

July 31, 2013 - FIVE INMATES COMPLETE JAIL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

Five inmates at the Bristol Virginia City Jail recently completed the National Fatherhood Initiative program "Dads 24/7". The parenting program is provided to inmates as a partnership between the Bristol Sheriffs Office and Highlands Community Services. The Dads 24/7 program began earlier this year in the Bristol Jail, and has graduated approximately 20 inmates to date. Sheriff Jack Weisenburger touts the inmate program as an important element of crime prevention in the community. Sheriff Weisenburger said " If we can begin a process that help fathers learn tools and techniques to strengthen the relationship with their children and dealing with the issues that children experience, that makes for stronger families. That its a key component to building safer communities."

Inmates spend 12 weekly sessions learning key parenting strategies and identifying strengths and weaknesses in building better family relationships. A mother's program is currently being coordinated and is scheduled to be instituted within the next several weeks. Sheriff Weisenburger sees these initiatives as an important part of inmate re-entry efforts that include a GED program and drug and alcohol counseling. " I appreciate the effort that the inmates have shown in completing this program. My hope is that it will give them the confidence to continue to grow as dads for their children", Weisenburger said at the graduation ceremony.

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