



# Awana Lifeline Angola Evaluation Summary

**Louisiana has the highest prison incarceration rate in the United States (835 inmates per 100,000 state residents).** U.S. Department of Justice, June 2007

## **Prison population in Louisiana expected to rise**

In 2006, there were 15,158 men and women admitted to Louisiana's parish jails and prisons, while 14,925 inmates were released, according to the Louisiana Department of Corrections. The inmate population in Louisiana, as of June 2007, was 36,990. The rise in prison population is projected to reach 40,470 by 2015.

## **Angola partners with Awana**

In 2003 Louisiana State Penitentiary Warden Burl Cain invited Awana to visit LSP (Angola). It was learned that inmates with children wanted to see a program established through which their children could make good choices in life and thereby avoid following their father to prison. As a result, the Awana Lifeline program was developed. The goal of Awana Lifeline is to reunite the hearts of children to their parent in prison, to break the cycle of crime and to prevent future victims of crime.

Awana helps churches and parents worldwide raise children and youth to know, love and serve God. Nearly 12,000 churches in the U.S. run the Awana program. The program at Angola is the first of its kind for Awana. After three years at Angola the program has been successfully started at a prison in Kentucky, it is set to begin at a county jail in Illinois, and it is being considered for expansion to other prisons in Louisiana.

## **Results lead to changed lives**

Outcomes from the Awana Lifeline program at Angola were measured through surveys conducted at Angola on the weekend of Sept. 8, 2007. Respondents to the surveys included 159 inmates and 82 guardians.

- Of particular interest in the data is the 22 percent improvement in how the men viewed themselves as fathers before participating in the Awana Lifeline program and after participating.
- The average age of the fathers at the time of their incarceration is 23 years and the average age today is 35 years.
- The fathers have an average of 3 children.
- Ninety-three percent of these children were under age 18 at the time the father was incarcerated.
- More than 33 percent of the inmates had a parent or stepparent who was incarcerated.
- Ninety-five percent of guardians agree there is a need to reconnect fathers in prison to their children. Of the guardians responding, a slight majority (42%) of the children are being raised by a grandmother. Mothers (39%), aunts (10%) and others (9%) comprise the remainder.
- As reported by guardians, 68 percent of the children attending an event at Angola in previous years showed an improvement in their behavior (e.g. attitude toward the father, interest in spiritual growth, academic improvement at school). The cumulative number of children attending the event at Angola for either one, two or three years is 1,570.