



South Carolina Department of Corrections

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COLUMBIA, S.C. – The S.C. Department of Corrections is renaming one of its signature family programs in honor of former U.S. Secretary of Education and S.C. Gov. Richard Riley.

Now called “Riley’s Readers,” the former Mother’s/Father’s Voice program allows incarcerated parents to record storybooks for their children. The children receive the book and can read along with their parent’s recorded voice as a bedtime story or whenever they want to feel connected to their parent.

“Prison walls do not stop a parent’s love for their child, and reading bedtime stories to children is a nightly routine for so many families,” Stirling said. “With this project, hundreds of children can now experience this special ritual and hear their parent’s voice. This strengthens the parent-child bond and promotes a love of reading, ultimately helping increase literacy. We’re grateful for community support for this project.”

The program was developed in 2016 by a group of eight Midlands leaders in workshops with the Riley Diversity Leadership Initiative, a program sponsored by the Riley Institute at Furman University. Director Stirling was part of this group.

“The Riley’s Readers program epitomizes the mission of The Riley Institute to build leadership that advances social and economic progress in our state,” said Dr. Don Gordon, Executive Director of the Riley Institute. “This program is the direct result of bringing together leaders from across sectors and focusing their attention on specific, tangible things that can be done to help make South Carolina a better place, particularly for its most marginalized citizens.”

The project has issued 469 books to date. The program is funded by donations. For more information on donations and volunteer opportunities, contact Peggy Murvin at (803) 896-3978 or Murvin.peggy@doc.sc.gov.

Note: Photos of incarcerated parents recording books can be [found here](#).