



A literacy program helping incarcerated parents stay connected with their children

IN THE NEWS

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"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope." —Kofi Annan

Behind the Scenes

If you are a theater goer, you appreciate that which you *can't* see: the lighting operators, sound effects, set construction, costume design, and other activities that — in addition to the talented actors — are essential to the successful performance on stage. If you spend much time using a computer or mobile device, you are aware that software programs are running invisibly in the background, organizing your data, facilitating your searches, and keeping your systems up to date. And who among us has not turned on some music for a little background "noise" to fill a void and keep us humming?

This issue of *In the News* features examples of *behind the scenes* activities by folks who have a connection — direct or indirect — with **Remain in Touch**. These activities, though mostly unseen, lend a whole lot of life to our organization. They fuel our enthusiasm; they reinforce our commitment to do the best work we possibly can to help incarcerated parents stay connected with their children through literacy. Read on and discover:

- Reflections from our directors regarding their service on the Remain in Touch board;
- A mini documentary about our programs by a local college student to fulfill a journalism assignment;
- YOU — yes, YOU! our generous contributors! While you may never meet the inmates or children we serve, your *behind the scenes* support is indispensable.



Together, we create just the right background "joys" to keep our programs humming!



The **Remain in Touch** Board of Directors meets six times per year. Three of its nine members serve as jail facilitators, but for the most part, the work of the board is conducted behind the scenes. We asked our board members the following question:

"What do you find most meaningful about your service on our board?" Here are some replies:

Witnessing the dedication and commitment each board member has to provide this program touches my heart. They truly understand the value for inmate parents with children and they are willing to work hard towards achieving it. They are purposeful and single-minded, working together to accomplish the Remain in Touch mission. -Connie

The most meaningful part is recognizing that we have the unique opportunity to address potentially devastating situations for children with incarcerated parents. Knowing that our literacy program will create and/or improve the bond between the child and incarcerated parent is extremely gratifying. -Leah

A well run organization reflects the heartbeat of the leadership. Being on the RIT board allows me the privilege to experience the organizing, planning and implementing of the program. The strong healthy leadership is reflected in a strong healthy program that impacts family connections through literacy. -Bonnie

As a board member for Remain in Touch it has been gratifying to know the impact that our work has. The fact that inmates can communicate with their children up to 18 years of age and do it through books is a win, win for parents, children, the community and literacy in general. -Jill

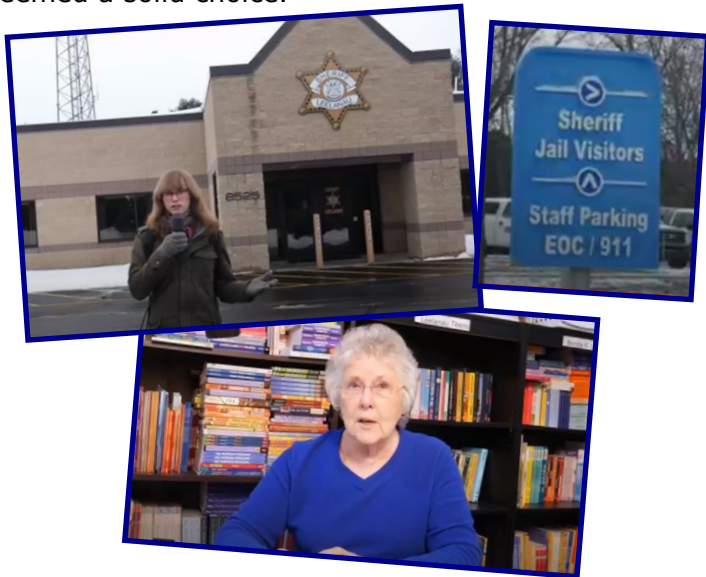
Most meaningful has been listening to the stories of how the work of Remain in Touch impacts families. The program touches both the parent and their children, and in turn, those of us who can make that happen. It also serves as a reminder that the people in the community we call home may live different types of lives, but share the same desire to be connected, especially with those we love. -Rose

I marvel at the talents each board member brings to the table. Their collective hearts, minds and talents, and those of our facilitators, offer the promise of an effective parent/child program with long-lasting impact. -Perri

- Children develop literacy skills long before they read.
- Young children who are read to regularly have a larger vocabulary, a stronger foundation of language awareness, and literacy skills at a younger age.
- Children who are read to regularly by family members experience social-emotional gains and an increased likelihood of overall school success.

Making the grade ...

In December, upon receiving the assignment to produce a short documentary for his journalism class, local Northwestern Michigan College student Will Lewellen chose to feature **Remain in Touch**. This was not the first time Will crossed paths with our program. As a high school student he served on the Youth Advisory Council [YAC] of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Upon YAC's recommendation, the Foundation awarded a grant to Remain in Touch to conduct its program in the Leelanau County Jail. Will recalled the positive impression he had of our literacy program at that time, so to feature our work in his documentary seemed a solid choice.



After hours of video taping, interviewing and editing, the assignment was completed. Will agreed to let us share the final documentary with you, emphasizing that it is only a student work. It is posted on the Remain in Touch website, www.remainintouch.org/news. Thank you, Will, for featuring our program — *behind the scenes!* Nice work!

(And by the way, he got full credit on the assignment.)

Complete age-appropriate booklists for our **0-12** and **13-18** programs are always available in-store or online at Brilliant Books in Traverse City and in-store at Bay Books in Suttons Bay.



Individual donors play an important role in our ability to stock our book carts, purchase packaging, and mail new books and recorded CDs to children of incarcerated parents. Thank you to all who have supported our efforts!

And then there was ... you!

We are grateful as can be for your generous, behind the scenes response to our year-end fundraising invitation. We offer our sincere thanks to these caring contributors:

- [St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Peace and Justice Committee](#) — \$1,800
- [Benzie County Community Chest](#) — \$1,000
- [Traverse Bay Sunrise Rotary Club](#) — \$500
- [Green Brick Foundation Inc](#) — \$500
- [Blackbaud Giving Fund](#) — \$250
- [Keswick United Methodist Church](#) — \$175 special offering
- [Suttons Bay Congregational Church](#) — \$1,000
- Amazing generosity of **individual donors — you!** — who have contributed both monetarily and materially with donations of books purchased through our bookstore partners.



Remember, if you are shopping online, you can continue your support of **Remain in Touch** by designating us as your nonprofit recipient through smile.amazon.com. Thank you!



Visit our [website](#) for:

- a complete list of our partners & supporters
- the latest news about Remain in Touch
- a description of our program
- numerous ways that you can help
- secure online donation via PayPal
- a link to our complete booklists for ages 0-12 and 13-18 at Brilliant Books

Donate

Your generous support provides hope for incarcerated parents and their children! Please invest in a better future by donating online at www.remainintouch.org or make your check payable to *Remain in Touch* and mail it to the address below.

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