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Harriet's House Transitional Housing Program Wins Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award

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Due to its work in reducing recidivism and helping women to obtain and maintain permanent, safe, and affordable housing in North Carolina, The National Criminal Justice Association is honoring Harriet's House Transitional Housing for Female Ex-Offenders with its Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award. The award is given out annually at the National Forum on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. This year's conference will take place Aug. 9-11 in Bellevue, Washington.

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The program was founded on the premise of helping participants to address problems that lead to re-incarceration, including substance abuse, domestic violence and limited education. Services provided include intensive wrap-around case management, employment aid, permanent housing, and family re-unification support. Clients of Harriet's house are given the opportunity to learn valuable life skills such as budgeting, establishing a savings account, developing peer support, parenting skills, and remaining drug free through participation in AA/NA groups. Families are addressed on an individual basis and the staff works with the women to help them return to the community with a positive and stable lifestyle.

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"Harriet's House has provided a practical roadmap for reentry programs to model," said Cheryl Bryant, Grants Manager for the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission. "This program effectively addresses housing, educational, employment, and parenting needs of female ex-offenders by fostering collaborations with state agencies, federal entities and faith-based organizations and successfully leveraging human and financial resources. The comprehensive transitional services, wide-scale collaborations, and effective leveraging of resources provided by Harriet's House have proven to be ingredients for a successful program."

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Since the program was established in 1995, 128 women and 298 children have received care from Harriet's House. Eighty percent of the clients have been placed in permanent housing and 85 percent have jobs. The recidivism rate among clients is 15 percent. Harriet's House operates with support from a network of church congregations that contribute food, clothing, tutoring, and childcare, and was a branch project of Passage Home, a faith-based community development corporation assisting low-income and homeless families.

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The NCJA Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Awards are a way to seek out and share successful criminal justice programs. The purpose of these awards is to highlight programs that:

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