



WOMEN MOVING FORWARD

A COLLABORATIVE RE-ENTRY PROGRAM FOR WOMEN AT THE
MARYLAND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Danielle Lueking 410-339-5011
Deputy Public Information Officer
MD Dept. of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Maryland's 2nd Annual Comprehensive Re-Entry Conference for Female Inmates

On Saturday, October 24, 2009, the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW) held a unique re-entry conference for over 150 women scheduled for release from MCIW within the coming year. The "Women Moving Forward" pre-release conference was initiated by the National Association of Women Judges, (NAWJ), the nation's leading voice for women jurists dedicated to ensuring equal justice and access to the courts for women, minorities and other historically disfavored groups

Keynote speaker Angela T. Jackson is a Behavioral Health Specialist with LIGHT, Health & Wellness Comprehensive Services, Inc. of Baltimore, which provides information, guidance and treatment for communities impacted by HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, mental illness, poverty and other societal issues.

Participants had the opportunity to attend several workshops on topics such as job retention, money management, family reunification and mediation, substance and mental health resources, educational opportunities and legal issues post-release. In addition, women met with potential employers and resource providers from the community who addressed the many hurdles they will face upon release. The event concluded with a panel of ex-offenders who told the women about their struggles and successes.

"According to national statistics, over 50 % of female ex offenders will be re-arrested and close to 50% will return to prison for a new crime within three years of release. If we can reduce recidivism through provision of transition services, we will help not only these women, but their children and our communities. Preparation is essential for facilitating successful transitions into the community after incarceration," stated Judge Susan Gauvey, a Co-Chair of the conference. "Knowing the challenges that could arise, where to go for assistance and how to successfully enter the workforce upon release will enhance the participants' confidence and support their efforts to turn their lives around."

MCIW houses over 800 women and is the only female prison within the Maryland Division of Correction (DOC). With so many offenders returning to society each year, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and DOC are dedicated to providing transitional preparation. Programming is provided on a regular basis for offenders in the area of job readiness, re-entry and family maintenance with the help of employees, volunteers and community organizations. To address the most pressing issues faced by the female population, the committee, headed by MCIW's Warden Carroll Parrish and NAWJ, included others in the field such as Alternative Directions, Inc., Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, Marian House, the Maryland Commission for Women, the Maryland Women's Bar Association, the Maryland Women's Law Center and the National Women's Prison Project.

"This conference would not be possible without the generous support of Correct RX Pharmacy Services, The Hoffberger Foundation, Wal-Mart Stores, The National Association of Women Judges-District 4, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and the Maryland Women's Bar Association. The event aims not only to benefit the women personally, but to bolster the community as a whole, through family support and greater public safety," stated Carolyn Mattingly, Co-Chair of the conference.