

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 22, 2014**

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## **Osborne Association Celebrates Graduates of Parenting Program at Sing Sing**

***- Family connections key to successful reentry and reduced recidivism -***

**Bronx, N.Y.** – At a graduation ceremony on October 22, 2014, the Osborne Association celebrated the 47 graduates of a parenting and relationship program at Sing Sing, a maximum-security state correctional facility in Ossining, NY. The program, called [FamilyWorks](#), builds family connections – a key factor in a person’s success while they are incarcerated and when they return to the community.

More than half of all incarcerated men and women nationally are parents of minor children. Launched in 1986 as the first parenting program in a men’s state prison, FamilyWorks works with incarcerated fathers to make, mend, and maintain relationships with their children and families.

*FamilyWorks was established in 1986 as the first comprehensive parenting program in a men’s state prison. It has since expanded to 7 men’s prisons with the support of the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. For nearly thirty years, it has enabled incarcerated men to make, mend, and maintain relationships with their children and their children’s caregivers through a comprehensive program that includes five components:*

Basic Parenting — an original 16-week video-based course designed to offer men in prison the opportunity to become better fathers while they are incarcerated and when they return to the community.

Strengthening Relationships — a 6-session course designed to provide graduates of the parenting course with healthy methods of communication and problem solving with family members, partners, and those caring for their children.

Connected Couples — a day-long seminar, attended by both partners in a relationship, that provides couples a better understanding of the impact of incarceration on their relationship and the role each of them play in strengthening that relationship.

Fatherhood Forum — a one-day workshop offering an opportunity for review,

debate, and feedback sessions regarding Basic Parenting, co-facilitated by Osborne staff, but primarily led by participants who completed or are currently enrolled in parenting classes.

Family Centers — at most facilities where FamilyWorks courses are offered, Osborne maintains a dedicated space within the visiting room, staffed by trained civilian and incarcerated Center staff, where fathers can visit with their children in a child-oriented setting that is furnished with games, books and activities that can be shared to enhance the visiting experience and encourage positive communication.

2.7 million children in the U.S. have a parent in prison, and approximately 10 million children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives. In New York State alone, over 100,000 children have a parent currently in prison or jail, and are at high risk for instability due to their parent's absence. Both families and communities derive benefits when children are more closely connected to their incarcerated parent. Children do better in school and are more involved in positive and prosocial activities and programs outside of school.

FamilyWorks is operated in collaboration with the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. Originally launched at Sing Sing in 1986, the program has expanded to a total of eight New York State prisons as well as the New York City jail complex on Rikers Island.

“Individuals in jails and prisons have the same right and responsibility to parent their children as you or I have,” says Liz Gaynes, Executive Director of the Osborne Association. “We know that children of incarcerated parents—like all children—are happier and more successful when they have a strong relationship with their parent. We also know that individuals who are connected to their families do better while they are incarcerated and when they come home.”

The Osborne Association has been nationally recognized for its work to connect families and improve the lives of children with incarcerated parents – most recently when Liz Gaynes was named a Champion of Change for children of incarcerated parents by the White House.

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