

Stronger Families

Stronger Families initiative seeks to empower families involved in the criminal justice system by offering support as they create their own safety net with the help of life coaches (family advocates). Concentrating on behavioral, marital/family and substance abuse, the coaches motivate and encourage families while walking with them through sets of goals the families set for themselves. Each family is linked with community partners, churches, schools, reentry needs and other venues where families can continue to grow and become self-sufficient.

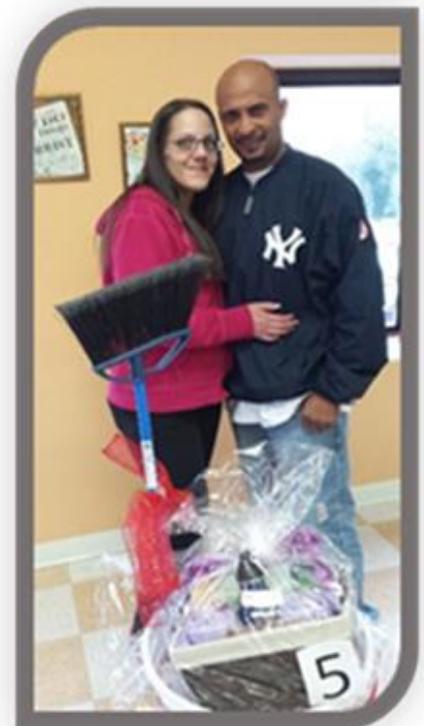


Stronger Families offers several services to bring families closer to their desired goals. These services include an innovative Virtual Visit system, which connects families with an incarcerated loved one, allowing families to build relationships with the help of Stronger Families coaches. If a family chooses to schedule Virtual Visits through the Alms Center they can schedule as many visits as they like with each being 30 minutes long (provided they comply with jail policy). With the help of the Department of Corrections (DOC), the Stronger Families initiative will be offering this incentive to families who participate in the Virtual Visits at our location, otherwise, the visits are only 15 minutes, 3 times per week per DOC protocol. Stronger Families is encouraged by the Virtual Visit system. Not only does it offer families the opportunity to visit their loved one in a safe, comfortable and confidential setting but it also offers the ability for the incarcerated persons to receive counseling services and other programming, such as parenting classes.

In addition, workshops are conducted to keep families involved with all the collaborative agencies as well as community partners. These services and workshops have been an essential part of the continuing bond and relationship that the coaches build with each family.

Our first event was called "Get Connected." Each family was able to sit down with each of the collaborators present and learn more about the benefits of being part of the Stronger Families Initiative. The children present were able to make cards for their incarcerated relative for the holidays and they were hand delivered by the life coach to each of the relatives.

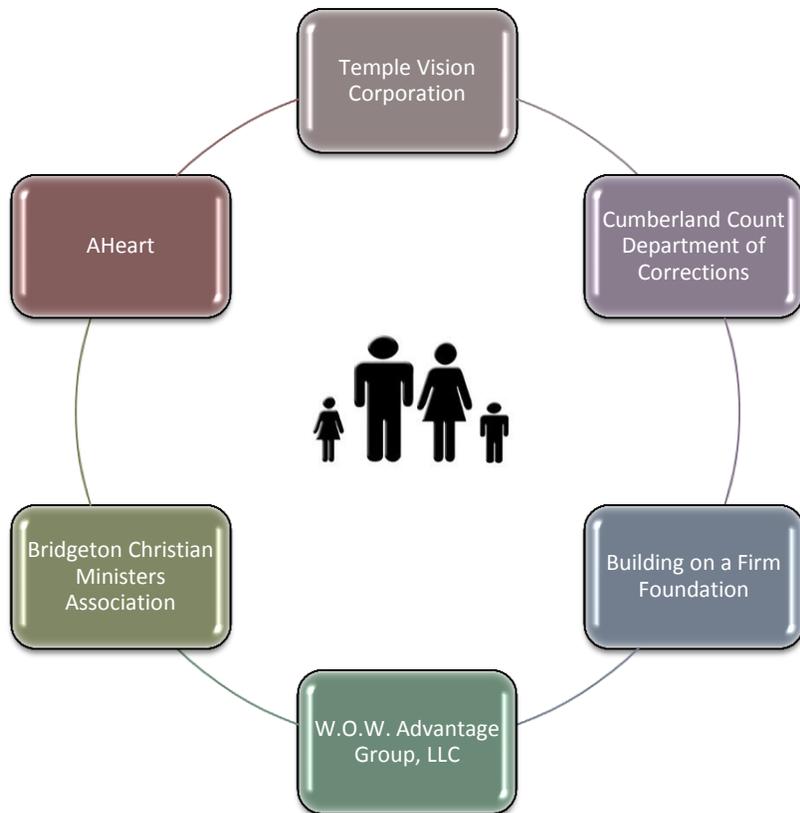
Our second event, "Heart to Heart," was designed to help families build a safety net with our community partners and understand the services provided by these agencies. Each family was provided with a gift basket of assorted items and gift cards, courtesy of the Bridgeton Christian Ministers Association.





Sue desired to be a presence in the life of her children and fiancé during her incarceration. She began working with the Stronger Families life coach in an effort to have continued communication with her children during this trying time. Through scheduled Virtual Visits (3 per week), her fiancé was able to maintain their family goals including paying bills, the educational needs of the children, as well as the progress regarding her incarceration. Sue has since been released and both she and her fiancé have continued communication with the life coaches and desire Stronger Families staff to assist them in their desired goals.

Collaborators and Partners



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