

The PROGRAM

"It's About Change"

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Agency History

The PROGRAM for Female Offenders, Inc. – “It’s About Change” of the Greater Harrisburg Area was established in 1979 at the request of then Attorney General LeRoy Zimmerman.

As the number of women in the criminal justice system has grown, so have the services offered by The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change”. Services then included supportive counseling and employment placement.

The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” has operated three children’s programs since 1996 that included a mentoring initiative, Life Is Nurturing Kids; Kids Are the Key an after school program; and Saturday Sessions which encourages mothers and children to spend quality time together.

In an effort to alleviate prison overcrowding and adopt alternative to incarceration options, The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” was awarded a contract by the Dauphin County Prison Board to operate a female work release program. **The Woodside Family Center** opened its doors in July 1996 and offers an alternative to incarceration to eligible female women inmates from the Dauphin County Prison. The Center accommodates up to 45 women and several of their pre-school-age children.

On October 1, 1997, The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” began operating Promise Place, which provides a continuum of care service for women offenders released from incarceration and/or for rehabilitation. **Promise Place** provides transitional living services in a residential setting for up to 12 women in need of structure and a safe haven to remain crime and drug free.

During November 1998 The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” secured a contract with Dauphin County Juvenile Probation to provide an **Intensive In-Home Program** for up to 20 female juvenile probationers.

In June 1999 The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” purchased its own building in the South Allison Hill District in Harrisburg, PA. **The Community Center** houses the administrative offices, training center, client-related services for women, and a children’s program area.

In 2001 an anonymous donor presented The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” with a monetary gift that was placed with The Foundation for Enhancing Communities to establish an Endowment Fund in the amount of \$10,000. Also in 2001, The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” secured a \$20,000 grant from the Whitaker Foundation and purchased state-of-the-art computers, software, and other relevant training equipment and materials for its new computer lab.

In January 2003 The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” was approved by the Dauphin County Juvenile Probation Department to submit a new project proposal to provide **Detention Alternative Programming (DAP)** for male and female juveniles. This additional component is available for youths who are not yet adjudicated delinquent and have a pending court disposition and are monitored.

In January 2003, The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) to administer voluntary **HIV/AIDS Testing and Counseling** on site. Clients are administered the Ora-sure test with pre and post testing.

In 2004 The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” received funding from the United Way of the Capital Region to provide a pilot project, “Frank Talk” which were real talk sessions with male adolescents by positive adult male role models recruited from the community to discuss gangs, fatherhood, drug abuse, career planning and a number of other topics.

During 2004-2005 The PROGRAM – “It’s About Change” was a collaborative partner in the Weed and Seed initiative; South Allison Generational Program facilitated by the YWCA of the Greater Harrisburg and was funded to provide “Strait Talk” for Young Female Adults – a duplicate of the “Frank Talk” for males.