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Federal Government Renews Grant for Compeer Rochester's Mentoring Program for Children of Incarcerated Parents

Grant will help Compeer Rochester serve the 13,000 area young people who have a parent in prison

ROCHESTER, N.Y., Oct. 5, 2007 — The estimated 13,000 young people in Monroe County who have a parent in state or federal prison will continue to have access to Compeer Rochester's mentoring and support services, as a result of a federal grant renewal.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has again awarded Compeer Rochester a three-year, \$300,000 grant, which will continue to fund the non-profit agency's Mentoring Children of Promise program. The program matches adult volunteers in one-to-one mentoring relationships with youths ages 4 to 18 who have an incarcerated parent.

In addition to the disruption in the parent-child relationship, young people who have a parent in prison also often face economic, social and emotional burdens, such as poverty, parental substance abuse, mental illness and exposure to criminal activities. Mentoring programs like Compeer Rochester have been proven to help these children, by improving school performance, reducing first-time drug and alcohol use, improving social relationships and reducing the likelihood they will turn to violence.

"Compeer Rochester is delighted that the federal government will enable us to mentor more children in our community," said Dana Frame, president and executive director, Compeer Rochester. "These grant funds, along with additional support of local organizations, will allow us to continue to serve a highly at-risk population - without the intervention provided by this program, the children of incarcerated parents face a 70-percent chance of following in their parents' footsteps to prison."

Compeer Rochester's program takes a comprehensive approach to addressing the complex needs of children of incarcerated parents, their families and caregivers. It incorporates services ranging from intake and assessment, to referrals, coordination and community collaboration.

To supplement the federal grant, Compeer Rochester's Mentoring Children of Promise program has received local support from the Max Adler Charitable Trust, Ames Amzalak Memorial Trust, August Family Foundation, Goldberg Berbeco Charitable Trust, Mary S. Mulligan Charitable Trust, Polisseni Foundation, the John F. Wegman Fund, and the Fred and Floy Willmott Foundation. Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter and New York State Senator Joseph E. Robach also have supported the program.

About Compeer Rochester

Established in 1973, Compeer Rochester Inc. (www.rochester.compeer.org) is an innovative, non-profit organization that cultivates supportive friendships and mentoring between volunteers and individuals in mental-health treatment – and promotes mental wellness in the community. Compeer mentoring relationships, which serve as a supplement to therapy, have a direct impact by building the self-esteem, self-confidence and independence of youth and adults in mental-health care or with emotional challenges. The American Psychological Association (APA) recognizes Compeer as a best-practices model.

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