

VACRO Children's Foundation

Why does VACRO have its own Children's Foundation?

Every year, a surprisingly large number of Victorian children are adversely affected by parental contact with the criminal justice system (police, courts, corrections). An estimated 67,500 children had a parent appearing as a defendant at the Magistrates' Court of Victoria in only one year (Court Based Family Support, 2009). Families of offenders experience significant social disadvantage and exclusion. Children of offenders are at heightened risk of experiencing parental drug and alcohol abuse, family violence, mental illness, poverty, housing instability and social isolation. Growing up in such a vulnerable family situation can have profound effects on the future opportunities of children, compromising their health and development and disrupting their education, family relationships and social engagement.

VACRO has had contact with the families and children of offenders for many years and we know that constructive family relationships improve the life chances for children and prevent the development of a range of problems including substance abuse and mental health problems, both of which are likely to increase potential contact with the criminal justice system in later years (Barefoot Research & Evaluation, 2005:3).

VACRO believes it is critical to provide early intervention for children, to maintain and support family relationships and contact through a period of incarceration and, finally, to assist with successful transition back into the community upon release. It is apparent that there are significant barriers that are preventing the development of effective support services for children and families of offenders in Victoria.

VACRO has taken the opportunity to act as a leader in providing public commentary and raising community awareness to ensure that barriers are reduced and that this issue is raised in a rational form in the public domain, through community networks and with influential policy makers.

We seek your support in maintaining a consistent voice for these children and in implementing relevant and professional services to meet their needs.

Donations

Please FAX the completed form below to:

03 9602 2355

Or mail to:

**VACRO Children's Foundation
PO Box 14093
Melbourne VIC 8001**

DONOR INFORMATION

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