



PRESS Announcement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SECRETARY OF STATE ERIC CLARK TO GIVE KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT SMCI PROJECT CATCH GRADUATION ON APRIL 25

Jackson, MS...South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI), located near Leakesville, will be the setting for the second graduation exercise for **PROJECT CATCH**, a therapeutic program created for offenders at the prison. The graduation ceremony will be held on April 25 in SMCI II's visitation center and is scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m. The name **CATCH** is an acronym for "*Choosing Activities That Create Healthiness.*" Secretary of State Eric Clark will be the keynote speaker at the graduation.

The major goals of the program are to teach social skills. The group participation focuses on interpersonal relationships and the ability to get along with peers while incarcerated as well as after release. The basic design of the unique program incorporates classroom activities developed for group interaction as well as one-on-one encounters. The program requires self-discipline, determination, and commitment from each participant.

PROJECT CATCH was begun in February 2000. The program currently has 14 participants who have successfully completed all program sessions, which include, but are not limited to: relationships, drug and alcohol abuse, self-esteem, life skills, anger management, communications, and choosing healthy habits and activities in life. Forty-nine additional offenders have filled out applications to participate in the next class, which is scheduled to begin immediately following graduation.

Media representatives who wish to attend the graduation are asked to contact Ken Jones, public information officer, at (601) 359-5608 by 2:00 p.m. Thursday, April 24, 2002 or by e-mail kjones@mdoc.state.ms.us.