

All across the country, ordinary Americans are doing extraordinary things in their communities to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world. Each month, these *Champions of Change* are invited to the White House to share their ideas. On June 12, 2013, twelve individuals who are helping children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers were honored. These hidden heroes work every day to help families impacted by incarceration.

Judi Goozh and Sue Jeweler were nominated for the *Champions of Change* honor and, although not recipients, they were invited to attend the ceremony at the White House Executive Office Building. Deputy Attorney General James Cole's spoke of their work for the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

### **Deputy Attorney General James M. Cole Delivers Remarks at the Children of Incarcerated Parents Initiative “Champions of Change” Event**

~ Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Thank you Tonya [Robinson] for that introduction and for your work on this issue and this event. And congratulations again to all of the Champions of Change being honored today. Your work is exemplary as you have dedicated your time and energy to speak up for a unique and vulnerable group: our nation's children who are dealing with the consequences of a parent's imprisonment.

It is estimated that more than 1.7 million children currently have a parent in prison, and many more have parents who are in local jails or lock-ups at any given time. As we've heard today, addressing these children's needs requires a coordinated effort of multiple government agencies and social service entities to implement collaborative approaches. This Administration is committed to providing support to children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. Through an interagency working group led by the White House, agencies across the Administration have been taking a hard look at the issues these children, their caregivers and their parents confront and how we can provide more support. Today, we've announced a number of efforts to promote the well-being of these children -- from the time of their parents' arrest to their parents' reentry into our communities.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police, with funding support from the Department of Justice, is developing a model protocol and training on protecting the physical and emotional well-being of children when their parents are arrested. Federal law enforcement agencies, the National Sheriffs' Association, and other partners are participating in this critical effort.

**To help incarcerated parents maintain relationships with their children during their sentence and become better parents, the Bureau of Prisons has identified model parenting programs for use in prisons around the country. And with the help of Judi Goozh and Sue Jeweler from Creative Family Projects, we will circulate a “Mommies and Daddies in Prison” booklet for incarcerated parents and caregivers to read with the children so that they understand more about their parent's daily experience.**

We're also calling for funding to support these efforts. The President's 2014 budget calls for \$5 million in grants to enhance parental and family relationships for incarcerated parents as a reentry and recidivism-reduction strategy. It also requests \$2 million for the Bureau of Prisons to expand education programs that strengthen family and parental ties.

Our efforts don't stop there. We're improving our research, enhancing resources and training, educating the public to dispel myths, and conducting more research about how to assist these children.

All of these efforts would not be complete without helping formerly incarcerated individuals become productive, law-abiding and tax-paying citizens upon their release from prison or jail. The best way former inmates can positively contribute to their children's lives is to remain crime-free. Without a doubt, successful reentry policies and practices go hand-in hand with the theme of today's event. Motivated individuals -- who have served their time and paid their debts -- need the opportunity to compete for jobs and attain stable housing to support their children and their families and contribute to our communities.

Through today's events, we have made great strides in providing support and increasing public awareness about an issue discussed too little. I want to thank the White House and the federal interagency group members for taking on this issue—including representatives from my own agency, the Department of Justice, as well as the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Education, and the Social Security Administration. I'd like to invite you to please rise. You should be proud of what you have accomplished in just one year.

I also want to thank the Champions for being fierce advocates for our children. We are glad to give you the recognition you deserve. To our caregivers, we applaud you. You are heroes in the lives of these children. You must be the role model, the nurturer, the stable, guiding hand, and the rock, often with enormous day-to-day challenges.

And finally I want to applaud the resilient children and young people here today. I am going to ask you to listen closely to me now. It is ok -- more than ok -- to ask questions and to share your feelings with someone you trust about the parent who may not be with you. We are all here to help and support you.

It is an honor to be here as a part of your special day, and I wish you future success.