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A Bright Future for Brookelyn

I am a recovering drug addict in federal prison. I am 25 years old and have been incarcerated for 4 years.

I have seen many women sit in jail with no one, nothing. [But] the image of jail that is typically portrayed isn't the reality I've experienced.

While incarcerated in Mecklenburg County Jail, I became familiar with Changed Choices. Each of the ladies impacted my life in more than one way. We prayed together, we laughed together and at times we even cried together.

The reality [of jail] I lived was filled with prayer, goal setting, and hope. Changed Choices has given me hope when I felt hopeless, dreams of a brighter future, motivation to strive for greatness and they lifted me up when I didn't think I could survive another hour much less one more day.

I still worry about my future and who I can lean on for a safe harbor when I return to the free world.

I know with God, my family and my Changed Choices family I will be able to achieve my dreams of a better future sober and clean.

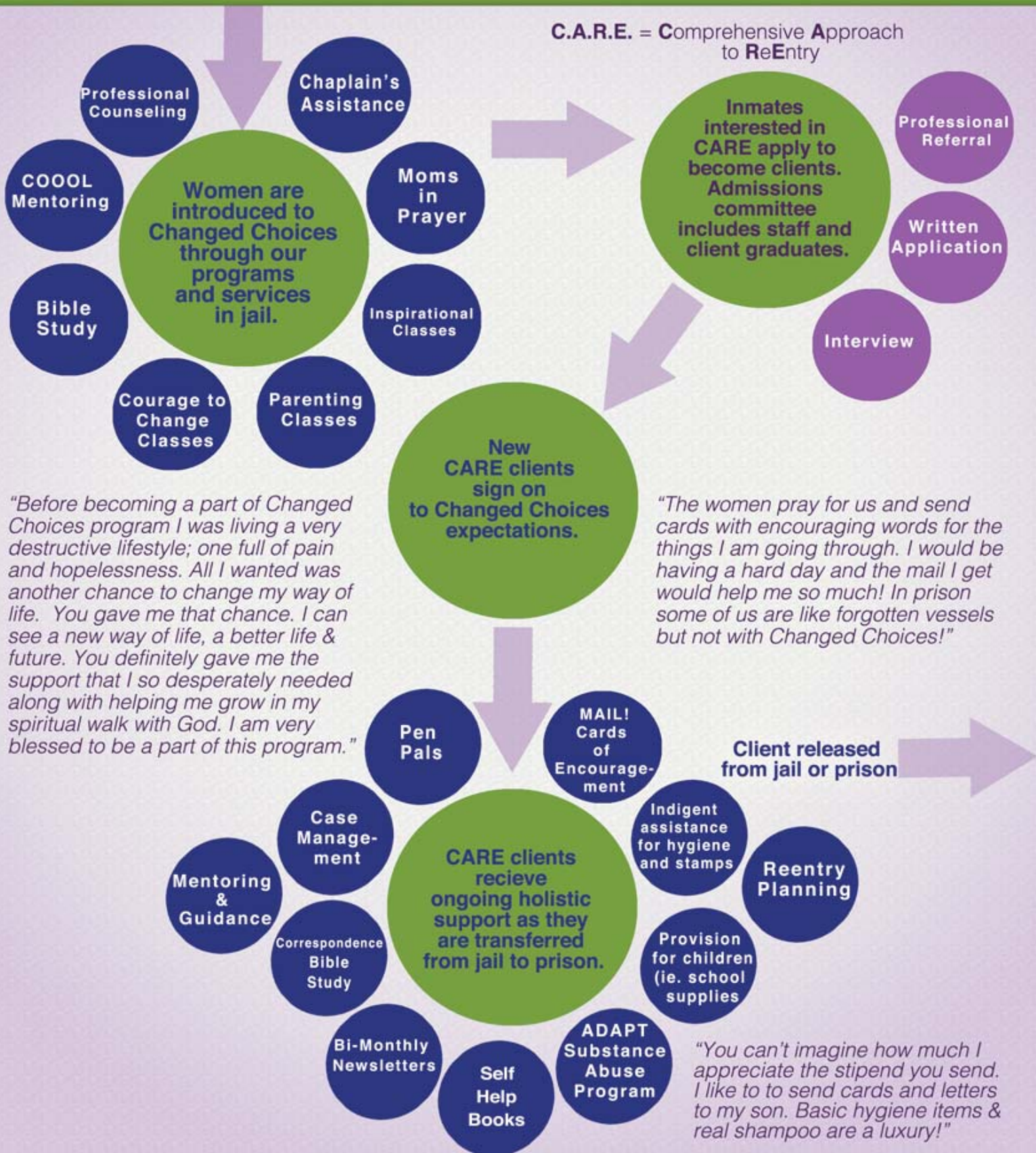
Thank you, Changed Choices, for giving me hope and reminding me that I can achieve my dreams and beyond.

"Brookelyn has just graduated from an intensive nine month drug treatment program in Alderson Federal Prison."

Changed Choices is privileged to offer educational programs, professional counseling, mentoring and Chaplain support for women in jail. Brookelyn took full advantage of these opportunities while in custody at the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office. Because of her motivation and teachability, we were excited to accept her as a client in our CARE program. Through our comprehensive approach to reentry, she will receive the encouragement and support of Changed Choices throughout her sentence and eventual return to our community.



Building New Lives: Changed Choices serves from Jail through Reentry



Who qualifies for the CARE program?

Changed Choices works with women who:

- Return to Mecklenburg County post-release (surrounding counties considered on a space-available basis).
- Have at least two years of incarceration ahead, since the CARE program is based on the proven strategy of wraparound services pre- and post- release.
- Can demonstrate that they are ready for change.
- Have any number of charges or length of record, because we believe that everyone deserves a second chance.

What do CARE clients agree to?

Most basically, these are Changed Choices' expectations for the women we serve:

Honesty: Without telling the truth, we can't develop the relationships needed to work with women.

Acceptance of Responsibility: It's vital for clients to accept responsibility for their past choices and take ownership for the future choices that will allow them to become who they were intended to be.

Accountability: Anyone we work with is expected to faithfully follow through, demonstrating progress (however slow) toward their goals.

Teachability: Women must be willing to listen, accept advice and learn new ways of thinking and living.

Integrity: Our CARE clients should do what is right, even when it's hard.

Willingness to work as hard as agency staff – or harder: Ultimately, the CARE program is about our clients' lives. They must show us the lengths to which they are willing to go to achieve a healthy future.

ReEntry upon release from Jail or Prison



"Upon coming out of prison, I had nothing. I was starting a new way of life with challenges that I had never experienced before. I was frightened and filled with doubt. It is easy to get discouraged when it seems that you are being "pushed down" everywhere you turn because of your past. But thanks to God and all the people involved with Changed Choices, I had someone in my corner fighting along with me. They not only kept me encouraged, but found me a wonderful home I could afford. I don't know if I would be where I am today if I hadn't had the help of Changed Choices."

Community Partners include:

- Anuvia Prevention & Recovery Services
- Beds for Kids
- Bright Blessings
- Center for Community Transitions
- Charlotte Rescue Mission
- Dress for Success
- Fashion & Compassion
- Jackson Park Ministries

Beyond Our Dreams

On April 6th, we gathered with old and new friends for a delicious Italian dinner and fundraiser in support of the many ways Changed Choices empowers women to achieve their dreams. Those who attended gave generously, and together we raised \$14,700!



MOVING STORIES CHANGING LIVES

JUNE 17/18/2017 3-5 PM

**CHARLOTTE BALLET STUDIO THEATER
701 NORTH TRYON STREET
CHARLOTTE, NC**

\$12 donation at the door or reserve at www.mckineticworks.org

In 2016, three Changed Choices clients shared their stories with local choreographer Martha Connerton of Kinetic-Works. The resulting dance production follows the lives of women who have experienced incarceration. Experience "Moving Stories" June 17 & 18, 3-5pm at the Charlotte Ballet Studio Theater.

We Love Our Volunteers!



In 2016, volunteers donated 8,797 hours to Changed Choices, so we were excited for this year's Volunteer Appreciation Week (April 22-29). Our partners at Fashion & Compassion helped us celebrate by lending their boutique to host our Volunteer Appreciation Drop-In.

Fashion & Compassion's artisans, who are women with barriers for employment, helped our volunteers make custom bracelets as a special thank-you gift. Thank you for all who came!

Visit [Changed Choices on Facebook](#) to find our easy recipe for sparkling lemonade punch!

Can you help?

We are in immediate need of volunteers to provide individual, weekly mentoring to incarcerated adolescent and adult women at Mecklenburg County Jail North (located on Spector Drive, nine miles north of uptown). Mentoring takes place on Thursday afternoons. Female volunteers must be 21 or older. Contact Gail@changedchoices.org or call our office at 704-332-6388 for more information. Please help us by sharing this opportunity.

JOIN THE CHANGED CHOICES VOLUNTEER TEAM!

Come to learn about opportunities to serve at **Volunteer Orientation on June 17th.**

Email

Gail@changedchoices.org or call Gail at 704-332-6388 for more information



Thanks to the generous donors of two used vehicles, Linda and Eve are driven toward new opportunities! Your contribution of a vehicle in working order is tax-deductible, and will be used in direct support of a woman or family working hard to build a new life.



COMING SOON:
SummerSHARE: July 10-23
Follow Changed Choices on social media to find out how you can "give need a vacation"

This city-wide donation campaign, led by SHARE Charlotte, supplied us with much-needed household items and postage stamps in 2016.