



Volunteer Opportunities to Support The Osborne Association's Family Ties Program

There are over 100,000 children in New York State with a parent in jail or prison; and hundreds of thousands more who experience their parent's arrest or incarceration at some point during their childhoods. Despite these significant numbers, these children remain invisible and there are few programs, services, and trained professionals to recognize and meet their needs. Their families also often do not want to "come out" about this issue for fear of stigmatization, judgment and blame. Children bear the weight of all of this and are often isolated from other children in similar circumstances and are provided with few opportunities to visit and maintain contact with their incarcerated parent. Research shows that recidivism is significantly reduced when families are involved with their loved ones while they are in prison; research also demonstrates that visiting and maintaining contact can reduce the negative impact of separation for children. In addition the more families stay in touch while a parent is incarcerated, the smoother the transition home.

The Family Ties Program at the Osborne Association is one service/program that works to make a positive difference in these children's lives, as well as supporting their families. In particular it works to build and strengthen connections between children/ young people and their mothers while their mothers are incarcerated. Children in the program also get to know one another and can participate in Osborne's other youth programs so they receive positive peer support.

Below are some opportunities to support these important connections and help the young people while their parents are away. At the end of the document is a form for you to return via email (iburton@cbebk.org) or print out and return to Isabel Burton at Beth Elohim.

➤ Chaperoning Day Visits to Prisons

Volunteers accompany Osborne staff and children to visit their parents in prisons within 1-2 hours of NYC (Sing Sing and Eastern Correctional Facilities). Visits take place bi-monthly. Osborne prepares the children, parents and volunteers prior to the visits.

Time commitment:

- Full day on visits. Volunteers wouldn't be required to go on every trip.
- One 2 hour orientation 2-3 weeks before the trip

Volunteers needed:

5-6 volunteers

Trip dates:

- Sing-sing – 12/28, 2/22, 4/19
- Eastern – 2/23,
- Beacon – 6/30

➤ **Chaperoning Out-of-Town Prison Trips**

Twice a year, volunteers accompany Osborne staff and children to visit their mothers at Albion Correctional Facility in Rochester, NY. Volunteers, children, and staff meet in NYC and fly together to Rochester, spend the night in a hotel getting ready for the visit to the prison, visit the mothers on Friday, and return to NYC Friday evening.

Time commitment:

- One Saturday orientation with children 9am-12pm (2-3 weeks before the trip)
- Thursday morning until Friday evening
- Optional debriefing evening session the week following the trip

Volunteers needed:

2-3 volunteers; Men are especially needed for balance.

First Trip:

- December 2nd and 3rd; Training Saturday November 20th.

➤ **Monthly Saturday Activities for Children**

Once Saturday a month, the children come together in the Osborne downtown Brooklyn office (on Remsen St.) for lunch support and activities. They write letters to their parents, and participate in fun activities together. Volunteers are particularly needed to help with letter writing, and participate in the activities.

Time commitment:

- Monthly Saturday meetings (two hours).

Volunteers needed:

5-10 volunteers total; 1-2 volunteers per meeting - volunteers attend on a rotating basis.

➤ **Tutoring and College Mentoring**

Osborne provides academic support and educational assistance to the young people in the downtown Brooklyn office and needs tutors particularly in math and science. There is also the need for assistance with college application process, transition to college, planning for graduation and even things like prom.

Time commitment:

- Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30-5:30pm (Volunteers can come as they are available during that time, but must RSVP in advance.)
- College support would be through individual meetings and email.

Volunteers needed:

5-10 Volunteers

➤ **Bright Futures Series**

Each year, Osborne offers its youth participants exposure to professionals in varied fields and with different educational backgrounds, to expand their own horizons, and inspire them to “dream big.” Volunteers provide 3-4 young people with a tour of their workplace, and/or meet with them to tell their educational and professional stories. Volunteers who have taken non-traditional paths (may not have gone to college, started their own businesses, etc.) are particularly encouraged.

Time commitment:

- One time commitment for 1-2 hours

Volunteers needed:

5-10 Volunteers

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please mark the volunteer opportunity/ies you would like to join:

For further details on the opportunities, please see the *Volunteer Opportunities* document.

_____ **Chaperoning Day Visits to Prisons**

Accompany Osborne staff and children to visit their parents in prisons within 1-2 hours of NYC, such as Sing Sing and Eastern Correctional Facilities.

_____ **Chaperoning Out-of-Town Prison Trips**

Accompany Osborne staff and children overnight to visit their parents at Albion Correctional Facility in Rochester, NY.

_____ **Monthly Saturday Activities for Children**

Work with kids on homework, help them with letters, and plan and participate in other activities during the "Rap and Chat" support and activity group.

_____ **Tutoring**

Help provide support and education activities including tutoring and homework help,

_____ **College Mentoring**

Assistance with college application process, transition to college, planning for graduation and even prom.

_____ **Bright Futures Series**

Provide 3-4 young people with a tour of your workplace, and/or meet with them to tell your educational and professional stories. Volunteers who have taken non-traditional paths (may not have gone to college, started their own businesses, etc.) are encouraged to participate.