

FAMILIES AND CORRECTIONS JOURNAL

Canadian Families and Corrections Network |
Regroupement canadien d'aide aux familles des détenu(e)s
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The mission of the Canadian Families and Corrections Network is "Building stronger and safer communities by assisting families affected by criminal behavior, incarceration and community reintegration."

The CFCN is a registered Canadian charity, registration number 875428062RR0001.

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CFCN and *Jeffrey Goes to Jail* recognized by the United Nations!

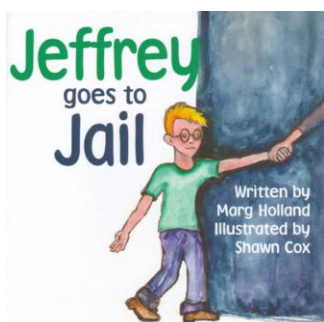
By Louise Leonardi, Executive Director, CFCN

In September 2011 the committee on the Rights of the Child at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland hosted a day of general discussion around the rights of 'Children of Incarcerated Parents'. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness about and explore child rights issues related to children of incarcerated parents as outlined in Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also aimed to provide policy and practical guidance on the respect, promotion and fulfillment of the rights of children in such situations.

During the day, Canadian Families and Corrections Network was honoured for our work in the area of families of offenders and in particular for our storybook *Jeffrey Goes to Jail*.

How did this wonderful resource come together?

Volunteer Shawn Cox and CFCN Ontario Coordinator Margaret Holland, are friends who share a passion that children should be treated with dignity and respect.



Through Margaret's work in the Visitor Resource Centers at Kingston Penitentiary, Collins Bay, Bath and Joyceville Institutions in Ontario she experienced many children who have been given

confusing information about what happens when they visit Dad. It also became obvious in her work that the parents struggled with questions from the children and their circumstances. It only made sense that there was a resource that parents could have to explain that Dad was not a bad person; he had made a mistake and was getting a time out.

Shawn Cox, an artist, was overwhelmed with the security procedure when he entered Collins Bay Institution to provide face painting during the Special Olympics. When Margaret approached him and asked that he volunteer his artistic abilities in creating the



Author Margaret Holland and Illustrator Shawn Cox

resource *Jeffrey Goes to Jail*, he welcomed the opportunity.

Shawn Cox's talent enhances Margaret's script and he is proud to be able to share his abilities to benefit families who are experiencing incarceration by providing the reader with a clear and sensitive explanation of what it is to walk into a correctional institution and a resource that acknowledges the importance of the father-child bond.

Margaret and Shawn share the belief that children should know where they are going and what to expect. It is hoped that *Jeffrey goes to Jail* opens the doors to honest communication and explains what it is to come into a correctional institution for children, as well as adults, and focuses on the effects of parental incarceration, security procedures and the antidrug strategy. It has been translated into French in *Julien à la prison* and is in video form as well.

It is with both humbleness and gratitude that CFCN accepts this recognition and passes on our praise and appreciation to Margaret and Shawn for their significant contribution to the families of those incarcerated. CFCN is grateful for Shawn's generosity with this project that has benefited hundreds of families through our Family National Orientation Project and toll-free lines.

National Family Orientation Project Results

By Louise Leonardi, Executive Director, CFCN

From August 10, 2009 to March 31, 2010 (Project 1) and again from November 01, 2010 to October 31, 2012 (Project 2), Canadian Families and Corrections Network was grateful to receive funding from the National Contribution Program Committee, through Correctional Service Canada (CSC) Chaplaincy Branch to run the National Family Orientation Project.

The Contributions Agreements were for a CFCN Family Orientation Coordinator to offer a family-based, restorative-based presentation with pre/post testing to all new male offenders at the seven regional intake and assessment units across Canada. These included the Regional Reception Centre (RRAC) in the Pacific region; Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Stony Mountain, and Edmonton Institution in the Prairie region; Millhaven Assessment Unit in the Ontario region, Centre Régional de Reception (CRR) in the Quebec region, and Springhill Institution in the Atlantic region.

The presentation at each institution included information on Corrections, CSC Chaplaincy, Restorative Justice, Aboriginal Liaisons, Victim Services, Parole Board of Canada, LifeLine, and CSC's Anti-drug Strategy. And, as it is paramount to CFCN, we talked about the importance of families – as victims of the crime itself or as victims of the consequences of crime. We talked about the harm that had been done to the family and loved ones; how to begin to repair that harm; and offered the participants in the program the opportunity to write a restorative letter home.

During the presentation, family contact information was gathered from orientation participants on a voluntary basis and a bilingual family orientation mailing was sent to the family of the offender to help them understand and cope with having a loved one incarcerated. It included similar information to what was in the presentation along with CFCN resources such as *Time Together / Qui purge la peine* (families and incarceration), *Time's Up / Un nouveau depart* (reintegration), *One Step at a Time/ Un pas a la fois* (family-victims and Victim Services), community resource information, an evaluation and our United Nations recognized storybook *Jeffrey goes to Jail / Julien à la prison* (Anti-drug strategy from a child's perspective).

Other services included CFCN's bilingual toll-free information and referral service to families of offenders, information clearing/brokering for the Voluntary Sector and CSC services and a reporting and evaluation component.

A formal, comprehensive evaluation of the National Family Orientation Project and its outcomes was completed by the Center of Research and Development of Education (CRDE) at the University of Moncton, in New Brunswick (see the Full Report at www.umoncton.ca/crde/node/60). The methodology in the external evaluation was to use the existing qualitative and quantitative data from both Project 1 and Project 2 to produce a final evaluation. Data analysis included qualitative content analysis as well as statistical analyses and was determined on such factors as orientation participants pre/post knowledge surveys, orientation participant comments and ratings, victim services demographics as well as family orientation packages mailed, ratings of family orientation packages, family comments, toll free information and referral service statistics.

The Statistics

During Projects 1 and 2 (August 2009 to October 2012) there were 420 orientation sessions which included 4,814 participants. Another 1,525 offenders who were absent from the presentation received information, bringing the total number of recipients of the course materials to 6,339 offenders.

The participants of the Orientation Session rated its effectiveness at 88%.

Pre and post testing of the offenders' knowledge of the topics presented showed an overall 21.6% increase in the knowledge base of the offenders (scores on pre-test were an average of 57.1% and post-testing 78.7%)

What was important? The way the orientation wants us to be reconciled into our family and community as an honest and respectful citizen in the city or town we live!

There were a total of 1,146 comments made by orientation participants on what they considered the most important parts of the orientation which included the entire presentation, information on Restorative

Justice, information on families visiting the institutions, support provided to families, information on parole, the impact of crime on families and information on reintegration/community support.

There were 608 comments on the least important parts of the presentation where many said everything was of interest but least important included the information related to parenting/children, some aspects of Restorative Justice, information on parole and information on families visiting the institution. In many cases, the reason for disinterest was the irrelevance of the subject matter to the circumstances of the participant.

What was important? Making me realize that even though my crime was victimless my family became victims of my actions.

There were 448 comments on what other topics they would like to see included in the presentation, and while many thought it was all inclusive, others discussed parenting/children; personal support information; more Restorative Justice information; more information on visits and family contact; and successful reintegration.

And finally, there were 575 general comments, mostly concerning their appreciation for the project, suggestions of changes to the presentation, requests for additional information, information regarding their specific situation, and some that expressed concerns or regret.

Of the 6,339 offenders in the Family Orientation Coordination Project, 2,989 offenders voluntarily completed a Family Contact Information Form which enabled CFCN to send a package of information to their families which comprised 47.15% of the total inmates orientated.

About Relationships

44.1% of these family packages were sent to a wife/common law/partner, 38.3% to a parent, 15.0% to a family member/friend/other and 2.6% to someone whose relationship to the offender was not stated.

What was important? The part where I can tell my kids that it is not their fault I'm here and that I'm sorry.

37.91% of offenders were custodial parents, 18.5% were non-custodial parents, and 30.1% self-identified as a non-parent or having an adult child while 13.4% did not state their parenting

status. While some research projects focus on custodial parenting only, the impact on noncustodial children may be just as great with respect to lack of contact with the parent, custody and access, or with the cessation of child support and spousal support payments.

What was important? How each crime has large ripple effects and that communicating with family and friends is very important to the healing process.

This project also looked at family members who are victims. 22.9% of the men reported that a family member was a victim of their crime and 53.69% of the men self-reported that a family member was harmed by their offence which speaks well to the restorative aspects of the orientation. This means that the men were thinking about their families and admitting that whether they were a direct victim of their crime or not, they were a victim of the consequences of their crime and that restorative action needed to take place.

From the Families

Family members who received mailings were encouraged to send in an Evaluation Form and 248 people took advantage of this which represents 8.30% of the 2,989 who received packages. Some of the information gleaned from these reports was:

Family members rated the value of the information to them as 4.4 out of a possible 5%.

What was important? This experience is surreal. I'm having trouble coping with a son in jail. I haven't had a hug from my son since May 2010.

393 comments were given in response to the question "What are the three biggest needs of your family?" These included support (for family members and offenders), contact and communication, basic needs (food, shelter, income, employment, health, and education).

Family members travel an average of 461.64kms. It was not always clearly stated whether this was a one-way or return trip but regardless, families are travelling between 2.5-4.5 hours to an institution to visit an incarcerated family member which is a financial hardship for most.

On the Phones

Toll-free numbers were maintained all across Canada for families who wished to call into CFCN for further information or referrals and toll numbers were included in the family mailings. A toll-free line allows family members to request assistance without being financially disadvantaged. 695 family members took advantage of the toll-free line and there were a corresponding 716 follow-up calls made on their behalf. This represents 23.25% of the families who received a family information mailing.

The Lessons

- CFCN has found, with rare exception that incarcerated parents do not wish for their children to be involved in criminal behaviour and are concerned about how the children view the offender and his incarceration. Support for parenting while incarcerated and further resources to strengthen the family and parent-child bond are required.
- Resources are needed for family members on the outside in terms of counselling, support groups and financial aid all across Canada.
- It was critical to create strong relationships between CSC and CFCN staff to pave the way for smoother procedures, security clearance issues, transition to new staff members, etc.
- Ongoing contact needed to be maintained between all Family Orientation Coordinators on a regular basis in order to build a good team, ensure program integrity and to prevent program drift. Other assignments were completed (such as research to aid the project) when staff could not deliver programming due to lockdowns, institutional searches, etc.
- Restorative justice has a role to play in the correctional process. Restorative practices are not intended to take the place of effective corrections but serve as an adjunct to processes that can address current harm and reduce future harm. It is important to give restorative opportunities to those incarcerated to allow them the chance to consider acting in a way that increases public safety.

I would like to visit my husband. It is the first time. I don't know what to do.

The Family Orientation Coordinator Project was of great value to the offenders and the families CFCN serves in that it provided resources to both families and the offenders during Intake and Assessment, a critical time for both population groups as they struggle with a lack of knowledge of the correctional process. Our team of Family Orientation coordinators received good feedback from both CSC institutional staff and the inmates, and CFCN thanks each of them for their professionalism, dedication and commitment to the project.

The Family Orientation Coordinator Project was highly successful in terms of the number of offenders and family member contacts made, the Voluntary Sector and Correctional Service of Canada information disseminated as well as the chance to present restorative opportunities to the incarcerated.

Thank you!

Canadian Families and Corrections Network wishes to express its appreciation to the Correctional Service of Canada, through the Chaplaincy Branch (and especially Rick Burk and Anna Wiecek) as the Project Authority for its support to CFCN and to the families and offenders who benefited from the Family Orientation Coordinator project.



We would like to **THANK** the following for their dedication and service on the Board of Directors of Canadian Families and Corrections Network

Christopher Carr (former Director General, CSC Chaplaincy)

Terry Richardson (former Director General, CSC Chaplaincy)

Anna Wiecek (CSC Chaplaincy Liaison)



The Voice.

Voiceless scent, oh stretching mountain,
How you have spoken. My heartbeat in
Twinned intimacy with your might,
Answers. Answers. Answers.

Greatness in all Her glory showers
Tremendous poignancy clear upon
Our heated wanted, and we are
Joined like blood-siblings, imbibing
Only one song: Sawbonna.

In straining to mount
Your beckoning summit,
Forgiveness breathes your name.
Reconciliation eats your fire.
You have heard us. We are glad.

We are glad. We are glad.

La voix.

Fragrance sans voix, oh montagne étendue,
Comme vous avez parlé. Les battements de mon
cœur qui se
Melent étroitement à votre grandeur,
Respondent. Respondent. Respondent.

La grandeur dans toute sa splendeur inonde
Notre désir ardent de façon
Extrêmement poignante, et nous sommes
Lies entre nous comme des frères de sang, ne
chantant
Plus qu'à l'unisson.

En gravissant péniblement
Ton sommet rayonnant,
Le pardon souffle ton nom.
La réconciliation festoie sur ton feu.
Vous nous avez entendus. Nous sommes ravis.

Nous sommes ravis. Nous sommes ravis.

Margot Van Sluytman

From The Other Inmate: Mediating Justice-Mediating Hope.
L'autre prisonnier: conciliation de la justice-conciliation de l'espoir.

Annual General Meeting – September 2012



CFCN Board of Directors and Staff

Canadian Families and Corrections Network held four days of meetings from September 13-16, 2012, including its Annual General Meeting in the beautiful Town of Shediac NB.

Meetings were held around the impact of recent events and transition in Corrections Canada, Chaplaincy, government and CFCN itself. The Board of Directors continued its work in Policy and Procedure manuals, the new Corporate Not-for-profit Continuation Act, forward visioning as well as Board sustainability



Lawyer Robert Basque

and succession planning. We were appreciative of the guidance and input from Rev. Hugh Kirkegaard, Atlantic Regional Chaplain for Correctional Service of Canada and legal information and recommendations from Robert Basque, Q.C. from Moncton NB.

Staff meetings and training sessions were held among various groups and presentations were given by staff to the Board of Directors on current CFCN projects and ideas for future work for families impacted by crime.



CFCN President Debbie Barriault and Laura Hoar, Friends of the Family recipient

CFCN's AGM was held in the evening of Friday, September 14, 2012 with many guests from all over Canada. Warm greetings and welcome words were brought from the Town of Shediac, Major Jacques LeBlanc, and CFCN members were recognized with certificates. Roger Ouellette, Correctional Service Canada, Area Director for NB and PEI was the keynote speaker and Laura Hoar and Lois Weatherbee were the recipients of CFCN *Friends of the Family Award* (which recognizes individuals that significantly contribute to services or programs for families affected by incarceration and reintegration) for their wonderful work with Women in the Shadows.

During the AGM, CFCN acknowledged the tremendous dedication and commitment shown to CFCN by Christopher Carr, retired Director General of CSC Chaplaincy, as he resigned as Treasurer from our Board of Directors after many years of service. He truly believes in families and our need to work and support them as they struggle with the effects of crime in their lives.

There was also cause for celebration with CFCN's 20th Anniversary to be held on December 16, 2012. During the AGM we spent time reflecting the "Best CFCN Memories" and there were stories of our humble beginnings as an organization, the moments of laughter over our growing pains, as well as reflections on the suffering and struggles of families affected by crime that keep us focused on our work and hopes for the future of CFCN.



Rev. Hugh Kirkegaard and Debbie Barriault

It was a good weekend of networking, education, decisions and strategic planning. The Board of Directors, staff and our guests from across Canada enjoyed beautiful Shediac as well as the Point du Chene Wharf and Parlee Beach. We were very grateful for the support and discounts given to our non-profit from local businesses such as the Seely's Motel, Bernice's Office, The Greenhouse on Main Street, Pizza Delight and Subway Restaurants.



Christina Farnsworth (Moncton Community Chaplaincy) with Anne-Marie Collette (Canadian Centers for Teaching Peace)



Maria Vivas
CFCN Board Member

Maria Vivas is Canadian Families and Corrections Network's newest Board Member, joining us in January 2013. She obtained her Law degree from the University of Ottawa and is currently articling with Monterosso and Associates and will be called to the Bar in December. She also has a background in French Literature, Social Sciences and speaks Spanish in addition to French and English.

Maria's past work experience includes the Douglas Mental Health University Institute as a paralegal and Corrections Canada as a Complaints Analyst. She also worked for Canadian Families and Corrections Network on our National Family Orientation Project (a restorative family-based orientation for offenders and their families) at the Regional Reception Centre in Sainte-Anne des Plainnes for the Quebec region.

Maria says "I feel very grateful to be a board member at CFCN because I believe in the organization. I also believe in the importance of family in an individual's life, choices and values. I think that restorative justice is an interesting and effective alternative to the conventional justice system."

CFCN is pleased that Maria has moved from employee to Board Member and will continue her work with us!

Support Group Information

MOMS

Mothers
Offering
Mutual
Support

Did you know there is a MOMS Support Group in Ottawa?

They are a small group of mothers who meet to share practical information and advice for those that have a son or daughter involved with the justice and/or corrections system.

Check them out online at www.momsottawa.com

CFCN at Prisoners' Justice Day in Toronto – August 10, 2013



Louise Leonardi,
CFCN Executive Director

Prisoners' Justice Day is a day when we remember those who have died while being incarcerated. August 10th has been commemorated since 1975 as a memory of the death of Eddie Nolan in solitary confinement in Millhaven Institution in Ontario. This annual day of remembrance began in Canada and is now observed world-wide. While Prisoners' Justice Day started solely as a memorial event, it now has been expanded and those on the inside remember, fast and protest while those on the outside have education, advocacy and solidarity events.

This year, the theme of the Toronto Prisoners' Justice Day event was families and CFCN was on the steering committee along with Elizabeth Fry Toronto, F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents, John Howard Society of Toronto, Community Outreach, and S.O.S.O.L.O. Support Group. The opening prayer and smudge was led by Elder Vern Harper and there was music from Eagle Women Singerz and Faith Nolan. We saw the new Sesame Street and Women in Bedford videos and heard Rita Chiarelli's "Music from the Big House". Speakers included Crystal Daley and Elizabeth Fry Peer Mentors, as well as Tim, a former inmate.

Canadian Families and Corrections Network was proud to be a part of the event!