

# Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

## Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date:

### ***SHERIFF ARPAIO INTRODUCES A NEW VIDEO BOOK CLUB . . .***

### ***AIMED AT LESSENING THE PAIN OF SEPARATION BETWEEN INMATE AND CHILD***

(Phoenix, AZ) Separation between parent and child is always difficult but no more so than when the parent is in jail. Visits can be awkward, phone calls are short and costly to the family and letter writing is quickly becoming a thing of the past.

Easing some of the pain of separation is the reason behind Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio's introduction of a new literacy program called "A.B.C. -Arpaio's Book Club."

The program consists of inmates recording a book of their choice on a DVD which is then edited and mailed to the home of the inmate's child. The inmate could be the father or mother or aunt or grandmother – whoever acts as a primary or secondary caregiver to a child.

Books for the program, Arpaio says, have all been donated from local sources including libraries, book vendors as well as from individuals.

The only costs associated with the program are minimal – the DVDs themselves and postage. The filming and editing are done by detention officers from the Inmate Programs division, a part of the office largely funded by canteen sales, vending machines sales and phone calls made to family and friends by inmates.

News Release

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So far about 60 inmates have signed up to be a part of the new program, Arpaio says. Those 60 inmates have a total of nearly 100 children who will be receiving an audio/video book soon.

“Just in time for Christmas,” Arpaio says. “But this is more than just a one time, feel-good thing for these children. These DVDs can be held onto and played over and over again while they are separated from their loved ones. And there is a literacy angle here too – kids may come to appreciate reading and books because of the positive feelings this programs will generate in them.”

The program launches tomorrow. Inmates will be reading and recording their books at 1PM on Tuesday, December 22, 2009 from inside Estrella Jail at 2939 West Durango Road. Sheriff Arpaio will be present and media is invited to attend.

Inmates recording tomorrow are Michele Lacy, in jail on various drug charges and Danielle Valenzuela, awaiting trial on murder charges.

Please contact on the on call media relations officer for access into the secured facility.

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