

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Transition program at Rankin County prison prepares women to transition from incarceration to freedom**

PEARL –Their release date may be years away. Or, it could be in a matter of months. Regardless of when they leave prison, a group of women at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility should be prepared thanks to their participation in the 1A Women’s Program.

The six-month program is focused on re-entry planning, and the women are encouraged to begin preparations emotionally long before their actual release so the transition is as smooth as possible.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said the program is yet another example of the many activities underway to address recidivism, especially for women.

“Many of the people in our custody are working hard to prepare for the next chapter of their lives, which hopefully will be a positive one,” Commissioner Hall said. “We will continue to do everything we can to help them re-integrate into society so they do not return.”

Dr. Sandy F. Adams, mental health director at CMCF, said transition days are held twice each year.

“The purpose is to help make the women aware of the services that are available in the community to help them once they leave prison,” Dr. Adams said. “These are resources they can explore that will hopefully help them to be successful in starting over.”

As part of the program, the women hear from outside speakers, some of whom once sat where they are sitting, during an all-day event called Transition Day. They learn about vocational interests, college preparation, transitional living resources and admission requirements, and programs that provide treatment for mental illness and alcohol/drug addiction.

During the most recent Transition Day, organizations represented included Prison Fellowship, Centurion of Mississippi, The Net, Hinds Community College, WIN Job Center, Crossroads Ministry, and the Mississippi State Department of Health.

Pauline Rogers, field director for Prison Fellowship, said she understands the challenges that the women will face because she once was incarcerated for shoplifting.

“I feel a duty to help other incarcerated women through the transition process,” she said.

She talked to the women about changing their mindset so they can have a more positive life experience after release.

“I was where you are now,” she said. The day I got out, I was back in here the next day talking to others coming behind me. That was 31 years ago.”

Cathy Walters, president of The Net, spoke to the women about counseling and mentoring programs available through her faith-based non-profit organization.

“An important thing to remember is that whether you are about to get out or have some time left, God has a plan and you have choices for what you can do,” Walters told the group. “We are here to help you reconnect with the world outside.”

The 1A curriculum consists of evidence-based psycho-educational groups, faith-based classes, and art and music classes. In addition to speakers, approved mentors teach classes on addiction and recovery, health and nutrition, and spiritual growth.

Graduation is Dec. 7.