Inmates graduate from jail programs

For Hometown News NewsFP@hometownnewsol.com

ST. LUCIE COUNTY - Wednesday Feb. 4 was a day of personal achievement for 54 St. Lucie County jail inmates who graduated from educational and selfhelp programs at the jail.

The programs are the result of years of collaboration by the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office, Public Defender's Office, Indian River State College, Aramark Correctional Services and hundreds of clergy and volunteers from the local faith community.

The ceremony was took place within the secure confines of the jail.

The St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard opened the ceremony followed by a welcome from Major F. Patrick Tighe, Director of Detention and Dr. Kenneth Mills who performed the invocation and Pastor Ed Day closed in prayer. Other volunteer clergy present were Trevor Thelwell and John Travis.

The guest speaker was former inmate James Poole, who explained how the jail's programs helped him to become "clean and sober" for more than two years. He owns his own business, attends Alcoholics Anonymous, alumni meetings of the Journey Forward program he took at the jail, and attends church. The audience included Poole's parents.

Graduates from the programs praised the jail staff and volunteers who invested their time and care, support and resources. The graduates said that the

programs helped them to restore family relationships and enjoy life again. Major Tighe said, "You will make mis-

takes, and a lot of them. You will make mistakes in your relationships and personal lives; that is just another fact of life and that is okay.

He closed the program by telling the graduates: "Each one of you is special, each of you can become a productive member of society and you inspire me because every one of you has a story to tell. My question to you is what will be the direction of your journey?'

Attending the ceremony were: St. Lucie County Administrator Howard Tipton; Public Defender Diamond Litty and several of her staff members; County Commissioner Tod Mowery; Florida Department of Corrections Circuit Administrator John Thompson; St. Lucie County Criminal Justice Coordinator Mark Godwin; CORE Executive Director Suzanne Caudelle; Indian River State College officials Kimberly Taylor, Donna Roberts, Gail Schorr and Loren Diaz; Hanley Center Program Director Arnie Kampa; and Ocean Addiction Recovery Services President Kathy Hurt.

Attending the ceremony were four recently released former inmates who returned to participate in the ceremony; nine former inmates who completed the Journey Forward Substance Abuse program and have been out of jail for one year or longer and that attend the aftercare program.

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Sevin Bullwinkle/staff photographer

County Commissioner Tod Mowery with Paul Kuschell, graduate of the 'Spiritual Learning Program' and his wife Carolyn, graduate from the 'Therapeutic Community Re-Entry Program'. Having been incarcerated for a year, they are seeing each other again for the first time following their graduation. The couple celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary in jail.



Sevin Bullwinkle/staff photographer

Culinary graduates Nadia Stephenson, Amy Gallo, Terra Board, and Monica Barth stand up to be recognized.

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Ten things to know about the Martin County Fair

For Hometown News NewsFP@hometownnewsol.com

MARTIN COUNTY — The Martin County Fair, under the vision of new

fair manager Jay Spicer, has produced an event that features more than 30 new components. It truly is the most entertainment in America for less than

\$10. Some of the highlights are:

1. Free admission opening night until 8 p.m. With so many changes, we want

people to come "Kick the Tires" and let the community know what we have to offer this year.

2. More than 70 new home arts categories to enter exhibits in, with cash premium money paid out with ribbons.

3. More parking. Fair-goers will be shuttled by open tram from the Triumph Air parking lot to accommodate more cars.

4. More demonstrations, exhibitions, and education. Enjoy scheduled activities such as Gardening Classes, Demonstrations by the Beekeepers, the

Fire/Sheriff's Departments, learn about Exotic Bird Care, Preparing your

Home for a Pet Rabbit, Whip Cracking, Goat Milking, Black Powder Rifle

shooting, and much more.

5. Shark Tank/Museum featuring "Celebrity Dips," including County Commissioner Doug Smith, Stuart

Mayor Kelly Glass Leighton, Anderson Middle School Principle Brenda

Watkins, and others.

6. New beer offerings. Now serving Miller Products, such as Miller Lite, Coors, Coors Light, Heineken, Guinness, Blue Moon, & YuengLing. Plus five Florida IPA beers on draft. All highlighted by the first Martin County Fair Homebrew Competition.

ty Fair Homebrew Competition. 7. The Miss Martin County Fair Pageant is now a qualifying event for the winner to continue competition in the Miss Florida USA Teen Pageant.

8. The Martin County Fair is proud to host the Martin County Schools Science Fair at the Fair! Students science fair projects will be judged and awarded at the fair.

9. You've heard of the TV show "Fear Factor," well Mr. Spicer has created an event he calls "FAIR Factor." Be sure to enter into the contests.

10. What do we grow here in Martin County? Stop by the new produce stand and "Take a piece of Martin County home with you." Putting the agriculture back into the fair. Also, more than 100 elementary students are growing produce from seeds they chose a while back, and will be



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bringing it to the fair for judging and prizes.

OK... one more.

Jail

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11. Living history. Native American group Go Native Now, will be demonstrating Ancient Indian farming techniques, cooking on rocks, and traditional dancing/drumming. Stop by and browse their museum of artifacts, some thousands of years old!

The Martin County Fair is produced by the Martin County Fair

The Journey Forward program is part-

nered with the Public Defender's Office,

Corizon Health Services and several local faith-based community leaders provid-

ing a 90-day therapeutic program

designed to promote long-term recovery

and successful re-entry into the commu-

nity. Indian River State College Adult Education & Career Pathways program

was created by the St. Lucie County Sher-

iff partnered with the college as a way to

assist inmates who lacked proper educa-

tion and training, many who were con-

sidered unemployable, which in many

cases may have been contributing to

their repeated offenses. This compre-

Association, a Not for Profit 501c3 organization, that exists to promote Agriculture and support multiple charities at its fairgrounds. Advanced Tickets are available now for up to

50 percent off at all Treasure Coast Walgreens, Seacoast Banks, Martin County Schools, and on the fair website.

For a list of all scheduled events or for tickets to the fair, visit www.MartinCountyFair.com.

hensive program is individualized for each student helping with reading, mathematics, language skills and GED exam preparation.

The Culinary Program, partnered with Aramark Correctional Food Service and Indian River State College offers culinary training from certified instructors.

The Spiritual Learning Program was created in 2009 providing positive growth through spirituality. This 90-day program includes scripture study, group meetings, meditation and worship.

Sheriff Ken J. Mascara is not required by law to provide programs to inmates, but he understands the benefit of these programs to the Sheriff's Office as well as the inmates. The programs are funded through grants, inmate subsistence fees, and donations.

