

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nearly 200 inmates will be allowed a special family visit Saturday at the Rankin County prison

JACKSON – Nearly 200 inmates on good behavior for a year or more will be allowed a special family visit for three hours Saturday at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County.

The special visitation, which began last year, is being offered again because prison officials believe it has helped to reduce the number of inmates cited for fighting and other infractions. In September, when the first special visit occurred, there were 183 inmates eligible; as of this month, 277 inmates are eligible.

The incentive is beneficial for both staff and the inmates, said Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall. “My staff members have told me what a positive impact they believe this program has,” Hall said. “I applaud the CMCF staff for acting on my charge to come up with programs that cost little to no money to improve rehabilitation and re-entry for inmates.”

Up to 100 females and 90 males will be allowed to interact with their children or grandchildren with games, face-painting, and other activities from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Each inmate can visit with three children and one adult from the inmate’s approved visitation list.

CMCF Superintendent Ron King has watched inmates and family members mingle at the previous Day with Mom or Day with Dad. “We realize that most of these offenders will be released,” King said. “Having a strong family support system to include a relationship with their children is very important to their success. The event is also very fun and rewarding for the children.”

Warden Dean Epps, who oversees the females, said she believes it is incumbent upon staff “to give inmates something to look forward to. The court gave them their punishment. We just can’t lock them up and don’t give them an opportunity to change.”

CMCF Recreation Director Richard Caston, who supervises the participating male inmates, said the men have been looking forward to the special visit. “Most of the inmates who have been here for years say this is a way for them to show that they still love their children,” Caston said.

In addition to being at least a year free of a rule violation, eligible inmates also must have been incarcerated for at least a year.