

Our Children's Place and Coastal Horizons Center Announce Merger

Combined organization looks to have stronger impact on the well-being of children throughout the state.

Our Children's Place (OCP) has merged with Coastal Horizons Center and will be known as Our Children's Place of Coastal Horizons Center. OCP has served as North Carolina's leading advocate and education resource focused on children of incarcerated parents. Through one of its programs, Coastal Horizons Center supports the state's criminal justice system by providing treatment alternatives for offenders. Together, the two organizations will have a stronger impact on the lives of North Carolina's children through public awareness and statewide advocacy, ensuring the necessary resources are available to support children of incarcerated parents. Melissa Radcliff, executive director of Our Children's Place, will continue as the program director and the program will continue to be based in the Triangle.

"We look forward to working together to create a statewide community where children of incarcerated parents are recognized and supported rather than shamed and stigmatized," said Karen Chapple, Executive Vice President of Operations for Coastal Horizons Center. Our Children's Place has partnered with Coastal Horizons for years, with both organizations working to support families enmeshed in the criminal justice system. "The work of Our Children's Place directly relates to the mission and beliefs of Coastal Horizons Center, and together we will expand our involvement in, and impact on, the lives of the families we serve," said Ms. Chapple.

The work of Our Children's Place focuses on educating professionals about the impacts of parental incarceration; identifying and promoting policies, programs, and practices which improve the outcomes for these children; and supporting the relationship between these children and their parents, not only to benefit the children, but also to ensure that the corrections system, agencies focused on serving families, and surrounding communities understand how best to facilitate these interactions in order to provide the most value. Importantly, they also work to coordinate Parent Days, so children have opportunities to interact with their incarcerated parents. With an eye towards building resiliency in these children and protecting them from shame, stigma, and isolation, the organization works to keep affected children's needs in mind at the time of a parent's arrest, during incarceration, and upon re-entry.

"We are pleased to become part of Coastal Horizons Center, an organization with a long history of identifying community needs and providing opportunities for individual and families to make better choices. We are excited about the chance to add the perspective of children of incarcerated parents to the work Coastal Horizons is doing throughout the state," said Chris Blue, outgoing Board Chair of Our Children's Place.

Coastal Horizons Center's work in criminal justice focuses on alternatives to incarceration, diversion and reentry programs. The Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) program provides assessment, referral and linkage to treatment and advocacy within the justice system for adults in local communities within 53 counties of North Carolina. Coastal Horizons also provides Recidivism Reduction Services (RRS) programs which provide evidence based cognitive behavioral programs within eight counties in North Carolina via a contract with the NC Department of Public Safety. The most recent addition to Coastal Horizons array of criminal justice services, is the ReEntry for Effective Systems of Treatment (RESET). This program has a priority service area for women who are incarcerated in jail or prison and have a substance use and mental health disorder. The women are assessed while they are incarcerated and then linked to services in New Hanover County to enhance their likelihood of reduced recidivism. This program is currently funded by the U. S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and is a partnership between the City of Wilmington and LINC, Inc.