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AUTHOR BORN IN PRISON TO HEROIN-ADDICTED MOTHER BRINGS MOTIVATIONAL STORY TO FEMALE INMATES

PEARL – Female inmates at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) on Friday heard first-hand the inspirational story of a woman born to a heroin-addicted mother inside a prison, deep in the Appalachia Mountains in West Virginia.

Deborah Jiang-Stein, author of *Prison Baby* and a motivational speaker, also was a guest speaker at the Flowood Community Work Center. Jiang-Stein, whose story has received national attention, lived with her mother in prison for a year before being moved to foster care and was eventually adopted. Like her mother, Jiang-Stein began using drugs and alcohol at age 12 before making changes that brought her 20 years of continued sobriety.

“The real story is what I did with my life,” Jiang-Stein told the inmates. “I know what it means to use drugs and alcohol because I felt bad inside. I sought help and quit. That is where the victory is. Your story is not where you are sitting now but who you teach and how you tell your story.”

Jiang-Stein, a resident of Minneapolis, Minn., uses her life experiences to advocate for education and literacy and to offer tips for resilience and recovery as evidence that anyone can transform to live a productive life regardless of the odds.

Tina Ladner, MDOC director of electronic monitoring, met Jiang-Stein two years ago at a conference in Connecticut and was inspired by her story. “Her story was about her journey through life as her mother was incarcerated when she was born and that really pulled me in,” Ladner said. “I stayed in touch with her and worked on making arrangements for her to visit Mississippi.”

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