

table of contents

- 2 Stitches of Hope
- 3-4 A Volunteer's View
- 5-6 News Corner



Pinwheels for Prevention

April is designated as Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Month nationally and in Missouri. PATCH and Chillicothe Correctional Center highlighted the crime of child abuse at the annual Crime Victims' Rights Week ceremony. There were plenty of pinwheels on the prison grounds to remind everyone that all children deserve the chance for a healthy, happy childhood. The pinwheel is the national symbol of child abuse prevention. The importance and responsibility of keeping children safe from harm is stressed to offender mothers through PATCH parenting classes at the prison. PATCH is partially funded by the Children's Trust Fund of Missouri. Missouri's foundation for child abuse awareness and prevention.



news corner

New Cabinets for PATCH

New cabinets with roll-out drawers are providing great storage and organization in the PATCH observation area. Supplies for lunch and craft projects are all within arm's reach in these new cabinets. The spacious counter top gives PATCH staff, volunteers and offender mothers plenty of room to prepare lunch for the many children who come for visits. Thank you to the Missouri Union Presbytery of NE MO and Minnick Supply of Chillicothe for making this possible for PATCH.



These beautiful flowers were created by offenders to brighten the PATCH room. Offenders make room decorations for each season.

Age Extended for PATCH Participation

Children may continue to have PATCH visits through their high school graduation due to a policy approved by the Department of Corrections. This could be age 19, 20 or 21 for children with special needs. A previous policy did not allow children to have visits in the PATCH room after age 18. PATCH staff became aware that more and more children were turning 18 before or during their senior year in high school. Discontinuing PATCH visits at this critical time was a concern that prompted the change.

Offenders Decorate PATCH Visiting Rooms

The children love the colorful decorations in the PATCH visiting rooms! The decorations are crafted by hand by offenders who work together to create a theme for each season.

stitches of hope

This Spring, PATCH worked together with the offender Restorative Justice class at Chillicothe Correctional Center to create a 106" x 125" quilt on the topic of child abuse. Child abuse is an all too common crime that plagues the United States, and one that comes with strong emotions both inside and outside of the correctional system.

The women of Chillicothe Correctional Center (CCC) created hundreds of strips of fabric with personal statements on child abuse that were collected and quilted together by offenders who are a part of the Restorative Justice class. Drawings created by PATCH children were also included in the quilt. The quilt was displayed at the annual "Crime Victims" Week ceremony at CCC and was titled "Stitches of Hope" through a vote during PATCH's weekly support group class.



"Stitches of Hope" now travels with PATCH volunteers to speaking engagements and events, raising awareness for both the plight of child abuse victims and spreading the message of the PATCH program that aims to strengthen the bond of mother and child.



Lou Marchbank
Kearney, Missouri

a volunteer's view

I first heard of PATCH several years ago when Carol Bates, a member of my church circle, presented a program on it. At the time I was busy with work, family and a large garden and simply thought "What a wonderful program! I'm glad there are people who do that." My husband worked over 40 years in children's services at both the state and federal levels, and I had an in-home daycare for most of those years plus raised four children of our

own. When I heard that PATCH drivers were needed, and thought about a mother doing everything she needed to do in order to earn a visit, the thought of having her children stay home because there was no one to transport them was unthinkable. I knew I had to make the call.

The first group we took consisted of 2 teenage brothers, and another boy aged 5. I was told that the 5 year old had never seen his mom outside the prison walls. We picked them up early and though we tried to engage them in conversation, they all wanted to sleep – or at least pretended to. I wondered if it was their way of not having to talk with us ☹️ The trip from Kansas City to Chillicothe was uneventful, and soon we were dropping the boys off. The afternoon went quickly as we browsed antique stores, enjoyed a leisurely lunch, and went for a walk at a nearby park ...all things I love to do but don't take the time during busy gardening months.

When we returned to pick up the boys, we sat in the reception

area wondering how the visit had gone. A few minutes later the door burst open and out came 3 beaming faces, 3 boys all talking at once, transformed. Transformed by an all-too-short visit with their mom, who still means the world to them even though they are apart. Not all kids' reactions are that dramatic, but most are. They giggled and laughed all the way home, talking non-stop, proudly showing us the craft they had made, teasing each other good-naturedly, and in general acting like normal kids.

We've learned a few things to make the trips more fun. I keep a bag filled with lap trays, crayons, paper, hand-held games, board books for younger kids and other books appropriate for the ages we'll be taking, snacks (I always ask the caregivers about food allergies first), bottled water, wipes, tissues, earphones. I usually have to vacuum my car out after a trip, but that's okay.

The PATCH program helps to maintain the bond between mom and the kids -- they'll have a hard enough time readjusting when they are finally reunited without having to get completely reacquainted again. For anyone thinking about becoming a PATCH volunteer driver, I urge you to try it. You may never know the impact you've had on the kids, but I guarantee it will have a positive affect on you.

"Volunteers don't necessarily have the time,
they just have the heart."

~ Elizabeth Andrew

our mission

To provide services necessary to help children and their mothers, incarcerated at Chillicothe Correctional Center, keep the connection during periods of separation due to incarceration.

donations

Gifts of Honor

Lou Cowherd
Helen Martin
Coleen Scott
Dale Whiteside
Nannie Harmon

Memorial Gifts

Alene Burton
Ruth Seiberling
Rita Jones
Fred and Joan Stephens



WEBSITE: www.chillicothepatch.org

PHONE: 1-800-284-0145

EMAIL: director@chillicothepatch.org

PATCH ytd stats

243 PATCH visits
68 volunteers drove children or supervised visits
413 children helped to see their mothers
58% PATCH-assisted transportation

How to donate

Honor someone special while helping children maintain connections with their mothers in prison.

In Honor of — a gift given to recognize someone for outstanding service or to celebrate a special occasion. A note will be sent to the person being honored and the name will appear in the next PATCH newsletter.

In Memory of — a gift given in memory of someone special. Memorial gifts will be listed in the next PATCH newsletter and a note will be sent to the family.



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