



MEDIA RELEASE

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St. Mary's County Detention Center Inmate Program – Guiding Good Choices

Guiding Good Choices is a progressive inmate program offered by the St. Mary's County Detention Center. The program is a substance abuse prevention agenda which teaches parents of children the skills necessary to improve family communication and enhance family bonding. The goal of the program is to prevent substance abuse among young people by teaching their parents effective communication and family management skills before their children enter adolescence.

The program at the St. Mary's County Detention Center is facilitated by Walt Biscoe, Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator, and Barbara Zeigler, a Walden Sierra Behavior Health Addiction Counselor. Inmates are taught universal life, effective communication and anger management skills. Bonding among family members is a critical aspect of the program. Children who bond in a positive manner to their peers, family, school and community are less likely to engage in negative behaviors or succumb to peer pressure. Family meetings with open and honest communication among all family members, including the children are a must.

Program participant Josh Coleman, 25, of La Plata, Maryland, stated "family meetings are very important because they get everyone involved. At first the meetings are a little awkward, but once everyone starts expressing their feelings in a positive manner, everyone relaxes and gets involved."

Several inmates at the detention center are participating in the program, with three recently completing the program and earning certificates. The program runs two hours a day, one day a week for five weeks and is funded through a State of Maryland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration grant.



Barbara Zeigler, Michael Gianino, Eric Robinson, Marvin Chase, Walt Biscoe and Captain Michael Merican