



Silent Victims Of Crime
The Children of Incarcerated Parents

Silent Victims of Crime's Quarterly Newsletter



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UPCOMING EVENTS IN APRIL



April 09 2022

Frost Museum Experience

We are bringing the children to explore the Frost Museum and learning all about the world of Science.



April 16 2022

Egg Hunt at the Fairchild Botanic Gardens

Join us for egg hunt in the beautiful gardens at Fairchild.



April 24th 2022

International Beauty Queens Dinner Show

Our fundraising dinner is just around the corner and its sure to be an extraordinary night with filled with queens of all kinds.



DAD IS COMING HOME FROM PRISON

By: Dr. Rafael Alalu, Psy.D., Prison Reform Advocate

It's been many years since dad left home for a prison to pay his debt to society. He left behind a comfortable large-size bed which he shared with his wife, and where his kids would come in and play hide and seek, for a thin used mattress that often produced severe backaches. Family dinners were replaced by sharing unidentifiable mystery meat at the chow hall with a hundred or so men who are complete strangers. Instead of reading stories to put his children to sleep, he would silently cry himself to sleep, avoiding others perceiving his weakness. Holidays, birthdays, graduation, and other special occasions were only a part of his imagination, not reality. After all, dad went to prison, not a resort.

That's all in the past now. Dad is finally coming home. He is a returning citizen who has no idea what to expect when he walks in through the door. He's welcomed home by familiar faces including family, friends, neighbors, and community people. However, everything he remembers has changed. His kids are grown up, his wife has become more independent, and even the neighborhood has changed. The cost of living has significantly increased, technology has advanced, and with no job or skills, dad feels frozen in time.

All of the above are real-life challenges that people face every day when they return home. It is incumbent upon society to initiate an honest conversation and programs geared towards having returning citizens better prepared to reintegrate into society. This would reduce the rate of recidivism while giving family's a better chance of success. The debt has been paid, it's time to move on.

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JANUARY 23rd 2022

FAMILY FUN SUNDAY WITH THE LITTLE LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION

This month, Silent Victims of Crime joined Big Brothers Big Sisters of Miami, Motivational Edge, and MDPD Youth Outreach Unit to celebrate the 12th birthday of LLF. It was a Sunday of fun for the whole family with a variety of dancing, fitness, and wellness activities to participate in. The children were able to decorate their own mini birthday cakes to take home, topping them with different sprinkles and icing. There were lots of art activities! The children were able to create positive affirmation canvases, paint self-portraits, make vision board collages, get creative with flower art, and help with a spray painted mural. Midia held a mediation session for all the children, helping them to learn how to calm themselves and enjoy stillness. Outside, there was an obstacle course race, games of soccer and basketball, fun workouts, and lots of music to dance to. The children and families enjoyed sandwiches, pizza and cupcakes that were donated by all the agencies involved. Everyone received shirts to wear and take home from the event. The children had an incredible day of fun, it truly couldn't have been more successful!



February 13th 2022

BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT

SVC had a Drum and Music Circle Event for Black History Month at Motivational Edge. The children were taught about the importance of heritage and took part in a range of fun activities that Staff and volunteers had set up for the day. As always, we started our event with our chant led by Wes. The children then took turns creating beats and rhythms with the drums and after had the opportunity to learn how to make chocolate with Alejandra. She taught them through each step of the process and helped pour their chocolates into molds to set. We later had some outdoor activities planned for the children that had to be altered due to the rain that day, instead, the children created Valentine's Day paintings for someone they loved. Later, everyone enjoyed a meal together and we celebrated all the children with February birthdays. Last, but not least, to wrap up the day Midia led a mediation session to teach the children self-calming techniques.



DONATION OF HAND SANITIZING SUPPLIES & CLOTHING TO MDCPS



Silent Victims of Crime and the Inmate Literacy Foundation have been collaborating to donate much needed hand sanitizing supplies and clothing to Miami Dade County Public Schools. Over one hundred and ninety gallons of medical grade hand sanitizer and over five hundred dispensing stations were donated to the school system, allowing them to distribute supplies around the county and to approximately twenty four schools thus far. We look forward to continuing to work with Miami County Public Schools and with the Inmate Literacy Foundation to help our families and the students of Miami Dade.

February 19th 2022

FAMILY CELEBRATION AT GOLDEN CORRAL

Three Generations of SVC families join to celebrate our success in South Carolina

We threw an event in South Carolina for all our families in our Duke Endowment food delivery program. We had the event at The Golden Corral a popular all you-can-eat buffet and grill. Tinkerbell flew up north for the event, excited to get together with the families since the new year passed. Some of the families have been in SVC's South Carolina programs since 2002, back when Silent Victims of Crime was known as We Stand For Kids. Tinkerbell and her husband have known some of these families for many years now and have watched the children grow up and even have their own children who have joined our programs in South Carolina today.

The event was thrown in honor of our two project lead coordinators, **Ellie** and **Kayla**, to thank them for their hard work and dedication to this program. Everyone had a marvelous time together, getting the chance to mingle and eat some good food. We had a raffle with lots of prizes to give out to the children. The most exciting moment of the night was the announcement of our biggest giveaway of the night: a week-long trip to Orlando with tickets to DisneyWorld. Everyone was incredibly nervous and energized to see who had won. One of the children from the Glenn family held the lucky ticket and was so ecstatic when she heard her number called. This trip is an amazing experience for these families who very rarely ever get the chance to go on vacation, which made us all the more proud to offer this trip.



February 27th 2022

THE VAN GOGH EXPERIENCE

This event was an absolute hit with our families, staff and volunteers! The children were so excited and mesmerized by the beauty of Van Gogh's masterpieces. The staff from Exhibition Hub were so wonderful and incredibly helpful. We were first directed to a room where the children could create their own artwork, it even included a scanner for the children to use to project their finished artwork into the walls. Gift cards were given out to all the children with birthdays for the month, as well as to some of the children who worked the hardest on their artwork! Next, everyone got to sit and relax while experiencing a light and sound spectacular of Van Gogh's artwork. One of our children, a little 3 year old boy, had trouble saying Van Gogh and walked around the whole day adorably practicing by saying "Van.... go!".



GOFUNDME SUCCESS FOR THE SUTTON FAMILY

Earlier this year SVC raised money via GoFundMe for one of its dearest families that have been a part of the SVC's programs since 2015. There are nine children in this family who are being raised by their grandmother.

One of the eldest children was accepted into a college in Georgia, and the family made the move up there to support her. They have been struggling to establish steady income and reached out to SVC to see if we could help with collecting warm clothing, electronics, bedding and other necessities. We successfully raised enough funds to help them get on their feet and help them through the colder months.

Our founder and executive director, Tinkerbell, says "We've never given up on this family, they've been with us for seven years now and they've been homeless twice while they've been with us. After they moved up to Georgia, we knew we had to do whatever we could to keep assisting them. No matter what, we don't give up on our families and while they become independent we're always here if they need us".





MY INTRO TO SVC

By: Tashel Samuel

As a recent graduate of Florida International University, like many students, I initially was faced with figuring out what I wanted to do next. I decided to take a year off to experience life, volunteer, and work as I prepared to attend law school the following year. Upon looking for a position, I came across a job posting on Handshake for Silent Victims of Crime, which has been working with children of incarcerated parents for 26 years. I applied for the position but, unfortunately, another individual had already been hired. Nevertheless, that did not prevent me from still getting involved. I began to volunteer twice a week and grew to love the organization. Volunteering at SVC has opened my eyes to a key issue within our community regarding parental incarceration.

As of 2014, the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated has reported that nearly 1 in 28 children have an incarcerated parent. In total, that is nearly 2.7 million children nationwide who have fallen victim to the detrimental effects incarceration has on a household. Miami Dade alone has approximately 15,000 children who suffer from this ordeal. Studies have shown that children with incarcerated parents are six times more likely to go to prison opposed to those whose parents have not been convicted of a crime.

Parental incarceration has caused a strain on relationships and the mental well-being of children and their families nationwide. “Few studies have explored the impact of parental incarceration on young children or identified the needs that arise from such circumstances” (Travis et al., 2006) even though it continues to be a growing issue. Silent Victims of Crime caters to those who suffer from this life-changing ordeal and provides children of incarcerated parents with resources that range from emotional support, positive mentorship, impactful life skills and lessons through events, and an opportunity to build supportive lifelong relationships.

After experiencing a drastic change such as losing a parent, whether they may be deceased or incarcerated, children are not only faced with having to cope with their loss but are often challenged with now having to bear more responsibilities to assist their caregiver. Sometimes, children are even faced with the effects of being displaced and homelessness. “At least 9,000 students in Miami-Dade County alone are homeless or considered unstably housed” (Quintana, 2018). Silent Victims of Crime and the National Association for Children with Incarcerated Parents (NACIP) advocate for the best interest of the children and are working to ensure that upon initial arrest the needs of the children are adhered to. Advocacy has played a key role in facilitating the organization’s key mission to assist children of inmates by enhancing their ability to improve their economy, providing educational and personal stability, and addressing behavioral, social, and mental challenges.

References

Quintana, A. (2018, November 23). Miami-Dade’s Homeless Student Population Is Growing, And 2017’s Hurricanes Didn’t Help. WLRN. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from https://www.wlrn.org/news/2018-11-23/miami-dades-homeless-student-population-is-growing-and-2017s-hurricanes-didnt-help?_amp=true



SOUTH BEACH VACATION

At the end of last year at one of our events, several of our families won a three night stay in an Airbnb in South Beach. It was an incredible opportunity for some of our families to get away and relax in a luxurious condo in the heart of Miami Beach. The condo has direct beach access, with beach chairs, an umbrella, and a pool for the whole family to enjoy. One of our families, the Collie's, went last month and said "it was mind blowing, so beautiful... it was exactly what I needed". We also gifted one of our most devoted volunteers, Barbara, a few nights at the Airbnb as a token of our appreciation, she'll get to enjoy her time there in the coming weeks!



27th March 2022

GREEN ARCHITECTURE

The children loved this event! They were able to create their own cities, inventions or monuments using recycled materials. We had two architects, Roberta Feldman and Mayra Verdezoto, come to speak to the children about their jobs and about all the possibilities of work in the field of architecture. The children poured their creative energies into building their pieces, one group created a NASA gas station, while another created a homeless shelter and rehabilitation center. We had a birthday celebration as always, with gift cards, goodies, and balloons given out to all children with birthdays. There were extra prizes to go around, as well as a gift card for the team with the most creative architectural piece. Afterwards, the children had some free time outside where they played basketball and football with Wes. D.J. Dimelo 305 came out to join us and play some cool music for kids while they played.

WRAPPING UP OUR SOUTH CAROLINA DUKE FOOD PROGRAM

We are sad to see our food program in South Carolina come to a close, knowing how much of a difference these groceries made to families. This six month program was supported by a grant funded by Duke Endowment, allowing us to provide weekly food deliveries to 24 families. We are currently looking for further grants to help support children in families with incarcerated family members and at creating other programs in South Carolina.

This program served a greater purpose than solely providing groceries to these families and getting much needed food on their tables. It also gave us the opportunity to form relationships with them and to be a contact in their support network. We connected with caregivers every week, getting to know their day to day lives, as well as their worries and their struggles concerning the children in their care and their daily experiences. While the program may be at its end, our connection to these families is not, which only makes us more dedicated to working towards what else we can do to strengthen these families and brighten their children's future outcomes.



Our Project Leads with some of our families

A few words from one of our SC Project Leads:

"I am so thankful for being a part of Silent Victims of Crime. The food program was an outstanding program and was coordinated so well. I looked forward to receiving my food each week, it provided more than a little bit of help for my family. Working for the program also gave me different insight on how to look and grow in a positive and healthier direction. Everyone works together to make SVC the most helpful program there is. Thank you." – Kayla Baumann and family

SPOTLIGHT

WALLS TO BRIDGES

It is important to recognize the work that other organizations are making around the US. Walls to Bridges project sprung up during the pandemic in response to the frustrating lack of communication inmates had with their families during the pandemic due to closed visiting rooms policies. They are working to keep impacted families together by mailing children a book "from" their incarcerated family members. The project operates in California and is open to all incarcerated persons in California's jails and prisons. Currently, over 1,000 books have been sent out to children across the state.



photos from @wallstobridgesproject



WE STAND FOR KIDS



Silent Victims Of Crime

The Children of Incarcerated Parents



DONATE OR VOLUNTEER

None of this work is possible without the donations of our supporters and the work of our volunteers. All contributions are deeply appreciated and help us to reach more children of incarcerated parents, one of the most underserved and overlooked populations in our communities.

Find information on how to donate to us through PayPal on our site.

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