



The Illinois Department of Corrections

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Summer Camp Builds Bonds between Incarcerated Moms and Children

(Springfield, IL) -- The Illinois Department of Corrections continues to help incarcerated women build strong relationships with their children. Nearly 50 children will be brought in to Logan and Decatur Correctional Centers to spend time with their mothers next week as part of the Mom and Me Summer Camp, which is being held from July 31st through August 3rd.

The children will meet up at East Bay Camp near Bloomington on Sunday, where they will spend their evenings participating in activities that enhance their communication skills, strengthen their abilities to work as a team, and boost their self-esteem. Starting Monday, the kids will split up and head to the facilities where their moms are housed for daily activities. The children will return to the campgrounds each evening.

The camp started at Lincoln Correctional Center 15 years ago and falls in line with the Department's mission to give incarcerated women the tools they need to become better parents. Maggie Burke, who oversees the IDOC's Women and Family Service's Division, says the camp is extremely beneficial when it comes to strengthening family ties, "Programs like the Mom and Me Summer Camp are the cornerstone to building bonds between a mother and her children. It's a positive experience that helps keep families together and helps reduce the recidivism rate among female offenders."

The camp is in its 10th year at Decatur Correctional Center. Warden Shelith Hansbro says, "It's an amazing opportunity for moms and their children to reconnect and participate in activities that allow them to focus on each other, learn more about each other, and grow together."

Thirty-two children and 18 moms are expected to participate in the camp at Logan. Fifteen children and 11 moms are expected to participate in the camp at Decatur. And this year, a former camper, who participated in the program for several years while his mother was incarcerated, will be returning to volunteer as a cabin counselor.

The Mom and Me Summer Camp is a faith-based program funded entirely through private donations. The camp is for children ages 7 through 12 and would not be possible without the committed efforts of volunteers. This year, 60 volunteers will work with the children at the camp. 564**16

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Mission: To serve justice in Illinois and increase public safety by promoting positive change in offender behavior, operating successful reentry programs, and reducing victimization.