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Reading program keeps incarcerated mothers involved in their children's lives

Published: Monday, August 1st 2016, 8:17 am EDT

Updated: Monday, August 1st 2016, 10:04 am EDT

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COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - A program in the Midlands is helping incarcerated mothers in prison stay connected with their children. According to the South Carolina Department of Corrections there are about 1,400 women incarcerated in the state and about 80 percent of them have children.

So the initiative called a Mother's Voice, was started in the state.

This initiative provides incarcerated mothers with recordable books suitable for toddlers and young children. Mothers record their own voice as they read the book, then give the book to their child or children to keep and listen to over and over again.

The overall mission of A Mother's Voice is to connect children with their incarcerated moms through reading with the objective to reinforce bonds between mother and child, increase mother and child communication through reading, and improve literacy skills of both the mother and the child.

"It's so meaningful. It's that thing that hasn't happened and we want to make sure that the mothers and the children stay in touch no matter where they are," says Camden Councilwoman Laurie Parks.

Director the S.C. Department of Corrections Bryan Stirling said "They wanted to do it for their kids to let their kids know that even though their incarcerated and away for a time, that they were still there for them. And still thinking about them. And they still love them even though they have made some life choices that lead them to be away from them."

The project still needs funding to continue and you can help. Each book costs about \$24. If you'd like to make a donation, mail it to the S.C. Department of Corrections, 4444 Broad River Road, with A Mother's Voice listed somewhere on the donation.

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