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Children
of Incarcerated
Parents

All Together Now:

“Acknowledging and Addressing
the Needs
Of Children with Incarcerated
Parents”



Honorable Jeannie McDaniel House of Representatives

History

- **Legislation House Bill 1197**
- **Goal was to examine the needs of children with a parent in prison, focusing on seven key tasks:**
 1. Safety Protocols
 2. Data Collection
 3. Outreach and Education
 4. Economic Supports
 5. Research
 6. Resource Clearinghouse
 7. Review existing legislation affecting children with incarcerated parents

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**Lisa Smith, Executive Director
Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth**

- Legislation Senate Joint Resolution 48, 2004
- First Task Force
- The study of children of incarcerated mothers, three part series of reports
- Partnership with Susan F. Sharp, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma



- In July 31, 2004, Oklahoma's female prison population was 2,351
- In the first phase of the study, 203 female prisoners were administered a survey
- Survey questions on demographics, criminal record, and information about families such as contact with children, placement of children, and problems with children



Children of Incarcerated Parents

Who's providing food, shelter and basic necessities for these children?

- Children's care arrangements are often handled informally by family members
- Remaining family members must take on the parent's roles and responsibilities
- Drastic reductions in parental income
- Financial hardship
- Stigma, shame, guilt, and pain of dealing with a family member's incarceration



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How are children affected by the incarcerated parent

- Trauma
- Financial hardship
- Social stigma
- Insecurity/Instability
- Neglect



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Direct Impact on a Child Due to Parental Incarceration

- Bad Grades
- School Drop Out
- Trouble with Guardian/Authorities
- Run Away
- Alcohol Problems
- Drug Problems
- Depression
- Suicidal



- Oklahoma data strongly imply that children of incarcerated parents are at-risk for negative outcomes such as drug use and criminal behaviors in adulthood.
- Most come from homes with mental illnesses
- Homes where the mother has been battered
- Many are at-risk of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and neglect

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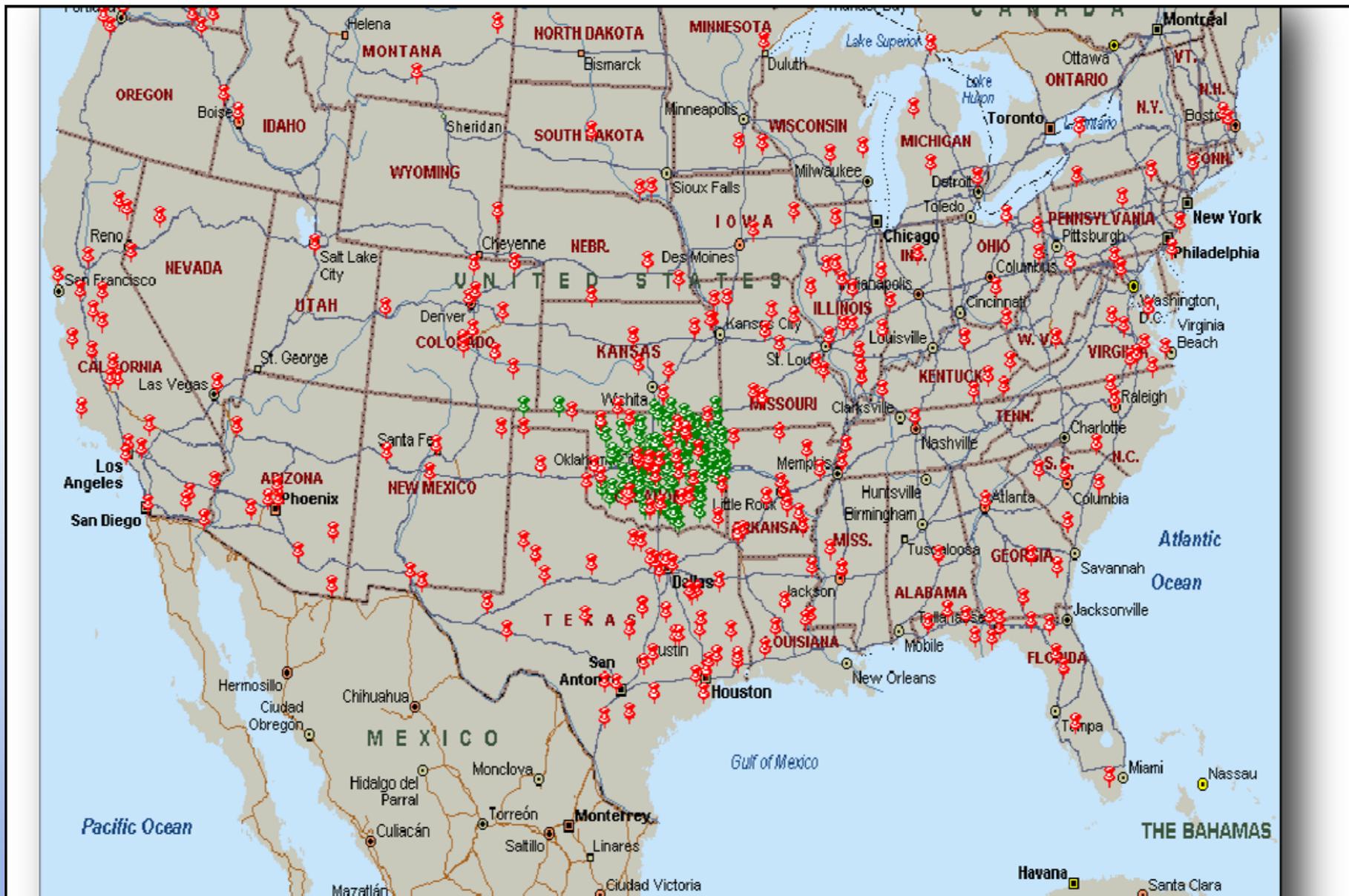
Honorable April Sellers White, Retired
Co-Chair

Oklahoma Children of Incarcerated Parents , OCIP

- Broad range of stakeholders
- Networking together to look at the needs of children with a parent in prison
- To determine the scope of the problem facing Oklahoma's children, and
- Gathering data on the number of children impacted by incarceration



- Used data from the Oklahoma Study of Incarcerated Women and Their Children
- Developed and administered survey to sample of incarcerated men to estimate number of children with an incarcerated father
- Data from Department Of Corrections visitation logs
- Data from Prison Fellowship Ministries Project Angel Tree





Children of Incarcerated Parents

Project Angel Tree Data

- There are many children in Oklahoma with a parent incarcerated in another state
- There are many children in Oklahoma with parent incarcerated in a county jail
- This means that our data underestimates the number of children impacted by parental incarceration

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Oklahoma Study of Incarcerated Women 2009 Report

- Minor children with incarcerated mother: 4,624

Oklahoma Children of Incarcerated Task Force 2012 Report

- Minor Children with Incarcerated father: 21,482

**Total estimated number of children with incarcerated parent
on a given day**

26,106

**This does not reflect local and county jails or federal
prisons**

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Oklahoma Children of Incarcerated Parents Committee

- In 2012, legislation was passed mandating OCCY administer the Oklahoma Children of Incarcerated Parents Advisory Committee
- To look at the safety and well-being of children whose parents are incarcerated
- Working collaboratively with agencies and service providers to better meet the needs of children whose parents are incarcerated
- Legislative Brief 2013

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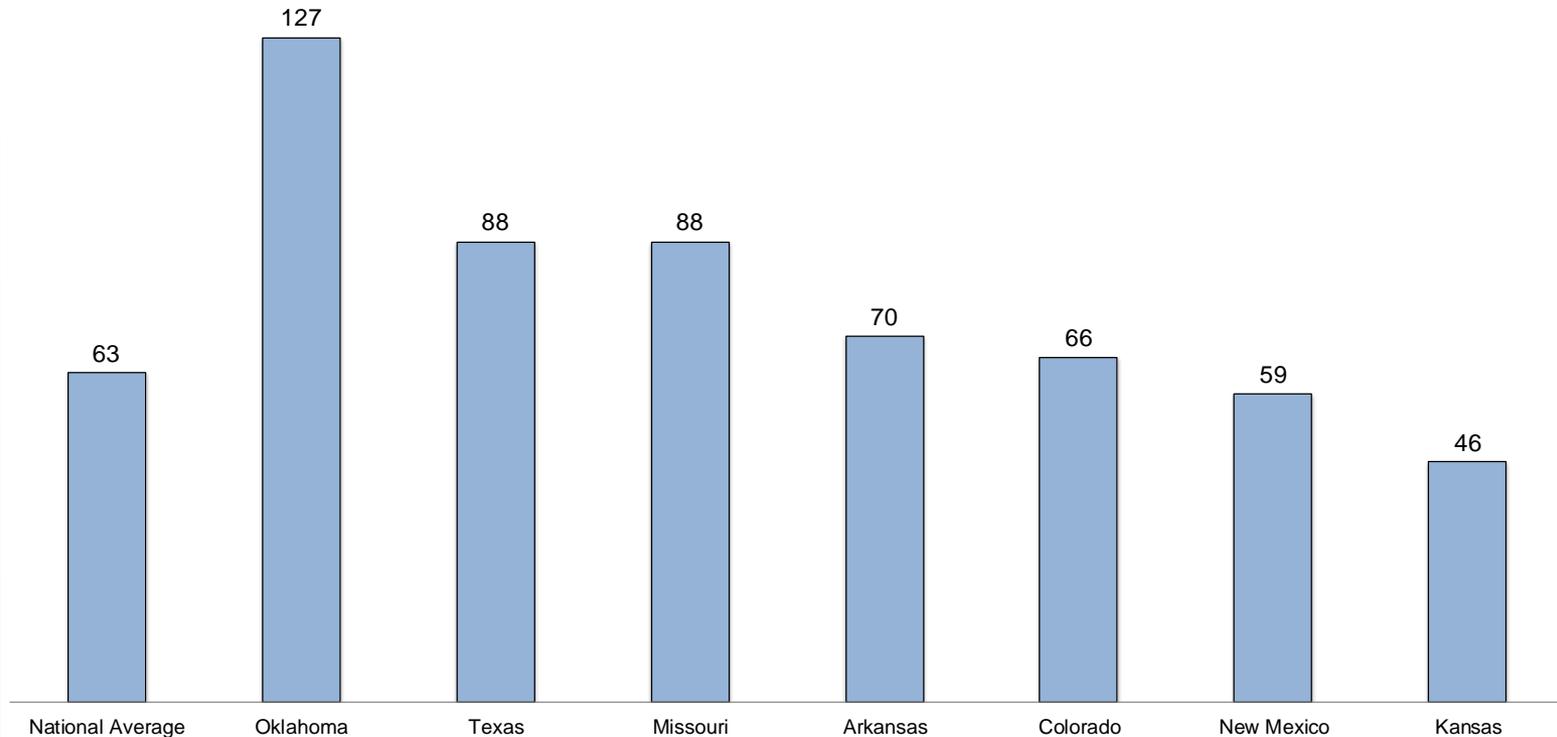
Laura J. Pitman, M.B.A., Ph.D.
Deputy Director of Division I-Institutions
(Female Offenders)

- **Incarceration of Women in Oklahoma**
 - As of October 31, 2013, 26,270 men and women were incarcerated in the Oklahoma prison system
 - 1,634 men and women are awaiting reception to prison
 - Additional 24,241 are under probation or parole supervision
 - Not every offender has minor children
 - Many have more than one child under the age of 18

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Female Incarceration Rates
Contiguous States End of Calendar Year 2012



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners in 2012-Advance Counts Table 8. Imprisonment Rates of Sentenced Prisoners Under Jurisdiction of State and Federal Correctional Authorities, by Jurisdiction and Sex, December 31, 2011 and 2012.



- At the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, 2,702 women were imprisoned in the State of Oklahoma
- In FY 2013, 1,152 women were received into the Department of Corrections and 1,081 women completed their sentences and were released
- 35% of female offenders served less than one year in prison
- The average length of stay per offender is 2.02 years
- At the end of Fiscal Year 2013, the recidivism rate for females released in Fiscal Year 2010 and returning within 3 years was 13.3%
- Controlling Offense Categories for FY 2013 Receptions
 - Possession/Obtaining CDS (26.2%)
 - Distribution CDS (16.6%)
 - Assault (11.8%)



Children of Incarcerated Parents

Pathways to Incarceration

- History of Trauma and Violence

301 female offenders were surveyed:

- 61.1% (N=184) reported someone in home with drinking problem
- 46.8 % (N=141) reported someone in home with drug problem
- 47.2% (N=142) reported mental illness in the home
- 61.1% (N=184) reported divorced parents
- 31.6% (N=95) reported one or both parents incarcerated
- 52.5% (N=158) reported running away from home before age 18

In Childhood

- Child Physical and/or Sexual Abuse (66.4%)
- Father Violent (42.9%)
- Mother Violent (28.6%)

In Adulthood

- Domestic Violence (71.1%)
- Rape After Age 18 (36.2%)



- **History of Substance Abuse and Addiction**
 - Of the 1,152 female offenders received in FY 2013, 704 (61%) were assessed with a moderate to high need for substance abuse treatment.
- **Mental Health Issues**
 - 74.9% of incarcerated women in the state of Oklahoma have a history of or are currently being treated for mental illnesses
- **Medical Issues**
- **Economic Marginalization and Poverty**

For Women Entering DOC in FY 2013

 - 95.5% were unemployed at the time of arrest
 - 77.3% were frequently unemployed when in the labor market
 - 79.9% reported difficulty managing their finances at the time of arrest
 - 62.7% reported reliance on social assistance at the time of arrest
 - 74.6% had a need for education (e.g., Literacy, Adult Basic Education, General Equivalency Diploma)
- **Race and Ethnicity**
 - Black and Native American women are disproportionately represented in the Oklahoma prison system.



Children of Incarcerated Parents

Women Offenders As Mothers

- 301 women were surveyed
 - 257 (85.4%) had at least one child
 - Among them, these 257 women had 760 children
 - 65.4% (497) of these children were under age 18
- Extrapolated
 - 2,308 incarcerated women have at least one child
 - Among them, these 2,308 women have 6,825 children
 - 4,464 of these children are under age 18
- Where Are the Children Now?
 - Other Parent (31.0%)
 - Maternal Grandmother (28.3%)
 - Mother's Sibling (8.0%)
 - Other Relatives of Mother (8.0%)
 - Partner's Mother (5.9%)
 - Foster Care (5.9%)

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Sharla J. Owens, Chief Executive Officer

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma

Mission Statement

Provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.



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Ernest Coulter **New York City, 1904**



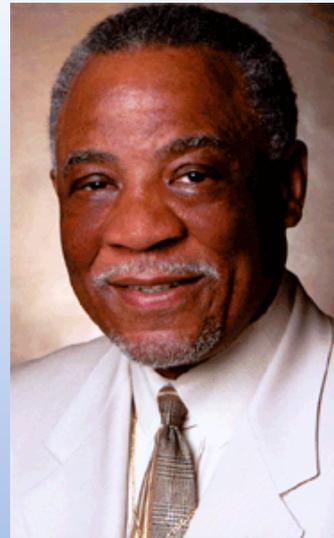
NYC Court Clerk

Saw repeat juvenile offenders in his court

Decided they needed someone like a “big brother”

Recruited his colleagues to mentor the boys

Reverend Dr. Wilson Goode **Philadelphia, PA**



Founder of Amachi Program, 2000

Former Philadelphia Mayor

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education, Clinton Administration

Father was incarcerated

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Children of Incarcerated Parents

Amachi

Goal: To break the intergenerational cycle of crime and incarceration by matching children of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated parents with a caring adult mentor.

Nationwide:

Program in all 350 agencies, in all 50 states

Over 300,000 children of incarcerated parents served since 2000

Nigerian word:

“Who knows what God has brought us through this child?”



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Amachi Texas Study – Results, results, results

Short-term (Within six months)

Significant, positive differences in:

relationship with parent/caregiver,
self-esteem/self-worth,
sense of having a real future

Long-term (12+ months)

Continued increases in family
relationships,
self-esteem higher than peers,
greater connections to
school/community,
positive perception about ability to
make friends

School related outcomes - attitudes toward school became more
positive and both literacy and discipline improved across time



How The Program Works

Child of Incarcerated Parent + Mentor + Agency

School-based

1 hour/week

At local elementary schools

Teachers/counselors refer children

Community-based

Several times a month

Various low cost/no cost
community activities

BBBS Amachi program

- Qualified professional staff
- Careful matching of bigs and littles
- Child Safety is our number one priority
- On-going match support and training



Partnership with OCCY and OJA

- 3 year grant through state funding to mentor children of incarcerated parents and younger siblings of children in juvenile system
- Serving 83 children right now, will match 109 over next 18 months
- Tracking outcomes to report to Legislature

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Questions and Answers

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THANK YOU!

Oklahoma Children of Incarcerated Parents Advisory
Committee

April Sellers White, Co-Chair

AprilSellersWhite@gmail.com

Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

1111 North Lee Avenue, Suite 500

Oklahoma City, OK 73103

405-606-4900