



## ***Pens to Paper to Parents to Prison***

On Saturday, June 4, 2016, the **DC Corrections Information Council (CIC)** facilitated a family engagement letter-writing party, entitled, “Pens to Paper to Parents in Prison”. The idea for the event was born on April 26, 2016 during the *CIC Pop-up Think Tank* when family members, local leaders and formerly incarcerated individuals came together to discuss strategies to increase family engagement with the nearly 4900 DC residents in Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) facilities across the country.

Sixteen families attended the event, eager to share their experiences, insight and write letters together. One of the event’s highlights was a conversation between 11-year old **Madison Strempek** and **Tony Lewis**, both authors who have fathers in prison. They have become spokespersons for this population in an effort to encourage pro-social coping skills and reduce stigma for children with incarcerated parents.

Others on hand to lend support to children and family members with incarcerated loved ones included: **Dr. Avon Hart-Johnson** of DC Project Connect, **Kyle Bacon** of Dreamer’s Academy, **Yasmine Arrington** of Scholarchips, and **Yukia Hugee** of London Bridges Inc. **Edward Doxen** from the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) also participated in the festivities.

Special Thanks to the CIC staff and interns who facilitated this event. Most of all we extend our sincere gratitude to **The Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ** in Ward 8 for hosting the CIC family engagement letter-writing party and to **Susan Galbraith** for her generous donation for refreshments.

As the holidays approach, the CIC will facilitate letter-writing parties in an effort to continue family engagement through written correspondence.

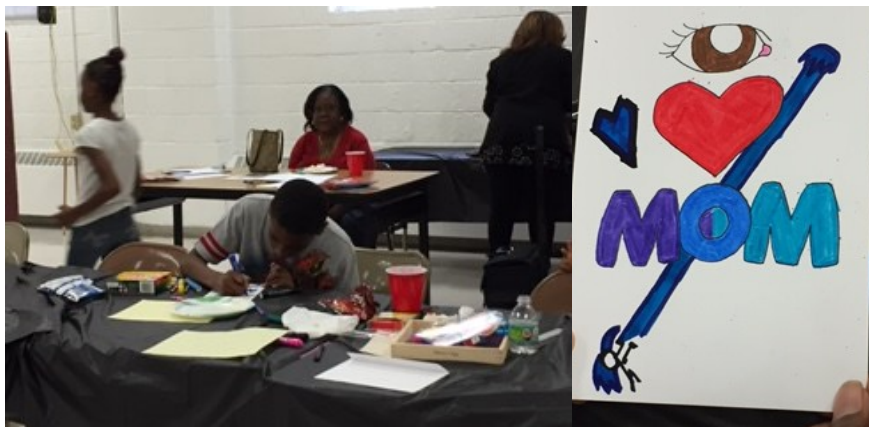
**Please see below for event photos and more ways to communicate  
with incarcerated loved ones.**



A parent colors a card for her son who is incarcerated in the FBOP



Yukia Hugee of London Bridges Inc. and Yasmine Arrington of Scholarships.



A young man creates a card for his mother who is incarcerated in the FBOP.



CIC Staff: Lashonia Thompson-El and Phillip Mosby



Authors Tony Lewis and Madison Strempek exchange books.

## Other Methods of Communication with Incarcerated Loved Ones

### Connect Inmate App

This app allows individuals to send a letter or photos to inmates. This app keeps the inmate information saved for an individual to go back and send a new letter or photos at any time using a mobile device. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/connect-inmate/id918936874?mt=8>

### Pigeonly

The system allows individuals to send photos electronically to inmates for 20 cents a photo, plus shipping & handling. Individuals can upload pictures from the phone, computer, or social media sites. *Pigeonly* prints photos and mails them to any institution throughout the U.S. There is an inmate locator system that allows senders to find registration numbers and addresses. <https://pigeon.ly/>

### CorrLinks Email System

*CorrLinks* allows inmates to correspond via email with persons outside of correctional facilities. An inmate must send an email request to be added to their email correspondence list. Once an individual approves the email request, they may exchange emails with the inmate through the *CorrLinks* website. The inmate must pay to read and respond to messages. <https://www.corrlinks.com/FAQ.aspx>

### CorrLinks Videoconferencing Pilot Program

*CorrLinks* now supports video chat using your personal computer. Video session times are set by each institution, but are generally available daily. Sessions are 25 minutes at \$6.00 per session, which is charged to the inmate. Inmates can schedule up to 2 visits a day with a max of 3 scheduled at any given time. Anyone approved for email correspondence can use the video visitation service. *CorrLinks* Video Service is being piloted at SFF Hazelton, a women's facility in WV, with plans to roll out Bureau-wide. <http://www.corrlinkssupport.com/corrlinks-video-chat-service-with-inmates/>

### Textinmate.com

The system allows inmates to send and receive messages through their *CorrLinks* account. Each inmate will get their own dedicated SMS phone number for their friends and family to send and receive messages, so loved ones can send texts to inmates as they would to any cell phone number. The inmate will be able to receive and respond to text messages on the *CorrLinks* computer system. <https://textinmate.com>

*The Corrections Information Council (CIC) is an independent agency mandated to inspect, monitor, and report on the conditions of confinement at facilities where DC residents are incarcerated. The CIC does not handle individual complaints, provide legal representation or provide legal advice. Listings and/or links to product sites do not constitute endorsement by the CIC of any product, service, organization, company, information provider, or content.*