

For immediate release

TLC Documentary Features Indiana Prison Nursery

Indianapolis, IN (February 23, 2011) – The documentary special, *Babies Behind Bars*, filmed in the Wee Ones Nursery at the Indiana Women’s Prison (IWP) in Indianapolis, IN, premieres tomorrow, Thursday, February 24, 2011 at 10:00 p.m. EST on TLC. The documentary will be shown in two one-hour specials airing February 24 and March 3 at 10/9c.

According to TLC, “*Babies Behind Bars*” tells the dramatic story of pregnant inmates contending for a spot in the coveted “baby dorm,” a radical new project that allows selected offenders at Indiana Women’s Prison, to keep their babies with them while they serve their sentence.”

Babies Behind Bars was produced by Firecracker Films out of London, England. The documentary was filmed last spring by a crew from Firecracker Films who spent several weeks inside the Indiana Women’s Prison to capture a glimpse into the lives of the offenders on the dorm.

Indiana Department of Correction Commissioner Bruce Lemmon commented, “This program not only has a positive impact on reducing the likelihood of recidivism, but it also makes a significant impact on the lives of the mother and the child. By keeping mothers and infants together, the Wee Ones program offers women the opportunity to foster a long-term bond with their child in the first months of life.”

“The nursery program teaches these women the responsibility of motherhood, helping them to become productive members of society and better parents,” added Commissioner Lemmon.

About the Wee Ones Nursery:

The Wee Ones Nursery opened in April 2008 for eligible pregnant offenders. Since its inception, 78 mothers and 62 infants have enjoyed the benefits of the nursery. Since the newborns live on a specialized unit with the mothers, each female offender must meet certain qualifications to be accepted into the program. Participating mothers are pregnant women scheduled to deliver while incarcerated and who will be released less than 18 months after delivery.

The mothers and infants also live with offender nannies on the unit staffed with correctional officers who have received additional training in child safety.

The intent of the program is to provide parenting education and to ensure quality time to strengthen the mother-infant bond during the initial months after the infant’s birth. Currently, offender mothers receive educational program instruction from Riley Development Center, Healthy Starts via the Marion County Health Department, and the Clarian Health Network.

In 2007, Women’s Fund of Central Indiana provided funding to help with the creation and evaluation of the Wee Ones Nursery. For funding, the program currently relies on grants and donations. Last February, the program received donations from members of the Indiana General Assembly at a baby shower hosted by the Women’s Caucus, Political Organization for Women’s Education and Representation (POWER) group.

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