

PRESS
RELEASES
RELEAS
E



Girl Scouts of Central Maryland
4806 Seton Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215-3216
T 410 358 9711 F 410 358 9833
Toll Free 800 492 2521

February 23, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Danita Terry, Director of Communications
(410) 358-9711/ dterry@gscm.org

Girl Scouts Nominate Warden for Champion of Courage Award

Baltimore—Maryland Correctional Institute for Women Warden, Brenda Shell was among the four recipients of Fox 45's Champion of Courage award. The Champions were honored at a luncheon on Saturday, February 21 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel for keeping Dr. King's dream alive through their work with youth and the community. Girl Scouts of Central Maryland nominated Warden Shell for her exemplary oversight of the Girl Scout Beyond Bars program at the institution.

The Girl Scouts Beyond Bars Program, which was piloted in Baltimore, has been in existence at MCIW for 16 years. Partnerships with the National Institute of Justice and the Maryland Department of Corrections enable MCIW and the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland to provide encouragement and support to daughters of incarcerated women and their mothers through bi-monthly troop meetings at the institution. Troop 7140 at MCIW currently has 77 members. During their bi-monthly Girl Scout meetings, moms and daughters recite the Girl Scout pledge, work on service projects and arts and crafts, engage in reading projects and participate in activities that encourage self-esteem and good decision-making skills.

The Beyond Bars program at MCIW 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 1992 427 girls have benefited from this unique and highly relevant program. Under Warden Shell's leadership, Troop 7140 has had three overnight troop meetings—somewhat of a phenomena in the correctional world—allowing daughters to spend the night cuddled with their moms talking, playing and most importantly, strengthening their mother-daughter bond, a crucial element in the lives and well-being of both the daughters and the mothers. For some girls, it was the first time they could remember spending the night with their moms.

Where Girls Grow StrongSM

One of the moms described her feelings about the sleep-over: "As a mother who has been an inmate for over eight years, the opportunity to spend nearly 14 hours of quality time with my daughter was nothing short of a miracle. I know that there is nothing more important to any mother than a strong bond with her daughter. I believe that every mother involved left our event with that gift...I can't talk about this wonderful time without thanking our Warden, Brenda Shell. Without [her] compassion and advocacy, this miracle wouldn't have occurred."

Warden Brenda Shell is a Champion of Courage because of the respect, hope and inspiration she provides to the women at MCIW and to the daughters of the women at MCIW through innovative programs like Beyond Bars. For more information about this program or other Girl Scout Child Advocacy programs, contact Kamela Robinson, Child Advocacy program manager.

###

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. Girl Scouts of Central Maryland serves 30,000 girls in Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties providing programs and activities that allow them to Discover, Connect and Take Action.