

MEDIA ALERT



Girl Scouts®

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Girl Scouts' Beyond Bars Program Featured on the Oxygen Network, Sunday, March 25

Baltimore--Girl Scouts of Central Maryland's award winning program, Beyond Bars—a Girl Scout program for women incarcerated at the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women in Jessup, Maryland, and their daughters—will be featured in the documentary series, *Who Cares About Girls?* on Sunday, March 25, 2007 at 10 p.m. Hosted by award winning journalist Lisa Ling, and produced by National Geographic Television, the Oxygen Network will explore how the world treats girls. The series debuts with the original production *“Mothers In Prison - And The Daughters Left Behind.”* The show will rerun throughout April and other installments of the series will follow in 2007.

“Mothers In Prison” takes an in-depth look at what happens to the young daughters left behind when their moms are taken away--since women are often the primary or sole caregiver to their children. Does ‘the system’ help or hinder the lives of these girls? Lisa Ling spent time with three girls who live thousands of miles from each other, but are bound by the common experience of having mothers behind bars. She also explores the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland's Beyond Bars program; an innovative ‘summer camp’ for children of imprisoned parents in Bedford, NY; and a women's prison in Australia where children are able to live with their parents until the age of six.

Where Girls Grow StrongSM

Girl Scouts of Central Maryland (GSCM) was the first Girl Scout Council to pilot the Beyond Bars program in 1992. Partnerships with the National Institute of Justice and the Maryland Department of Corrections have allowed Girl Scouts of Central Maryland to provide support and encouragement to a segment of the population often overlooked—daughters of incarcerated women. The goals of the program have been the key elements of this award winning program:

- Help reduce the trauma that children experience from having an incarcerated parent.
- Help reduce the incidence of intergenerational incarceration.
- Help mothers work towards being better parents during incarceration and upon their return to the community.
- Help mothers maintain connection and involvement with their children and sustain the mother/daughter bond.

The GSCM Beyond Bars program has been recognized by the National Institute of Justice, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the Maryland Criminal Justice Association. Since the pilot of the central Maryland program, over 50 Girl Scout Councils nationwide have replicated this life-changing program in their cities and states.

In 2002, GSCM expanded its outreach services to incarcerated women and their daughters with the Bridge Beyond Bars program. This Girl Scout program targets women who are in the pre-release phase of their incarceration and helps them with their transition efforts. Both the Beyond Bars and Bridge Beyond Bars programs were featured on the Hallmark Channel's *Naomi's New Morning* show in late September of last year.