



Nevada Department of Corrections

Public Information Office 775-887-3309

PIO Brooke Keast cell: 775-350-0037

PRESS RELEASE

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The Nevada Department of Corrections is pleased to announce the graduation of 15 inmates from the Culinary Arts Program sponsored by WorkForce Connections in collaboration with Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center. The program which began October 2014, is designed to provide vocational training, soft skills, supportive services and counseling to increase employability thus improving the offender's chances for success upon release.

The participating female inmates have each completed 6 weeks of classes contracted through Hospitality International Training (HIT) and have been certified as Line Cooks and earned ServSafe Culinary Management certifications.

"It's a continuum pre to post release," states Warden Jo Gentry. "Inside prison the participants learn employment preparation and basic computer skills. They have access to mental health and substance abuse counseling and the culinary vocational training. When they leave, the support continues."

That support comes from the Foundation for Independent Tomorrow (FIT), the organization that trains the inmates post release to continue support and hone newly learned skills to boost their chances of success. Then HIT again steps in to connect the newly trained women to employers and even assist with transportation as well as providing additional training in cutlery skills, necessary for culinary work but not allowed to be taught in the prison setting.

"They attend an orientation and set up regular appointments to continue what we started in prison," continues Gentry. "The women can get help building resumes, get assistance finding affordable housing or pick up a bus pass in order to make it to interviews. This type of support makes all the difference."

Initially, the grant funded program set out to identify 150 women who would be released within a three to nine month time frame, and who would continue to reside in southern Nevada. To date, 132 women have participated in the program, 98 have completed their culinary training.

Hospitality International Training or (HIT) is a dba of the parent company Hospitality International founded in 1998 by husband and wife, Lonnie and Sherrie Wright. Hospitality International LLC trains groups with technical skills in all areas of the hospitality properties with a heavy emphasis on customer service and satisfaction seeing this group as a "bank of new untapped talent that will be an asset to the Hospitality Industry."