



PRESS RELEASE

MISS. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS *723 N. PRESIDENT ST. *JACKSON, MS 39202 *(601)359-5600 *(FAX: 5738)

Date: May 18, 2001
Contact: Claire Papizan
Phone: (601) 359-5689
Fax: (601) 359-5738

MDOC Inmates Help Build Kid Zone Playground

Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) community work center inmates are helping build the Kid Zone playground, sponsored by Blue Cross & Blue Shield, at LeFleur's Bluff State Park. The inmates are working May 11-13 during the pre-build work weekend and during the blitz build May 16 – 20 and are from the community work centers in Madison, Rankin and Simpson counties.

“The Kid Zone playground project is a wonderful opportunity for the inmates to help the community and it’s just such a great project to work on,” said Community Services Director Jo Burton. “The whole concept of the community work center program is to provide a gradual reintroduction of inmates back into society and this is an example of how the program is beneficial not only to the public, but the inmates too.”

Jimmy Polk, an inmate from the Simpson County Community Work Center, said he volunteered for the job. “I do maintenance and carpentry work at the work center and I was glad to volunteer for this project,” said Polk. “I’m trying to make a better life for myself and I enjoy helping others.”

The inmates from community work centers routinely perform work for cities, counties and state agencies and are a valuable source of free labor. In order for an inmate to get assigned to a community work center, several criteria must be met. Inmates must be within seven years of their earliest release date, pass a drug and alcohol test, and be able to physically perform required work. Disqualifications include inmates who have an escape attempt in the last five years, convictions of sex crimes, child abuse or crime convictions involving a minor or handicapped person. Inmates convicted of arson, carrying a concealed weapon, or inmates charged with violent or sexual offenses which received a plea bargain to a non-violent crime cannot be assigned to a community work center.

###

Media Note: The Mississippi Department of Corrections has digital photos of inmates building the Kid Zone playground. If you are interested in these photos, e-mail Claire Papizan, MDOC Communications Specialist, at cpapizan@mdoc.state.ms.us or call 601.359.5689.