

National Art Exhibit "Interrupted Life: Incarcerated Mothers in the United States" comes to UVM's Davis Center on November 9th

Burlington VT – The national art exhibit "Interrupted Life: Incarcerated Mothers in the United States" will open at UVM's Davis Center's Fireside Lounge on November 9th and run through the 20th. This exhibit exposes the lives of women who are incarcerated by examining motherhood, incarceration, reproductive policy, welfare policy, and politics in the United States. It raises provocative questions about the equality and equity of the American justice system through race, class, gender and sexuality. In addition to the traveling exhibit, works focusing on the effects of incarceration on Vermont children and their families will be on display – including artwork and writings produced by women incarcerated at the Northwest State Correctional facility in Swanton as well as photos taken during family visits. A video created by teenagers telling the story of what it is like to have a parent in prison that will be shown at the opening reception on November 12th. Please join us for this powerful commentary on imprisonment; the emotional impact incarceration has on families; and a deeper understanding about the social costs of incarceration to those most impacted.

Scheduled Events at the Davis Center:

Thursday, November 12th

- **Opening Reception**

Exhibit viewing, Fireside Lounge: 5 – 6:30pm

Remarks by historian and national curator Rickie Solinger, Silver Maple Ballroom: 6:30 – 7:30pm

Wednesday, November 18th: Chittenden Room (#413):

- **Listening Forum on Issues of Incarceration by the VT Commission on Women**, 10am – Noon
- **Film Viewing:** "What I Want My Words to Do To You" – 1 – 2:30pm
- **Panel Discussion on Incarcerated Women in the U.S. and Vermont** by local service providers and UVM Faculty, introduction by Chittenden County State's Attorney T.J. Donovan, 3 – 5:00pm

Many thanks to Casey Family Services, Chittenden Bank, The Permanent Fund for the Well Being of Vermont Children, Photo Garden, the University of Vermont, Kids-A-Part at Vermont Children's Aid, and Vermont Works for Women for their financial support of this exhibit.

Incarcerated Mothers in Vermont

In VT, over 1,000 women go to prison each year. Over three-quarters of those women are mothers, the overwhelming majority of which are single mothers. Eighty percent of those women are non-violent, and up to 60% of the women who are incarcerated have not committed new crimes – they have violated a technical condition of their community supervision. In 2007 over 2,000 children were affected by their mother's incarceration and the numbers continue to increase.

When mothers are incarcerated, their children are often left in situations where their needs are misunderstood, where poverty prevails and where they suffer emotional neglect and abuse. They are among the most at-risk, yet least visible, populations of children. They must often leave behind all that is familiar – parents, schools, siblings – not always told the truth about where their parents are and many lose contact with their parent. The stories of these children and their families are the stories of your friends, neighbors, and even your family. The hope for children who have a parent incarcerated in Vermont is that they do not become collateral damage to their parent's criminal behavior.

For further information on incarcerated mothers in Vermont, contact:

Tara Graham, Program Director, Kids-A-Part at Vermont Children's Aid: (802) 655-0006

Denise Nagelschmidt, Executive Director, Kids-A-Part at Vermont Children's Aid: (802) 655-0006

Jill Evans, Director of Women Offenders and Family services, Dept. of Corrections: (802) 527-4389