



**PAUL MIYAMOTO
SHERIFF**



*San Francisco
Public Library*



**THE FINANCIAL
JUSTICE PROJECT**
SAN FRANCISCO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Contact: Tara Moriarty, SFSO Tara.Moriarty@sfgov.org 628 286-8198

Anne Stuhldreher, The Financial Justice Project Anne.Stuhldreher@sfgov.org 415 596-6138

Kate Patterson, SF Public Library kate.patterson@sfgov.org, 917-821-6759

*****MEDIA RELEASE*****

OPENING OF NEW CHILD-FRIENDLY VISITING ROOM AT SF COUNTY JAIL

*Community Leaders Collaborate to Transform Old Law Library/Storage Space into Colorful,
Inviting Room for Incarcerated Parents and their Children*

San Francisco, CA- Sheriff Miyamoto welcomed children, their parents, and City partners to celebrate the opening of the new County Jail #2 family visitation room, where children can spend one-on-one time with their incarcerated parent, free from the traditional, harsh constraints of jail.

“This celebration represents a continuation of our ongoing commitment to reconnect parents with their children, regardless of their circumstance,” said Sheriff Miyamoto. “As we have done at other jails, we created this safe space that will help strengthen family bonds in a positive place.”

The redesign was made possible through a joint, six-months-long effort, which included the San Francisco Sheriff’s Office, the San Francisco Public Library, the San Francisco Financial Justice Project in the Treasurer’s Office, and the SF Jail Justice Coalition.

"I remember my mom taking me to see my father in prison, then later coming to see me behind bars and still not having those hard conversations about how to break this cycle of incarceration," said William Palmer, the executive director of Life After Next, a re-entry program for the formerly incarcerated and a member of the Sheriff’s Oversight Board.

The updated room features a beehive-themed mural painted by Palmer, who happens to be an artist, as well as books, tables, chairs, beanbag chairs, and colorful rugs donated by the SF Public Library. The Financial Justice Project purchased board games, toys, and furniture, and the Harry Potter Cursed Child Production pitched in rugs and other furniture.

“San Francisco Public Library is proud to be a part of this project,” said City Librarian Michael Lambert. “Nobody can deny the transformational power of sharing a book with those you love. We hope these books provide solace, entertainment, joy and lots of family bonding time, and that they help build positive memories that visitors and those involved in the justice system can carry with them into the future.”



**PAUL MIYAMOTO
SHERIFF**



*San Francisco
Public Library*



**THE FINANCIAL
JUSTICE PROJECT**
SAN FRANCISCO

"Through our collaboration with the Sheriff and community groups to make jail phone calls free, we've come to understand how important it is to keep family members connected to their incarcerated loved ones," said San Francisco Treasurer José Cisneros. "The new family visiting room will strengthen family connection in a similar way. That's good for families, successful reentry, and San Francisco as a whole."

Last fall, the Sheriff's Office decided to launch the project, since visits were then being held in the 5th floor Recreational Room. Deputies spent several weeks cleaning up and making aesthetic and safety upgrades to the space before reaching out to community groups.

"The response was overwhelmingly positive," said Sheriff Miyamoto. "We truly appreciate how the community came together altruistically to create this space where kids can be kids and parents can be parents."

"The new visiting room will be a place where parents and children can heal and take steps to end intergenerational incarceration, which unfortunately is all too real, said Joanna Hernandez, Director of Strategic Partnerships for the SF Pretrial Diversion Project. "Working to make this room happen makes me feel that I'm making a difference for children who are voiceless."

###