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Bill of Rights*.

#### 18 After Incarceration: Adolescent-Parent Reunification

By Gretchen Newby, M.A.

While children usually look forward to being reunited with their parents following incarceration, reunification signals yet another stage in a long adjustment process. This article explores the impact of parental incarceration as it relates to future reunification, examines pre- and post-release factors which affect successful reunification, and provides practical suggestions for support.



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*The Prevention Researcher* is a quarterly journal with the mission of connecting service professionals to the latest research. Established in 1994, each single-theme issue of *The Prevention Researcher* focuses on an "at-risk" youth topic from a prevention standpoint. *The Prevention Researcher* is indexed in ERIC, CINAHL, and PsycEXTRA.

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## From the Editor's PC

Dear Colleagues,

Though estimates vary widely, some 1.5 million youth have a parent in prison and many more have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives. These youth are usually "invisible" within our schools and organizations. Most youth workers do not know if one of their youth has, or has had, a parent in prison. If they do know, they do not know how they can most effectively support these youth. This issue of *The Prevention Researcher* explores the experiences of youth with incarcerated parents.

This issue begins with an article by Ms. Elizabeth Johnson who provides an overview of the effects on children of having an incarcerated parent, and the issues they face. Once we understand the issues, Ms. Ann Adalist-Estrin examines

how we can provide support to these youth, including understanding the emotions they typically report and strategies for responding to their needs.

One national program which has taken the lead in addressing the needs of youth with incarcerated parents is the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program. Our third article, by Dr. Darlene Grant, explores how this program works to improve the resilience of girls with incarcerated mothers. In fact, an award winning documentary about this unique program, *Troop 1500*, has been featured on PBS.

Two other strategies for addressing the needs of youth with parents in prison are the Children of Promise – Mentors of Hope initiative and the *Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Bill of Rights*. Ms. Cynthia Timmons explores how each of these

initiatives is working to improve the lives of youth with incarcerated parents.

Most people return to their families and communities following their incarceration. The effects on adolescents of reunifying with their incarcerated parent is rarely acknowledged or addressed. This issue concludes with an article by Ms. Gretchen Newby which addresses these issues.

Please let us know your thoughts.



Steven Ungerleider, Ph.D.  
Editor/ Psychologist

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