

Uniting children with their mothers and fathers in prison.





## Letter from the Executive Director and Founder

As a supporter of Get On The Bus, what you do for children who have a parent in prison is priceless. How do you place a value on the love that a child receives from his or her parent? There is no better feeling and no greater need for each child who "gets on the bus" than to experience the love of the parent who is absent from their daily life. And if we think about the children of an immigrant parent, deportation may quite literally mean that that they will never see that parent again.

**Get On The Bus** creates the opportunity for children of incarcerated parents to maintain this essential relationship. A growing body of research informs us that children of incarcerated parents suffer a greater likelihood of experiencing poverty, family instability, poor school performance and a variety of physical and mental health issues.

Research also confirms what Get On The Bus has known all along . . . facilitating family visitation can decrease the negative impacts of parental incarceration on children and increase the possibility for a parent's successful re-entry into the community following their sentence.

Our staff and board of directors would like to express our deepest gratitude for the partnership and generosity of literally thousands of volunteers who make what we do possible. **Get On The Bus is not** "our" program, it's EVERYBODY's program, and we are so glad you're on board.

In service,
Amalia Molina Cortina
Executive Director

Sr. Suzanne Jabro, CSJ Founder



## Success Looks Like . . . Benny!

A week before his third **Get On The Bus** trip, Benny graduated from high school. According to Sylvia, Benny's mom, "His dad made a bad choice and everyone who loved him was affected and suffered. Benny had to overcome a lot to do so well."

Benny brought his cap and gown on the bus, hoping to show his Dad. However, during the clearance process Benny was told that he couldn't bring them into the visiting room. A **Get On The Bus** staff member appealed the denial. Much to our surprise, the warden not only gave permission to bring in the cap and gown, he asked Benny to wear them proudly all day so that all of the other dads and children could see him as the role model that he is.

Benny was the center of attention and was complimented time and time again on his accomplishment. For Benny, it was the best graduation gift that he received. For **Get On The Bus**, it was a moment that defines our purpose, our impact and a picture-perfect snapshot of success.

Both Benny and his dad are now taking positive steps forward with their lives. Benny has been accepted into the Coast Guard and his dad was released in November.



## Service Statistics

Mother's Day Totals Father's Day Totals December Trip Totals TOTALS

| Children | Parents | Caregivers | Volunteers | # of Buses |
|----------|---------|------------|------------|------------|
| 676      | 292     | 240        | 112        | 21         |
| 638      | 295     | 272        | 186        | 25         |
| 153      | 68      | 60         | 33         | 5          |
| 1,467    | 655     | 572        | 331        | 51         |

- A total of 638 families participated in Get On the Bus in 2014.
- The average age of participating children was 8 years old.
- 55% of participating parents will be paroled in 3 years or less.
- Get On The Bus facilitated the clearance of 3,340 individuals into the prisons.
- Get On The Bus participants ate 6,280 slices of pizza and drank 3,893 bottles of water.



## Dear Get on the Bus,

In y name is Lacy and I was one of the inmates who participated in Get On The Bus today at the Federal Correctional Institution in Dublin. I am writing to let you know how much my family and I appreciate all that you have done to make these family visits possible. I had the most wonderful visit with my kids and my mom. If not for Get On The Bus, I know that this visit would have been impossible. My family does not have the transportation or funding to make the trip up here on their own. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for letting this happen.

To see the smiles on my kids' faces the moment they walked though those doors and saw me was priceless. My kids mean



the world to me and I mean the world to them. When I was out there doing the wrong that ended me up in prison I didn't understand or think about the price that I would have to pay until I got ripped apart from my kids and family. I know this experience has opened my eyes and made me realize how important my kids are to me and I to them.

Without GOTB I would have never seen those wonderful smiles on my babies' faces until I get out in 2019. There are not enough words to express how much I appreciate it. Thank you, thank you, God Bless you all!



Our committed board members in action: Sr. Teresa Lynch, CSJ and Jane O'Brien Argento represent Get On The Bus at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress.

## Getting the Word Out . . .

et On The Bus staff and volunteers love telling people about Get On The Bus. That's because they know that more people they introduce to our work means that more children can see their moms and dads.

### We need your help to:

- Share the good news about reuniting children with their parent in prison
- Get your faith community, club or family involved
- Continue funding our important ministry so that more children will **Get On The Bus** in 2015

Thank you for your generous support that gives children of incarcerated parents a special day, a lifetime memory and an unique opportunity to strengthen their family bonds.

## Dear Friends,

n behalf of the Center for Restorative Justice Works' Board of Directors, it is my honor to introduce Amalia Molina Cortina, who joined CRJW this summer as the new executive director.

Amalia is an old friend of **Get On The Bus** having worked closely with CRJW's founder, Sr. Suzanne Jabro, CSJ, during the agency's early days. Amalia also brings a deep interest and commitment to CRJW's Women of Wisdom program at the California Institution for Women.

Prior to joining us, Amalia was the director of Families of the Incarcerated, a program of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Restorative Justice, which provides families with transportation to eight prisons and also pastoral care and support groups for victims of crime, the incarcerated, and the families of both.

A native of El Salvador, Amalia is the author of *The Power of Love: My Experience in a U.S. Immigration Jail* (Epica Task Force, December 2003). In 2000, the Oregonian received a Pulitzer Prize for a sixpart series, "*Liberty's Heavy Hand*," which included the Molina family's story. A longtime advocate for immigrant families, Amalia was the recipient of the Women Refugee Commission's 2010 Voices of Courage Award and the Posada Project's 2007 Angels Award.

Her public speaking experiences have included presentations at Loyola University of Chicago, Georgetown University, and Regis University as well as various restorative justice and religious conferences in a number of states. Amalia holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration with an emphasis in public accounting from Universidad Centroamerica, San Salvador, and a MBA in finance from Universidad Tecnologica, San Salvador.

Amailia knows the heart of the Center for Restorative Justice Works. She understands the plight of the families our programs serve – qualifications that are priceless in leading this unique agency. Under her leadership and with your support, CRJW will continue to be a light in the lives of many of the most forgotten.

Gratefully, Jane O'Brien Argento CRJW Board Chair

"To see my son for the first time was.....wow! I thank you for all the hard work you guys do for all the families. May God bless you always!"

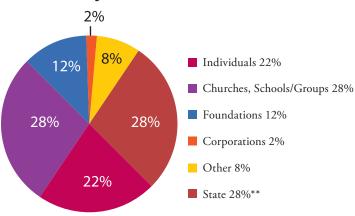


## Financial Report

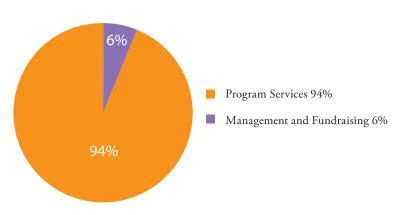
**Get On The Bus** is the flagship program of the Center for Restorative Justice Works (CRJW), an organization dedicated to uniting children, families and communities separated by crime and the criminal justice system. In addition to **Get On The Bus**, CRJW offers The Chowchilla Express, a state-funded visitation program exclusively to Chowchilla and Cross-Over, a program providing women at the California Institution for Women with personal and spiritual development opportunities.

During its 2013-14 fiscal year, CRJW raised \$1,191,866.\* The sources of funding and use of funds are displayed in the pie charts below.

### Sources of CRJW Revenue



### Distribution of CRJW Expenditures



<sup>\*</sup> The figures displayed above are unaudited as of the printing of this report. CRJW is independently reviewed by Hensiek & Caron, Certified Public Accountants.

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<sup>\*\*</sup> The revenue received from the state funded the Chowchilla Family Express. Get On The Bus does not receive government funding.

## Jur Donors

Space constraints limit us to listing donors for sponsor-level gifts received by September 30, 2014. We are very grateful for every donation that we receive and all donors are listed on our website. www.getonthebus.us. Please forgive any errors or omissions. Enclosed remit cards contain giving level categories that were increased as of October 1, 2014 and do not correspond exactly to the categories listed below.

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"Seeing my girls was the ultimate blessing. Thank you for transporting our most precious cargo—our little angels." - Mom, CIW

## "My Daddy gave me a teddy bear and was happy to see me."

- GOTB child

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# "My favorite part was playing connect 4 with my Dad . . . I won by the way." - 14 yrs old

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Nadia Ganna



## "We talked and ate and played games together. This is one of the best days of my life" - 11 year old

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### It is with deep gratitude that we recognize the efforts of all of the Get On The Bus Team Leaders. We couldn't do it without you!

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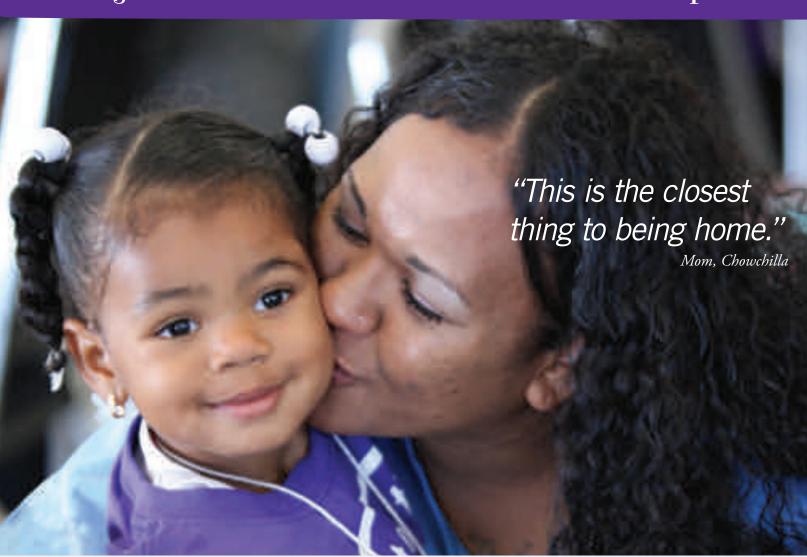


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