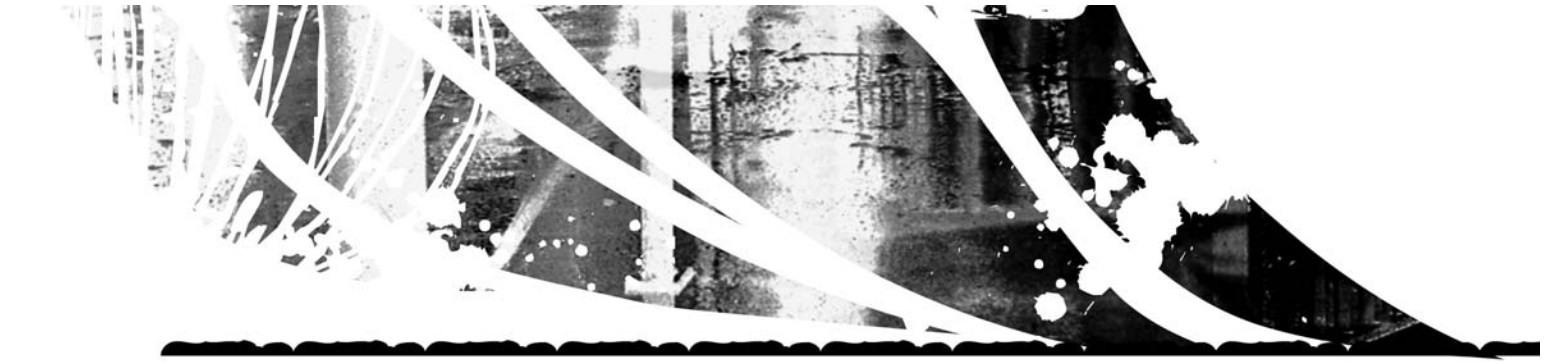
PROJECT WHAT!

# RESOURCE GUIDE

## for Teens with a Parent in Prison or Jail

**2nd edition, May 2008**



# RESOURCE GUIDE

## for Teens with a Parent in Prison or Jail

### Who are we and why do we care?

We are a group of teenagers and young adults from different parts of the San Francisco Bay Area. We go to different schools and like doing different things for fun. We have faced different struggles and had different successes in our lives. One thing we have in common is that all of us have had a parent incarcerated at some point in our lives. Some of our parents were locked up when we were younger; some have been in and out of jail most of our lives and still are.

### Why did we create this guide?

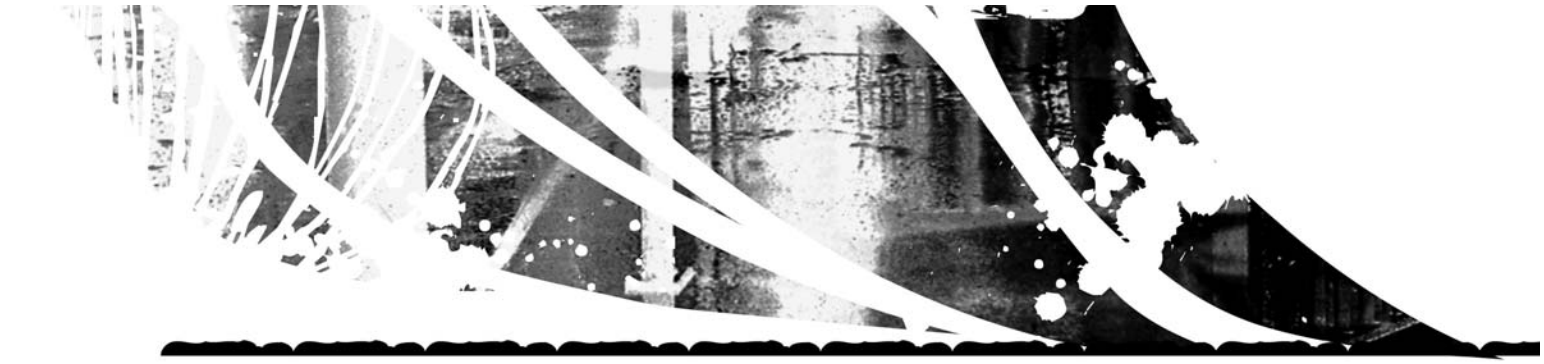
We made this guide because we've all had to live with at least one parent being locked up and know it's not easy to deal with. We want to express the voices of youth who are often silenced. Most importantly, we want to make sure you know that there are resources to help you deal with the stress and problems you're probably facing. As teenagers who have all had one or both of our parents locked up, we believe you can get through this. Lots of other young people have parents in jail or prison. In 2004, the U.S. government estimated that 2.4 million children across the nation had a parent in prison or jail. More than seven million children have a parent under the supervision of the criminal justice system (a parent who is incarcerated, on probation, or on parole). This guide will give you some idea of the different things we've gone through, how you can visit or stay in touch with your parent if you want to, and where you can find help.

You might not want to ask anyone for help. You might be used to surviving on your own, or worried that other people will judge you if they find out your mom or dad is incarcerated. Maybe there's just not anyone you trust. In any case, this guide gives you ideas and places to find help without anyone judging you or having to know your personal business. So, while this resource guide isn't a fix-all, it just might have something that will help.

Since we're from the Bay Area, many of the resources in this guide are specifically for teens in the Bay Area or California. Even if you don't live in the Bay Area, we hope the stories and information will be useful, or will inspire you to create your own guide to help youth of incarcerated parents wherever you live.

### Our Stories

The stories in this guide were written by Project WHAT! members describing our individual experiences with parental incarceration. Each of the stories captures a particular aspect of our experience, but doesn't necessarily share our current emotions or the entire story of our perspective as children of incarcerated parents.



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## How the guide is organized

Each section lists organizations that are related to answering the questions in that section. Many organizations provide multiple services for youth. The first time we list an organization, we give a full description of the services provided. After an organization appears for the first time, we only include its name and the page number where it first appears. Entries are separated into East Bay and San Francisco, then listed alphabetically. There are a few organizations listed under "Bay Area Wide" because they have multiple locations. You can also check the index to find an organization quickly.

**Remember that organizations often change their hours or the services they provide. It's always best to call first and check on services and hours in case information has changed.**



## Feedback

**Help us make the Resource Guide better! Please send us any suggestions you have. It will especially help us if you address the following questions:**

1. How did the information in the guide help you?
2. What was the most useful information to you and why?
3. Is there anything missing?
4. Was the guide easy to use? If not, what made it hard?
5. Do you have any other suggestions for ways we can improve the guide?

Send your feedback to us any way you can—by email, fax, or snail mail. Please include your name, age, and contact information so if we have questions, we can contact you. Our email is: **projectwhat@gmail.com**, fax: **510-649-8239** or mail to **1605 Bonita Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709**.

**We give a special thanks to Ellen Walker and the Zellerbach Family Foundation for making Project WHAT! possible through their generous funding since 2005.**

SECTION 1

# Where Am I Gonna Stay?

# Where Am I Gonna Stay? (and Other Basic Needs)

If you need help, you shouldn't be ashamed to ask for it. If you were living with a parent who was arrested, one of the first problems you might have to solve is where you're going to stay. In this section, you'll find organizations in the Bay Area that can help you meet basic needs like housing, food, and clothing while a parent is in jail. We answer some basic questions about public agencies like the foster care system, CalWORKS, and CPS, because it's useful to know what these agencies do in case you need to use them or they come into your life uninvited. De'Mel's story gives you an idea of what he went through to find a place to live and take care of his lil' bro when he was fifteen and his father got locked up. Kashka's story talks about how she felt living with her aunt after her mother went to jail.

### Question 1:
**My parent just got locked up and I need food, clothes, or a place to stay. What should I do?**

Many children live with family members or friends when the parent they were living with gets locked up. Sometimes the arrangement is informal (you're just staying there), and at other times, an adult relative or friend becomes your legal guardian. If someone (like the police or a neighbor) calls Child Protective Services (CPS) after your parent is arrested, CPS will probably place you into emergency shelter while they try to locate relatives or arrange for a more permanent place for you to live.

If you don't have anywhere to go—and no one you can trust to call and ask for help—you can call or go to an emergency youth shelter on your own. **If you have young brothers or sisters, it is important for their safety that you get help**—hopefully there is someone you trust to call. You can always call a youth hotline if you want to talk out your situation with someone. See the hotlines and organizations below for help with finding emergency housing.

If you end up living with an adult who is abusing you physically, sexually, or emotionally, tell an adult you trust who can help you get into a safe living situation, or call the child abuse hotline CPS at 1-800-856-5553. This number is available twenty-four hours a day. **Before you call CPS, read Question 3 for more information so you understand what CPS is supposed to do and what could happen after you make the call.**

Even if you have a roof over your head, you might still need food and clothes. Many emergency shelters



## MY STORY

### What Made Me Feel I Wasn't a Kid Anymore

By De'Mel Bullock

What made me feel I wasn't a kid anymore? It wasn't turning eighteen. It happened earlier, the year after I got kicked out my grandma's house, when I was fifteen.

I was living with my dad for the first time since my early single digit years, four or five years old. It felt different, because I always got to visit him growing up, but I hadn't lived with him since I was too young too remember. I was happy to live with him again, for real—happier than a little kid riding his new bike on Christmas morning. I was happy not to have to go visit him in jail, happy not to have to feel sad anymore if my dad said he

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provide food and clothes. Organizations such as churches, community centers, and YMCAs sometimes provide food and clothes, even if they don't have a place for you to sleep. Different places have different hours and services, so if you can, call before you go.

## Hotlines

**Runaway Hotline:** 1-800-448-3000. If you are running away from home, a group home, or anywhere else, call twenty-four hours a day to get information about shelters, counseling, bus tickets, or help going back home. Trained counselors can offer advice to help you right now.

**National Runaway Switchboard:** 1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929) or www.1800runaway.org. Call if you're a teenager thinking of running away from home, if you have a friend who has run away and is looking for help, or if you are a runaway ready to go home. Their twenty-four hour crisis line is anonymous, confidential, and free.

**YouthLINE:** (415) 977-6949, 1-888-977-3399, or www.youthline.org. YouthLINE gives youth, parents, and caregivers one number to call for information about children and youth services and programs throughout the Bay Area. The free, confidential phone line is open every day (inclu-ding holidays) from NOON to 10 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. The phones are answered by youth between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.

## East Bay Resources for Food, Clothing, and Shelter

**A Safe Place** (this shelter is specifically for battered women and their children)
Hotline: (510) 536-7233
www.asafeplacedvs.org
A Safe Place offers a comprehensive program that provides both shelter and professional supportive services to victims of domestic violence. The shelter has twenty beds with individual living space. The Emergency Shelter Program provides up to 8 weeks of shelter and therapeutic environment for women and their children. An interim motel program is also available to provide emergency accommodations until space is available. The 24-hour crisis and shelter referral and information line handles nearly 3,000 calls each year.

**Berkeley Food & Housing Project**
Trinity Church Building
2362 Bancroft Way
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 649-4965 ext. 302 (meal program)
(510) 649-4976 (multi-service center)
www.bfhp.org
Neighborhood: Downtown Berkeley
The Trinity Church building houses the Quarter Meal Program (the meal used to cost a quarter) and Multi-Service Center (MSC) of the Berkeley Food & Housing Project. The MSC is a daytime drop-in and services program for homeless and low-income Berkeley residents. In addition to providing respite and hospitality, the MSC staff provides information and referral, resource counseling, supportive housing, and case management. Sit-down meals are served Mondays through Wednesdays in a welcoming,

## What Made Me Feel I Wasn't a Kid Anymore

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was coming to pick up me and my little brother and didn't show, happy just knowing I would be able to enjoy my dad's presence at any time of the day or night.

But as time passed, as many youngsters do, I found my way in and out of trouble—nothing big, but big enough. So after a few months went by, either Pops or myself got taller or maybe one of us shrank—point is, we stopped seeing eye to eye. To this day, I really don't even know why. Maybe we hadn't had time to get to know, like *really* get to know each other, or maybe we were just too much alike. But I'm assuming you know how it works: my house, my rules, you don't like it, I'm changing the locks, so do it moving, no looking back or making stops. I wasn't given the choice to like it or not. Just the simple get your shit and get out.

So there it was around three in the morning and I'm walking down the street with a bag that weighs more than my little brother, flipping through phone contacts, mind racing 200 mph, trying to find somewhere to go. Now a few more months passed. I'm on my own, well, living with a friend, barely sleeping, showering here, some clothes there. Just trying to make the best out of a bad situation.

Then one day I get this phone call from my auntie. "Go to the house and get your little brother so them people don't take him. They takin' your dad to jail."

*What? What happened?* "I'm on my way," and doing a hundred on my five

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cafeteria-style, dining venue. A take-out, brown bag dinner is available on Thursdays and Fridays.

### Covenant House

2781 Telegraph Ave. at 28th
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 625-7800
www.covenanthouseca.org
Neighborhood: Downtown Oakland
Covenant House serves runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth, providing housing, crisis intervention, mental health, case management, education, youth development, tutoring, and vocational training. The Crisis Shelter provides safe housing, food, clothing, case management, counseling, medical care, and other supportive services to assist homeless, at-risk youth in resolving their crisis situations. Once taken into the shelter, each youth is assigned a case manager with whom they develop a service plan based on the individual's needs and short- and long-term goals. At the service center they have showers. **This program operates twenty-four hours daily throughout the year.**

### DreamCatcher

422 Jefferson St. at 5th
Oakland, CA 94607
1-800-379-1114 or (510) 522-8363
www.alamedafs.org
Neighborhood: Downtown Oakland
DreamCatcher has an emergency shelter and a support center. Youth between the ages of thirteen and seventeen (or eighteen if enrolled in school) may stay in the shelter. Youth may only stay twenty-four hours if they are in the foster care or probation systems. DreamCatcher cannot take pregnant teens who are more than six months pregnant. **The shelter hours are 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. Monday through Friday and 7 p.m. to 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday.** The support center is for youth ages thirteen to nineteen, and provides lunch and dinner, laundry, case management/crisis counseling, health education workshops, health clinic, HIV and STD testing and counseling, contraceptives, academic tutoring, computer training, job skills training, art and recreation activities, peer support, hygiene supplies, family mediation, outreach, transportation/bus passes, and a safe place for youth to learn, relax, create, and make connections. **The support center hours are 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays. Call (510) 839-1559 to reach the support center.** All services are free of charge and voluntary.

### George P. Scotlan Center

1651 Adeline St.
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 832-4544
Neighborhood: West Oakland
George P. Scotlan Center serves youth ages eight to eighteen, provid-

## What Made Me Feel I Wasn't a Kid Anymore

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point toes, I felt like my world was coming to an end. That the weight on my back could get even heavier. *Is this really happening?* I kept thinking, until I got there, and true enough, my dad was going to jail.

Looking for my little brother, I must have looked like a suspect. "What you doing here?" "Who are you?" "How old are you?" "Is he going to live with you?" "Where?" Question after question from the police—as if just seeing the police in my dad's house wasn't bad enough. I couldn't tell them I was only eighteen, didn't have a home of my own—the whole thing became even scarier. My dad was going to jail, and I watch Court TV—isn't lying to the police a crime in itself? But with bottom lip trembling and legs shaking, I got through it and ended up convincing them I was legit. Or maybe they really didn't even care and just had to say they asked.

The world seemed to spin a little faster, as everything was now on me: school clothes, rent, food, "I wanna go here," "I wanna go there." All on me. Taking care of a kid when most older people still called me a baby. I'd rather not go into details about how I pulled it off, and yeah, there were people I could have turned to for help, but they weren't there when we were babies and really needed them, so I figured we didn't need them now. So with my I'll-Do-It-Myself, I-Don't-Need-Anyone, We-All-We-Got attitude, and most importantly the hedge of protection that I know God placed upon us, we got situated in an apartment and got through the next few months.

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ing housing, food and clothing, outreach, education, mental health, medical care, case management, STD screening, HIV testing, HIV/STD prevention, family planning, substance use services, crisis intervention, youth development, and tutoring.

## San Francisco Resources for Food, Clothing, and Shelter

### Girls 2000

763 Jerrold Ave. at Earl
San Francisco, CA 94124
(415) 824-3225
Neighborhood: Bayview
Girls 2000 provides outreach, education, mental health services, case management, STD screening, HIV/STD prevention, family planning, pregnancy-related services, substance use services, crisis intervention, housing, food, clothing, youth development, tutoring, vocational training, and sports programs.

### Huckleberry Youth Services at Cole Street Clinic

555 Cole St. at Haight
San Francisco, CA 94117
(415) 386-9398
www.huckleberryyouth.org
Neighborhood: Haight Ashbury
Huckleberry Youth Programs serves homeless, runaway, and other at-risk youth at Huckleberry House and Nine Grove Lane (in Marin). Other services include outreach, education, mental health, medical care, case management, STD screening, HIV testing, HIV/STD prevention, family planning, pregnancy-related services, emergency housing, crisis intervention, youth development, and tutoring.

### Huckleberry House

1292 Page St.
San Francisco, CA 94117
(415) 621-2929 or 1-800-735-2929 (TTY)
Neighborhood: Haight Ashbury
Huckleberry House offers continuous twenty-four-hour crisis services and an emergency shelter for youth. Huckleberry House is the oldest program for runaway and homeless youth in the country. Call before you come in if possible. They work with youth ages 11 through 17. It also provides a wide range of mental health services, including crisis counseling, family mediation, and counseling for individuals, families and parents.

### Larkin Street Youth Services Drop-In Center

1142 Sutter St. (between Larkin and Polk)
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 673-0911 ext. 252 or (800) 669-6196
www.larkinstreetyouth.org
Neighborhood: Tenderloin
Larkin Street Youth Services Drop-In Center mainly serves youth nineteen and under, providing meals, showers, clothing, laundry, and case management. They have outings, groups for men and women, and groups for people dealing with substance abuse and HIV. **Hours for youth ages nineteen and under are**

## What Made Me Feel I Wasn't a Kid Anymore

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Then, as the neighbors started to get nosier than they already were, and started to run they mouth, the building manager started to investigate, and faking the grown-ups-would-be-home-shortly was getting tiresome. Have you ever had a feeling someone was watching you? It's a cold feeling. Now here that manager go with the question and answer game: "How old are you?" "Who all lives here?" Enough said, it was time to find another place to reside.

With my back against the ropes, I was still fighting my inner self, trying to avoid asking anyone for anything, for the simple fact that it always seems to get thrown back in my face at some point. I don't like to hear "I did this for you, I did that for you" down the line. And I don't like to owe anybody anything. Asking for help has always been one of the hardest things for me to do. But with a thirty-day notice on our door, and a slim chance of getting a new one when I wasn't eighteen yet, what could I do now? Flipping through phone contacts once again, I finally thought to call my big sister. She had actually insisted on helping with everything from the beginning, but I had always told her we was cool, we didn't need nothing and everything was fine, even if it wasn't. My grandma had always said a closed mouth don't get fed, but hey, we was eating. Still, looking back now, asking my sister for help seems as simple as the scripture, "Ask and you shall receive."

So, the fog started to clear, and it began looking a little better for the home team. We had a new apartment,

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**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.** Youth ages twenty-four and under can come every Thursday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**Diamond Youth Shelter (part of Larkin Street Youth Services)**
536 Central Avenue (between Hayes and Grove)
(415) 567-1020 or 1-800-887-1020
Neighborhood: Tenderloin
Diamond Youth Shelter is an emergency overnight shelter for youth ages 12 to 17 that provides meals, showers, and groups. **Diamond opens at 8 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. On Wednesday, it opens at 6 p.m. and on Sunday it opens at 4 p.m.**

**Lark-Inn for Youth (part of Larkin Street Youth Services)**
869 Ellis St. (between Van Ness and Polk)
(415) 749-2968 or 1-800-447-8223
Neighborhood: Tenderloin
Lark-Inn is an emergency shelter for youth ages eighteen to twenty-four, providing case management, groups, meals, showers, and laundry. **You must be at the shelter at 9:45 p.m. for a bed.**

## Question 2:
## My parent got arrested and I'm living with a relative or family friend. Can my caregiver get any money for taking care of me?

CalWORKs or AFDC-FC may be available for youth who live with relatives or other caregivers (like an adult neighbor or family friend). The programs differ in important ways, so read on for details.

### One option: CalWORKs
Qualified adult relatives can receive public assistance for supporting you, regardless of their income level, under CalWORKs (California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids). Qualified relatives who are financially needy may also be eligible for CalWORKs to cover their own needs. Qualified relatives under CalWORKs include mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, first cousins, nieces, nephews, sisters, brothers, or any of the above if half-related, a grand, a great-grand, a great-great-grand, an adopted, step, or spouse of any of the above.

An unrelated adult must become your legal guardian in order to receive benefits for you through CalWORKs. Your legal guardian is also entitled to enroll you in Medi-Cal. See Question 4 for more information about legal guardianship.

### How to apply for CalWORKs
Relatives may apply for assistance on your behalf with or without legal guardianship. They must be able to show that they are a relative (birth certificate, adop-

## What Made Me Feel I Wasn't a Kid Anymore
Continued from page10

which meant a new beginning. A couple months later, my dad got out. No hard feelings—I love him, and he'll always be my dad.

It was time to move forward with life. I went to Job Corps looking to get a trade and finish up school. But soon, I found my way back into some trouble. No wait, trouble found me. Like really knocked on my door one night. But I'm not one to point the finger— I take responsibility for my actions.

So there I was in jail, on the other side of the glass, in the shoes my dad once wore, given nothing but time to think about my life, what I wanted to happen in it, my little brother, and who he might become if he didn't have anyone but the deceased rapper Mac Dre (RIP) to look up to. I thought about the past year, and what I needed to do to make things better. How things that you simply take for granted can be taken from you, and then you have to fend for yourself. I learned to accept the fact that I do and will need people's help at certain points. I even produced some patience.

So yeah, if anyone was to ask me, I believe what you go through in life makes you who you are. Through it all I got to see my reflection without a mirror and tell myself, step it up and get it together 'cause the world don't see you as a kid anymore.

So here I am today, sharing my story with you all. I'm now twenty years old, going to Laney College in Oakland, California, and working with Project WHAT! to build a

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tion papers, or marriage license are sufficient to demonstrate relations). **Always call before you go to make sure you have the correct documents, address, and hours.**

In **San Francisco**, go to the Department of Human Services at 170 Otis Street, 1st floor reception area or call (415) 557-5723. Hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. (101 Grove Street in San Francisco can help you to locate birth certificates).

In **Alameda**, visit any of the following Alameda County Social Services Agencies. Hours for all offices are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
North County Multi-Service Center: 2000 San Pablo Ave. in Oakland or call (510) 891-0700
Eastmont Self-Sufficiency Center: 6955 Foothill Blvd., Suite 100 in Oakland or call (510) 383-5300
Fremont Outstation: 39155 Liberty St., Suite 330 in Fremont or call (510) 795-2428
Eden Area Multi-Service Center: 24100 Amador St. in Hayward or call (510) 670-6000
Livermore Outstation: 3311 Pacific Ave in Livermore or call (925) 455-0747

In **Contra Costa**, there are four CalWORKs offices. Contact the office to set up an appointment. Hours for all locations are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to noon and 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.
1305 Macdonald Avenue in Richmond or call (510) 412-3000
30 Muir Road in Martinez or call (925) 313-7987
4545 Delta Fair Boulevard in Antioch or call (925) 706-4980
151 Linus Pauling Drive in Hercules or call (510) 262-7700

### Another option: AFDC-FC

AFDC-FC provides payments for youth who are in foster care. This includes youth 1) who are adjudicated dependent by the juvenile court, 2) for whom the parent and the county have entered into a voluntary placement agreement, and 3) youth who are living with a nonrelated legal guardian (i.e., a foster parent) appointed by the probate court. (Note: A relative who is financially needy and caring for a youth who receives AFDC-FC may qualify for CalWORKs to cover his or her own needs).

### The difference between CalWORKs and AFDC-FC

AFDC-FC benefits are significantly more money than CalWORKs benefits. In addition, if you have siblings, each child gets his/her own AFDC-FC grant, as opposed to CalWORKs, which doesn't increase per child. Finally, you also get other supportive services with AFDC-FC like Independent Living Program Services, transitional Medi-Cal (if you are in foster care on your 18th birthday, you get full scope Medi-Cal with no share of cost and no income/resource requirements until the age of 21). So, for many reasons, it may be important to consider AFDC-FC—even though this means you will have to formally enter the foster care system. If you go this route, there will be home visits, court dates, and other involvement by the county. On the other hand, if the child welfare system has no prior involvement in your life, it may not be in your best interests to voluntarily get involved with the foster care system or dependency court. Which option is best for you totally depends on your personal situation, needs, and preferences.

### More about Voluntary Placement Agreements

If your parent has only a "short" sentence (under one year), and the plan is for you to live with her or him again upon release from jail, your parent can agree with the county agency to temporarily place you into foster care (relative or non relative) through a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA). While the VPA is in place, the person that is caring for you may receive AFDC-FC benefits on your behalf as a foster parent. VPAs are limited to six months (but can be extended for an additional six months), and during the time that the VPA is in effect, your parent is entitled to receive family reunification services. Be-



## MY STORY

### What Made Me Feel I Wasn't a Kid Anymore | Continued from page 11

training curriculum for teachers and social workers, hoping to better the lives of others who have dealt with their parents being incarcerated. Still dealing with some of my old ways of thinking. Like, when school started I didn't have enough money to pay for the books I needed for my business and real estate classes, and I really didn't want to ask my dad for help. I was telling my brother, "I think I'm going to quit school because I don't have enough money." Then the next day, my dad gave me the money for my books and told me I didn't owe him anything and just to pay him back with success. I plan to repay that debt, plus interest. You will be hearing from me.

fore the expiration of the six months, the county has to act to: (1) return you to your parent, (2) formally place you in foster care, (3) relinquish you for adoption, or (4) extend the VPA for another six months. If the county does NOT do one of those things and you remain in your caregiver's home for more than six months, then they will lose the AFDC-FC benefits they had under the VPA.

**Important distinctions**

• Your relative can qualify for CalWORKs without involvement by the county child welfare agency and without court involvement. In other words, you don't have to go into the foster care system for your caregiver to get CalWORKs.

• However, your relative could potentially get AFDC-FC benefits if you are placed into foster care, which are significantly more than CalWORKs.

• VPAs are simply one way of qualifying for AFDC-FC. You become a ward of the court without an actual court hearing, because your parent voluntarily enters into an agreement with the county. VPAs are mainly only to be used if your parent is serving a short sentence or needs a little bit of time to get their life together in order to provide you with a more stable home and living environment.

Note: Portions of this answer were taken from "Legal Rights and Options for Runaway Teens", published by Legal Services for Children in August 2003. The Public Interest Law Project and the National Youth Law Center contributed information about Voluntary Placement Arrangements and AFDC-FC. We edited the information for our guide and it was reviewed for accuracy as of 2008.

**If you have additional questions about these topics, or you need free legal advice, contact LSC at (415) 863-3762. August 2003.**

## Question 3:
## What is CPS? Why would someone call CPS? What happens when CPS is called?

CPS stands for Child Protective Services. This division of The Human Services Agency investigates and protects children from physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, and neglect. Anyone, including you, can call your county's child abuse hotline to report suspected child abuse or neglect. We hope this information will help you understand more about CPS, mandated reporting, and how CPS might become involved in your life if your parent is arrested and/or incarcerated.

**Mandated reporters:** Some people are "mandated reporters." A mandated reporter is someone who is required by law to report to CPS any suspected neglect or child abuse that they know of. Common mandated reporters include: teachers and other employees of public schools, staff and administrators of public or private day camps or youth centers, foster parents, group home personnel, social workers, probation officers, parole officers, police, doctors, nurses, and people who develop film. There are other mandated reporters (this isn't the full list). **If you're not sure if someone is a mandated reporter, you can always ask them before you tell them details about your personal life.**

If you tell a mandated reporter that you are being neglected or abused, or say something to a mandated reporter that implies you are being neglected or abused, they are required by law



MY STORY

# Trapped Until Further Notice

by Kashka Washington

Balloons, cake and ice cream. Cookies and chips. Friends and family, laughing, playing, becoming a teenager. My mom and I always talked about how wonderful my thirteenth birthday party would be. But on the day I became a teenager I didn't get a party. Instead I got six packs of Now and Laters and a can of fifty-cent soda that I bought myself from the corner store. On my thirteenth birthday, my mom was in jail.

She left, went away, wasn't heard from, until I got the news. I thought, "Should I cry or just don't believe it?" I couldn't pretend she was on vacation because it wasn't true.

My brother and I had to move in with my Aunt Trinice, her husband, her three boys, and her only daughter.

"Welcome to your new home."

Um, hello, not exciting.

They were family, but they didn't feel like family. We had only met them two years before and didn't have a real relationship.

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to report this to CPS. This report is made not necessarily to get anyone in trouble, but for your safety and the safety of those around you. **You should be aware of their legal obligation, and make an informed decision about what to say or not say to mandated reporters.**

A mandated reporter that you meet with confidentially is required to tell you that "everything you talk about is confidential unless you mention any of the following three things: a) that you are going to hurt yourself, b) that you are going to hurt someone else, or c) that someone else is hurting you."

Here are a few scenarios in which someone might call CPS and report that they are concerned about you:

**1) When the police arrest your parent, if they believe there are children in the house who won't be able to take care of themselves.** In some places, like San Francisco, when the police arrest an adult, they are required to ask whether there are children living in the home. Even if the police don't call CPS, a neighbor, building manager, or anyone else who is concerned about your well-being might call. If your parent is arrested and you have somewhere safe to live—like a relative's or friend's home—CPS will not necessarily get involved in your life. CPS is not worried about a youth living with a non-parent in a stable living situation. In fact, any adult can become your "caregiver" with parental consent. CPS is only interested in investigating situations in which you might not be safe or in which you are being neglected.

**2) You can call CPS yourself if you think or feel like you are being abused or neglected.** Generally, taking a child out of a home requires a high level of "proof" that abuse or neglect has occurred. If you report that you are being abused and want CPS to be able to do something about it (like take you out of the home where you are staying), you must be prepared to tell the investigating social worker that you are scared of the person who is abusing you, and possibly show physical evidence of the abuse (like bruises or cuts). Since CPS keeps a record of all reports, even if they don't take you out of the home the first time, if you demonstrate a long history of abuse or neglect, it will be easier to document to the court that you are not safe in your home.

**3) If a mandated reporter or someone else suspects that you are being abused or neglected.** This situation could occur regardless of whether your parent has been arrested or incarcerated, and is not uncommon when a parent is abusing alcohol or drugs.

**This is what should happen after CPS is called:**
The intake worker on the phone will ask many questions to the person placing the call and determine the danger of the situation. Based on the information they receive in this conversation, if CPS thinks you are in immediate danger, they will send a social worker to your school or home to investigate and potentially remove you from a dangerous situation within twenty-four hours. For your safety, CPS should make every effort to interview you in a safe place away from home (or wherever the suspected abuse/neglect is happening). CPS often goes to schools to conduct interviews. If the case does not appear to be immediately dangerous, a social worker will visit your home or school within ten days of the call. If the intake worker does not think that the child and family require services or intervention, the case will be closed; however, a record of the call will be kept on file. In many situations, suspected abuse and neglect cases will be reported (someone will make a call), but no one will even go out to see you. All CPS calls are kept on record. If



## MY STORY

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At my aunt's house nothing felt the same, nothing was the same. I was terrified, sad and lonely, like a puppy when it's storming out at night. In the dark I cried myself to sleep, hiding so nobody could see. "I don't know these people," I told my mother over the thirty-minute phone call we got every blue moon. "Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry," I told myself as I heard the precious voice I had longed to hear, when she got on the phone to say, "Hey Kash-ko." She always called me Kash-ko like the store, Costco. Before, it had irritated me, but now I suddenly found it endearing.

"Don't worry, everything will be okay, and I'll be home soon," she told me every phone call, and in each letter she wrote. Oh, how I worshipped those words.

Aunt Trinice's family favored my brother over me because he resembled my dad, my aunt's brother. "Awww, look at him, he looks just like Tauni," they'd say, gazing fondly at my

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CPS is concerned about your safety, they have several choices.

**In the short term:**

☆ They might take you to a friend's or relative's home.

☆ They might take you to a temporary foster care placement such as Huckleberry House in San Francisco, or place you with a family or in a group home while they investigate the child abuse charges.

**In the long term:**

Long-term involvement with CPS (an open CPS case) means that you become a dependent of the court. That is, the court is your legal guardian. This might happen if the social worker and the court believe that you are not safe in your home. **See Question 4 for more information about the dependency or foster care system.**

**Family reunification services:** If you are placed in foster care, your placement will almost always be accompanied by "family reunification services." These services work to create a safe and stable living environment for you back at home. Some services include counseling, residential therapy, and mediation for you and your family. If these services do not appear to improve your chances of moving back home, the state may seek to terminate your parent's rights so that a more stable long-term situation can be established for you. This may include being adopted by someone else, placement in a foster home or other licensed facility such as a group home.

**Adoption:** All children and teens should remember that adoption by someone who loves you, or someone who is waiting for a child or teen to share their life with, is an option you can explore by speaking with your assigned Protective Services Worker.

**Termination of parental rights:** If your parent is in prison or jail, especially if they received a sentence over six months, it is very important that you and your parent understand what "termination of parental rights" means. If your parent's rights are terminated, your parent has no right to see you again, make any decisions about you, or get information about you. Under the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), a law passed in 1997, the state must seek to terminate parental rights if a child has been in foster care for more than fifteen months out of the past twenty-two months, or six months if the child is under the age of three. Under ASFA, exceptions to the timelines for termination of parental rights are permissible under two circumstances:
1) when a court finds that termination of parental rights is not "in your best interest" or
2) when a court determines that "reasonable efforts" have not been made to support reunification with your parent(s).

The act is meant to make it easier to move children from foster care to permanent adoptive homes, and speed up the process of getting you into a stable living environment. However, the law has resulted in parental rights being terminated for many incarcerated parents, even for parents incarcerated for relatively minor convictions, and sometimes in circumstances

## Trapped Until Further Notice

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brother, while ignoring me. I looked like my mom, and my aunt didn't like my mom. But my aunt showed the most favoritism towards her own children.

"Mama, can I have some money, to walk to the store?" my cousin Dehmi would ask.

"Go get my purse." my aunt would tell her.

I wanted to go to the store too. I jumped up to rush out of that preposterous house.

"Oh, I'm sorry Kashka, I don't have any more money," my aunt said unhesitatingly.

"Okay," I said, and sat back down.

Every time I said something, it felt like I messed up the whole moment, so eventually I just stopped speaking. I would go hide in my room, but then they would get mad at that. So I only spoke when spoken to.

School was no better. I used to love it. Shoot, to me growing up, school was my specialty. Almost a straight "A" student, except for bad citizenship sometimes. I used to love science projects and history projects. My mom and my brother always helped. Building missions and villages for the Native Americans in history class. Making paper mache face masks like the ancient Egyptians. Used to be fun working with our hands, getting down and dirty. It all changed when my mom left.

When I asked my aunt and her family for help on homework, they said.

"Ask your teacher! I don't know how to do that!"

"But I'll fail," I said.

"I don't care, that's not my problem," the expression on my aunt's face told me.

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where a child has a good relationship with the parent and might be better off living with the parent when the parent returns home from jail or prison. This usually happens because when a parent is incarcerated, it can be very difficult to meet the reunification requirements set by the court, such as taking parenting classes and having regular visits with the child, or just because a parent's sentence is longer than the ASFA timelines for reunification.

Termination of parental rights is difficult to understand. We talk about it here to flag the issue, but understand this is just basic information. If you want your parent to maintain parental rights over you, have your parent talk to a lawyer, or talk to your own social worker, court appointed special advocate, or lawyer. **See Question 22 for more resources to help you and your parent better understand this issue.**

Note: We took most of the information about AFSA and termination of parental rights from Nell Bernstein's book, *All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated* (The New Press, 2005). For more information, see pages 148–50, 153–54, 156–57, and 263–64.

**You might be wondering if you will be better or worse off if CPS gets involved in your life.** CPS exists to protect children from abuse or neglect, not to take children away from stable living situations. If you're a teenager, the CPS worker is likely to take into strong consideration what you say about your own situation and what's best for you. That being said, the agency and its individual employees do not always make the best decisions for a variety of reasons such as lack of information or resources, legal requirements to follow laws that might not be in your best interest, or simply poor judgment by workers. While it's very hard to predict whether you will be better off with CPS in your life or not, if CPS does get involved in your life it is very important that you speak up and tell the CPS worker what you think would be best for your life and why.

## Question 4:

**What is legal guardianship? What's the difference between legal guardianship, foster care, and the dependency system?**

**Legal guardianship** is when a court has given custody of a child to someone who is not the child's parent. Your legal guardian has the right to make decisions about your well-being, including decisions about your health, education, and welfare.

The dependency system and the foster care system are the same system! The words are used interchangeably to mean the same thing. "Dependency" means that you, as a youth, are dependent on the court (with delegation of your care, custody, and control to the Human Ser-

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I made friends, but my aunt's family disapproved of them. "Those 'friends' are not really your friends," they claimed. "They'll only cause trouble." But in my experience my friends were not trouble. They made it easier on me by taking my mind off my situation. For me the "trouble"came when I had to go home at the end of the day. Tried everything to stay away—extracurricular programs, going over to people's houses, helping teachers after school. But I always had to return to that torturous world.

Nobody cared except my grandparents. They always cared and were always there but my aunt kept me away. Told me they were busy or tired. Or, "They don't feel like being bothered with no snotty ass little evil bitch like you." Then she'd sigh and say, "I can't wait till your mother comes home," loud enough to make sure I heard it. This was one thing we agreed on. I couldn't wait for my mother to come home either.

Day after day, week after week, month after month, I waited for my mother to come home. "Save me from this madness," I chanted to myself. Then the day finally came. I was sitting in the room I shared with my cousin, doing my chemistry homework. I was finally starting to get the hang of it. I heard the doorbell ring and went to answer it without any clue who it might be. I opened the door and there she stood, my mother, looking just like she had on the last day I had seen her. How I cried as I flew into her arms, not wanting to let go, as she whispered, "I told you I'd be home before you knew it."

Project WHAT! member preparing for a presentation.

vices Agency's Family and Childrens Division) instead of your parents or another adult caregiver.

The court makes decisions about where you will live and with whom you will live, based on the Protective Services Worker's recommendation. Many families and group homes are licensed by the state of California as foster care providers. If you can't live with your own family (mother, father, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) you might move to one of these licensed foster care provider's homes. You will be placed by an assigned Protective Services Worker. **See Question 3 for more information about CPS.**

**There is a difference between legal guardianship and foster care.** In a legal guardianship, your "dependency" is dismissed by the court. The adult who is your legal guardian has custody over you. It is assumed that you will stay with this guardian until your parent comes home and is able to take care of you, until you turn eighteen, or until it becomes impossible for you to live with that person (i.e., that person becomes an unstable or unsafe caregiver).

To inquire about legal guardianship in San Francisco, call (415) 863-9892. In Alameda, call (510) 268-2838 to inquire about legal guardianship. Call (510) 268-2850 to inquire about kinship guardianship or (510) 834-4006 for kinship support. In Contra Costa, call (510) 231-8114.

## Question 5:
### What is Emancipation? Is this an option for me?

Emancipation is a legal process that frees a child who is between fourteen and eighteen from the custody and control of their parents or legal guardian. Emancipation is a serious step that has negative as well as positive consequences. Legal Services for Children published an excellent guide about Emancipation in November 2004 for youth in California (laws are different in each state).

If you want to learn more about emancipation, go to LSC's website and read the guide: www.lsc-sf.org/publications/emancipation_manual.pdf. After reading it, if you feel this is an option you want to explore, you should talk about it with a trusted adult, counselor, social worker, or your attorney. You can also call LSC at (415) 863-3762. An intake worker can answer your questions and help you figure out your options.

Remember, if you are in the "dependency" foster care system and are at least fourteen or fifteen (the minimum age varies depending on where you live), you are entitled to participate in an Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) that will provide you with a stable transition from foster care to living on your own. Independent Living Skills Programs help you with things like job skills, job placement, and money management. Some provide additional services such as medical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and tutoring, and can give you access to computers.

Below is information about Bay Area Independent Living Skills Programs.

**East Bay Independent Living Skills Program**
Teen Center East Bay
2647 International Blvd. at 27th
Oakland, CA 94601
(510) 261-4102
Neighborhood: East Oakland

**Contra Costa County Independent Living Skills Program**
1875 Arnold Drive, Suite 200
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 957-2404
www.cocoilsp.org

**San Francisco Independent Living Skills Program**
225 Valencia St. at 13th
San Francisco, CA 94103
1-800-818-2989
www.sfilsp.org
Neighborhood: Mission District

# Mentall Health, Counselling, and Medicall Services

# Mental Health, Counseling, and Medical Services

Section 2 answers health questions you may have, such as how to get heath insurance, finding ways to deal with stress, and seeing a doctor. At the end of the section, we list information/referral and crisis hotlines, and a bunch of clinics that provide mental health services and/or medical care to teens. Most are low-cost, free, or accept Medi-Cal.

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**Question 6:**
**I'm under eighteen and don't live with my parents. Am I eligible for free medical services through Medi-Cal?**

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Yes, under any of these circumstances:
**1. If you need emergency medical care.** You CAN receive emergency medical care without insurance of any kind or if you are undocumented. If you need emergency medical care right away, go to the hospital or call 911 (it is a free call from anywhere) and ask for an ambulance to come and get you.

**2. If you are living with an adult relative.** That relative can apply for a Medi-Cal card (and CalWORKS) for you. The relative does not have to be your legal guardian to do this.

**3. If you are under eighteen years of age and qualify for "minor consent services."** According to the California Code of Regulations Sections 50063.5 and 50147.1, minor consent services include treatment for:
a. Sexual assault, including rape and involuntary sexual acts;
b. Drug or alcohol abuse treatment for youth twelve years of age or older;
c. Family planning involving discussions with health care providers about your personal decisions regarding birth control, pregnancy, parenting, and adoption;
d. Pregnancy, including prenatal care, benefits, and options counseling;
e. Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs or STIs) for youth twelve years of age or older;
f. Mental health services for youth twelve years of age or older who are ready to actively participate and where either you or other people are in danger OR you have experienced incest (sex with a family member) or child abuse.

**4. If you are twelve years of age or older, are not living with a parent or legal guardian, and there is no person who accepts legal responsibility for you, you may apply for the full scope of Medi-Cal benefits as an adult (as long as you appear competent).** This means that Medi-Cal will cover all health services—not just minor consent services.

It will help Medi-Cal if you can bring some identification (a school picture I.D. is fine). Medi-Cal is not allowed to contact your parent or guardian if you are applying for minor consent services! However, always ask whether the local Medi-Cal office will contact your parents before you apply for Medi-Cal. Many providers are not clear on the minor consent laws. You may enroll in the Medi-Cal minor consent program even if you are living at home AND regardless of your parents' income. If you are already enrolled in a Medi-Cal managed care plan (in San Francisco the Medi-Cal managed care plans are the San Francisco Health Plan and Blue Cross) you do not need to apply for a minor consent card. You can simply use your managed care card to receive minor consent services.

The easiest way for you to enroll in Medi-Cal is simply to visit a youth shelter with a Medi-Cal outreach worker or a youth medical clinic. Most clinics have a Medi-Cal worker whose job it is to enroll young people in Medi-Cal. Always call the clinic you wish to visit first and confirm when the Medi-Cal worker will be available.

For immediate medical care in San Francisco, go to San Francisco General Hospital at 1001 Potrero Avenue or call them at (415) 206-8000. For immediate medical care in Alameda, go to Highland General Hospital at 1411 East 31st Street, Oakland or call them at (510) 437-4800.

**Question 7:**
**The stress of this whole situation is getting to me. Is there someone I can talk to?**

It's normal to be stressed out about a situation like this—it's not easy to have a parent in prison. In Luis's story, he talks about the impact that his dad's incarceration had on his whole family. You have lots of options for dealing with this stress in a healthy way. Some people write in a journal or play sports. It can also be useful to talk to a trained counselor or psychologist, in person or through a confidential hotline.

Some hotlines are staffed by youth. See the end of this section for crisis hotlines as well as information and referral lines. You might not hit it off right away with a particular counselor, or you might have had a bad experience in the past, but counseling can sometimes be a great way to help you sort out your feelings and deal with stress.

**Question 8:**
**Can I see a counselor, therapist, or psychologist without my parents or legal guardians knowing about it?**

Sometimes—it depends on the circumstances. **Before your first appointment, make sure to ask the mental health provider if the services are confidential.** Also ask under what circumstances s/he would be required to contact your parents/legal guardians. Mental health providers—and all other mandated reporters—are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). **See question 3 for more information about CPS.** Some mental health care providers do not know the law. Make sure you feel comfortable with your confidentiality agreement. If you explain that it would make you uncomfortable if they told your parents, they might be more likely to keep the information private.

**1. You may consent to your own counseling if you meet all of the following conditions [Family Code Section 6924(b)]:**
a. You are twelve years old or older;
b. The counselor, therapist, or psychologist believes you are mature enough to participate intelligently; and
c. The counselor, therapist, or psychologist believes you would be a danger to yourself or others without the treatment OR you are an alleged victim of incest or child abuse and are stating that parental consent would be detrimental to you.

**2. You may consent to drug and alcohol abuse counseling if you are twelve years old or older. However, you cannot receive methadone treatment without the consent of your parent or legal guardian. [Family Code Section 6929].** Remember, the provider is required to inform your parents/legal guardian about your treatment UNLESS s/he feels that doing so would be inappropriate or detrimental to you. Be sure to discuss the conditions under which s/he would contact your parent/guardian.

**3. You can see a school counselor for confidential counseling if you are twelve years of age or older [Education Code Section 49602].** Remember, there are limits to the confiden-

## MY STORY

# The Life and Times of Luis

By Luis Esparza

Oh how I ask myself every day, "Where is Daddy?" If I am lucky, I get to see him once a month. Every time we visit, I don't have the courage to talk to him. I just stare at him through the glass. There really isn't much to say. I said everything I wanted to say to him the first time he went to jail.

I told him I loved him. I asked him why he did what he did. He said, "You got to do what you got to do." This was to make me feel better.

I told him I thought it was dumb of him to take the blame for something my brother did. He told me he did it for my brother, and for the family. I know my dad did what he did to protect us, but protecting us made it worse. No one talked to my brother. They all blamed him. Everyone in my family started drifting apart, not talking. It was like we weren't even a family anymore.

The second time my dad went to jail, he went for leaving the country and

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tiality of these services. For instance, a school counselor may tell your parents or others what you say if s/he feels it is necessary to protect your health, safety, and welfare or that of the school community. The counselor may also report information you give him/her regarding a crime that could or already has hurt someone or damaged property. The school counselor may not, however, tell your parents about what you say if the school counselor reasonably feels that your health, safety, or welfare would be endangered [Education Code 49602]. None of this information will become part of any official school record.

In general, a mental health provider (e.g. counselor) may have you hospitalized without your permission if s/he believes that you will hurt yourself or others, or that you are "gravely disabled" (unable to use the basics of life such as food, clothing, or shelter, even if they are provided to you). In addition, if you threaten to harm someone or damage their property, and the mental health provider feels it is necessary to warn that person to prevent the harm, the mental health provider is required to warn that person of your threat [Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California, 17 Cal. 3d 425, 131 Cal Rprt. 14 (1976)].

*You might not hit it off right away with a particular counselor, or you might have had a bad experience in the past, but counseling can sometimes be a great way to help you sort out your feelings and deal with stress.*

**Question 9:**
**I think I'm pregnant, have a sexually transmitted disease or infection (STD/STI), or have a drinking or drug problem. What should I do?**

Get to the doctor or clinic. Lots of organizations provide free pregnancy-related services, and STD/HIV testing and prevention. See our list at the end of this section. Section 3 is all about substance abuse and rehabilitation resources.

If you're pregnant or have children, and want to understand your rights, The Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD) published a handbook for young mothers in 2007 called "My Life Chose Me." This guide is especially useful if you have already been involved with the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems. Call (415) 703-8800 or visit CYWD to get a free copy: 832 Folsom Street, Suite 700 in San Francisco.

**The Life and Times of Luis**
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not calling his parole officer. I had told him to call, that if he got caught one more time I wouldn't have a father anymore and he should forget he had a son, that I had already heard too many excuses.

How would you feel if your father went to jail for something as minor as that? My mom told me, "He is still your father," and that I should love him no matter what. I guess I still love him, but I don't want to get close to him and see him get taken away again.

After he went to jail I kept to myself a lot—became the quiet kid that no one noticed and no one really cared about. At one point I didn't even have any friends. No one talked to me, so I didn't have to say anything about my life. I kind of like it that way, but inside I feel sad and angry. In this world, though, no one wants to see that so I keep it all to myself.

My dad sends me a letter for my birthday. I just start to cry because I can't even see him.

I say to my mom and dad that I don't have a father anymore and I don't care if he gets out of jail. I am only kidding myself. The first time he got out of jail, I was eleven. I was home at the window and my face lit up like the sun when I heard him calling my name from the curb. I ran out of the house and hugged him, crying and crying. I pinched myself like 100 times just to make sure it wasn't a dream. Then he went back to jail and my world came crashing down.

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## Hotlines and Information/Referral Lines

### Alameda County Mental Health Care Services

Access Mental Health
1-800-491-9099
Telephone screening and referrals for people needing psychotherapists and psychiatrists; also for people with chronic mental illness needing admittance to an Alameda County community mental health center. Fees are on a sliding scale and Medi-Cal is accepted. Referral line is open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Bay Area 2-1-1 Lines

www.211bayarea.org
For every day needs and in times of disaster, dial 2-1-1 to access hundreds of community services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can find the help you need by searching their online database or calling. 2-1-1 phone service is free, confidential and available in over 150 languages. In the Bay Area, 2-1-1 is available in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Solano Counties. (In San Mateo, instead try 800-273-6222 or 415-808-HELP. In Sonoma, try 800-325-9601).

**Child Crisis Hotlines in Bay Area Counties:** If you feel like you might hurt yourself or someone else, you can call a "crisis" hotline. The person you talk to can help you figure out options and ways to get help. See below for numbers in a few Bay Area counties. If you live in other parts of California or in other states, dial 411 and ask for the phone number for the "child crisis" or "suicide prevention" hotline in your county.
**San Francisco County: (415) 970-3800**
**Marin County: (415) 499-1100 (this is a suicide prevention line staffed 24/7)**
**Napa County: (707) 253-4711 (this line is staffed 24/7)**
**Solano County: (707) 784-2140**

**California Youth Crisis Line:** 1-800-843-5200 or www.youthcrisisline.org. A crisis counseling and support program that is available 24/7 from anywhere in California, for ages twelve to twenty-four.

### Girls and Boys Town National Hotline

800-448-3000
The Girls and Boys Town National Hotline is a 24-hour crisis, resource and referral line. The Hotline has been in operation since 1989 and is staffed by trained counselors who can respond to questions every day of the week, 365 days a year. Approximately 250,000 callers contact the hotline annually to receive help relating to being suicidal, physically or sexually abused, on the run, addicted, threatened by gang violence, fighting with a parent, a parent frustrated by a child, scared of a spouse, or faced with an overwhelming challenge. Visitors can also chat online with counselors every Monday (except holidays) from 8 to 9 PM CST.

## The Life and Times of Luis

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I ask my mom if she misses him. She doesn't say a word. I think it is because she is secretly seeing someone else. She acts like nothing happened and goes on with her life. I feel bad for her, but I should talk—I am the same way.

When my dad is out, it is a whole different story. Mom smiles and laughs and has the time of her life. I feel so happy for her because it's been like forever since I have seen her be that happy. I guess she does love him.

The second time they told me he was getting out, I put my best clothes on and sat next to the window like a dog waiting for his master's return. He didn't show. I asked my mom to call and check if he was released. She looked at me with a sad face. I swallowed my feelings in front of her and acted like it didn't bother me. As soon as I got to my room I started crying, but then I told myself, "Hey, what's the difference? He hasn't been here for me for most of my childhood. Why should it matter to me now?"

My mom says that my dad is coming out soon, and that we can be a family again. I don't think that's possible. Too much has happened.

I hate that when my dad gets out, no one tells him what they really feel. But I do the same thing. I can't get the courage to tell him how much he has hurt me and everyone else around him. I guess that's how my family wants it—to act like nothing ever happened. I love the moments I get to spend with him when he is

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## Bay Area Wide Health Resources

### Family Support Services of the Bay Area (FSSBA)

www.fssba-oak.org

FSSBA's mission is to help caregivers nurture their children and keep their families intact. Programs include Respite, Family Preservation, Kinship, and OreMi Mentoring. Services are provided in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco Counties. See below for offices/programs.

### San Francisco FSSBA

205 13th St., Suite 3150
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 861-4060
Respite Program direct line: (415) 861-4284

### Oakland FSSBA

Family Reclaim and Another Road to Safety Programs
401 Grand Avenue, Suite 200
Oakland, CA 94610
(510) 834-4006

### Admin/Finance, HR, and OreMi Mentor, Respite and Kinship Programs

401 Grand Avenue, Suite 500
Oakland, CA 94610
(510) 834-2443
Respite Program direct line: (510) 834-4766

### Planned Parenthood Golden Gate

1-800-967-7526 or 1-800-967-PLAN
www.ppgg.org

Planned Parenthood offers a wide range of reproductive and primary health care services, including medical care, STD screening, HIV testing, HIV/STD prevention, family planning, pregnancy-related services, and health education during daytime, evening, and Saturday hours. You can make a confidential online appointment from the website or call the appointment/ information line at 1-800-967-7526. PP also has "teen clinics" for teens only ages 12-19. All services are very low cost and in most cases confidential for teens ages 12 and older. See below for select locations, or check the website for all Bay Area locations and hours. Always call to check days and hours since they might change after our guide is published.

### San Francisco Health Center

815 Eddy St. at Van Ness Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94109

### Oakland—Eastmont Health Center

Eastmont Mall, Suite 210
7200 Bancroft Ave.
Oakland, CA 94605
Teen Clinic: Thursday 1-5pm

## The Life and Times of Luis

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out, and I sort of get why my family says nothing. I guess we would rather have some moments of happiness with my dad than not have him in our lives at all.

My dad is out now. I am fifteen. He first went in when I was seven. I haven't seen him once since I was eleven, except in that horrible place that is the jail waiting room. He is in Mexico and wants us to go there too. He was given the choice to stay in the U.S. but he wanted to go to Mexico so he chose to be deported. I tell him I won't leave the people I love here, because some of them have helped me out more than my father. "How do you expect to tell me anything, when you haven't been there almost my entire life?" I ask. He tells me he has no right, but he is trying to make everything right.

Some people I have told this to tell me that it seems like a bad dream or something made up and sometimes I think it is. Sometimes I feel like all this isn't really happening, that maybe one day I'll wake up from this bad dream. I call this dream my life.

*The second time they told me he was getting out, I put my best clothes on and sat next to the window like a dog waiting for his master's return. He didn't show.*

**Oakland—MacArthur Health Center**
482 West MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94609
Teen Clinic: Wednesday 2-5pm

**Hayward Health Center**
1866 B St.
Hayward, CA 94541
Teen Clinic: Wednesday 1-4pm

**San Rafael Health Center**
2 H Street
San Rafael, CA 94901
Teen Clinic: Thursdays 1-4pm (they will take the first 20-35 teens)

**San Mateo Health Center**
2211 Palm Ave.
San Mateo, CA 94403
Teen Clinic: 1st Wednesday of each month (teens welcome to drop-in any Wednesday from 1:30-3:30pm; the 1st Wednesday of each month is Teen Clinic ONLY; the clinic is closed the 4th Wednesday of each month)

## East Bay Resources

**Already listed:**
DreamCatcher (See page 09)
George P. Scotlan Center (See page 09)

**Ann Martin Center**
1250 Grand Ave. (across from the ACE Hardware)
Piedmont, CA 94610
(510) 655-7880
www.annmartin.org
Ann Martin Center is a nonprofit community organization that provides child and family psychotherapy, play, art and sand tray therapy, academic tutoring and remediation, and educational and psychological diagnostic testing. The center helps youth and adults handle problems with learning, emotions and behaviors that can be due to stress, relationship issues, life transitions, and learning disabilities. Fees vary by service. They offer a sliding scale whenever possible. Occasionally treatment scholarships are also available. Families may be eligible for free or reduced fees through Alameda County Behavioral Health Care, Medi-Cal, or the Victims of Crime Program.

**Berkeley Free Clinic**
2339 Durant Ave. at Ellsworth
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 548-4811 ext. 6400
www.berkeleyfreeclinic.org
Neighborhood: Berkeley
The Berkeley Free Clinic provides a variety of services, including free primary care services and other medical care, dental services, HIV/STD prevention/testing, peer counseling, youth employment, and health education. The Information and Referral Collective (IRC) provides information in areas such as addiction programs, medical needs, mental health resources, shelters, foodstuffs and meals, legal services, HIV and STD programs, and much more. To get information about health and social services in the community, or if you have questions about the services of the Berkeley Free Clinic, call. **They answer phones on Sundays from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Mondays through Fridays from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**



## MY STORY

# Daddy's Little Girl

By Marriah Humphrey

If I hadn't woken up out of my sleep that night crying for my dad, how long would they have carried on with this lie about him working late?
I was in kindergarten and for the past year I had been under the belief that my dad was working late nights at a hotel. That night when I started crying, my mom came in and sat down on my white princess bed with the pink flowers. "Daddy's gone." she said. "He's in jail." He was actually in prison but I didn't know that word yet so she said jail. It crushed my world. I was sad because if he was working at a hotel, he could come back anytime he wanted to, but knowing he was in jail meant he couldn't ever come.
I was so used to having my dad around, and at four years old I was spoiled rotten. My dad never yelled at me and whenever my mom threatened to punish me he'd insist, "Don't spank her!" I felt like I had the best dad in the world, there was no one better.

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**FamilyPaths, Inc.** (formerly Parental Stress Service)
Family Hotline: 1-800-829-3777 or (510) 893-5444 (if calling from Oakland)
www.familypaths.org
FamilyPaths, Inc. (formerly Parental Stress Service) is a non-profit organization of mental health professionals and dedicated volunteers that provide a number of mental health, counseling and therapy services to low income, multi-stressed individuals and families. The agency has served the mental health needs of Alameda's families since 1972 and today offers services from offices in Oakland, Hayward and Fremont. These services include a 24-hour Family Support Resource Hotline, a 24-hour Foster Parent Advice Line, Emergency Respite Child Care, CalWORKS support counseling and Positive Parenting Classes. They also provide counseling for infants, children, adolescents, adults, and families. See below for locations.

**Oakland FamilyPaths Office**
1727 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Suite #109
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 893-9230

**Hayward FamilyPaths Office**
22455 Maple Ct., Suite #402
Hayward, CA 94541
(510) 582-0148

**Fremont FamilyPaths Office**
39155 Liberty St, Suite #F600
Fremont, CA 94536
(510) 790-3803

**Youth Uprising**
8711 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94605
(510) 777-9909
www.youthuprising.org
Neighborhood: Oakland, near Castlemont High School
Youth Uprising serves youth ages thirteen to twenty-four, providing youth leadership and community building training, classes in media arts, physical arts and material arts, health and wellness services, youth employment, career and education services, and legal services. They also have a health clinic.

*If I hadn't woken up out of my sleep that night crying for my dad, how long would they have carried on with this lie about him working late?*

## Daddy's Little Girl
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My dad was six foot one, with a smooth bald head and big biceps. We did everything together. We went swimming whenever I wanted to, jumping into the pool together, splashing around and playing. I always stayed close to him in the water. He exercised a lot, and I liked to jump rope next to him. I remember he used to jump rope really fast and I always wanted to jump fast like that. I didn't know how to do it though. I started out with the rope in front of me instead of behind me. It wasn't till I started school and a girl asked, "Why do you jump rope like that?!" that I realized I had been jumping backwards. My dad never told me I was doing it wrong because he didn't like making me sad. If anything hurt me, it hurt him too. My dad used to run next to me while I rode my bike. He always made sure I wore a helmet, elbow pads, kneepads and gloves. One time he was putting my helmet on and he snapped the skin under my chin by accident. It hurt and I cried. To this day he asks me if I forgive him for it.

The day after I found out the truth about where my dad was, I went over to the house of my grandma, my dad's mom. My aunt was there too. I told them I knew and that I wanted to write my dad a letter telling him I knew. But when I got ready to write my letter and I was asking them how to spell stuff, they wouldn't tell me. I think they were upset with my mom for telling me, and thought "Well, maybe we can stop her from writing the letter." But that wasn't the case. Even though I couldn't

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## San Francisco Resources

**Already listed:**
Girls 2000 (See page 10)
Huckleberry Youth Services at the Cole Street Clinic (See page 10)
Larkin Street Youth Services (See page 10)

### A Home Within
2500 18th St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
1-888-898-2249
www.ahomewithin.org
Neighborhood: Potrero Hill
A Home Within's Local Chapters offers pro bono psychotherapy to current and former foster youth. Their Fostering Art Program gives foster youth the chance to explore and document their inner and outer worlds through art and the written word, while developing life skills and strong ties with peers and the community. Fostering Transitions pairs youth about to leave foster care with mentors from the community for at least one year to build healthy relationships and skills for work and life.

### Balboa Teen Health Center
1000 Cayuga Ave. Room 156
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 469-4512
Neighborhood: Outer Mission/Excelsior
The Balboa Teen Health Center serves high school aged adolescents, not just students at Balboa High School. They provide medical and mental health services. Drop-in services are available.

### Bayview Hunters Point Foundation Youth Services
5015 3rd St. at Quesada
San Francisco, CA 94124
(415) 822-1585
Neighborhood: Bayview
The Bayview Hunters Point Foundation is a drop-in center with social services for youth ages 11-22 in Bayview Hunter's Point. They provide outreach, STD screening, HIV testing, HIV/STD prevention, family planning, pregnancy-related services, substance use services, crisis intervention, youth development, tutoring, and vocational training.

### Haight Ashbury Free Clinics, Inc.
Main number: (415) 746-1967
www.hafci.org
Haight Ashbury Free Clinics (HAFCI) provides free or low-cost health care, substance abuse treatment, HIV prevention, and a range of community programs. They speak English and Spanish. They serve youth over 17 years old as well as emancipated and homeless youth, even if under 17. There are two locations: the Haight Clinic and the Integrated Care Center. See below for ad-

## Daddy's Little Girl
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write, I just drew him what I wanted to say. I remember drawing a man with little bars.

After that first time I wrote him, it got harder for me. To this day I do not like writing him. I have a mental block on writing him. Maybe it's because I don't want to know that he's there. I'd rather not believe it. I only write him when report cards come and school pictures. When I was still living in Texas my grandma used to come take me to visit my dad. It was always awkward because my grandma and mom didn't really talk. Me being around was the only thing that kept them talking. Whenever I went to go visit my dad I always cried. He asked me about school, my friends, and what I did during the day. He always had candy in his pocket for me, usually candy canes because most of the time it was during Christmas that I'd get to visit. It was always a long time between visits because of the tension in my mom and grandma's relationship.

We moved from Texas to California when I was about to start first grade. It was really far away. I just recently asked my dad if he knew why we moved and he said, "Because your mom wanted a new beginning, a chance to start over."

My mom moved on in her life without my dad, and I guess I did too. I started to take my mom's side because I could see all her pain and frustration. Ever since that first time she told me my dad was locked up, my mom has been really straight-

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dresses and numbers. Days and hours are subject to change so call to inquire.

**Haight Clinic**
558 Clayton St. at Haight
San Francisco, CA 94117
Appointments: (415) 746-1950

**Integrated Care Center**
1735 Mission St. at 13th
San Francisco, CA 94103
Appointments: (415) 746-1940

**Homeless Youth Alliance**
1696 Haight St. at Cole
San Francisco, CA 94117
(415) 630-0744
homelessyouthalliance.org
The Homeless Youth Alliance (HYA) offers a variety of services, including a drop-in center, street-based outreach, one-on-one counseling, weekly educational workshops, psychotherapy services, syringe exchange, and monthly community clean-ups. The drop-in center is open: Monday 10am-1pm, Wednesday 12:30-4:30pm, Thursday 10-2pm, and Friday 2-5pm.

**Hip Hop to Health Clinic**
446 Randolph St. at Arch
San Francisco, CA 94132
(415) 337-4719
Neighborhood: Lake Merced
Hip Hop to Health is a community clinic that provides supportive services for ages 12-24, including outreach, education, mental health, medical care, case management, STD/HIV screening, STD/HIV prevention, family planning, substance use services, and crisis intervention.

**Horizons**
440 Potrero Ave at Mariposa
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 487-6700
www.horizons-sf.org
Neighborhood: Potrero Hill
Horizons engages, educates, and inspires youth to greatness through a wide range of programs and services. Services include education, mental health HIV/STD prevention, substance abuse treatment, crisis intervention, arts, the DJ Project (arts entrepreneurship built on a hip hop foundation), employmenty, and entrepreneurship, and programs specifically for females. Horizons serves youth ages 12-26 and is bi-lingual Spanish/English.

**Homeless Prenatal Program**
2500 18th St.
San Francisco, CA 94110

## Daddy's Little Girl
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forward with me about everything. Me and my mom's connection grew strong. I became and still am mama's baby girl.

Watching my mom's struggle made me angry at my dad. Without him around, money was always an issue. Once my mom told me a story about how right before my dad went to prison they were about to buy a big yellow house in Texas. I always wonder what it would be like to live in Texas. I always wonder if I had stayed if I would have been that Southern belle with a deep accent.

But instead here I am in California, far away. I saw my dad this summer, but before that it had been seven years since I had last seen him. We talk on the phone, and I guess we pretend like everything is normal because we always had a good relationship when I was little. But the truth is we just can't communicate like we used to. I like to joke around, but I've noticed he can't tell the difference between me being serious and sarcastic. The truth is, it's hard to talk to him about my life when there's so much of it he hasn't been around to experience with me.

Now that I'm older, I can imagine how things could have, should have been. I remember reading a school newsletter and in the left corner there was a section about a daddy-daughter dance. The advertisement showed a little girl dancing with her dad and it made me so sad, knowing that I'd never get a chance to go to one.
Sometimes I think back to how it was when I was four. If I had to choose between going with my mom or going with my dad back then, I'd choose my dad. I always wanted to be with daddy. But

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(415) 546-6756
www.homelessprenatal.org
Neighborhood: Potrero Hill
Homeless Prenatal helps women have healthy babies through case management, education, and home visits. They provide housing assistance, substance abuse services, a childcare center, a mental health center, a technology center, and prenatal services , housing workshops, art classes, and mommy and baby yoga.

### Valencia Health Services

1647 Valencia St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 647-3666
www.nurseweb.ucsf.edu/conf/vhs
Neighborhood: Mission District
Valencia Health Services (VHS) is a community clinic that offers confidential sexual health services to teens up to 21 years of age. VHS offers these confidential services: Plan B (emergency contraception) and condoms at the clinic, birth control counseling and prescriptions, safer sex counseling, pregnancy testing and counseling, pediatrics clinic referrals for prenatal care or abortion, STD testing and treatment, and pelvic exams and pap smears. VHS also offers general health services to teens and budgeting services. Clients don't need a parent or guardian's permission to receive sexual healthcare at VHS. Health care practitioners will not give your parents or guardians any information about the sexual health treatment you receive there. However, if you are under eighteen you will need a parent or guardian's permission for these services: physical exams, including pre-sports, camp, job training or college physicals; urgent care visits; care for teen chronic conditions, including asthma and acne; and referral to specialists. Services are NOT free, but they are payable on a sliding scale. Many insurance plans are accepted, including San Francisco Health Plan and Healthy Kids.

### San Francisco Wellness Initiative

555 Franklin St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 522-6738
www.sfwellness.org
The San Francisco Wellness Initiative is a group effort to support the health and well-being of students. As of 2008, there were school-based wellness centers in 15 high schools in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)—see our list below. The programs provide free, confidential services to SFUSD students, including behavioral health counseling and services; support and empowerment groups; reproductive health services, and referrals to health resources in the community. Core staff at wellness programs includes a site coordinator, school nurse, mental health and substance abuse counselors, and student and professional outreach workers. (Note: The program originally was going to include some middle schools, but middle schools will now be coordinated



## Daddy's Little Girl

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now it has been eleven long years, and hearing he is getting out soon just doesn't excite me in any way. I was in kindergarten when he went in, but by the time he gets out I'll be heading off to college. I want to be a daddy's girl and I sometimes say I am but it's just four-year-old me remembering how it used to be.

## ROOTS STUDENTS POEMS

### Dear Dad

**By Grevon Daggs**

Most of my life you have
been locked up—
This is what you missed in my life:
My elementary school graduation,
my 15th birthday when we went
to Universal Studios,
and my first touchdown
in a high school football game.

Greshawn got out of jail
and is now holding two jobs.
Mom's gotten better,
she's happier now that her sons are safe.
Uncle JoJo died of cancer last year.
I'm about to finish high school and go
to college. I'm planning to go
to Saint Mary's College like my cousins
Corey and Cordell.

Dad, I've learned that the world
is scarier than a nightmare.
I wish you were here
to help me get through it.
Until then, I will maintain my life
with strength and without fear.

through the "Safe Passages Program").
Phillip & Sala Burton High School
Downtown High School
Galileo Academy of Science and Technology
International Studies Academy
June Jordan School for Equity
Abraham Lincoln High School
Lowell High School
Thurgood Marshall Academic High School
Mission High School
Newcomer High School
John O'Connell School of Technology
School of the Arts/Academy of Arts & Sciences
Wallenberg High School
Washington High School
Ida B. Wells High School

## MY STORY

# I'm Not Feeling It

By Sarita "Ri-Ri" Wilson

On September 29, 2003, my life changed forever. This is the day my mother went to prison. Not only did I lose my mother, but I lost one of my best friends. My mom and I did everything together. We'd been going to Starbucks together every morning since I was eight. First cocoa for me, then Frappucino as I got older. We went shopping together, went out to eat together, and went to the movies together. How many teenagers would you catch at the movies with their mother? Not many, but me and my mama always did.

My mom had fought her case outside and so when she was sentenced she was forced to turn herself in on that day. The night before she left, my mom wanted to play a family Scrabble game but I was mad so I acted out and went to my friend's house. When I came back she tried to tell me I was in trouble but I just walked away and went to bed. I wasn't feeling it. The next day I just woke up and went to school like it was a regular day and nothing was wrong. When I came back I asked my step dad where she was and he said, "You know where she at." My best friend was gone.

So there I was living with my step dad who, at the time I thought was a great guy. That is until Thanksgiving that year, when I woke up in the middle of the night to find him feeling on me. At that point I had few choices of where I was going to stay, because I was hardheaded, and no one wanted a hardheaded teenager to raise. I bounced around to different family members, basically taking care of myself.

The March after my mom left, I fell 42 feet from my school bleachers, broke my whole left leg, sprained my wrist and had to have surgery on my ankle. There was no way I could take care of myself, so I had only one other option and that was to go stay with my cousin in Hayward. Hayward is quiet and boring with no one to hang out with. I wasn't feeling that shit—I'm from the town!

Staying with my cousin was hell from the beginning. I was in a wheel chair and using a walker and still forced to do household chores even though I couldn't even walk. And on top of that, she stopped me from going to my junior prom and other school events. After my cast came off it just got worse. I felt like jumping off a bridge. Not only was my mom gone but I was in Hayward with no privileges and all my friends were in Oakland. I hated it there. So I told her that if I continued to stay with her I would kill myself. So she called the police and told them what I said. They came and got me and took me to Herrick Mental Hospital, where I stayed for five days, not feeling it,

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**I'm Not Feeling It** | Continued from page 29

until I was moved to Fred Finch Youth Center, not feeling it, as an assessment while they found me someplace to go. From there I was placed at a group home. That first group home wasn't so bad. They took us whitewater rafting and everything. But as school started it got harder and harder, me being used to being spoiled and having new clothes every year. Having to go back as a senior in the same clothes as the year before (definitely not feeling it) was horrible. Not to mention it ruined my rep. Everyone knew me as the big girl who could dress her ass off and was always fitted. I went from being the one girls wanted fashion tips from to the butt of everybody's jokes.

So I talked to this girl Cheryl in my group home and we made a plan to run away together since our boyfriends were brothers and had their own spot.

"How are we going to do it?" I asked.
Cheryl said, "It'll be easier if we leave in the middle of the night."
"Why?" I asked.
"Because then the counselors won't see us and we can take our stuff."
"How are we going to get out?"
"Through the window. You know we all have those fire escape ladders in our room."

So at 2 a.m. we hopped down the fire escape. Not living at the group home, not going to school…I was loving it at first…until me and Cheryl got into it and me and my boyfriend broke up. But things were looking up. I had started talking to my neighbor and he seemed nice and sweet, as they all seem at first.

Because my mom wasn't around to tell me to watch out, I was vulnerable to older guys. I was already flirtatious as it was. Then with her gone, and not telling me to stay away I had even more reason to talk to them. I had no mom to tell me about the birds and the bees like she had promised to one day. I had to read it in a book. Because I didn't always know where my next meal was coming from and because I needed somewhere to stay, I got involved with men who weren't good for me. My neighbor offered me a place to stay with him and his son. The only thing was that he was a drug dealer. And to help pay part of the rent so I didn't feel like a moocher, I began to steal from stores and return the stuff for cash or credit until I got caught stealing and went to juvenile hall for the first time 9 days before my sweet sixteen. Definitely wasn't feeling that.

I was sent to another group home but I ran again, back to my apartment in Hayward. Then I began to sell drugs. The money was fast and easy and I loved it. I was back to being my spoiled self with fresh clothes, fresh shoes and fresh hairdos. I loved the street life. I never left the house with less than five hundred dollars and when I came home I had at least twice that. The only thing was, I kept getting arrested. It wasn't always for selling drugs. One time I went in it was for loitering with the intent to pimp and pander because I had on baggy jeans, big t-shirt and a beanie, standing on Mission Street in Hayward. They said it was a ho stroll. I didn't even know Mission was a ho stroll , I'm from Oakland!

Every time I got sent to a group home I would run. Once I had experienced independence, no group home could keep me interested enough to stay more than two days. I loved the street life.

Two weeks before our two year anniversary, my fiancé and I broke up and I started paying my godmother $250 month to sleep on her couch. Which was cool until my stash ran out. (I had stopped selling drugs and started spending money.) So broke and homeless, I called the only person, I could think of, which was my brother Jason. The next day I moved with him.

Things couldn't get better. Finally, I had stability and I was ready to give up "the life." Finally, I was back in school, playing volleyball, and I was near my friends. I had a party for my 18th birthday. I was in a new relationship and was talking to my mother at least twice a week cause she knew where to find me now. I was ready to stop getting in trouble and start turning my life around.
But because I had been involved in the street life, it wasn't that easy. I had a previous debt and I couldn't get a job because I still had a warrant. Feeling like I had no other choice, I got talked into cashing checks. I got locked up again. And this was no juvenile hall, this was Santa Rita Jail. I was 18 now. Those six days were the worst of my life. The jail was nasty, not to mention the women. Since it was my first case as an adult they let me go. But I didn't stop cashing checks, just moved to a different county and started there. On

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# Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Rehabilitation

## Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Rehabilitation

Oftentimes, drugs and alcohol not only contribute to the deterioration of the abuser, but also of the family. But this doesn't necessarily mean that it's right to blame the person suffering from drug/alcohol use; nor does this mean that a person is lost and beyond help once s/he has become involved with these harmful substances. In fact, in most cases, these substances are used as an escape from other, deeper problems within the person's life. In this section, you'll learn how to make the hard decisions necessary for facilitating change and ultimately helping your family or yourself. You'll also find information on various resources, rehabilitation centers, support groups, and counseling services that can support you in your efforts. Kyle's story gives you a glimpse of how substance abuse ruined his father's life, and how his addiction and violence devastated his family. Therese's story gives you an idea of how drugs and incarceration robbed her from having a father in her life.

**Question 10:**
**I've been turning to drugs or alcohol to deal with the problems in my life. What can I do and where can I go to get help?**

Using drugs and alcohol is a common and unhealthy way to cope with your problems and the stresses in your life. It can even start to feel like it has taken control over certain aspects of your life. Assert control over the things you're able to and take care of yourself. Focus on your strengths, accomplishments and motivations in life so that the stress doesn't overwhelm you. Talk to someone, an adult you care about—chances are they want the best for you. It's good to have people in your life for support, even though they might not understand exactly what you are going through. It can also be helpful to talk through your problems and find out healthy ways to cope with them with someone who has a lot of experience and knowledge. If you are at a school that has a counselor, talk to them, or go to your nearest boys and girls club or community center and they can refer you to a counselor/therapist or a case manager. A case manager is someone that can help you with goals that you have for yourself. If you have goals to get into a four-year university, get medical health care, find a place to stay, stay sober, etc., case managers can help you move forward. If you want to talk about your drug and alcohol abuse or about your problems with other youth that can relate to your experiences then a support group might work for you; a case manager and counselor can refer you to one. Also, do things that you enjoy, this can help you get your mind off of whatever you are going through. Some positive things to do can be going to the gym, for a jog, or to the beach, writing or drawing, playing hoops or strike-outs, learning how to knit, joining a club or organization, getting involved in your community or a youth center, or volunteering and taking a leadership position.



## MY STORY

### Kyle's Story
By Kyle Sporleder

During his life, a boy expects to receive love, happiness, and security from his parents. He expects his parents to be dependable and to provide him with the aid and guidance necessary to thrive. In my life, these expectations were never met.

My father met and married my mom when he was 20 and she was 23. He was a non-graduate of high school, unemployed, and without his own family to support him. When he met my mom, I think he saw his anchor, a person to help him hold his life together. They stayed happily married for about a year and a half. Then he began to drink heavily and exhibit bi-polar tendencies, jolly one minute, and violent the next. One night, after coming home from a bar, he pulled my mom out of bed and started screaming at her, blaming her for all of his problems. My mother

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**Question 11:**
**My father is using drugs/ alcohol and I'm worried he's becoming addicted. I don't want to get him in trouble. How do I get him the help he needs?**

Depending on the stage of addiction your parent is at there are a variety of ways in which you may approach him. If you've just recently started to notice his drug use and you're fairly certain that he's just begun using, then your best option may be simply sitting down and talking to him yourself. If you have a strong, communicative relationship with your parent then this may seem like an appealing route to take. However, if you feel uncomfortable engaging your parent in such a conversation, then it might be better to talk to a relative or family friend and asking them if they'd be willing to talk to him. Regardless of who makes the approach, the essential part is that your parent recognizes the danger of his drug use and how it threatens the stability and happiness of your family. If this approach works, then he may consent to attending counseling and rehabilitation. As with all problems, it's best to stop it at the inception. Question 13 considers the possibility that your appeal will fail, things might even get worse, and what additional options you have in that case.

**Question 12:**
**A family member has an addiction and has been stealing money from us and lying about it. this has been very stressful—what should I do?**

It sounds like this addiction is no longer just their problem. If you want this family member to stop lying, stealing and using, know that the desire to change has to come from that person. Confronting that person might be very difficult as they may have feelings of embarrassment, shame, pride and guilt for what they are doing. Basically, you can't be in control of anything that is happening to that family member or what is happening to the rest of you as a result of their addiction. What you do have control over is your life and taking care of yourself. If you haven't already: hide your money, valuables, bank statements, and anything else that has your account information and passwords. You can try writing little notes to them stating how serious their addiction is and how it is affecting you. If you don't feel comfortable giving the notes to them then you can place them around the house where they might look for your money. If the situation is stressing you out to the point that you can't concentrate or remain motivated about any aspect of your life—school, family or social life—then get help. If you are not taking care of your physical health and well-being—eating right, sleeping, etc.—talk to someone. Again, you can always talk to a school counselor or have them refer you to a therapist/counselor or case manager at another community agency. If your school doesn't have a counselor, go to your nearest community agency. If you feel like you want to talk to other youth who are going through the same things, there are support groups for those whose family members have an addiction. If you want to get information and educated on what your family member is going through there are a lot of community organizations that can

**Kyle's Story**
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tried to calm him, but he was beyond reason. He grabbed her by the hair, and threw her down the stairs. She was 7 months pregnant with me at the time. The neighbors called the police, and upon their arrival, my mother was put into an ambulance and my father was arrested. This event began my family's long and painful journey of domestic violence.

By the time I was 11, my father had been arrested many more times. He and my mother argued regularly, sometimes with the dispute ending in violence. Though he had stopped drinking, he was abusing drugs and often invited his addict "friends" to stay with us.I didn't understand why my family had to be so unhappy. I wanted to talk to someone about how I felt, but I couldn't think of whom. I thought about talking to my friends, but I felt embarrassed. I also thought about telling my church's pastor but I was scared that something horrible would happen. I had seen on TV what happened to dysfunctional families: they would be split up. I didn't want to leave my mom or my little sister and brother.

So I decided to talk to my favorite relatives, my uncle and aunt. I called my aunt, and the following day, she and my uncle came to pick me up, telling my mom that they just wanted to take me to the movies. After we left the house, I told them everything. I told them about my parents' continuous arguments. I told them about how scared my siblings and I were. They listened to me silently, without expression. Then, my uncle spoke. He told me not to worry about anything, that he would handle it. I was so immensely

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help you with this or point you in the right direction. If you want to provide help and give information for rehabilitation to your family member, call an information line or ask a substance abuse agency to give you the resources that you need.

**Question 13:**
**When my father uses drugs/alcohol he becomes very abusive. I don't want to go to foster care if I try to get help. What can I do and where can I go to get help without getting anyone into trouble?**

Above all, remember that you are not to blame; you are a survivor of abuse and have the right to be safe. If you're being abused and you don't want to talk to anyone because you're worried you'll end up in foster care—or that you'll get other adult family members in trouble by speaking out—please read our answer to question 3 in section one. You always have the option of reporting the abuse to child protective services (CPS) by calling CPS yourself or by telling a mandated reporter what's happening. You can also call an anonymous domestic violence hotline if you just want to talk to someone trained in domestic violence. These people can also often refer you to emergency shelters if things get really bad at home.

One approach that focuses more on repairing your family is to organize an intervention, which would include family members and friends sitting down with the abuser and telling him/her how they feel. At this time, it would also be beneficial to explain why change is needed and how the participants can help. If the intervention proves to be ineffective, then another option is to seek professional help. This might consist of attending family therapy or asking your abusive parent to attend counseling and/or to complete a residential or outpatient substance abuse program.

## MY STORY

**Kyle's Story** | Continued from page 34

relieved. Finally, someone was going to help me.

Oh, was I wrong. The next day my mom confronted me. She smacked me across the face and started yelling at me. She was furious that I thought I could just spread "our family's business" and do so without telling her. When my dad heard what she was yelling about he beat me.

I'll never forget that night. I cried myself to sleep, cupping my wet bruised face. No one was going to help me. My mom had convinced my aunt that there was nothing wrong. She had lied out of shame, and her lies had condemned me. I was a prisoner of my own family.

On the morning of my eighth grade graduation I woke up at dawn to get ready. My mom helped my sister Lindsay and my brother Shane get dressed. My sister wore a long, flowing dress with a soft blue hue, and my brother was in a navy blue suit; he even had a little clip-on tie. Honestly, they looked like two miniature angels, though I'd never tell them that.

My mom was trying to get ready too, but my father impeded her progress. He was insisting he needed money to "fix the car," though in actuality, he wanted to buy drugs. By this time, he was using cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin. As they fought, I simply sat in a chair with my brother and sister, watching them. The normalcy with which we treated my parents fighting now appalls me.

My father attempted to wrench my mother's money out of her hands but she pulled away from him and ran outside to the car. I followed her, and so did my siblings, but my father grabbed them as they neared the door. He said that they weren't going, and that the only person that was going to be present at my graduation was my "bitch" mom. I hated him for doing that to me. My mom and I got into the car and drove to my school. She was crying, but for some reason, I wasn't. When we got there, I ran inside the church, where the ceremony would be held. I didn't turn back to see if my mom followed.

Twenty minutes later, as my classmates and I were lining up for the graduation to begin, I heard a scream, my mother's scream. I ran outside, along with many other people, and on the steps of the church stood my parents, arguing. Apparently, my father had decided to come to my graduation, but only with the intention of getting money from my mother. When she refused to relent, he took the camcorder from her. Maybe he thought that he could get some money for it. After all, he needed his drugs. But he was my dad and that was the camcorder that was supposed to record my graduation. Luckily, when he left, he forgot Lindsay and Shane, so they were able to stay.

After the ceremony, many people congratulated me for my awards. A large group of teachers, friends and families, including my own, headed to a restaurant to celebrate. When we got there, I excused myself from the group. I needed a moment alone. My mom had apologized to me, but I was so angry about my father, so sick of the hell that my family was being exposed to daily. I sat down and cried.

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A final option includes reporting the abuse to a probation/parole officer or the police (or CPS as discussed above and in question 3). Although there is a huge stigma attached to taking this path, in some cases, nothing short of the most extreme options can keep you safe or actually help the abuser change their ways. We are not advocating that the first thing you do is to call the police or CPS but remember that you are not to blame for this situation and you have the right to protect yourself if someone else is harming you. In the event that you do end up calling the authorities, you shouldn't feel guilty for your choice. You'll never truly know if change is possible until all options are tried and everything possible is done to help yourself and your family.

### Question 14:

**My mother is trying to stop abusing drugs/alcohol, but still suffers from occasional relapses. how can I help her stay on the right track?**

Fighting an addiction takes immense effort, and sometimes an addicted person will find that she feels hopeless in fighting it. At times like these, it is pertinent that you offer all the support you can. Although it may seem that the storm has passed now that your mother has decided to pursue a clean, drug-free, happy life with you, the road to actually freeing oneself from addiction is a difficult one. Relapse is common in that process of staying clean; don't despair. Your mom has already shown an interest and willingness in getting clean, and this is the most significant part. No one can be forced to change her life; she must make that choice herself. Therefore, what's needed now is your ongoing support, which can entail anything from spending plenty of time with her to simply telling her that you know she can persevere. Some tips for helping her keep clean (which might seem obvious) include: ensuring that she does not come in contact with the previously abused substance; keeping her away from anything related to her addiction (drug dealers, other addicts, drug paraphernalia); helping her find a new, healthier "habit" such as biking, swimming, playing basketball, writing, painting, or really anything she has an interest in or used to enjoy doing before the addiction; making sure she maintains her health (good diet, exercise, meditation); and most of all, letting her know that you support her and that you're 100% confident that she can beat this addiction. Help her recognize her strengths and obstacles that she has overcome. This can help in having her focus on her future and move forward. Remember, she's fighting this addiction in order to change



## MY STORY

**Kyle's Story** | Continued from page 35

During the next year, my father continued to physically abuse my mother and me, as well as psychologically assault my brother and sister. Finally there came a moment when I was so fed up that I fought back. My father had been trying to force my mom to give him money and they ended up struggling. Lindsey and Shane were watching and crying. I tackled my father. I managed to get him off my mom momentarily, but after hitting me a few times, he turned back to her. I ran to the phone and threatened to call the police. My parents shouted for me to stop, both of them. I never knew why my mom had always protected my father all of those times that the police had come for him. But, now I know. She protected him out of love, misplaced love, but still love. Afterward, my mom managed to calm down my dad, and then she told me to pack my stuff. She said that if I stayed there my father would hurt me and that she couldn't do anything about it. She drove me to my friend Darrell's house, gave me 100 dollars, and drove back home, to the home that was no longer mine. I stood there silently with Darrell's arm across my shoulders, and I cried.

For over a year and a half I lived with friends, first with Darrell and his father, then with two brothers, Michael and Anthony, and their dad. My gratitude toward these friends and their families is immeasurable. But having no steady family support of my own created great stress. My mother tried to drop off some money or food monthly but it wasn't nearly enough. Then she stopped visiting so often. I ended up working two jobs. My grades dropped so much that eventually I quit working so I could bring them back up. I was only able to get by because Darrell lent me money. My situation seemed dire. However, I got back in contact with my mom and she started to help me out again. She even brought my brother and sister to see me. I had missed them so much but my joy at seeing them dissipated when they told me about the torment my father was

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for herself, but knowing that she's doing it for you too can give her that extra reserve of strength that she needs to ultimately win the battle.

## How are you going to go about having a successful future and overcoming having a parent in jail or prison?

Well for me that thought had not come about 'til I was older and my dad no longer was in jail. I still think about ways to have a successful future and honestly I haven't come up with the perfect plan, but I have been making little progress step by step trying to stay positive and doing positive things. I kinda look at it like "I don't want him or me to be locked up in a cage" and the fact that the criminal justice system will not have a problem taking your life away is another thing that keeps my head straight. Really I think you can make the best of anything, if you use your situation as a motivation. (Demel)

I don't really know what I want to be or what to do with my life, but basically understanding that the past is over and now I can move forward is what motivates me most to do better. Knowing that I can help others get through this and share my own story is also helping me change my future for the better. (Zoe)

I guess not doing the same mistake that my dad did and show the world that it's not always "like father like son." That just because he messed up doesn't mean I will. I want to show the world that I can do everything like everyone else and just because I have a parent in jail doesn't mean I'm any different than the other kids who don't have parents in jail. (Luis)

I'm going to look at their wrongs and see what they were doing and acknowledge that it was the wrong thing and know not to go that way. I'm going the opposite way and have a positive outlook on life. Also my church will be a big help because they know the struggles that I have and they are dedicated to helping me have a successful future no matter what. (Tiffany)

*My mixed feelings tortured me. When I was younger, my father had told me about how horrible prison was. And I had just sent him there for at least a year. My heart burst with guilt as well as relief.*

**Kyle's Story**
Continued from page 36

causing them. I felt like I had abandoned them. I begged my mother to let me come back home, but she said no, that I'd only make things worse. Eventually, I went to my house anyway. I expected it to be a short visit, but it ended up changing my life.

When I arrived, my parents were fighting, so I instinctively called the police. When they got there, they took my father away. Apparently, there had been an active court order for him to stay away from my mom, my siblings, and me. He had violated a restraining order that I hadn't even known existed. My mixed feelings tortured me. When I was younger, my father had told me about how horrible prison was. And I had just sent him there for at least a year. My heart burst with guilt as well as relief.

Today I'm living back at home. Lindsay and Shane are growing up fairly well by my judgment, performing well in school, making tons of friends, and being somewhat kind to me when they're not pestering. Interaction with my mother is improving. She seems to be finally realizing that her love has blinded her. My father is out of jail now, but I haven't seen him. I'm trying to get a restraining order against him for me and my siblings.

During his life, a boy expects many things. When a boy grows to be a young man, and after he has endured struggle, pain, and disappointment, he realizes that his expectations were naïve. But now that young man has hopes and dreams. He is no longer naïve; he knows that those hopes and dreams might not necessarily come true. The future is still uncertain, and all he can do is hope for the best.

## San Francisco Resources

**Alcoholics Anonymous**
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org
Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) offers support services for alcoholics, their families and friends. The only requirement is a desire to stop drinking, there are no membership fees. AA is worldwide with meetings in almost every community. You can find times and places of local AA meetings or events by contacting a nearby central office, intergroup or answering service.

**East Bay Intergroup Central Office**
295 27th St.
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 839-8900
www.eastbayaa.org
Neighborhood: West Oakland

**Intercounty Fellowship**
1821 Sacramento St.
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 674-1821
www.aasf.org
Neighborhood: Western Addition

**Oficina Central Hispana**
383 Valencia St.
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 554-8811
Neighborhood: Mission

**Bayview Hunters Point Foundation**
This organization is already listed in our guide. These are their specific resources for substance abuse treatment.

**Adult Substance Abuse Treatment** (detoxification and methadone maintenance or detox)
1625 Carroll Street
San Francisco CA 94124
(415) 822-8200

**Youth Substance Abuse Treatment** (outpatient, partial hospitalization/day treatment)
5015 3rd Street
San Francisco CA 94124
(415) 822-1585

**Colvin House and Buster's Place**
**Programs of the Haight Ashbury Free Clinics**
(415) 746-1940
Colvin House and Buster's Place are both located at the Integrated Care Center, which provides primary medical care, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling and intensive case management all under one roof. Colvin House is the only Women's Detox Center in San Francisco and serves 2,900 women a year. Buster's Place is a homeless drop-in center that serves 34,000 people a year.

**Friendship House Association of American Indians**
56 Julian Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 865-0964
Neighborhood: Mission
Their substance abuse services are not strictly for American Indians, and are open to both men and women. They provide residential long-term treatment services for six months to one year, as well as a 30 day program.



## MY STORY

# Survivor

By Therese Rodriguez

I can recall, vividly, nights when my dad, brother and I were home watching movies, and my dad would say those little words that started my heart racing with fear. "I'm going to the store. I'll be right back." I knew from experience that once he left chances were he wouldn't come back. I would cry and cry and beg him, "Daddy, don't go, if you really love me you won't leave us, you don't have to go." But he always left. Then would come that dreaded phone call saying how sorry he was that he wouldn't be around for awhile.

My dad had an addiction to crack and cocaine that was stronger than me and my family. He was in and out of jail, prison for all of my childhood and adolescent years, up until I was about 16 years old; at that point he made his home in Milwau-

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**Harbor House**
407 9th Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 503-3029
Neighborhood: SOMA
Harbor House serves persons with co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders and provides residential beds for clients' children. In addition to providing long-term substance abuse treatment (more than 30 days), Harbor House is also a Halfway House.

**Western Addition Recovery House**
940 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
Client Intake: (415) 487-5647
Western Addition Recovery House is a 20-bed substance abuse treatment program designed for African-American men. Counseling services, substance abuse education, job skills training, and reading classes are all offered in a culturally appropriate setting, leading to substance abuse recovery and personal development.

## East Bay Resources

**Alameda Family Services**
2325 Clement Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
Hotline: (510) 522-8363
Intake: (510) 522-8363 x103
www.alamedafs.org
Alameda Family Services provides a mix of mental health and substance abuse services. The care is outpatient treatment. They focus on teenagers and people who have been in the criminal justice system. They accept state financed insurance but NOT Medicaid and fees are on a sliding scale.

**Kaiser Permanente**
**Chemical Dependency Recovery Program**
969 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 251-0121
Kaiser Permanente Chemical Dependency Recovery Program provides substance abuse treatment, detoxification, and buprenorphine services. The care is out patient and partial hospitalization/ day treatment. They focus on teenagers and people with co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders. They accept Medicaid and Medicare.

**Narcotics Anonymous**
(510) 536-4760
www.na.org
Narcotics Anonymous is an international, community-based association of recovering drug addicts with more than 43,900 weekly meetings in over 127 countries worldwide. They provide counseling and rehabilitation. There are no fees or dues for membership and they also provide a recovery process and a support network.

**Survivor**
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kee, Wisconsin, where he last did time at. When I was a little girl and he would disappear, my mom would tell me he was working, "in the fields", I think she would say, and couldn't come home. The thought that lingered in my mind was, "Why didn't he know and tell us ahead of time if he was going to be away for awhile working?" I listened more closely to phone call conversations my mom was having with my dad and other people and I figured out where he really was.

For awhile I still played along because I didn't know how to bring it up, but it eventually came out in the open. That's when my family started to really talk bad about my dad. My grandparents, uncles and aunts on my mom's side would say, "He's not a dad to you, he's not helping you, he doesn't do anything for you. He doesn't help your mom; look where he's at. He's more like your dad." They would say this referring to my grandpa or uncle. Everything they said to me or anyone else about my dad got me very angry and built resentment towards them. My dad was my everything, my shining star; I was the firstborn, daddy's little girl. No matter how much he hurt me and my family, he was still my dad, and I didn't like when anyone said otherwise. I always protected and defended my dad; when he was around, me and my brother were always nice to him because we saw how my mom's family treated him.

My brother and I never visited my dad when he was locked up. I'm not sure if it was my mom's or my dad's idea for us not to go, but we never questioned why we didn't visit him, I guess I always assumed he

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**Cole House of Antioch**
1408-A Street
Antioch, CA 94509
(925) 978-2873
Cole House offers an inpatient, residential substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation program (long-term; more than 30 days) for individuals with co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders. Services are offered in English and Spanish. They accept males only, ages 18-56 and serve criminal justice clients (parolees and people serving alternative sentences or those mandated to do a drug rehab program).

**REACH Project of Antioch**
1915 D Street
Antioch, CA 94509
(925) 754-3673
The REACH Project offers various substance abuse treatment services, including an outpatient program with bilingual and payment assistance options. Hours: Tuesday through Friday from noon to 8 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Monday by appointment.

**Center for Recovery of Concord**
2740 Grant Street
Concord CA 94520
(925) 674-4100
The Center for Recovery offers detoxification and substance abuse treatment services for adults, including a hospital inpatient program, an outpatient program, and partial hospitalization/day treatment. Psychiatric services are offered for children as well as adults, but substance abuse treatment is only for adults. Payment options include self-payment or any type of health insurance.

**RMS/Crossroads Treatment Center of Concord**
2449 Pacheco Street
Concord, CA 94520
(925) 682-5704
Crossroads Treatment Center offers detoxification and substance abuse treatment services for both men and women, including both a short-term (30 days or less) and long-term (more than 30 days) residential treatment program, an outpatient program, and a partial hospitalization/day treatment service.

*was still my dad, and I didn't like when anyone said otherwise.*

**Survivor**
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was very far away. I remember feeling stressed out because it was hard for me to write him. I'm sure it hurt him that we never really wrote him a letter or sent him anything, but there was nothing I had to say to him.

Each time my dad went away it grew more and more painful for me to have to be without my dad and each time apart from us grew longer. When I was in fourth grade, I believe, my parents finally got divorced. My dad was sent to prison in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and when he was released for the final time he decided to stay out there, believing that he needed to get away from his old lifestyle and bad habits in the city. He came back to visit us and apologize for everything he did to us and asked for our forgiveness. At the time I really couldn't respond and express how I really felt about it all, and I just hugged him, as he cried and I told him that it was okay. His other intention in coming down to see us was to have us move up to Milwaukee with him, but none of us was ready to change our lives around to fit his new lifestyle. We visited him before making our final decision to stay in San Francisco, where we really felt was our home. I was hurt that in the end he chose to live out there without us, I guess I had always assumed that he would eventually come back and make up for lost time. Then I figured it wouldn't make that big of a difference since I was used to him not being around anyway. He is now married and is having his "second chance at being a dad"; he is the caretaker of my niece, while my sister does time in prison.

My dad's absence robbed me of my childhood. Since as far back

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SECTION 41

# Visiting a Parent in Prison or Jail

# Visiting a Parent in Prison or Jail

It can be hard to visit a parent who is locked up. You might not even want to. But if you do want to, we hope this section will help you figure out how. If you can't visit for whatever reason, you can stay in touch with your parent by writing letters or talking on the phone.

Generally here's how prison phone systems work: 1) you can't call an inmate in prison—they have to call you; 2) phone calls are usually limited to fifteen minutes; 3) often, inmates can only make collect calls, although some prisons allow inmates to pay for their own calls. Either way, rates are way higher than normal phone calls. Even though phone calls can be expensive, they can be a good way to keep in touch with your parent if you're able to afford them. And remember, stamps are cheap and your parent can receive as many letters as you want to write.

**If you do want to VISIT, read this section carefully.**

There may be lots of obstacles to visiting: where you live, transportation, your age, getting permission, etc. On top of all this, prisons and jails are confusing. Many have different rules. Visiting someone you care about in jail or prison can be an overwhelming experience. You might leave angry, upset, or sad. At some jails and prisons, there are only non-contact visits—visits that take place through glass, or where they only allow one hug. This can be stressful, especially for younger children, so if you plan to visit your parent with a young child, it might help if someone explains to them what to expect ahead of time.

Even if you don't have younger siblings, you need to prepare YOURSELF for the visit. Guards are often rude. Sometimes it seems like they look for an excuse to turn visitors away—like little dress code violations. Don't give them an excuse! If you do, you might not get in, even if you traveled hundreds of miles to visit. Getting turned away at the door is really frustrating. Just make sure you're doing everything "right" according to their rules—even if they seem pointless.

It's critical to remember that each jail and prison has different visiting rules. Even if you follow everything we say in this guide, the best way to make sure your visit happens is to call the prison or jail before you visit. Use the worksheet we provide at the end of this section to help you ask the right questions and get all the information you need in one place.

In the rest of this section, we give you as much information as we can about visiting in general. Check out the



## MY STORY

### Sunday Morning

By Zoe Willmott

Every Sunday morning I would wake up to a fresh glass of ripe orange juice, that tasted so sweet, but I never could quite keep it down. Tension knotted in the depths of my stomach, anxiety that made me shake. An interesting mixture of nervousness and excitement flowed through my pulsating veins as I stepped into the back seat of our silver/gray beat-up Toyota. We whizzed past the dead brown stench of dried hills, covered completely with black and white cows, blurring in my sleepy eyes, followed by the heat of still air as we sat in traffic for what must have been hours. We drove through an army base, a training camp that existed right across the street from my destination: my mother. She was hidden behind barbed wire, metal detectors, cold steel, shackles, and clanking chains that kept her inside of this place, of this prison.

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*Visiting someone you care about in jail or prison can be an overwhelming experience. You might leave angry, upset, or sad...You need to prepare yourself for the visit...*

sections for visiting Bay Area county jails and California state prisons. For a personal perspective, Zoe tells her story about visiting her mom every Sunday in prison.

### Question 15:
### How do I locate my parent?

First of all, know that if your parent was just arrested, admitted, or transferred to a jail or prison, information about them may not be available for about a week. The length of time depends on where they were arrested and/or are being held. If it's been longer than seven days, use the procedures below to locate them. You can still try to use these instructions if it's been less than seven days, but just be aware that they might not yet show up on any official records.

**County Jail:** If your parent was given a sentence of under one year or is awaiting trial, they are probably being held in a county jail. California is divided into fifty-eight counties. If you know what county your parent is in you can usually access the county website at www.(add the county's initials)gov.org (for example, San Francisco County is www.sfgov.org, Alameda County is www.acgov.org, and Santa Clara County is www.sccgov.org. Once you are in the county website you can follow the information for the County Jail or Sheriff's Department to possibly locate the inmate's information. Inmate information can also be obtained by phone through the jail's administrative booking unit. If you call, be prepared for a long wait because these numbers are usually very busy. The other option is to visit the administrative booking office. You should be able to find the address and phone number if you go to the county's web page or call 411. **No matter which way you try, the most important information to get is the phone number or address of the jail's "administrative booking unit" and the personal file number for your parent, as these numbers are the key tool for locating an inmate in the jail system.**

**California State Prison:** If your parent has been sentenced to a California state prison, call the CDCR Identification Unit at (916) 445-6713, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You must provide your mom or dad's full name and

### Sunday Morning
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As my dad and I pulled up to the front gates on those Sunday mornings, my six-year-old body became restless.

Form after form to fill out, line after line to wait in. The processing room to get into the prison visiting room was filled with antsy families, some from as far away as other countries. Little children anxiously ran around, and their parents were yelled at for not keeping them under control. Then, of course, were the teary-eyed folks who had been sent home because they didn't follow the dress code perfectly, or whatever other reasons the guards decided they needed to send someone home that day. Confirmation that I was not smuggling drugs into the prison as a four-year-old, metal detectors, and even more forms to fill out while waiting in even more lines, took up a good portion of the morning. Then, finally, being escorted by multiple guards, watching all of us like hungry vultures, ready to swoop down at any moment. And then, the visiting room, which brought even more waiting. Staring at those thick beige doors, desperately hoping that every time the red light came on, my mom would be the one to walk out. Eventually, she would, but each time I stood there waiting, I feared that she would never come out to see me again. She quickly walked through the doors, standing tall at five foot even. Her short, dyed-red hair bobbing at her shoulders, and kind face immediately put me at ease. I remember rushing across the room to get to her, and holding on so tight I thought I'd never let go. That is until a guard came along, staring us down, his eyes working like pliers, determined to pull us apart. Those visits flew by so quickly; I can hardly recall the time we actually spent

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full birthday (month, date and year), or their CDCR identification number if you know it. This unit can only provide you with the current location and CDCR identification number for the offender. They don't have future release date information. If your parent was just admitted or transferred, information may not be available about them for seven business days.

**Federal Prison:** If your parent has been sentenced to a federal prison, you can search online with first and last name, using the "inmate locator" tool on the Federal Bureau of Prisons website. Go to www.bop.gov/iloc2/LocateInmate.jsp.

## Question 16:
### How do I get on the visitors list?

After you find out where your parent is, it's up to them to put you and the person who will take you to visit them on their visiting list. The inmate almost always has to start the process, whether they are in a state prison, federal prison, or county jail. Some county jails don't require you to be pre-approved prior to a visit, but many do, so call and ask first.

**County Jail:** The process for getting on a visitors list varies between counties. Some counties, like San Francisco, don't require that you apply to get onto a pre-approved visitors list. The best thing to do is call the Sheriff's Department or jail in the county in which your parent is being held, and ask if you, or the adult who is taking you to visit (if you're a minor), needs to be pre-approved.

**California State Prison:** Inmates have to sign a Visitor Questionnaire (CDC Form 106) and send it to any adults who are going to visit. All adult visitors must complete the questionnaire and return it to the Visiting Sergeant by mail. Youth under eighteen don't have to fill out the form, but make sure the person who's taking you to visit fills it out. The prison visiting staff must approve visitors before they visit. This should take approximately thirty working days. Failure to provide all requested information might result in the request being either denied or delayed.

**Federal Prison:** The process is similar to state prison. The inmate gives a list of proposed visitors to staff, who investigate the proposed visitors before putting anyone on the list. An initial visiting list is ordinarily established within a few days. It includes immediate family members approved to visit. Additional family members and friends may be added following investigation. (These investigations can take a long time, but if you're visiting a parent, you should be able to get onto the 'immediate family member' list. If for some reason you or an adult who is taking you to visit is being investigated, be prepared for a long wait). When your parent arrives at a federal prison, they receive an institution handbook that has all the visiting procedures. Your parent is responsible for giving each visitor the visiting guidelines and directions to the prison.

## Sunday Morning
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together. I do remember just wanting to sit there and talk forever, wanting her to know what my life was like, and also the curiosity in my head of what it must be like for her to be stuck in this place, but of course, I never got around to those questions. I was too scared to know. I didn't want to think about what she was going through, so I left it up to my imagination. Still, the questions stayed in my mind: what was prison like? How did they treat her? How did she survive here? I didn't want to make our only time together depressing so I just avoided asking the questions. Instead, I would tell her about school, about my teachers and my friends. Her smooth voice and calming tone made me feel like I was back at home, just for a second. She knew how to make me giggle and laugh, making the experience of visiting as enjoyable as it possibly could be. She would tell jokes and tickle me (only she knew my most ticklish spots).

Occasionally I brought my best friend with me to visit my mom, so I could bring the different parts of my life together in the same beige visiting room. I was never ashamed that my mom was in prison. I was more proud than anything else, because I could show people that no matter what she's done in her past, she's still my mom. I felt the need to teach people that being incarcerated doesn't make you a bad person. Whether you are guilty or not, prisoners are still human beings, just like anyone else. My mom was my mom no matter what, and her incarceration never changed that. I was proud that she stood up for herself, that she didn't let the prison environment become an excuse to be depressed. She

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### Question 17
**How old do I have to be to visit alone?**

**County Jail:** In county jails, the age requirement varies. In most, you have to be eighteen to visit alone. (In a few, you only have to be sixteen). Otherwise, you have to have a parent or legal guardian with you and bring papers to prove your relationship with the adult who brings you to visit. In some cases, the written policy is different than what actually happens. This is frustrating, but it happens, so you should be aware of it.

**California State Prison:** Children under eighteen are only allowed to visit when they are accompanied by an approved adult visitor such as a parent or court-appointed legal guardian, or they have written, notarized permission to visit from the child's parent or legal guardian and a certified birth certificate or embossed abstract of birth. Notarized letters must have the notary stamp on the original document; it must not be stapled or attached as an amendment and must be updated each calendar year.

**Federal Prison:** Children under sixteen must have an adult with them when they visit, and their parent or guardian must approve their being on the visiting list. Some institutions have programs for young children during visitation, so if you have a younger brother or sister it's good to find out about these programs.

### Question 18:
**I don't have a car. How can I get there?**

The Center for Restorative Justice Works has a program called Get on the Bus which started out by providing transportation for children to visit their mothers in California prisons on Mother's Day. The Chowchilla Family Express was launched at the end of 2006, and provides free monthly transportation to families (including children, spouses, siblings, parents, and other family members) of women in Chowchilla prisons. They have buses each month from northern and southern California to Chowchilla. They are also starting to provide transportation to some men's prisons in California.

**Center for Restorative Justice Works** (Central Office)
5411 Camellia Ave.
North Hollywood, CA 91601
(818) 980-7714
www.getonthebus.us

**Chowchilla Family Express**
1-866-91-VISIT (1-866-918-4748)
www.familyexpress.us
Contact: Eric DeBode

**Get On the Bus**
**Northern California Office**
1125 Ferry St.
Martinez, CA 94533
(925) 335-9314
Contact: Sister Claire Williams

**Public Transportation**
Many people take a public bus or train to visit someone in jail or prison. If you have access to the web and live in the San Francisco Bay

### Sunday Morning
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never let them take her spirit, which always amazed me.

That visiting room holds so many of my childhood memories, it's almost like a part of me grew up there. I still recall the first time I got yelled at by a guard. I was four years old and I'd gone over to say hello to another prisoner, a friend of my mom's who I had also known. Of course, this type of behavior is "unacceptable" in the visiting room, because you may only have any form of contact with the inmate you are signed up to visit. Now, how was a four-year-old supposed to understand this? How was I to comprehend that it was not allowed for me to say hello to someone I knew? That experience taught me to fear guards and police officers, and eventually to hate them. I grew up being scared of the people in uniform who I had to be around every weekend.

I also spent a considerable amount of time without my mom in the visiting room. In the kids play area, where she wasn't allowed, I would go and play with other kids while my parents had their visit. I drew pictures, and played with toys. Some of the older girls used to braid my hair, and we would all just try and make the best of the situation. Knowing we all had something in common made it easier. There was no awkward period to get over the question of where your parents are. Occasionally, they would have someone directing an arts and crafts project. While this was all fun for me, I often sat there staring through the window, back out at my mom. All I longed for was to be by her side.

With my mom, we talked, we laughed, we cried, until it was time to say

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Area, you can use the website 511.org to help plan your route. Centerforce has a lot of information about California prisons and jails all over the Bay Area (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, Marin, and Santa Clara Counties). They list buses and trains that go to the jails and prisons in California. Like all information on the web, sometimes it's outdated, but it's a good place to start: www.centerforce.org/families.

### Question 19:

**This is confusing. Is there anyone who can just help me figure out what I need to do so I can visit?**

We agree—the rules are confusing. Don't feel bad about not understanding them. You'll eventually figure it out. Ask that smart friend, your social worker, or another adult to help you. They probably won't know all the rules either, but share this guide with them—they might be able to help you read through it and understand everything. And here are a few more resources to make it easier: If you're visiting someone in a **California State Prison** see our list at the end of this section.

If you live in **San Francisco County** and your parent is being represented by the Public Defender's Office, call Linnette Peralta Haynes at (415) 734-3294. Linnette serves families of public defender clients. Part of her job is to help children visit their parents in San Francisco jails and provide referrals to services as needed.

If you live in **Contra Costa**, **Santa Clara or Sonoma Counties**, the Friends Outside offices below can help you understand the regulations and/or set up a visit, and provide other services as described. You can also contact the Friends Outside National Office.

**Friends Outside**
**National Organization**
P.O. Box 4085
Stockton, CA 95204
(209) 955-0701
E-mail: gnewby@friendsoutside.org
www.friendsoutside.org

**Friends Outside in**
**Santa Clara County**
551 Stockton Ave.
San Jose, CA 95126
(408) 295-6033
www.friendsoutsideinscc.org
Friends Outside in Santa Clara County provides a variety of services to inmates, their families, and their children. Friends Outside in Santa Clara County can help you understand how to locate and visit a family member in jail or prison in Santa Clara County. They also provide notary services. They do not provide transportation, but may be able to connect you with other organizations that will provide transportation. Friends Outside also gives out emergency food and clothing, personal hygiene supplies, and household items such as dishes, pots, pans, and bedding through its drop-in center. For families who qualify (this depends on the zip code you live in), they can provide financial assistance and housing referrals.

Youth Programs serve children ages six to seventeen and include mentoring, after school programs, summer camps, and a Girl Scout Troop. Friends Outside offers a home visitation program for parents (including teens) who are pregnant or have a baby and have had a family member incarcerated. To sign up for this program you can call the main number and ask for the Steps Ahead program.



## MY STORY

**Sunday Morning** | Continued from page 46

goodbye. Saying goodbye to my mom was the one thing I swore I would never be able to do again, yet every week I was forced to. Those goodbyes, when everyone got quiet, all the mothers with tears sliding down their cheeks, mirroring their sobbing children. I would hold on to her for as long as possible, we repeated "I Love Yous" and" Goodbyes" to each other. Even today, going back to that visiting room makes my eyes tear up, just watching other children desperately clinging on to their own mothers, just how I used to be. I just left her with the strongest hope in the depths of my heart that it would not be the last time I said good-bye to her. Leaving my mom was the hardest thing I've ever had to do, yet it was the only option I had. I wanted so much to take her home with me, show her my room, my school, my friends, my life. Every time I had a chance to blow out birthday candles, or make a wish in a fountain, it was for her to come home with me. All I desired was for that missing piece to be filled in, for her to be able to complete my puzzle. But she couldn't. Which is why I will never forget those Sunday morning visits, my one chance to be a part of her life.

**Friends Outside in Sonoma County**
**Main Adult Detention Facility-Lobby**
2777 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 526-7318
www.friendsoutsidesonoma.org
**Mailing Address:**
PO Box 3905 Santa Rosa, CA 95402
Friends Outside in Sonoma County has a drop-in center in the lobby of the Main Adult Detention Facility at 2777 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa. They provide help dealing with the system, including helping family members communicate information to inmates, getting signatures on legal papers from inmates, cashing checks for inmates, and providing information about community resources and services to inmates and their family members. Friends Outside gives reading glasses, books, and greeting cards to inmates, and provides conflict resolution workshops to inmates. They also have a program for incarcerated parents in which the parents can read books to their children on tape, and they send the tape and book to the child.

**Friends Outside in Contra Costa County**
1127 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 228-0644
friendsoutside@aol.com
Friends Outside in Contra Costa County provides camping for children, holiday gifts and meals, emergency food pantry, clothing, money management, employment assistance, public education, self-help support group, case management, information and referrals.

**Celebrating at our Holiday Party, December 2007.**

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Do you think your parent's incarceration was your fault?

No, I don't think so. I can't even blame my mom because she didn't intend for it to be that way. She did her best to keep us alright. (Anthony)

Until recently, I entirely blamed my mother's incarceration on myself. I think this is very common for young kids, because I felt helpless, and as though there was nothing I could do to help her out. Without any particular person to blame, I believed that it was because of me that my mom was incarcerated. I began to believe that I should have done more to stop her incarceration because she did so much for me her entire life. (Zoe)

### What was it like to visit your parent in prison?

When I went to go see my dad it was sad because I couldn't give him a hug and I had to talk to him through glass on a phone. I wouldn't have missed a chance to visit, but it's not fun to see someone you care about through glass and not be able to at least touch the person. I wanted to break that glass but I knew I couldn't. It just made me think that I shouldn't ever get locked up…and if I have a son, I will never want my son to be without me. (Anthony)

SECTION 49

# Bay Area Jails and California State Prisons

# San Francisco County Jail Visiting Information

## Finding Your Parent

The San Francisco Sheriff's Department (SFSD) runs the county jail system. In order to find out if your parent is in any San Francisco jail, call processing at (415) 575-4489 (CJ9) or records at (415) 553-1430 (CJ1). You'll need your parent's full name and may need their date of birth.

## Types of Visits

Most visits at San Francisco county jails are non-contact visits through glass—also called "phone visits"—for thirty minutes maximum. Some of the jails allow contact visits, but ONLY if your mother or father is participating in a program AND you are not too old. The upper age limit for contact visits depends on which facility your parent is in (there is not one consistent policy throughout the department). In any case, if you and your parent are eligible for a contact visit, someone from the program staff will call you and tell you what to do in order to arrange the contact visit. The contact visit is only for you (the child). Your other parent or legal guardian must bring you to the jail to sign paperwork, but can't go into the visiting area during a contact visit. For a non-contact visit through glass, the parent or guardian who brought you to visit must be with you the whole time. Children cannot be left unattended at any time in a jail facility or waiting area. **If you are younger than eighteen, you must be with a parent or guardian for the entire visit, unless you are in the process of having a contact visit.** Unlike at state and federal prisons, where you need to fill out paperwork and get pre-approved to visit, there is NO application process to visit at any of the San Francisco jails. However, you must call to reserve a visiting time slot for a non-contact visit through glass. To reserve a thirty-minute time slot for a non-contact visit (at all the jails except CJ8), you must call the appropriate number between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. the day before you want to visit. Be prepared for the phone line to be busy. It's very difficult to get a call through and it's possible you will have to call many times (along the lines of twenty or more times). Once you get through, you might be put on hold. We don't say this to discourage you, but don't expect this to be an easy process. It's not right, but for now, it may be what you have to go through to visit. We listed the number you need to call for each jail in the section titled "which jail is which."

## What to Wear

The San Francisco County Jail has a strict dress code:

- Do NOT wear ORANGE at all.
- Do NOT wear ALL BLUE or ALL RED (a red, white and blue sweat suit would be okay, but an all red sweat suit would not).
- Do NOT wear any NUMBERS (sometimes even sports jerseys with numbers on them are a reason to be turned away—don't take the risk, just wear something else that day).
- Do NOT wear HATS (for any reason, even if it's cold).
- In general, deputies may deny a visit if they feel you have "inappropriate gang-related clothing or hairstyles."

## Identification

Adult visitors (your parent or guardian, or you if you're over eighteen) must be prepared to show valid **identification** with a current photograph, showing name, address, and date of birth. If you're a minor visiting with an adult, you don't need to bring ID.

You may bring money to put into an inmate's account but you may not bring any personal items for your parent. All visitors may be searched. There are NO lockers in CJ1 and CJ2, but there are lockers in CJ5 and CJ8 for visitors to store personal items. The easiest thing to do is to NOT bring any personal items with you except your keys and wallet (which they should allow you to keep in your pocket during the visit).

## Important Changes to Visiting Policies are Underway

The San Francisco Sheriff's Department—in partnership with Community Works, San Francisco's Human Services Agency, and the San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership—is working to expand parent-child contact visiting in the San Francisco county jail system. These contact visits are for children up to and including 17 years old who have a parent or guardian incarcerated in the San Francisco county jail system. The plan greatly expands the number of parent-child contact visit locations, the number of scheduled visits, and the overall number of parent-child contact visiting hours. Please call Community Works at (510) 486-2340 to get the latest information and details of these changes.

## Which Jail is Which

The jails in San Francisco County are commonly referred to by their number. There are five jails: County Jail #1 (CJ1), County Jail #2 (CJ2), County Jail #5 (CJ5), County Jail

#8 (CJ8), and County Jail #9 (CJ9). As of the printing of this guide, there were plans to rename some of the jails (we don't know when the new names will go into effect), so be aware that the jail names we use below may be different by the time you are reading this. We included the NEW names of the jails in parentheses, but right now they are still called by the old names.

### County Jail #1 (going to be renamed CJ3)

850 Bryant St., 6th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
CJ1 is located on the 6th floor of the Hall of Justice.
**Visiting hours and notes:** Phone visits (i.e., through glass) only. Thirty-minute phone visits on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The last slot begins at 1:30 p.m. To reserve a thirty-minute slot, call (415) 553-1464 between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. the day before you want to visit.

### County Jail #2 (going to be renamed CJ4)

850 Bryant St., 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
CJ2 is located on the 7th floor of the Hall of Justice.
**Visiting hours and notes:** Thirty-minute phone visits (i.e., through glass) and contact visits for a small number of inmates who qualify. Phone visits take place on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The last slot begins at 1:30 p.m. To reserve a thirty-minute slot, call (415) 553-9896 between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. the day before you want to visit.

Contact visits are available to men housed only in the dorms that offer programs. Visits to men in this jail are scheduled between 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on Fridays in thirty-minute time slots. **The Northern California Service League, (415) 552-9250**, runs the contact visiting program in this jail (by offering parenting classes). If your father is taking a parenting class, and is eligible to have you visit, NCSL will contact you to tell you when the first visit is scheduled. You must be 16 or under to be eligible for a contact visit. As of the printing of this guide, NCSL normally would call you on Wednesday to schedule a visit for Friday.

### County Jail #5, East and West

1 Moreland Dr.
San Bruno, CA 94066
**Visiting hours and notes:** Thirty-minute phone visits (i.e., through glass) and contact visits for a small number of inmates who qualify. Phone visits take place on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The last slot begins at 1:30 p.m. To reserve a thirty-minute slot, call (650) 266-1730 or (650) 266-7500 between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. the day before you want to visit.

Contact visits are only for parents participating in programs through Prison Match and for youth ages seventeen and under. Contact visits are held on Sundays for three hours between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Prison Match will contact you if your parent is eligible and will let you know when the first visit is scheduled.

### County Jail #8 (going to be renamed CJ2)

425 7th St. (near Bryant)
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 575-4378
**Visiting hours and notes:** Thirty-minute phone visits (i.e., through glass) and contact visits for a small number of women who qualify. No men in CJ8 can have contact visits. Phone visits take place on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The last slot begins at 1:30 p.m. Unlike the procedure in the other San Francisco jails, phone visits at CJ8 are first come first serve. Because visits start at 8 a.m., try to arrive by 7 a.m. the day you want to visit and get in line. We don't know if there are plans to put in a phone reservation system.

Contact visits are only for women in the SISTER Project who live in D or E Pods (pods are like dorms). Contact visits are held on Saturdays for two hours, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. You must be sixteen or under and signed in by 9:15 a.m. or you won't be able to visit. If your mother is eligible, someone from SISTER will call you to let you know when the first visit is scheduled.

### County Jail #9 (going to be renamed CJ1)

425 7th St. (near Bryant)
San Francisco, CA 94103

This is the intake, booking, and release facility. You can call or visit this jail to find out if your parent is in the San Francisco County jail system. Call (415) 575-4489 or (415) 575-4410 at CJ9 or records at CJ1 at (415) 553-1430. Whether you call or visit, you need to know your parent's full name and might also need to know their date of birth. **No visiting is allowed in CJ9.**

**You can always see our form "Questions to Ask" (pages 58-59) to verify the information here.**

# Alameda County Jail Visiting Information

There are two jails in Alameda County run by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office: Santa Rita and Glenn E. Dyer. Visits at both jails are approximately 30 minutes. You are not allowed to visit someone more than once a day. **VISITING IS ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS.**

**Santa Rita Jail**
5325 Broder Blvd.
Dublin, CA 94568
(925) 551-6500

**The Glenn E. Dyer Detention Facility**
550 - 6th Street
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 268-7777

## Finding Your Parent

You can reach the Inmate Services Section at (925) 551-6580, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. excluding holidays. All you need are name and birthday and personal file number (PFN) if you know it.

## Types of Visits

All visits are non-contact

## What to Wear

• NO bib-overalls/clothing of any kind with metal.
• NO attire displaying obscene offensive language or drawings.
• NO steel toed boots/shoes.

## What to Bring (or NOT to Bring)

• BRING your own pen or pencil—none are provided to fill-out forms.
• NO personal items of any kind are allowed into the visiting areas (NO cameras, cell phones, baby strollers, cigarettes, lighters, etc. NOTHING!)
•NO food or drink
Personal items should be left at home or locked in the visitor's vehicle. There are also public lockers in the lobby where you can lock your stuff up during a visit for 50 cents.

## Identification

Visitors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. You must provide documentation showing proof of the relationship (birth certificate and school ID). Acceptable ID includes:
• Valid driver's license.
• State identification card.
• Other official identification, depicting photograph, physical characteristics, and signature issued by a governmental body.
• Other types of identification approved by the visiting sergeant.

## Other Important Visiting Rules

1. Any person who has been confined in the Alameda County Jail System within the last six (6) months cannot visit an inmate without the express permission of the on-duty Watch Commander. Visitors who have been convicted of a felony and served time in state prison may not enter jail property without approval from the Commanding Officer.
2. All persons under 18 years of age must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian, unless they are married to the inmate receiving the visit. The visitor must provide proof of the relationship (documentation) upon request.
3. Visitors and their possessions are subject to search by Sheriff's Office personnel. Entering the facility is consent to search.
4. An inmate can refuse to see any visitor.

**Santa Rita visiting hours and notes**

| HOUSING UNIT | DAYS | TIMES |
|---|---|---|
| 1,2,3,4 | Wednesday, Saturday<br>Thursday | 8 a.m-11 a.m.<br>6 p.m.-9 p.m. |
| 6,7,8,9 | Wednesday<br>Friday<br>Saturday | 12 p.m.-3 p.m.<br>8 a.m.-11 a.m.<br>6 p.m.-9 p.m. |
| 21,22,23,24 | Thursday, Sunday<br>Friday | 8 a.m. –11 a.m.<br>6 p.m.-9 p.m. |
| 25-31,32 & INFIRMARY | Wednesday<br>Friday, Saturday | 6 p.m.-9 p.m.<br>12 p.m.-3 p.m. |
| 33,34,35 | Thursday, Saturday<br>Sunday | 12 p.m.-3 p.m.<br>6 p.m.-9 p.m. |

**Glen Dyer visiting hours and notes**

| HOUSING UNIT | DAYS | TIMES |
|---|---|---|
| H1S H3S, H5S | Thursday | 12 p.m.-3 p.m. |
| H1N, H3N, H5N | Thursday | 6 p.m.- 9 p.m. |
| H2S, H4S, H6S | Friday | 12 p.m.-3 p.m. |
| H2N, H4N, H6N | Friday | 6 p.m.- 9 p.m. |
| H1S H3S, H5S | Saturday | 8 a.m.- 11 a.m. |
| H1N, H3N, H5N | Saturday | 12 p.m.-3 p.m. |
| H2S, H4S, H6S | Sunday | 8 a.m.- 11 a.m. |
| H2N, H4N, H6N | Sunday | 12 p.m.- 3 p.m. |

# Contra Costa County Jail Visiting Information

Contra Costa has three jails: Martinez Detention Facility (MDF), West County Detention Facility (WCDF), and Marsh Creek Detention Facility (MCDF). The visiting days and times are different at each jail, and so are some of the rules. However the rules about what to wear, what you can bring, and identification apply to all the jails.

## Finding Your Parent

You can call any of the three jails to look someone up in the Contra Costa County jail system. For example, if you call Martinez, and your parent is being held at West County, the staff at Martinez should be able to tell you where they are.

## Age

If you are under 18, you must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. You must provide proof of the relationship (between the minor and parent or guardian) upon request.

## Scheduling a Visit

Inmates must request and schedule all visits and must notify visitors of the date and time of their visit. You CANNOT just show up at the jail to visit. Inmates may request to schedule a visit under the following conditions:

**a.** Only two 30-minute visits are permitted each week (Monday to Sunday). (Work Crew Inmates and Housing Unit Trustees are authorized three 30-minute visits each week.) Inmates may schedule their visits consecutively if they wish.

**b.** Inmates must complete and submit an Inmate Request Form at least 48-hours but not more than seven days in advance asking for the visit.

**c.** Requested date and times are listed on the Inmate Request Form.

**d.** Inmate must not be serving any disciplinary lockdown or disciplinary loss of privileges at any time from request of visit.

## Types of Visits

All visits are non-contact

## What to Wear

- Shirts and shoes are required
- NO midriff tops, low cut tops, mini skirts, shorts, bathing suits, see-through or skin-tight clothes
- NO hats, overalls, coveralls, coats or jackets
- NO exaggerated hairstyles
- NO gang related clothing, style of dress, symbols or markings

## What to Bring (or NOT to Bring)

- Basically, your pockets must be EMPTY to enter the visiting area.
- Leave personal items at home or in your car, or lock them in the lockers in the lobby.
- NO cell phones, pagers, computers, cameras, tape or digital recorders, purses, bags, briefcases, food, drink, or anything else are allowed into the visiting area.
- Smoking is prohibited in the building.

## Identification

Proper identification includes a valid driver's license, passport or other official ID with a photograph, physical characteristics and signature issued by a governmental body. Other types of identification may be approved by the Custody Sergeant.

## Visitor Registration Procedures

Each adult visitor must complete a visitor pass before approaching the Visitor Registration Desk. The registration must be complete and include: the visitor's name, address, date of birth, driver's license number, inmate name and booking number, and visitor's relationship to the inmate. Write neatly on the form. After you complete the form, go to the Visitor Registration Desk with your completed visitor pass and authorized photo identification.

## Visiting Schedules

### Martinez Detention Facility

1000 Ward Street
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 646-4495

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday**
8 a.m.-11 a.m.
1 p.m.-5 p.m.
7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.

**Thursday**
8 a.m.-11 a.m.
1 p.m.-5 p.m.

***NOTE: There are no evening visits on Thursdays!***

1. Up to four (4) visitors may visit an inmate at one time.
2. All visitors must be scheduled and have entered the facility no later than thirty (30)minutes prior to the end of any visiting block.
3. Registration of scheduled visitors will begin thirty (30) minutes before the posted visiting time.

### West County Detention Facility

5555 Giant Highway Richmond
Richmond, CA 94806
(510) 262-4200

**Every day except Wednesday and Thursday** (10:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.).
1. Up to three (3) visitors may visit an inmate at one time.
2. All visitors must be scheduled and have entered the facility not later than thirty (30) minutes prior to the end of any visiting block.
3. It shall be the inmate's responsibility to notify the supervising deputy at least ten (10) minutes to the hour of the pending visit and respond to authorized visiting areas fifteen (15) minutes prior to the visit. Failure to do so will result in the cancellation of the visit.

### Marsh Creek Detention Facility

12000 Marsh Creek Rd.
Clayton, CA 94517
(925) 646-5700

**Saturdays and Sundays**
1-1:45 p.m. (Orderlies only)
2-2:30 p.m.
2:45-3:15 p.m.
3:30-4 p.m.
1. Up to three (3) visitors may visit an inmate at one time.
2. All visitors must be scheduled and have entered the facility not later than thirty (30) minutes prior to the end of any visiting block.
3. It shall be the inmate's responsibility to respond to authorized visiting areas upon announcement. Failure to do so will result in the cancellation of the visit.
4. All inmates, regardless of classification, are eligible to visit except for inmates in "Disciplinary Isolation" or on "Disciplinary Loss of Privileges".
5. A sign will is posted in the lobby providing directions from the facility to the nearest public transportation and a schedule of the operating hours for public transportation near the facility.

## Marin County Jail Visiting

Marin County has one jail that houses both men and women. Visits are a maximum of 30 minutes each. Visitors are allowed one visit per day with each inmate. In order to visit your parent, you must be on their pre-approved visitor list. They can provide five names of individuals that will be approved for visiting. You MUST sign-in 30 minutes prior to the visit start time.

### Marin County Jail

13 Peter Behr Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 499-7316 (information is in English and Spanish)
(415) 429-2311

### Finding Your Parent

Contact the Marin County Jail at 415-499-7316. They can advise you if someone has been arrested, the charges, whether or not they will be released on bail, cited or released on their own recognizance and they will also provide bail amount. You may also review the booking log of the Marin County Jail to locate individuals arrested and booked into the County of Marin jail in the last 48 hours who are still in custody, and also a complete list of inmates as of the time the search is run.

### Visiting Hours

Visiting is open 7 days a week.
Monday through Friday time slots:
Morning—9 a.m., 9:40 a.m., 10:20 a.m. (last morning visit)
Afternoon—1 p.m., 1:40 p.m., 2:20 p.m. (last afternoon visit)
Evening—6 p.m., 6:40 p.m., 7:20 p.m., 8 p.m., 8:40 p.m., 9:20 p.m. (last evening visit)

Saturday/Sunday/Holiday time slots:
Morning—9 a.m., 9:40 a.m., 10:20 a.m. (last morning visit)
Afternoon—2 p.m., 2:40 p.m., 3:20 p.m. (last afternoon visit) ** note later start time
Evening—6 p.m., 6:40 p.m., 7:20 p.m., 8 p.m., 8:40 p.m., 9:20 p.m. (last evening visit)

For inmates in C POD (the program pod), there are only evening visits Monday through Friday: 6 p.m., 6:40 p.m., 7:20 p.m., 8 p.m., 8:40 p.m., 9:20 p.m. (last eve visit)
Saturday/Sunday/Holiday: visiting is the same as above times: 9-11, 2-4, 6-10pm

### Age

If you are under the age of 18, you may visit as long as you are with one of your parents, or legal guardian.

### Identification

California Drivers License, California Identification Card, Military Identification, Passport, or other official government identification with a photo.

### What to Wear

• All visitors must wear shirts, shoes, pants, shorts, or skirt.
• No see through clothing or gang affiliated clothing is allowed.

### What to Bring (or NOT to Bring)

NO items are allowed into the visiting areas, but there are lockers

to store items. Bring quarters for the lockers.

### Visiting Conditions

Visiting may be closed at any time with no prior notice. If this occurs, a sign will be posted on the door to the jail with an estimated time for reopening. The Custody staff is not allowed to take telephone messages for inmates. If you need to contact an inmate regarding a family emergency or other emergency situation, you may contact the housing Sergeant at (415) 499-7316.

## California State Prison Visiting Information

Use the following list if your mom or dad is in one of California's thirty-three state prisons. You can get more information about visiting someone in a California State Prison by calling visitor information at (800) 374-8474 or go online to www.cdcr.gov/Vistors.

If you call the prison directly, call the main number and ask to be transferred to the "visiting lieutenant." It is the lieutenant's job to explain the visiting rules.

Visiting hours for many of the prisons are on Saturdays, Sundays, and designated holidays (usually New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day). The visiting hours vary for each prison and a few prisons have totally different visiting hours. We listed the visiting hours for each prison as of April 2008. Sometimes sign-in ends earlier than actual visiting, and times may change, so always call first. Visits to inmates in Segregated Housing Units (SHU) are always by advance appointment only. Use the worksheet entitled "questions to ask when you call the jail or prison."

Friends Outside (FO) is a nonprofit organization that has a contract with California to provide services to inmates and their families. FO runs visitors centers near each state prison, and they have case managers at each state prison. The visitor centers are open only during prison visiting hours, so if you call outside of visiting hours, you may not get in touch with anyone. Outside of visiting hours, contact the Director of the Friends Outside Visitor Centers at the national office: Maria Rocero at (209) 955-0701 or mrocero@friendsoutside.org. The FO case manager usually has an office in the prison, and provides services to inmates, including helping to coordinate paperwork and visits for families.

**Each entry below consists of:**
**Prison name**
Address
Main Phone Number
Visiting Days and Hours
**Friends Outside:**
Visitors Center Phone Number

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**Avenal State Prison (ASP)**
PO Box 8
#1 Kings Way
Avenal, CA 93204
Main Number: (559) 386-0587
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:05-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Oasis Visitor Center:
(559) 386-4370

**California Correctional Center (CCC)**
711-045 Center Rd.
PO Box 790
Susanville, CA 96130
Main Number: (530) 257-2181
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:00-2:30
**Friends Outside:**
Friendship Place #I:
(530) 257-2211

**California Correctional Institution (CCI)**
24900 Highway 202
PO Box 1031
Tehachapi, CA 93581
Main Number: (661) 822-4402
Visiting: Fri/Sat/Sun 7:45-2:00
**Friends Outside:**
Tehachapi Visitor Center:
(661) 822-3407

**California Institution For Men (CIM)**
14901 Central Ave.
PO Box 128
Chino, CA 91710
Main Number: (909) 597-1821
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:30-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Friends Outside Hospitality Center:
(909) 597-5428

**California Institution For Women (CIW)**
16756 Chino-Corona Rd.
PO Box 6000
Corona, CA 92878
Main Number: (909) 597-1771
Visiting: Fri 1:30-7:00
Sat/Sun 8:30-2:00
**Friends Outside:**
Casa Frontera: (909) 597-0234

**California Men's Colony (CMC)**
Highway 1
PO Box 8101
San Luis Obispo, CA 93409-8101
Main Number: (805) 547-7900
Visiting: Sat/Sun 9:00-4:00
**Friends Outside:**
Friends Outside Visitor Center:
(805) 543-3888

**California Medical Facility (CMF)**
1600 California Dr.
PO Box 2000
Vacaville, CA 95696-2000
Main Number: (707) 448-6841
Visiting: Fri 12:00-8:00
Sat/Sun 8:00-3:30
**Friends Outside:**
Friendship House: (707) 469-9345

**California State Prison, Corcoran (COR)**
4001 King Ave.
PO Box 8800
Corcoran, CA 93212-8309
Main Number: (559) 992-8800
Visiting: Fri 12:00-8:00
Sat/Sun 8:00-2:30
**Friends Outside:**
Bienvenidos: (559) 992-4499

**California Rehabilitation Center (CRC)**
5th St. at Western
PO Box 1841
Norco, CA 92860
Main Number: (909) 737-2683
Visiting: Fri 12:30-7:00
Sat/Sun 8:15-3:15
**Friends Outside:**
Hospitality Place: (909) 737-7010

**California State Prison, Los Angeles County (LAC)**
44750 60th St. West
Lancaster, CA 93536-7620
Main Number: (661) 729-2000
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:00-3:30
**Friends Outside:**
Lancaster Visiting Center:
(661) 728-0844

**California State Prison, Sacramento (SAC)**
Prison Rd.
PO Box 29002
Represa, CA 95671-0002
Main Number: (916) 985-8610
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:00-1:00
**Friends Outside:**
Welcome House Visitor Center:
(916) 985-2372

**California State Prison, Solano (SOL)**
2100 Peabody Rd.
PO Box 4000
Vacaville, CA 95696-4000
Main Number: (707) 451-0182
Visiting: Fri 1:00-8:00
Sat/Sun 8:00-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Friendship House:
(707) 469-9345

**California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility (SATF)**
900 Quebec Ave
PO Box 7100
Corcoran, CA 93212-7100
Main Number: (559) 992-7100
Visiting: Fri/Sat/Sun 8:00-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Visitor Center:
(559) 992-9756

**Calipatria State Prison (CAL)**
7018 Blair Rd.
PO Box 5001
Calipatria, CA 92233-5001
Main Number: (760) 348-7000
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:30-2:45
**Friends Outside:**
Sorensen Visitor Center:
(760) 348-2232

**Centinela State Prison (CEN)**
2302 Brown Rd.
PO Box 731
Imperial, CA 92251
Main Number: (760) 337-7900
Visiting: Fridays for some inmates, Sat/Sun 8:15-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Centinela Visitor Center:
(760) 352-2466

**Central California Women's Facility (CCWF)**
23370 Road 22
PO Box 1501
Chowchilla, CA 93610
Main Number: (559) 665-5531
Visiting: Sat/Sun 9:00-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
The Lighthouse: (559) 665-4617

**Chuckawalla Valley State Prison (CVSP)**
19025 Wiley's Well Rd.
PO Box 2289
Blythe, CA 92226
Main Number: (760) 922-5300
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:00-2:00
**Friends Outside:**
Esperanza: (760) 921-8294

**Correctional Training Facility (CTF)** Highway 101 North
PO Box 686
Soledad, CA 93960-0686
Main Number: (831) 678-3951
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:15-3:00, some Fridays, call for information
**Friends Outside:**
El Puente: (831) 678-0135

**Deuel Vocational Institution (DVI)**
23500 Kasson Rd.
PO Box 400
Tracy, CA 95378-0400
Main Number: (209) 835-4141
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:30-3:30
**Friends Outside:**
The Gathering Place:
(209) 835-4141

**Folsom State Prison (FOL)**
300 Prison Rd.
PO Box 71
Represa, CA 95671
Main Number: (916) 985-2561
Visiting: Fri 12:00-6:30
Sat/Sun 8:00-1:30

**Friends Outside:**
Welcome House Visitor Center:
(916) 985-2372

**High Desert State Prison (HDSP)**
475-750 Rice Canyon Rd.
PO Box 750
Susanville, CA 96127
Main Number: (530) 251-5100
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:00-2:30,
sign-in from 8:00-10:40 only
**Friends Outside:**
Friendship Place #11:
(530) 257-5581

**Ironwood State Prison (ISP)**
**19005 Wiley's Well Rd.**
PO Box 2229
Blythe, CA 92226
Main Number: (760) 921-3000
Visiting: Sat/Sun 9:00-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Descanso Visitor Center:
(760) 921-1964

**Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP)**
300 West Cecil Ave.
PO Box 6000
Delano, CA 93216-6000
Main Number: (661) 721-6300
Visiting: Fri/Sat/Sun 8:00-2:30

**Mule Creek State Prison (MCSP)**
4001 Highway 104
PO Box 409099
Ione, CA 95640
Main Number: (209) 274-4911
Visiting: Fri 12:30-7:00 for some
inmates, Sat/Sun 8:30-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
New Beginnings Visitor Center:
(209) 274-4749

**North Kern State Prison (NKSP)**
2737 West Cecil Ave.
PO Box 567
Delano, CA 93216-0567
Main Number: (661) 721-2345
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:30-2:00
**Friends Outside:**
North Kern Visitor Center:
(661) 725-3833

**Pelican Bay State Prison (PBSP)**
5905 Lake Earl Dr.
PO Box 7000
Crescent City, CA 95531-7000
Main Number: (707) 465-1000
Visiting: Sat/Sun 9:00-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Hospitality House:
(707) 465-6269

**Pleasant Valley State Prison**
**(PVSP)**
24863 West Jayne Ave.
PO Box 8500
Coalinga, CA 93210
Main Number: (559) 935-4900
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:30-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Centerforce /Pleasant Valley Visitor
Center: (559) 935-0660

**R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility**
**at Rock Mountain (RJD)**
480 Alta Rd.
San Diego, CA 92179
Main Number: (619) 661-6500
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:00-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Su Casa: (619) 710-1645

**Salinas Valley State Prison (SVSP)**
31625 Highway 101
PO Box 1020
Soledad, CA 93960-1020
Main Number: (831) 678-5500
Visiting: Sat/Sun 8:30-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Salinas Valley Visitor Center:
(831) 678-0135

**San Quentin State Prison (SQ)**
San Quentin, CA 94964
Main Number: (415) 454-1460
Visiting: Fri/Sat/Sun, varies by unit.
Call or ask the person you are visiting.
**Friends Outside:**
**The House:**
(415) 482-8509

**Sierra Conservation Center (SCC)**
5100 O'Byrnes Ferry Rd.
PO Box 497
Jamestown, CA 95327
Main Number: (209) 984-5291
Visiting: Fri 12:30-7:30
Sat/Sun 8:30-3:30
**Friends Outside:**
Mother Lode Visitor Support Cen-
ter: (209) 984-5523

**Valley State Prison for Women**
**(VSPW)**
21633 Ave. 24
PO Box 99
Chowchilla, CA 93610-0099
Main Number: (559) 665-6100
Visiting: Sat/Sun 9:00-3:00
**Friends Outside:**
Valley State Visitor Center:
(559) 665-1913

**Wasco State Prison (WSP)**
701 Scofield Ave.
PO Box 8800
Wasco, CA 93280-8800
Main Number: (661) 758-8400
Visiting: Fri 12:00-6:45
Sat/Sun 8:00-2:45
**Friends Outside:**
Casa De Rosas:
(661) 758-8332

# Questions to Ask when You Call the Jail or Prison

This list is to help you get all the information you need in one place so you can visit your mother or father. If you need help, ask a friend, social worker, teacher, or another adult to help you make phone calls to get the answers to these questions.

**Name of prison/jail:** _____

**Address:** _____

**Phone number for visitor information (use our guide to find phone numbers for CA state prisons or Bay Area County Jails):** _____

**Name of parent you are visiting:** _____

**Your parent's birthday and inmate ID number (if you know it):** _____

**How you're going to get there:** _____

**What are the visiting hours and days?** _____

**What are the time limitations for the visit?** _____

**Is it a contact, non-contact (phone), or family visit?** _____

**Things you should NOT wear:** _____

**Things you should NOT bring with you:** _____

**Is there a locker to store anything you have with you that you're not allowed to bring in (like cell phones, clothing/hats, pens)?** _____

How old do you have to be to visit without a legal guardian?

If you're too young to visit alone, who has to go with you? Does the person have to be your legal guardian or other parent?

If the adult is not your parent or legal guardian, what paperwork do you need to have with you to prove that your parent or guardian approved the visit?

Does the adult with you have to be on a pre-approved visitors list or can you just show up together at the prison or jail during visiting hours and get in?

How does someone get on a pre-approved visitors list?

Do you have to bring ID if your parent, guardian or another adult is bringing you and you're a minor? What ID does the adult need to bring? What ID is acceptable? Do you need an original birth certificate?

Does the prison have special arrangements for children? (Ask this if you have younger brothers or sisters or any younger children who will be with you.)

Is prison visiting running normally? If you're visiting a California state prison, before you leave for your visit, call the prison visitor information number at 1-800-374-8474. There's a recording that tells you whether visiting procedures at a specific prison are running normally. If a prison is on lockdown – and sometimes for other reasons – visits are cancelled. Information is in English and Spanish.

# SECTION 5

# Legall Questions

# Legal Questions

**Question 20:**
**I'm in the foster care system and no one is listening to what I want about my placement or care. Who can help me?**

If you're in the foster care system, you should have an attorney or court appointed special advocate (CASA). CASAs provide individual assistance, advocacy, and mentorship to make sure you get the services you need and want, if you are a ward of the court. Some CASA offices provide other services such as education, vocational training, youth development, and HIV/STD prevention. Many child welfare departments also have an ombudsman number which you can call for complaints or concerns you have about any unit within Family and Children's Services. **See Question 21 for more information about free legal services.**

**San Francisco CASA**
100 Bush St., Suite 650
San Francisco, CA 94104
(415) 398-8001
www.sfcasa.org

**CASA of Alameda County**
1000 San Leandro Blvd. at Davis, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94577
(510) 618-1950
www.casaofalamedacounty.org

**CASA of Contra Costa County**
2020 N. Broadway, Suite 204
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(925) 256-7284 or 1-888-398-3300
www.cccocasa.org

**CASA of Sonoma County**
P.O. Box 1418
Kenwood, CA 95452
(707) 565-6375
www.sonomacasa.org

**Marin Advocates for Children**
30 N. San Pedro Road, Suite 275
San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 507-9016
www.marinadvocates.org

**Advocates for Children**
CASA of San Mateo County
1515 S. El Camino Real, Suite 201
San Mateo, CA 94402
(650) 212-4423
www.advocatesfc.org

**Child Advocates of Silicon Valley**
509 Valley Way, Bldg. 2
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 416-0400 or (800) 342-7480
www.cadvocates.org

**Question 21:**
**I need a FREE lawyer. Is there anyone I can call?**

You might need a lawyer for a variety of reasons—to help a relative become your legal guardian, because you got expelled from school and want to go back, because you got into trouble with the police and juvenile court system, or for whatever reason. Unfortunately, there aren't a whole lot of lawyers who provide free legal advice to children. However, the San Francisco Public Defender has a Juvenile Division (see information below). We also recommend Legal Services for Children (LSC). LSC provides free legal and social services to children and youth and has in-house attorneys and social workers to enable youth to achieve safety and stability and avoid unnecessary placement in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. LSC accepts collect phone calls. If you're in the foster care system, you should already have an attorney or CASA. If you don't know who your attorney is, ask your social worker. **Also see Question 20 for information about court appointed special advocates.**

**Legal Services for Children**
1254 Market St., 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 863-3762
www.lsc-sf.org

**Warm Line:**
Monday to Friday
1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
**Clinic Hours:**
Wednesdays 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**The San Francisco Public Defender Juvenile Division**
375 Woodside Ave., Room 118
San Francisco, CA 94127
(415) 753-7600

The legal resources listed below—including the public defender's office—don't work directly with youth, or tailor their services to youth. They may

be useful to your parents or caregivers, but it's better if an adult calls.

**Alameda County Public Defender's Office** (felony court)
1401 Lakeside Dr., Suite 400
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 272-6600

**Alameda County Public Defender's Office** (misdemeanor court)
380 Washington St.
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 268-7400

**East Bay Community Law Center**
2921 Adeline St.
Berkeley, CA 94703
(510) 548-4040
www.ebclc.org

East Bay Community Law Center provides legal services to low-income communities in the areas of housing, welfare, HIV and health, homelessness, and economic development. Their work makes the lives of East Bay community members more healthy, secure, productive, and hopeful.

**San Francisco Office of the Public Defender**
555 7th St.
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 553-1671

**Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC)**
1540 Market St., Suite 490
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 255-7036
www.prisonerswithchildren.org

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### Question 22:
**My parent is in jail and is fighting for custody of me. Is there anyone who can help my parent understand his or her rights?**

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Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC) and Prisoner Legal Services published a very useful booklet for Incarcerated Parents in 2001 called "Incarcerated Parents Manual: Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities." It's designed to answer many of the legal and practical questions that incarcerated parents have about custody of their children, both during and after the time they are in prison or jail. The information is based on California law as of June 2000. You can print a free copy by visiting their website at www.prisonerswithchildren.org and clicking on "publications," or you can print the order form and mail it to LSPC to request a copy. They ask for a donation but if you don't have the money, they might send it to you free. It will help if you mention that you're a youth in need of their services on the order form. The Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD) published a handbook for young mothers in 2007 called "My Life Chose Me." If you have children or are pregnant, and want to understand your rights—especially if you have already been involved with the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems—you should read this guide. Call (415) 703-8800 or visit CYWD to get a copy: 832 Folsom Street, Suite 700 in San Francisco.

Both of the above booklets have useful information but neither is intended to replace the advice of an attorney.

**Project WHAT! May 2008**.

# Making Something Positive Happen in My Life

# Making Something Positive Happen in My Life

Once you have your basic needs met—you have food, clothing and a roof over your head—you might have time for better things. This section has ideas about how you can create positive things in your life, whether that means finding a job, mentor, or hobby, or improving your grades and going to college. As teens who have had parents incarcerated ourselves, we know that some people think "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" and that we'll end up locked up 'cause our mom or dad messed up. Yeah, that happens—you might even be reading this from inside Juvie Hall or the California Youth Authority (CYA). But we believe you can do whatever you want with your life. Even if you made mistakes in the past, or your parents messed up, you still can choose to do more positive things in the future. As Anthony says, "Struggles really make you stronger." Tiffany's story gives you a personal perspective on how knowledge has been her ticket out. RiRi's story (on page 29) talks about what she went through after her mom was incarcerated—including running the streets and going to jail herself—until she got out, joined Project WHAT!, and started turning her life around. We hope this section will give you ideas on how to make the next positive move in your life.

**Question 23:**
**I have lots of negative people around me. How can I find an adult who will help me achieve my goals and dreams, or just someone positive to hang out with?**

The most important thing to do is focus on yourself, which means staying away from people who bring you down, or could get you caught up in bad situations. Aside from talking to school counselors, whom you may or may not trust, there are plenty of free and confidential services available in the Bay Area. There are youth hotlines like YouthLINE (1-888-977-3399) so you can have someone to talk to when something goes down, or if you need someone to listen to you. There are also mentoring and youth development programs that can provide trustworthy adult allies to youth in need. Some of the mentoring programs serve younger children too, so keep these programs in mind for your younger brothers or sisters.

## MY STORY

### Untitled

By Tiffany Hopkins

A lot of people call me heartless, so I'm 'bout to give you the background of how I became that way.

Man, I can't remember a time when we weren't poor. Don't get me wrong, we were filthy rich in love and loyalty, but in dollars our wealth didn't amount to much. I lived with my Mama, well, my great grandmother actually, but I call her Mama. My real mother is always in and out of jail and never around, and even when she is I wish she wasn't. I have no feelings toward her. My Mama tells me I'm wrong for that, that I should love her since she's my "mom," but she's not, my grandma is my mother, the one who stood by me in all my struggles, made me feel as though I

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## East Bay Resources for Mentoring and Youth Development

### Leadership Excellence
1924 Franklin St., #201
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 267-9770
www.leadershipexcellence.org
Neighborhood: Downtown Oakland
Leadership Excellence is committed to developing the next generation of leaders who possess the skills and desire to create social change in urban communities. Their mission is to provide grassroots community organizing and leadership skills to African American children and youth (ages five to eighteen). This is accomplished through workshops, trainings, and curriculum which empowers young people to make informed decisions about their lives and positive changes in their communities.

### LIFE Project
### Centerforce
2955 Kerner Blvd., 2nd Floor
San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 456-9980 ext. 116
www.centerforce.org/index.cfm
The Leaders in Future Environments (LIFE) Project provides one-on-one mentoring, annual retreats, and monthly group activities for teenagers throughout the San Francisco Bay Area who have or have had a parent involved in the criminal justice system.

### The Mentoring Center
1221 Preservation Pkwy., Suite 200
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 891-0427
The Mentoring Center provides services for youth who are on the wrong track and want to make a change in their lives and to develop survival skills. One program is the Positive Minds Group.

### On The Bricks
1515 Webster St., Suite 303
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 238-8080
On the Bricks provides services for youth ages fourteen to twenty who have been in the criminal justice system. There is a six-week mentoring program that focuses on education, career, and life skills.

### OreMi Mentoring Program
**Family Support Services of the Bay Area (FSSBA)**
401 Grand Ave., Suite 500
Oakland, CA 94610
(510) 834-2443
www.fssba-sf.org
The OreMi Mentoring Program is a mentoring program for children ages

## Untitled
Continued from page 64

was somebody, and provided the real parental love "that other woman" didn't. Therefore, that other woman is lower to me than an enemy. Not having parents around, the people who look like you, affects the way you look at yourself. I would not come to terms with my appearance until late in life, if I even have now. But some things I learned along the way helped me a great deal with the missing pieces.

Another struggle: we've lived everywhere. In little apartments, abandoned houses, with family members, in our car—I mean everywhere. But fast forward that, leaves change colors, I'm on the block, you already know which one, no daddy around, so it's time for me to find that male figure, someone to fill that void. Instead, I find nothing but trouble. Too much time on my hands and growing up too fast, Mama sick and we need money, that's all I knew. Not surviving was not an option so I became one of those statistic kids they warn you about. No, not on a corner or in a bed, but hustling all the same. Knew I was tired of seeing my Mama cry herself to sleep every night, tired of doing something like crying myself, but bitterness and loneliness had dried up my tears a long time ago. Maybe I did cry then. I can't remember now, that was too many lifetimes ago. My soul has gone through too many transformations since then.

My saving grace from getting caught up in all the drama that had engulfed my life, from becoming a copy of all the mistakes my mother made, was my knowledge. Knowledge. The most powerful word I know. My

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four to fourteen living in Alameda County who have a parent in the state or federal prison system. Call or visit the website for more information or to get an application to find a mentor.

### Project AVARY (Alternative Ventures for At Risk Youth)

1018 Grand Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 460-1184
www.projectavary.org
Project AVARY's mission is to cultivate a community of support for children whose parents are imprisoned or otherwise involved with the criminal justice system. They have a summer camp, "adventure days" (monthly field trips), and a mentoring program for youth. There are also Leadership Retreats for the older youth, a family camp weekend, and twice-yearly celebrations for the whole AVARY community.

## San Francisco Resources for Mentoring and Youth Development

### Already listed:

A Home Within (See page 26)
Horizons Inc. (See page 27)
Larkin St. Youth Services (See page 10)

### Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco

www.bgcsf.org
The Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco provide a wide range of youth programs at nine locations throughout the city. They provide education and career development, life skills, arts, sports, fitness and recreation, and special services for teens. They also have counseling and mental health services at five of the nine clubhouses (Columbia Park, Excelsior, Hunters Point, Visitacion Valley, and Treasure Island). BGCSF are a Medi-Cal approved facility. They will bill Medi-Cal or BGCSF for services provided to youth members. Youth may self-refer or be referred by family, school, legal system, or other providers by contacting the Behavioral Health Specialist at their clubhouse, or by contacting Deborah Machold, Citywide Director of Behavioral Health Services. See below for addresses and phone numbers and call for hours and services at each location, or go online to www.bgcsf.org.

**Columbia Park Clubhouse:** 450 Guerrero St. at 17th St. (415) 864-2724
**Ernest Ingold Clubhouse:** 1950 Page St. (415) 221-6100
**Excelsior Clubhouse:** 163 London St. (415) 334-2582
**Mission Clubhouse:** Bryant Elementary School, 1050 York St. (415) 648-2434
**Sunnydale Clubhouse:** 1654 Sunnydale Ave. (415) 584-5028
**Treasure Island Clubhouse:** 401 13th Ave. (415) 362-1383
**Tenderloin Clubhouse:** 115 Jones St. (415) 351-3125
**Visitacion Valley Clubhouse:** 1099 Sunnydale Ave. (415) 239-0146
**Hunters Point Clubhouse:** 195 Kiska Road (415) 643-6140
**Deborah Machold, Citywide Director of Behavioral Health Services:** (415) 503-1735

## Untitled

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ticket out, my way out. My thinking brain is my way to escape from everybody and everything.

The moment I found out I was smart, eighth grade, I think, when they were telling us that everybody in the class, except for me, was in great jeopardy of not graduating. That jumpstarted my self-appreciation. Or, maybe it was the fact that I knew, I better have good grades or else my Mama would have my butt. I like to think it was all me, and when I look back I know that it was my own determination that got me through. Knowledge let me know that I was somebody, a reckoning force that sooner or later somebody was going to have to deal with.

All before then I was reading, reading, reading, anything I could get my hands on. I have read hundreds of books, some I can't even remember, just my brain steadily absorbing everything it could, until I finally took a breath. I realized I could pick up a book and what was in it might help me get out of the predicament of either going crazy or not making it that, up until then, I thought were the only options.

Knowledge became my friend. Knowledge kicked in when my friends asked for help on homework. Knowledge made me accept myself. Knowledge made me focus. Knowledge taught me that it was okay that nobody around me looked like I did because that just made it harder for anybody to clone my greatness. Knowing that people of all shapes,

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**Center For Young Women's Development**
832 Folsom St., Suite #700
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 703-8800
www.cywd.org
Neighborhood: SOMA (they moved from the Mission in 2007)
The mission of the Center for Young Women's Development is to empower and inspire young women who have been involved with the juvenile justice system and/or the underground street economy to create positive change in their lives and communities. Each year they hire seventeen young women for a paid internship that incorporates healing, skills development, political education, community organizing, and reintegration into the community. They also have weekly educational seminars for girls in YGC (San Francisco's Juvenile Hall) and those reentering the community.

**Omega Boys Club/Street Soldiers**
1060 Tennessee St.
San Francisco, CA 94107
1-800-SOLDIER (1-800-765-3437)
www.street-soldiers.org/contents.htm
Neighborhood: Potrero Hill
The Omega Boys Club/Street Soldiers' mission is to keep young people alive and unharmed by violence and free from incarceration. They provide youth with the opportunity and support to build positive lives for themselves, and to move into contributing roles in society.

## Question 24:
## I need money! What should I do?

Teenagers can get better jobs than just at your standard fast-food place or store in the mall. Organizations like Enterprise for High School Students and Treasure Island Job Corps can help youth not only go through job training, but offers job placement based on your specific talents. There are also jobs that are based around a school schedule, because staying in school is also important. There are plenty of organizations looking to hire youth who have struggled and are willing to give back to their communities, so what are you waiting for?

### East Bay Resources for Job Placement

**Already listed:**
Covenant House (See page 09)
East Bay Independent Living Skills Programs (See page 17)
Youth Uprising (See page 25)
**Also see:** Treasure Island Job Corps listed under San Francisco Resources below (Job Corps serves youth all over the Bay Area)

### San Francisco Resources for Job Placement

**Already listed:**
Bayview Hunters Point Foundation (See page 26)
Boys and Girls Clubs of San Francisco (See page 66)
Center for Young Women's Development (See page 67)

**Untitled**
Continued from page 66

sizes, and abilities can do anything enforced my driving will to succeed because now my features or my thought of being ugly didn't matter. Shoot, look at Oprah. And the fact that I didn't have real parents, lived with a sick grandmother, and knew too much for my time—I learned that was all part of a greater good. I realized that if I could just harness all that anger, frustration, and knowledge into something good, there's no telling what might happen.

It took a while, but my thoughts started to shift. Learning about all the mistakes made since the beginning of time taught me that everybody makes mistakes, and while I don't forgive my mother for the hell and strife that I had to live through because of her, I am more aware of the many people who do the same things she does every day. I learned that sometimes you just have to say, "All right, we don't like that it's happening, but how can we prevent it from happening again?" And then do everything you can to prevent it.

I knew that I hated the person that my mother had turned out to be, but my main focus was making sure I did not end up like her. My goals and dreams had nothing to do with that aspect of life.

Now don't get me wrong, this is not a pretty story with a happy ending. Just a twig on one of the mighty branches of my life. So after we spruce this redwood up a bit, I'll let you know how far down I think the roots will go.

Girls 2000 (See page 10)
Horizons Inc. (See page 27)
Larkin Street Youth Services (See page 10)
San Francisco Independent Living Skills Program (See page 17)

**Enterprise for High School Students (EHSS)**
200 Pine St., Suite 600 (corner of Pine and Battery)
San Francisco, CA 94104
(415) 392-7600
www.ehss.org
Enterprise for High School Students (EHSS) is a citywide school-to-work/ youth development agency in San Francisco that guides youth ages fourteen to eighteen to find and retain jobs, be trained and engage in experiential learning, and explore career interests. EHSS serves students residing in every zip code and planning district in San Francisco.

**Treasure Island Job Corps**
655 H Ave., Building 442
San Francisco, CA 94130
1-800-733-5627
(415) 277-2400
treasureisland.jobcorps.gov
The Treasure Island Job Corps Center is a training facility where you will have the opportunity to learn a trade, complete your high school education, participate in hands-on job training, and receive job placement support as you embark on your career. Job Corps is a stepping stone to meaningful employment. At Job Corps, you will develop the necessary tools that will continue to benefit you throughout your life.



**Question 25:**
**There's nothing to do in my neighborhood besides hang out on the streets. Where can I go to stay out of trouble?**

There are plenty of safe places to go after school or on the weekends that are fun and productive, and will help you stay out of trouble. It's just a matter of finding them. Getting involved with school or neighborhood sports teams, arts programs, writing programs, or whatever it is that you may be interested in could make a world of difference.

## Bay Area Wide Organizations

**Youth Speaks**
SF/Bay Area
290 Division St., Suite 302
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 255-9035
www.youthspeaks.org
Youth Speaks presents after-school workshops in various locations throughout the Bay Area. Workshops typically run in eight to ten-week blocks. The

## Mel's Story

By Anthony Ellis

Well, let me start off by telling you how living with Melvin changed my life. Mel was my first cousin, my mom's sister's son. Mel grew up in West Oakland, like me, but he attended Clovis High School in Fresno. He played basketball and being 6' 9" didn't hurt his game. He graduated from Clovis and got a scholarship to Fresno Sate. There, Mel got even better. His grades were good and his passion for the game grew. His coach told him that scouts were looking at him from the 76ers. Given that he was from the 'hood, making it to the pros was a life dream. Mel played for the 76ers for one year, which made us all proud of him. After his first season, like the rest of the team, Mel went home for the off season.

Once home in West Oakland, he started hanging with his old friends from growing up, who were in the dope game. In 1994, he got shot in the throat during a drive-by and got paralyzed from the waist down. He spent four years in the hospital going through physical therapy and was released in 1998. He had to face the fact that the wheelchair they gave him would be his legs for the rest of his life.

In 2001, I moved in with him because I needed a male figure and we got along hella good. I needed a father figure because my own father was always in and out of the pen, so I was raised by just my mom. I was getting older and I saw my friends whose

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after-school workshops focus on different aspects of writing, from fiction, playwriting, and poetry, to performance, desktop publishing, and poetry slam. Taught by leading poets, writers, spoken word artists, and cultural activists, they are conducted throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Workshops are open to any teen thirteen to nineteen years old (unless otherwise noted). All workshops are free and no registration is necessary. Go to the website or call for workshop locations and schedules.

### YMCAs and YMCA Teen Centers

The mission of the YMCA teen centers is to provide a fun and safe environment where teens of all origins engage in programs and activities that enhance individual health and well-being, strengthen personal and family relationships, and develop leadership skills. Teen centers have educational services, art programs, and technology classes, among other programs. YMCAs often offer teen memberships and have plenty of programs geared towards youth, even if there is no "teen center" at your local Y. YMCA teen centers and branches in the East Bay and San Francisco are listed in the next section.

## East Bay Organizations

**Already listed:**

Covenant House (See page 09)
DreamCatcher (See page 09)
George P. Scotlan Center (See page 09)
Leadership Excellence (See page 65)
Youth Uprising (See page 25)

### YMCA Teen Center

5908 Foothill Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94605
(510) 638-3984
www.ymcaeastbay.org/urbanservices

### Eastlake Branch YMCA

1612 45th Ave.
Oakland, CA 94601
(510) 534-7441

### M. Robinson Baker Branch YMCA

3265 Market St.
Oakland, CA 94608
(510) 654-9622

### South Berkeley Branch YMCA

2901 California St
Berkeley, CA 94703
(510) 843-4280

### Mel's Story

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dads had taught them certain things and there was no one around to teach me. Once I moved in with Mel, I got to do some male bonding that I hadn't had much of a chance to do before—even just watching football games with the guys was cool.

I learned to take on household responsibilities, like cooking, cleaning, and washing our clothes. It was hard to start doing a lot of those things because someone had always done them for me.

But the hardest thing I learned was how to properly take care of Mel's wounds. Lying down too long on your butt can cause bed sores, which is when the sweat dissolves the skin, making the skin so sensitive that any friction can cause it to become an open wound. Taking care of somebody is a hard job, but someone who's paralyzed is even a harder job. What teenager you know have to clean open wounds? Not just a cut, but a wound that's so deep to where you see a bone. That's what I had to clean everyday.

Picture this. One weekend I went to Fremont and Mel told me he was going to get someone to clean out his wounds, but he never did. They bled and the gauze started to stink.

When I got back Mel was like, "Lil cuz, it something wrong. My leg keep jumpin."
"Why?"
"I don't know, check my sores," he said.
Man I ain't never seen no shit like that in my life! It was real life maggots in there wiggling around and

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If you have younger brothers or sisters, the South Berkeley Branch YMCA is a good resource. This branch has a learning academy with after school programs serving grades 2-8, a summer learning academy serving grades 1-8, and a leadership program for former learning academy students entering grades 7 through 10.

**Downtown Berkeley Branch YMCA**
2001 Allston Way
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 848-9622
The Downtown Berkeley Branch has several teen programs for youth ages 14-19 and youth memberships. A teen center is scheduled to open at 2100 Center St. (at Martin Luther King) in the fall 2008.

**West Contra Costa YMCA**
263 S 20th St
Richmond, CA 94804
(510) 412-5647
West Contra Costa YMCA has a great teen center.

## San Francisco Organizations

**Already listed:**
Boys and Girls Clubs of San Francisco (See page 66)
Girls 2000 (See page 10)
Huckleberry Youth Services (See page 10)
Larkin Street Youth Services (See page 10)

**Fostering Art**
2500 18th St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
1-888-898-2249
www.ahomewithin.org
Fostering Art is a program of A Home Within. The program gives foster youth the chance to explore and document their inner and outer worlds through art and the written word, while developing life skills and strong ties with peers and the community.

**LYRIC**
127 Collingwood St.
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 703-6150
www.lyric.org
Neighborhood: Castro
LYRIC envisions a diverse society where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) youth are embraced for who they are and encouraged to be who they want to be. By working towards social justice and supporting young leaders, their families and allies, LYRIC is building a world that that honors, respects and appreciates

**Mel's Story**
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my body got hella tingly.
"Mel Mel, blood."
"Wat nigga?"
"Blood, it hella maggots."
"For real?"
"Hella. Yea, I'm not playin."
A fly had got in there and laid some eggs.
Mel said, "Jus clean it hella good."
I'm thinking to myself "Hell naw!"

But cause of the love I had for him, I did it anyway. When I was done, he told me to call 911 so he could go to the hospital. The doctors told him that the maggots wasn't doin nothing but eating the dead tissue. In the hospital, sometimes they use maggots to clean out wounds, but when people hear that they're using maggots, they be like I was—"Hell naw!" So I learned a lot of people can't stomach it, but somehow and someway not only could I do that, there wasn't anything I wouldn't do for him. I loved him to death. I took care of Mel for a long time and I was getting real good at cleaning his wounds.

One time, I told him I could do it better than the doctors.
He said, "Yeah, lil cuz, you should think about taking this as a profession."
I was like, "Yea, I just might."
He said, "They get paid a lot of money too, lil cuz, I think you should go for it."

What I really want people to understand is that even though he sold drugs, he always made sure I went to school. He knew he took the wrong path and he knew he could prevent me from taking the same route he did. Mel used to tell me, "Man, go to col-

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LGBTQQ youth and their contributions. LYRIC's programs fall into three general categories: community building, education and economic development, and health and wellness.

**Out of Site Center for Arts Education**
301 de Montfort Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 841-2215
www.outofsite-sf.org
Out of Site offers free arts classes for high school students. It's a great place to try out photography, painting, spoken word, music, architecture, or a variety of other art classes. In spring 2007, classes were being offered on Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**YMCA Bayview Hunter's Point**
1601 Lane St.
San Francisco, CA 94124
(415) 822-7728
www.ymcasf.org/Bayview

**YMCA Urban Services**
1530 Buchanan St.
San Francisco, CA 94115
(415) 674-0888
www.ymcasf.org/UrbanServices

**Buchanan District Branch YMCA**
1530 Buchanan St
San Francisco, CA 94115
(415) 931-9622
The Buchanan YMCA has a Safe Haven/teen center.

**Mission Branch YMCA**
4080 Mission St
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 586-6900
The Mission YMCA has a teen center.

**Shih Yu - Lang Central YMCA**
220 Golden Gate Ave
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 885-0460

## Mel's Story
Continued from page 70

lege, be somebody, don't end up like I did." That's what I respected 'bout him the most.

Because of everything that was happening with Mel—especially taking care of him—I started going to school at U Prep Independent Studies. At U Prep, there was one more person that made a big difference in helping me get to where I am today—that was one of my teachers. He was so nice. When I needed to call him for a question he would always be there to help me understand. On June 15, 2006, I crossed the stage because of the help of my family and this teacher. If all teachers were more like him a lot more kids would succeed in school. After I graduated, he pulled me to the side and told me about Cal State Hayward. With his support, I was able to get in.

Mel told me hella shit on life and at the time, I didn't take it all serious. In 2005, he got shot again but this time he didn't make it. Now that he's gone, I realize how much the things he told me guided me to where I am. If it wasn't for him—and people like the teacher at U Prep—I wouldn't be who I am today, tryin to finish my first year of college. I'm taking classes at Cal State to become better at dressing wounds and being a better caretaker. I know it's not going to be easy, but I have the drive to continue to be somebody in my life, just like Mel would have wanted me to be.

**Question 26:**
**My grades dropped after my parent got locked up. How can I improve so I can get my high school diploma, GED or get into college?**

Talk to your teachers or school counselor and ask for extra support. Make a plan together or turn to resources outside of school. Lots of places offer free tutoring. If it's too hard to focus on academics because you have so much on your mind, or have other responsibilities like a job or taking care of younger siblings, you might consider alternative education programs like Independent Studies, or getting your GED through a community-based center. Anthony enrolled in Independent Studies and got his high school diploma while taking care of his paralyzed cousin. Demel got his GED through a community organization. Both went on to enroll in community colleges. Even if there are ups and downs along the way, in the end, it's really important to get your high school diploma or GED, and even better if you go to college. To get academic support or tutoring, check out the following organizations.

## East Bay Tutoring Resources

**Already listed:**
Covenant House (See page 09)
DreamCatcher (See page 09)
George P. Scotlan Center (See page 09)
Youth Uprising (See page 25)

**Teen Homework Center**
Oakland Public Library at Eastmont Town
Center Adult Reading Room, Suite 211
7200 Bancroft Ave. Oakland, CA 94605
(510) 615-5726
www.oaklandlibrary.org
The Eastmont Branch of Oakland Public Library launched a new Teen Homework Center in February 2007 which will run until the end of school in June. It offers free tutoring in math, science, English, and Spanish. Middle and high school students can drop in for homework help on Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and on Mondays from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. A new Eastmont Library Youth Chess Club (The Eastside Knights) for elementary through high school students will meet concurrently with the Homework Center, to provide an alternative developmental activity for youth after they finish their school work. We don't know if this specific program will be offered in future years, but it's good to remember that you can always go to the public library for a quiet space to study and borrow books.

## San Francisco Tutoring Resources

**Already listed:**
Bayview Hunters Point Foundation (See page 26)
Boys and Girls Clubs of San Francisco (See page 66)

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

What should foster parents do to support children?

I think foster parents should support children more in the way of allowing or taking them to visit their parents during their incarceration, and talking to them and letting them know everything that is going on. When I was growing up I lived with a foster parent because my dad was locked up, although I considered her my grandma, and still do to this day. I always got to visit my dad so there were no questions or mysteries for me to try to figure out. That's probably because of the way she took care of us while my dad was gone. She didn't try to put bad thoughts about my dad into my head. (Demel)

*Even if you made mistakes in the past, or your parents messed up, you still can choose to do more positive things in the future. As Anthony says, Struggles really make you stronger.*

**Youth Chance High School at the Embarcadero YMCA**
169 Steuart St. (between Mission and Howard)
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 957-9622 (main number)
(415) 615-1302 (Youth Chance High School)
Neighborhood: Downtown San Francisco
Youth Chance High School is a non-tuition private school operated continuously by the Embarcadero YMCA since 1977. Young people ages sixteen to twenty-one who have been referred by school principals, social workers, friends, and probation officers, find an environment in which they can learn and succeed. The curriculum emphasizes the GED, financial literacy, and employment readiness training. It also includes study skills, independent living skills, critical thinking, personal growth and awareness, and paid work experiences.

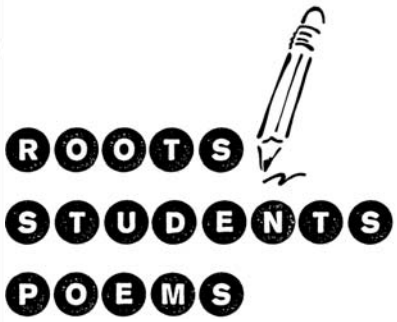
The following questions were answered by Project WHAT! participants and other youth that we interviewed. These answers give you some insight into some of the thoughts and feelings we've had about our parent's incarceration.

### What resource helped you?

The single resource that helped me most through my life has been my church. Up until I had started going there, I always saw myself as something negative, but when I entered this church, I saw all these black people who were beautiful, confident, and best of all intelligent and accomplishing a greater good. To see all these doctors, lawyers, businessmen and women did a great deal to boost my self love. (Tiffany)

### How are social workers supposed to treat you?

Social workers should treat us as if they care. They should at least ask us what we want to do in our situation. They should most of all try to get to know us. Maybe then they could help us out a little more. We should be visited more often, at least once a month. Social workers should also drop in at random times at the foster home or group home to see how things really are. Social workers should always keep track of the status at the home the children are staying at. Social workers should try and keep siblings together. When you're separated from your parents that's hard enough but when you're separated from your brothers and sister too that's even harder. Why should we have to go through even more pain than we already have? Think about it. (Former Project WHAT! youth participant)




## My Brother was Arrested for Wearing a Bullet-Proof Vest

**By Quincy Martin**

I was 12 when I visited my brother
in jail. The jail was big
like a dirty mansion. We walked
into the visiting room and sat down
across from my brother. The glass
between us was like a shield.
I didn't know what to say
so I just sat there looking at him.
My brother looked hurt
because another inmate had pulled
his hair out in a fight.
The quiet between us made me feel
like I was in an empty room.
My brother had become a person
with no expressions. Prison changes
you
into a body full of blank nothingness.
After two hours, the guards said
It's time to leave. My eyes locked
on the security guards gazing at my
brother
like snakes gazing at their prey.
I left the jail with a black shadow
hanging over me and a heart
broken into pieces I couldn't put
together.

# Index of organizations



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| National Runaway Switchboard | 08 | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X |
| Runaway Hotline | 08 | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X |
| YouthLINE | 08 | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X |
| **Bay Area Wide or Multiple Sites** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alcoholics Anonymous | 38 | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | X |
| Center for Restorative Justice Works | 46 | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Centerforce LIFE Project | 65 | X | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| Chowchilla Family Express | 46 | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Court Appointed Special Advocates | 61 | | X | X | X | | X | X | | | | | | X |
| Family Support Services of the Bay Area | 23 | X | | | X | | X | X | | | | | | X |
| Friends Outside | 47 | X | X | | | | | | X | | | | | X |
| Get on the Bus | 46 | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Independent Living Skills Programs | 17 | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| Narcotics Anonymous | 38 | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | X |
| OreMi Mentoring Program | 65 | X | | | | | | X | | | | X | | X |
| Planned Parenthood Golden Gate | 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project AVARY | 66 | X | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| Treasure Island Job Corps | 68 | | | | | | X | | | | | X | | X |
| YouthSpeaks | 68 | | | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| **East Bay** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A Safe Place | 08 | | | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| Alameda County Public Defenders Office | 62 | | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alameda Family Services | 39 | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Ann Martin Center | 24 | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | |
| Berkeley Food & Housing Project | 08 | | | | | | | | X | | X | X | | X |
| Berkeley Free Clinic | 24 | | | X | X | | X | | | | | | | X |
| CalWORKs Offices (Alameda & Contra Costa) | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Center for Recovery of Concord | 40 | | | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Cole House of Antioch | 40 | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Covenant House | 09 | | | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| DreamCatcher | 09 | | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| East Bay Community Law Center | 62 | | X | | | | | | | | | | | X |

| Agency Name | PAGE | SERVICES OFFERED: Prison Visiting and Advocacy | Legal Services | Medical Services* | Counseling/Mental Health | Substance Abuse Services | Education/Tutoring/Employment | Mentoring Programs | Food and/or Clothing | Emergency Housing for Youth | Crisis Intervention | Recreation (sports, art, music, etc.) | Youth Hotlines | Information Referral/Case Management |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **East Bay** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FamilyPaths, Inc. (formerly Parental Stress Service) | 25 | | | | X | | X | | | | X | | | X |
| George P. Scotlan Center | 09 | | | X | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | | X |
| Kaiser Permanente Chemical Dependency Recovery | 39 | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Leadership Excellence | 65 | | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| On the Bricks | 65 | | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| REACH Project of Antioch | 40 | | | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| RMS/Crossroads Treatment Center of Concord | 40 | | | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Teen Homework Center, Eastmont Library | 72 | | | | | | X | | | | | X | | |
| YMCAs (various locations) | 69 | | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| The Mentoring Center | 65 | | | | | | | X | | | | X | | X |
| Youth Uprising | 25 | | X | X | X | | X | X | | | X | X | | X |
| **San Francisco** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A Home Within | 26 | | | | X | | | X | | | | X | | X |
| Balboa Teen Health Center | 26 | | | X | X | | | | | | | | | X |
| Bayview Hunters Point Foundation (BHPF) | 26 | | | X | | X | X | X | | | X | X | | X |
| BHPF Substance Abuse Treatment Programs | 38 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco | 66 | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | X | | X |
| Buster's Place (Haight Ashbury Free Clinics Program) | 38 | | | | | X | | | | | | | | X |
| CalWORKs Office (DHS) | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Center for Young Women's Development | 67 | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Colvin House (Haight Ashbury Free Clinics Program) | 38 | | | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Diamond Youth Shelter | 11 | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | | X |
| Enterprise for High School Students | 68 | | | | | | X | | | | | | | X |
| Fostering Art | 70 | | | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Friendship House Association of American Indians | 38 | | | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Girls 2000 | 10 | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Haight Ashbury Free Clinics, Inc. | 26 | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | X |
| Harbor House | 39 | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop to Health Clinic | 27 | | | X | X | X | X | | | | X | | | X |
| Homeless Prenatal Program | 27 | | | X | X | X | | | | X | | | | X |
| Homeless Youth Alliance | 27 | | | | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | X |
| Horizons, Inc. | 27 | | | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | X |
| Huckleberry Youth Services at Cole St. Clinic | 10 | | | X | | | X | | | X | X | X | | X |
| Huckleberry House | 10 | | | | X | | | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Larkin Street Youth Services Drop-In Center | 10 | | | X | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Lark-Inn for Youth | 11 | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Legal Services for Children | 61 | | X | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Legal Services for Prisoners with Children | 62 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | X |

| Agency Name | PAGE | SERVICES OFFERED | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Prison Visiting and Advocacy | Legal Services | Medical Services* | Counseling/Mental Health | Substance Abuse Services | Education/Tutoring/Employment | Mentoring Programs | Food and/or Clothing | Emergency Housing for Youth | Crisis Intervention | Recreation (sports, art, music, etc.) | Youth Hotlines | Information Referral/Case Management |
| **San Francisco** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LYRIC | 70 | | | | X | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| Omega Boys Club/Street Soldiers | 67 | | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| Out of Site Center for Arts Education | 71 | | | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| San Francisco Public Defender Juvenile Division | 61 | | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| San Francisco Public Defender | 62 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| San Francisco Wellness Initiative (various locations) | 28 | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | X |
| Valencia Health Services | 28 | | | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Western Addition Recovery House | 39 | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | |
| YMCAs (various locations) | 71 | | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | X |
| Youth Chance High School, Embarcadero YMCA | 73 | | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | X |

*** Medical includes:** Dr. appointments, HIV/STD prevention/treatment, and pregnancy services & family planning

# About the Authors

This guide was originally created and published by Project WHAT! youth members and the Program Director, Anna Wong, in May 2007. The 2nd edition of the guide was updated by current Project WHAT! members and reprinted in May 2008. Learn more about the authors below.

**Anthony Ellis** joined Project WHAT! in 2006 and was a member of the project for its first year and a half. He attends Cal State East Bay. In his spare time, he enjoys playing football, going to church, and hanging out with friends.

**De'Mel Deon Bullock** is 21 years old and lives in Oakland, CA. He attended elementary, middle, and the beginning of high school in Suisun City, CA, then moved to Oakland and attended Oakland High. He says that school has always been a little challenging for him, more because of things that have taken place outside of the classroom walls than within. De'Mel earned his G.E.D. through a community program. Most of his spare time is spent at the gym or in the library trying to find ways to better his future. De'Mel is currently attending the College of Alameda in their automotive program. He has been working with Project WHAT! since the spring of 2006.

**Kashka Washington** is 16 years old. She is a leader who is here to help improve people's lives and her mission will get accomplished! Kashka joined Project WHAT! in 2007.

**Kyle Sporleder** joined Project WHAT! in 2007. He joined Project WHAT! to make his voice heard and to help make people care about preventing kids from missing out on their childhoods. Aside from his passion for helping others, education is an important part of Kyle's life. He is a senior at Leadership High School in San Francisco. During his time at Leadership, he discovered a talent for oral and written communication, and hopes to one day put his skills to good use by pursuing a career in journalism, law, or politics.

**Luis Esparza** was born in San Francisco in 1991. He joined Project WHAT! in April 2006. In his spare time, he likes drawing what's on his mind.

**Marriah Humphrey** joined Project WHAT! in 2007 and is 16 years old. She lives in Hayward, CA and attends Hayward High School. She's in the marching band and has been playing clarinet since the fourth grade. Marriah likes being on the computer and hanging out with friends. She wants to go to college on the east coast, and become a child psychiatrist. She says that Project WHAT! has been a great experience for her.

**Sarita "Ri-Ri" Wilson** is 19 years old and has been living in Oakland, California all her life. It hasn't been easy. She has dabbled in a little bit of everything from alcohol to drugs, from robbery to stealing cars but now as she begins her path towards womanhood, she is changing, trying to do the right thing. She is getting back in school and has three jobs so she is hoping, praying, and working her way to the top where she plans to be soon. She is also a mother to a beautiful little girl named

# About the Authors (Cont.)

Alicia. She began with Project WHAT! in June of 2007 and says that she loves what she does because she is making a difference in the lives of current and future children of incarcerated parents.

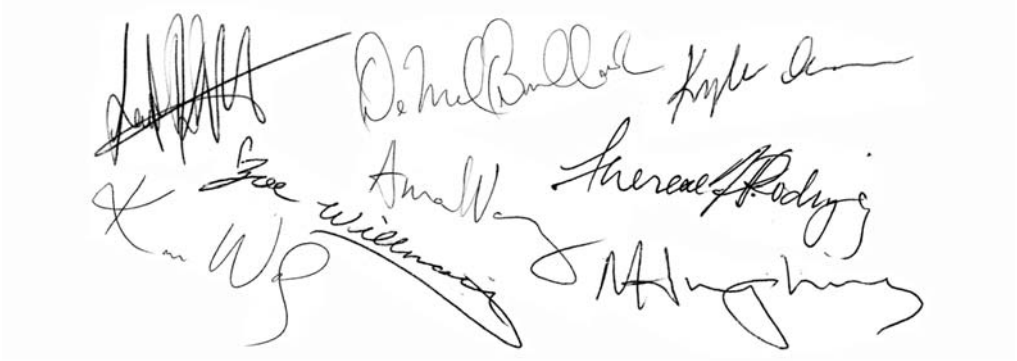
**Therese Rodriguez** is 25 years old, married, and has a 15 month old beautiful baby boy. She was born and raised in the Mission District, the heart of San Francisco. Therese is currently in her last year of the Social Work Masters Program at SFSU and is also working on her Pupil Personnel Services Credential, which will enable her to work as a certified professional in the public school system. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Social Work. Therese's passion and career goal is to work with children, youth and families in low-income neighborhoods. She is currently working as a clinical social worker and counselor at a high school and an elementary school.



**Tiffany Hopkins** was an original member of Project WHAT! and was 16 years old when she joined. She grew up in Richmond, CA and currently resides in El Sobrante. Tiffany attends El Cerrito High School. In her spare time, she likes to write, shop, and listen to music.

**Zoe Willmott** was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on November 28th, 1990 (Sagittarius), but raised in the City by the Bay, none other than San Francisco. After her mother's incarceration, she became involved with prison work. Zoe has been a member of Project WHAT! since the beginning and loves it. Zoe is a Senior at Leadership High School in San Francisco. In the fall she will be attending Barnard college in New York City. Her passions include writing and political activism, although she is undecided what specifically she will study in college. In the future, she hopes to continue advocacy work related to issues of incarceration.

**Anna Wong** has been the Program Director of Project WHAT! since the program's launch in 2006. She also represents Community Works in its collaboration with the San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership and the Women's Foundation of California. Anna was born and raised in Washington D.C. She has a Masters in Public Administration from Kennedy School of Government, with a background in criminal justice and education policy. For fun, she loves basketball, music, traveling, food, exploring, and hanging out with friends and family.



# Thanks

**…for your time, expertise, and feedback…**

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Last but not least, to all the teachers, social workers, other service providers, and youth who participated in our focus groups, surveys, or helped us in any way—we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We hope this guide helps you in your work and in your life.

**…for your money…**

We thank the Zellerbach Family Foundation and Ellen Walker for making not only this guide—but our whole project—possible through your generous funding. Zellerbach has been our main funder since the beginning in 2006 and Project WHAT! would not be possible without you!

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**…a special message to our future supporters…**

If you are a foundation, government agency, or individual who's searching for the right investment for your money, we are it. You won't be sorry if you fund us. Your money is well spent developing the leaders of the future, keeping us out of trouble, and helping service providers and policy makers understand what's really going on in the world. Imprisoning millions of our parents is NOT helping our families or communities—we are!

Take your own notes: