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PUMA(Prostitutes Union of Massachusetts), Just-a-Start employment program for teenagers and adults, the Massachusetts Coalition of Battered Women's Service Groups, Families and Friends of Prisoners, and the Mental Patients Liberation Front.

AIM also took part in the April 14 "Women in Poverty" conference at U/Mass, Boston. This was one of the first times that AIM and the Women's Learning and Health Center combined educational efforts. Both staff and formerly incarcerated women presented the "Women in Prison" workshop at the conference.

Jean Fox flew to Los Angeles to attend the "Women in the Law" conference March 30-April 1. Jean spoke at workshops on "Incarcerated Mothers and Their Children" and "Alternative Family Structures". Ev had hoped to join her but was snowed in at Logan Airport.

Special thanks to Carl Jefferson, 12 year old son of AIM mother Diane Jefferson who conducted himself so well during the January 24 segment of the People are Talking TV program. Carl joined Jean Fox and others in a discussion of the struggles and difficulties encountered by families and friends of incarcerated men and women. His ability to understand his difficult feelings and to articulate them demonstrated the positive impact that the van program can have on children of mothers at Framingham. Although the program was difficult, Jean felt that response to the show indicated that people gained some understanding of the problems facing families of men and women in prison.

Funding Report:

In early March AIM received final approval from the Legislature for its request for funding through the "Children's Reserve Account" at the Executive Office of Human Services. The grant is for $25,000 and will greatly help AIM this year. Many thanks to Greg Torres at EOHS for his support, and to the Legislature for approving this money.

A thank you also goes to these recent funders: Old South Church, Poor People's United Fund, Fidelity Foundation, and the Executive Office of Communities and Development.

**********Special Notes**********

AIM is in the process of trying to raise funds to buy a van to expand volunteer and transportation services. We are currently writing proposals and would appreciate any suggestions. Contact Lila Austin in the AIM office with ideas.

AIM's 1983 annual report has recently been mailed to supporters. We have a limited number of copies still available. Contact the office if you'd like to have one.

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Update on Subcommittee on Incarcerated Women:

Jean Fox recently arranged a tour of MCI Framingham for members of the subcommittee on incarcerated women and other interested members of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues. The tour was the second part of a four part training which Jean is conducting for the subcommittee which she chairs. Jean made arrangements with Superintendent Joyce Murphy, who provided an excellent half-day tour. Members came away with strong concerns and ideas for formulating the goals and objectives of the subcommittee. Part one of the training gave members an overview of issues affecting incarcerated women.

Ellen Shub

Legal Issues:

In February the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled on a decision which may make it more difficult for the state to terminate parental rights and proceed with adoptions. This favorable ruling made a distinction between parental fitness for custody vs. parental fitness for other responsibilities (short of custody). The Court set stricter standards for terminating parental rights (which leads to adoption) vs. parents' losing custody. This decision may have a favorable impact on mothers in prison who can't have custody of their children because of separation but may be found fit for other responsibilities such as visitation. Contact the AIM office if you'd like more information.

NEW VISITING PROGRAM PLANNED FOR LANCASTER

Since late Fall, AIM has been part of an interagency planning board developing an overnight visiting program at Lancaster Pre-Release Center. Scheduled to open in June, plans call for three visiting trailers, each housing a three bedroom apartment for the use of mothers and their children.

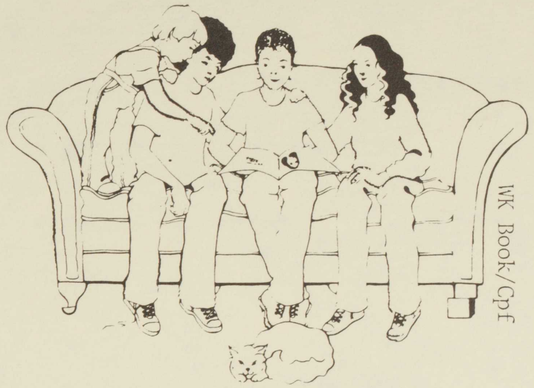
The Department of Correction has begun setting up a screening process to determine eligibility of women for the program. Other members of the planning board include the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health, the Office For Children, and the Department of Public Health. Evelyn Machtinger, AIM's Coordinator of the Family Support and Advocacy Project, believes that "This program is a key to keeping up family ties. It is an exciting idea to let mothers spend extended time (48 hours) with their kids while they're incarcerated in preparation for their eventual reunification with their children."

DSS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INCARCERATED MOTHERS FORMED

"What is unique about the situation of incarcerated mothers and their children?" was a question examined at the first meeting in February of the newly formed sub-committee with the Department of Social Services (DSS) on incarcerated mothers and their children. Initiated by AIM, this sub-committee includes DSS administrators, AIM Advisory Board Members, incarcerated mothers, and members of the Family Services Task Force. The sub-committe's goal is to make policy recommendations to DSS about the particular problems facing incarcerated mothers and their children. It will also write a philosophy statement and guidelines to assist social workers and foster parents with the issues of permanent planning, visitation rights, and case reviews. The sub-committee has been meeting monthly and hopes to make recommendations in the near future. Thus far, the committee was heard women share their own personal and sometimes painful experiences. It has also been producing written drafts of key issue areas. We'll keep you updated.

NEW AIM VIDEOTAPE!

AIM is happy to announce the release of its new videotape, "STAYING TOGETHER". This 17 minute color tape focuses on the importance of regular children's visits at women's prisons. Women speak about their experiences in court, in prison and with the social service system in their attempts to prevent the break-up of their families. Special thanks to Linda DiRocco and Karen Clay, producers of the videotape, and to John Demeter, Sister Jeanette, Mary Tiseo and Maria Contreras-Hall for assistance with the promotional brochure. Call or write the AIM office for a copy of the brochure describing the tape and rental information.



WK Book/Cpf

Here's what women say in and about STAYING TOGETHER:

"Two years I've been involved with the AIM program. They helped me alot because when I came here I didn't know what to do about my son. I didn't know who I could trust. You know, being Puerto Rican and I wasn't speaking too good English. I was thinking they were going to take him and adopt him. Then I heard about AIM and they went to look for Carlos. They found him and made sure he was going to school. AIM was a big help for me."

"It's really hard when you are here and your child comes to visit. They can't understand why you can't come home with them. They don't see guns, they don't see people physically holding you here. So, it's real hard to explain to them that you want to be home with them and you love them very much, but right now you have to be here- that the matter is out of your control."