

Parenting Connection

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CCI Dedicates Its Happiest Room

"This is the happiest room!" was the impression of a mother upon recently entering the Visiting Room with her children at the Columbia Correctional Institution (CCI) in Portage, Wisconsin.

In the dedication of the refurbished Visiting Room held on April 24, 2018, CCI staff and invited guests expressed their appreciation to inmate artists Jean D. and Joshua V. who put their amazing talents to work transforming the Visiting Room into a "children-friendly" atmosphere.

Warden Michael Dittmann commented on how the artists "transformed the entire environment with their gift" and how they left a legacy that will last long after their stay at CCI has ended. (continued on page 2)



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Quoting from retired warden Thomas G. Borgen who has influenced his view on prisons, Warden Dittmann believes that “Every inmate deserves a clean and orderly place to live and every staff person deserves a clean and orderly place to work.”

According to Correctional Program Supervisor Cynthia Neuhauser who headed up the Visiting Room transformation, “The impact of this project really came to life and the transformation of the room creates a positive atmosphere for all who enter.” Cynthia credits Jean and Joshua who “put their amazing talents to work on CCI’s Visiting Room wall to go along with CCI’s Sesame Street *Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration* initiative.”

Commenting on the intent of the project, Cynthia says, “The focus was to take away the scariness that may be associated for a small child visiting a loved one. Actually the room has made such a positive transition that put smiles on adult faces as well.” Many families love the artwork so much that they have their pictures taken in front of the mural characters.

The mural includes many of the Sesame Street characters including some of the lesser known characters such as Alex, the boy having difficulties explaining to his friends about a parent that is incarcerated and Julia who is autistic. The piece took approximately four months to create.

Artists Jean D. and Joshua V. explained what being involved in the Visiting room project meant to them.

Jean: “This mural gave me the opportunity to pay-it-forward and give back to the community. What truly made all of this worth it though, is when you realize the impact the mural will have on so many families, and especially their children, for years to come . . . giving back to society is what truly makes us human.”

Joshua: “This experience has been extremely positive for me. To see kids and their families interact with the mural the way they do is very rewarding. It is something that will continue to push me to be the best I can be for my own kids and family . . . It’s something I will never forget. I think that goes for both of us.”



Deputy Warden Kalen Ruck added, “What a wonderful way to support the spirit of the Sesame Street project by having the characters of Sesame Street come alive in our Visiting Room. The family friendly environment that this has generated is something that will positively influence not only the inmates that



come to visit here but also, their children and families. How can you not be happy at a mural that is this beautiful!"

In addition to the Warden's and Deputy Warden's comments, also speaking at the dedication were DAI Administrator Jim Schwochert; Bill Huber, Correctional Enterprises Supervisor who supervised Jean D.'s work in the Custom Sign Shop at Stanley Correctional Institution; and Jerry Bednarowski, Editor of the Correctional Education Association-Wisconsin's *Parenting Connection* newsletter. Inmates Derek K. and Dean S. provided music for the dedication.

Project coordinator Cynthia Neuhauser also thanked Printing instructor Todd Blankenship and his students for their work on portfolios and banners, the Maintenance Department for equipment and supplies, and Sgt. Robert Doyle for assistance in making sure the inmates were accessible during odd hours.

How to Become a Great Parent

One of the highlights of the 2018 Correctional Education Association International Leadership Forum held on March 18-20 in Madison, Wisconsin was the keynote address by Dr. Earl Suttle.

Dr. Suttle is a business consultant, motivational keynote speaker and best-selling author. Dr. Suttle has dedicated his career to motivating business leaders; student and professional athletes; and government, healthcare, education, and community leaders. He began his professional life as an elementary school teacher and guidance counselor and particularly enjoys his workshops in the educational field at schools and universities. Dr. Suttle is co-author of five books with Dr. John Hubbard and has produced numerous CDs.



Dr. Suttle believes, "The trick is not only to excel at each and everything you do, but to enjoy it in the process." He applies this philosophy to parenting in his series of Youth, Teacher and Parent Programs.

Included in Dr. Suttle's Youth, Teacher and Parent Programs are:

- **Great Life Choices for Teens Who Want to Make a Difference** - "Great Life Choices for Teens (Who Want to Make a Difference) is a self-esteem and skill and character building guide dedicated to teens and preteens to help to motivate them to achieve their goals, anticipate and prepare them for life challenges and master potentially dangerous situations. This workshop will also help youth cope with the unique stressors and changes they face as young people. In addition, important aspects of development into an effective leader are explored.
- **Seven Strategies for Enhancing Self-Esteem in Your Children** - In this highly interactive session, parents will learn seven strategies that will help build their child's self-esteem and confidence to increase their school performance. Parents will learn how to listen better and how to help their children set goals and utilize affirmations to build their self-concept.
- **Preparing Teenagers for High-Risk Situations** - Knowing what to do NOW will make it easier to know what to do when you have a crisis. Teenagers must prepare NOW for high-risk situations that
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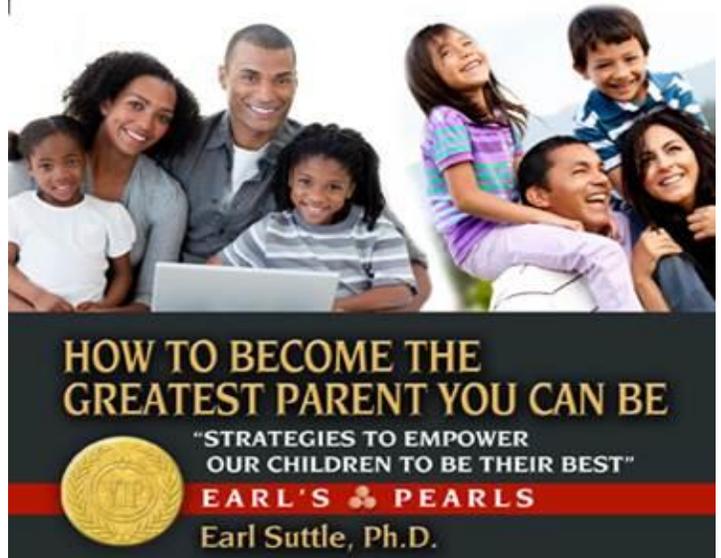
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can occur during high school. At the time of high-risk or crisis, it is often too late for a teenager to develop a way to respond appropriately. This lack of preparation can result in poor judgment and may put the teenager's career plans in jeopardy.

- **Becoming the Greatest Parent You Can Be** - Enjoy excellence as parents. Participants will learn how to be a better role model for their children, gain useful strategies to build better relationships with their children, the L.A.D.D.E.R. model to become a better listener, how to become a masterful asker rather than a typical teller and how to help build your child's confidence to increase school performance.

If a teen has natural athletic ability and a keen interest in sports, Dr. Suttle has a program for parents to guide and support the teen's athletic future and encourage realistic, attainable goals. In this compelling one-day workshop, well-known experts will present ideas and strategies needed to excel in today's highly competitive athletic world. Included in the workshop are discussions on:

- **On Your Mark: Being the Best Parent You Can Be**
 - ✓ How to become a masterful asker rather than a typical teller
 - ✓ Improving your relationships with your teen and becoming a better role model
 - ✓ Realizing areas where you need to grow to enhance your teen's growth
 - ✓ Building your teen's desire for educational as well as athletic excellence
- **Get Set: Are We in the Same Lane?**
 - ✓ Your goals for your teen's future
 - ✓ Ensuring compatibility between your goals and your teen's goals
 - ✓ Identifying and derailing roadblocks to your teen's success
- **Go! Fueling the Fire**
 - ✓ The importance of nutrition in athletic excellence
 - ✓ Ways to motivate your teen athlete to want to eat smart
 - ✓ The synergism between food and physical activity
 - ✓ Bulking up: It's not all protein
 - ✓ Helping your teen athlete get leaner without losing muscle mass
 - ✓ The truth about dietary supplements, protein shakes, caffeine, and alcohol
- **Victory Lap: And the Winner Is...**
 - ✓ How teens say parents can help their athletic performance before, during, and after competition
 - ✓ Clearly defining expectations for your teen and setting standards, not rules
 - ✓ Building character: Defining Discipline, Teachable Spirit, Mental Toughness, Accountability, Integrity, Selflessness, Pride and Humility
 - ✓ Scholarships and resources available at different levels
 - ✓ Conversations with recruiters and identifying red flags



Dr. Suttle has also recorded a CD, "**How to Become the Greatest Parent You Can Be.**" By listening to the CD you will learn the strategies to empower your children to be their best. You will also learn how parents can be a better role model for their children, how to become a masterful asker rather than typical teller and how to help build your child's confidence to increase school performance.

For more information on Dr. Suttle's programs, books and CDs, visit his website: <https://earlsuttle.com/> or follow him on Twitter @drearlspearls. You may also email Dr. Suttle at: earl@earlsuttle.com.



Turning Off the Reservation to Prison Pipeline

In the past few years, the “School to Prison Pipeline” has been a major topic of discussion by those studying the US criminal justice system. The “Reservation to Prison Pipeline” remains neglected.

The overrepresentation of Native Americans in the criminal justice system is an underreported story. According to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Native Americans are admitted to prison at over four times the rate for whites. Through this underreporting, “news media are communicating that Native Americans are not a vital part of the national conversation on race,” says researcher Christopher Josey.

Studies on the racial breakdown of incarceration and criminal punishment in the US show Native Americans to be far overrepresented in US jails and prisons.

- Native Americans were arrested at 1.5 times the rate for Whites, with higher disparity for certain violent and public order offenses, according to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.
- Native Americans are incarcerated at a rate 38% higher than the national average, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Native American men are incarcerated at four times the rate of white men; Native American women are incarcerated at six times the rate of white women, according to a report compiled by the Lakota People’s Law Project.
- Native American youths are 30% more likely than whites to be referred to juvenile court than have charges dropped, according to National Council on Crime and Delinquency.
- Rates of Native American youth admitted to adult prisons are over two times as high for as for White youth, according to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.
- Native Americans are more likely to be killed by police than any other racial group, according to the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice.
- Native Americans fall victim to violent crime at more than double the rate of all other US citizens, according to BJS reports. Eighty-eight percent of violent crime committed against Native American women is carried out by non-Native perpetrators.

In *Native American Incarceration: A Neglected Problem?*, author Roy F. Janisch argues that the chronic underfunding of law enforcement, courts, and corrections in reservation communities is due to the attitude that “Native American societies are often considered a silent minority. Information pertaining to the many social issues enveloping Native communities often falls on deaf ears and political party leaders who are more interested in a larger constituency fail to lend their assistance in a manner deemed appropriate to truly grasp the larger problems.”

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Ralph Erickson, a chief federal district court judge for North Dakota and an outspoken proponent of sentencing reforms for Native American reservations, argues, “Although most American minorities lack much of the communitarian infrastructure that is shown to help mitigate crime, Native Americans are particularly deprived. The federal government can take active steps to resolve Native American overrepresentation in prisons and the juvenile corrections system by funding child and family services on reservations, as well as tribal juvenile and addiction rehabilitation centers.”

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

As with other ethnic groups, the hidden victims of incarceration are the children. Few resources are available to help Native American children deal with the incarceration of a parent, but Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s offers some resources that may help.

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BGCA Native Services is a dedicated group of leaders that works tirelessly to provide culturally relevant support to Boys & Girls Clubs on Native Lands. They are committed to addressing the challenges and issues unique to Native communities while celebrating their unique strengths.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America's (BGCA) has been active for 26 years in Native Lands, BGCA is the nation's largest youth service provider for Native youth, with a network of nearly 200 Boys & Girls Clubs that serve over 86,000 youth from 100 different American Indian, Alaska Native, American Samoan and Hawaiian Tribal communities.

These Clubs offer opportunities to provide Native youth with ongoing relationships with caring adult professionals, a safe place to learn and grow, life-enhancing programs, character development experiences and hope and opportunity.

BGCA is aware of the unique conditions of working in Native communities and take steps to integrating culture into the Club activities. Club staff members are especially cognizant of the role culture and identity play in the lives of their youth. BGCA in Native Lands strive to indigenize everything the Club does incorporating community perspectives, languages, traditions, and practices into all aspects of the Club.

BGCA realizes the importance of hiring and partnering with local cultural experts and organizations to enhance Club programming and educational activities; particularly, networking with local organizations that could fund cultural and arts initiatives.

Over the last several years, Native communities have been positively impacted by the funding provided through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Mentoring grant. Boys & Girls Clubs of America has been able to utilize Federal award funding to serve their Native Clubs, reaching thousands of Native youth across the country each and every year. Regarding Indian Country alone, the grants received by BGCA in the past six years have served over a total of 21,700 Native youth.

Serving Native youth through the OJJDP Mentoring grant has ensured that youth are experiencing quality youth development, as well as being matched with quality mentors. Mentoring in Native communities reinforces trust and confidence between mentors and mentees and allows for an impactful relationship. The funding allotted provides Boys & Girls Clubs in Native Lands with enhanced youth mentoring programming that supports the inclusion of culturally relevant components and traditional practices.

National Native American Mentoring Program Guide

To help those interested in working with Native American youth, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America has published its *National Native American Mentoring Program Guide*.

This manual, published in collaboration with the US Department of Justice and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, provides information about the importance of mentoring for Native communities and recommendations for implementing mentoring programming for Native youth in culturally relevant and competent ways. It includes recommendations for the design of such programs, with worksheets for organizations to use during the planning process to help them set goals and objectives, incorporate safe mentor recruitment procedures, recruit mentees, train mentors, etc. The guide also addresses important considerations, including



evaluation and marketing for the program, communicating with families about program expectations, and supporting matches in communicating effectively. It features an Appendix with template materials, including mentor training pre- and post-surveys, caregiver surveys, mentor and mentee application materials, reference check forms, etc.

If you are interested in downloading the *National Native American Mentoring Program Guide* go to: <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/what-works-in-mentoring/resources-for-mentoring-programs.html?id=176>.

Other BGCA Publications

In addition to the National Native American Mentoring Program Guide, BGCA Native Services offers a variety of publications. They may be downloaded at: <http://nacliibs.org>.

Native Mentoring Media Toolkit - Mentoring has been part of our Native communities' systems for generations and emphasizes an approach that involves listening for understanding, and focusing on the journey, inner wisdom, and reflection. In order to provide culturally relevant support for mentor recruitment efforts at your Clubs, the Native Mentoring Media Toolkit provides helpful resources including a mentoring recruitment poster, sample recruitment letter templates, a mentoring fact sheet, frequently asked questions, and a PowerPoint Presentation on the importance of mentoring Native youth.

Tribal Relations Toolbox - The Tribal Relations Toolbox provides best practices working with Tribal Governments, Sample Tribal Resolutions, and many more resources that will prepare you for a Council Meeting and steps how to create an Advisory Board.

History of Native Clubs Timeline - The History of Native Clubs Timeline outlines key events and initiatives that led to the growth of Boys & Girls Clubs in Indian Country from 1992-2017. You will also find a series of awards that were granted during this time period, along with a map of Native Club sites. BGCA opened it's first Native Club in 1992 and has grown to be the nation's largest Native youth-serving agency, representing American Indian, Alaska Native, American Samoan and Hawaiian Communities.

BGCA Best Practices: Mentoring Native Youth - BGCA has created this best practice guide to provide insight and recommendations for Club staff who are implementing mentoring programs addressing targeted needs. This guide summarizes the current context and latest research in the mentoring field for Native youth.

Native Mentoring Newsletter - The Native Mentoring Newsletter is a quarterly publication that showcases best practices and available resources for Native Boys & Girls Clubs who are implementing mentoring programs made possible through Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funding. Best practices and relevant resources are carefully selected for cultural relevance to better benefit mentors, mentees, and the communities being served.

Starting a Native Boys & Girls Club:

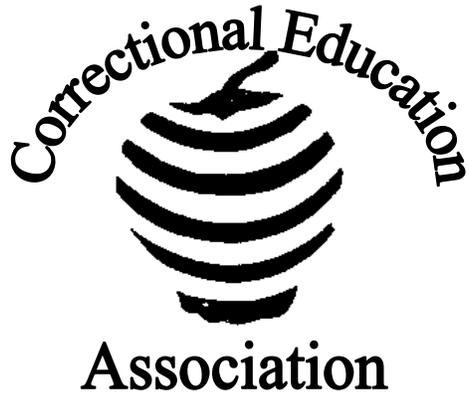
If you are interested in starting a Native Boys & Girls Club, you can find detailed instructions on completing an application to start a Native Boys & Girls Club, which includes chartering a New Organization, New Unit, and New Extension Site by requesting a Start a Club Packet. To request a packet, call BGCA Native Services at 972-581-2374 or send an e-mail to bgcans@bgca.org.

Tell Us About Your Program

Email Your Article to: JerryBednarowski@new.rr.com



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Editor's Message:

More and more social service providers are being impacted by the collateral effects of mass incarceration. Professional organizations are seeing the need to provide their members with information to help them effectively address the needs of the families affected by incarceration.

One example is the Wisconsin Social Service Association. Its annual conference, "Best Escape Anyone Can Have . . .," to be held on June 13-14 in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, will include two workshops that relate to the families and children affected by incarceration.

The workshops are *Addressing the Special Needs of Children with an Incarcerated Family Member* presented by Tim Schwaller, Assistant Clinical Professor at UW-Milwaukee, Helen Bader School of Social Welfare and Therapist, Professional Services Group, West Allis, Wisconsin and *Escaping the Revolving Door of Recidivism* presented by Sue Kastensen, Founder and Director of Fair Shake

If you have information of events relating to incarcerated parents and their families at upcoming conferences, let me know and I will publicize them in this newsletter.

Jerry

For past issues of this newsletter, parenting handbooks, program resources, and more go to www.ceawisconsin.org

