

# Hinda Cares Support Program for Women

*by Abigail Rabinowitz*

## **Announcing a new initiative under the Hinda CARES Program (Counselling, Advocacy, Restorative Justice, Education and Support)**

The Hinda Institute runs a unique program for women and children who have loved ones who are incarcerated. The Hinda institute supports these women by offering counseling, legal support, financial aid, and employment assistance. The Hinda Institute also coordinates a women's peer support group.

Our women's group, HINDA CARES, has now decided to expand by creating an educational package to inform our community on the plight of these children and families to destroy misconceptions and stereotypes. The package would be created by our women, specialists in the field, and would include a documentary video and brochure with contact information and resources. These sessions would be presented to different venues in the community.

### **Understanding the Issue**

When a person commits a crime, there are multiple victims who suffer. All families suffer when someone in a family does a crime and often they also become ostracized from the community. These families, spouses and children of the perpetrator are often innocent, ignorant of the crime, or even have been directly abused.

- Support systems in the community may be falling short due to censure.
- Spouses and families become victimized over and over again even though they didn't do the crime - often for their whole lives. This includes losing their livelihood, being evicted from schools and social organizations and being forced to move out of their communities.
- Often the family has to also deal with the perpetrator's mental health issues, financial support and housing. While the level of the crime can vary, the family will receive a lifelong sentence and often suffer lifelong shame.

### **Objectives of the Program**

- To bring a voice to the silent victims of incarceration.
- To sensitize the community to the ostracism, financial and emotional hardships experienced by families of offenders
- To create a safe, nonjudgmental atmosphere to dialogue and reach out to other members in the community who may have affected by the criminal justice system

### **We Need Your Support**

The Jewish community has had challenges recognizing these silent victims of incarceration and we hope that you could help us to promote and support this program through providing expertise and volunteer support. In particular, **we are looking for a lawyer to be part of the advisory board who has a passion for women's issues and helping the disenfranchised.**

Contact Abigail Rabinowitz, Program Coordinator 708-990-7849