

**NOMINATION FORM
2015 ANNUAL NCWBA PUBLIC SERVICE AND
OUTSTANDING MEMBER PROGRAM AWARDS**

Name of your organization's project: Visiting Mom Project

Please indicate whether your submission is for the Public Service Award or Outstanding Member Program Award: Public Service Award

Name of sponsoring women's bar association:
Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys & Polk County Women Attorneys

Name of sponsoring organization's contact person:
Christina I. Thompson

E-mail address: christinat@watsonpc.com

Telephone number: 515-287-7000

Number of members:
I.O.W.A.: Approx. 200. PCWA: Unknown at this time.

Name of contact person for purposes of award notification:
Christina I. Thompson

E-mail address: christinat@watsonpc.com

Telephone number: 515-287-7000

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO NOTIFY THE NCWBA OF ANY CHANGE IN YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION AFTER SUBMISSION OF YOUR AWARD APPLICATION TO ENSURE YOU RECEIVE TIMELY NOTIFICATION REGARDING WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO RECEIVE AN AWARD.

The nomination materials should be e-mailed to be received no later than Friday, January 30, 2015: Awards Chair Misty Blair, E-mail: awards@ncwba.org

Description of IOWA and PCWA

The Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys, IOWA, was established in 1984 and is the only statewide women's bar in the state of Iowa. IOWA's primary focus is promoting the equality and active participation of women in the legal profession, and to provide support and encouragement for female attorneys and females interested in becoming attorneys and judges. Currently, IOWA has 187 members throughout the state of Iowa. IOWA serves its members by providing opportunities for continuing legal education, as well as by providing networking opportunities to strengthen the ties between female attorneys within the state. IOWA has liaisons with the Iowa State Bar Association's committee on diversity and inclusion, and works with the 50/50 in 20/20 and Infinity projects.

Polk County Women Attorneys, PCWA, is the largest county-level female bar in the state of Iowa with approximately 100 members. PCWA serves its members by providing monthly lunches that offer opportunities for fellowship, networking, and continuing legal education. PCWA also organizes a meeting once a month at a local bakery, where law students, attorneys, and judges can mingle and network.

PCWA and IOWA often partner together to provide their members with services; one such instance is the "Defining your own Success" panel, formerly known as "Rainmaking." This project is now in its third year, and provides female attorneys with an evening of networking, culminating in a panel discussion where prominent female attorneys and judges answer questions and discuss various topics related to the challenges that are unique to female attorneys and judges.

Narrative in Support of Nomination of the Visiting Mom Project

The Iowa Correctional Institution for Women, located in Mitchellville, Iowa is the primary correctional facility in Iowa for the housing of female offenders. The facility houses approximately 540 female offenders.

In 2013, major renovations were made to the Mitchellville facility, including a brand new visiting room for the inmates to use when visiting with family, including their children. Many residents of Mitchellville are literally parenting their children in this room, because it offers the only contact between mother and child. The old visiting room was cold, dark and uninviting. While a few games and toys were available, many of them were broken or unusable. Over half of the inmates have children, and these children are not allowed to bring any toys or other objects in when they come to visit their mothers. During the summer of 2013, several female Iowa judges visited the facility to learn about the planned renovations.

The architect's original plan for the new visiting room was a room with a television, but no funding for new furniture, games, books, or toys. In speaking with the residents, however, the judges found out the women wanted to have items that would allow them to interact with their children, including flashcards, educational games and puzzles, and interactive learning activities. The women also wanted books they could read with their children. The residents were adamant that they did not want a television in the visiting room.

The judges notified IOWA and PCWA about plans at Mitchellville, and the membership responded immediately by forming the Visiting Mom Project in conjunction with the Ashcraft Library project. A steering committee formed of judges and attorneys who were members of IOWA and PCWA examined the issue and formed the plan for carrying out the project. The initial goal was to raise \$10,000, with the stated goal being \$100 each from 100 donors.

The project was promoted in a number of ways. IOWA and PCBA both advertised the project on list serves and Facebook, and explained and promoted the project at functions held by the organizations during the fundraising period. A brochure was developed to provide more information to individuals wishing to donate to the project. A copy of the brochure is included in the supporting documentation attached to this Nomination. The project was first announced on August 28, 2013 at the Puckerbrush Potluck, a joint IOWA/PCWA event, and fundraising

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finished in October 2013. PCWA also held a fundraising event at a local winery to benefit the project.

In less than two months, over \$15,000.00 was raised from over 100 donors—150% of the original goal. Almost half of the funds were donated by women judges, and the remainder of the funds came primarily from female attorneys and firms. Members of the steering committee worked with residents and the warden to determine what was needed for visiting with the children, while balancing the security needs of the facility. The residents wanted sturdy, interactive toys, games and books, as well as items for the children's caregivers to use while visiting. The warden wanted toys and furniture that would be low profile since the visiting room, with as many as 100 people in it at a time, is supervised by one guard at a time.

The Project purchased over 350 books from a local bookstore, and a publishing company donated an additional 350 books. In selecting books, the steering committee focused on books that would contain positive messages and show a wide diversity of people, including African-American and Native American protagonists and books written in Spanish or bilingually in English and Spanish. A local children's toy store helped the committee pick out games and toys that would be interactive, provide learning opportunities, and be sturdy and easy to clean. The variety of games and toys that were purchased is staggering—basic card games like Uno, classic games like chess, a train table, cooperative board games, flash cards, sequence games, and games for autistic children provide a sampling of the items selected. The project also purchased child-sized furniture and rocking chairs, as well as sturdy storage bins and shelves and a duplo table. Rocking chairs were also purchased to allow residents who give birth while at Mitchellville a place to rock their babies.

The new visiting room is warm and inviting, and looks more like a public library than a jail. This allows for the residents to have positive interactions with their children. The importance of this project cannot be understated. The primary goal of the Mitchellville facility is to rehabilitate the residents and allow them to return to society as productive members. Over 50% of the residents have mental health issues, and most of the residents will be released to rejoin society. Offenders who have positive interactions with their families are less likely to reoffend, and offenders with strong family contacts are more easily reintegrated into the

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community. Strengthening family bonds will also alleviate Adverse Child Experiences for those children.

The new facility's ribbon cutting ceremony was held in the visiting room in October 2013. IOWA and PCWA members were on hand, and were recognized for the Project's contributions. The inmates and warden have installed a plaque in the room recognizing the contribution. Many of the residents started crying when they saw the visiting room.

A second, smaller visiting room has also been outfitted with toys and furniture from the Visiting Mom Project, and will serve offenders who work outside the walls of the prison. During 2014, IOWA and PCWA continued to provide support to the visiting rooms through the provision of additional books and games, and are looking forward in 2015 to an exciting new component of this ongoing partnership. Beginning in April 2015. Members of IOWA and PCWA will host twice monthly book clubs with residents of Mitchellville to utilize the new space, to share in the appreciation of literature, and to learn from one another.

By providing the funds to furnish the visiting room, the Visiting Mom Project made it possible for the Mitchellville facility to use its funds for other important expenditures. More importantly, however, the Visiting Mom Project sends a message to the residents that reaffirms their humanity and their roles as mothers. The continued involvement of the Visiting Mom Project with the residents underlines this reaffirmation, and provides a continuing service to the community.

Supporting Materials



This picture shows a large part of the visiting room on the day of the ribbon cutting. The toys, games, furniture, and books shown in this picture are representative of the items selected by the Project. (Many of the items were removed for the ribbon cutting ceremony to create space).

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Steering committee members Judge Paulsen, Suzan Brooks, Judge Bremer, and Brooke Timmer show off a few of the over 700 books provided by the project. Judge Bremer is holding a copy of “Good Night, Moon” that has been translated into Spanish, and Brooke Timmer is holding one of the books chosen based on diversity.

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The Fiedler & Timmer law firm provided a generous matching grant of \$2,500.00 for all donations received within twenty-four hours of the Project's launch at the Puckerbrush Potluck. The firm's members present at the ribbon cutting ceremony include Whitney Judkins, Emily McCarty, Paige Fiedler, Brooke Timmer, and Nathan Borland.

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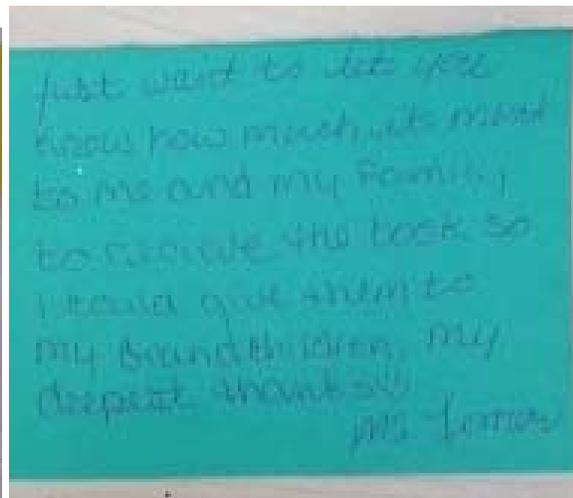
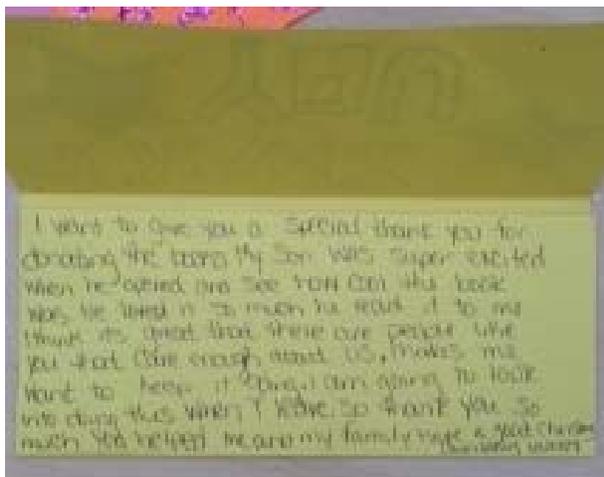
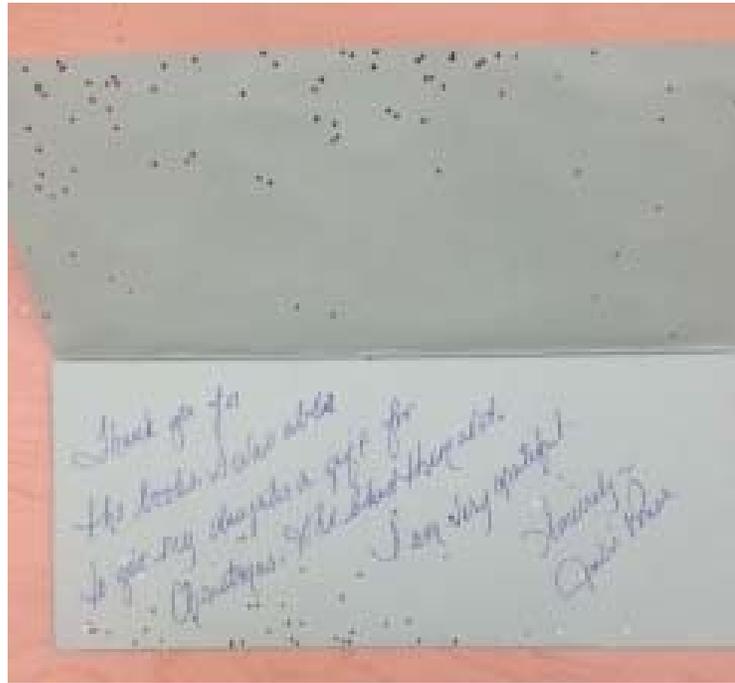
The warden had a specific request for the visiting room – rocking chairs. Many residents give birth while living at Mitchellville, and the only time they get to spend with their infants occurs in the visiting room.

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The first child playing in the visiting room.

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Since the program generated approximately 700 books, a number of the books were given to residents to share with their children or grandchildren. The pictures above are samples of the thank you notes written by the residents.