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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, August 23, 2023



The eight Inmates and the two Correctional Officers who completed the programme displaying their Certificates in Entertainment Business from the University of the West Indies Mona at the UWI Mona Prison Project graduation ceremony at Tower Street Adult Correctional Centre Chapel on Tuesday August 22. (The 10 Graduates)

Minister Cuthbert-Flynn urges second chance for inmates

Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, the Honourable Juliet Cuthbert-Flynn, says persons incarcerated deserve a second chance to be productive members of society notwithstanding their history.

She made the remarks while delivering the keynote address at the University of the West Indies Mona-Prison Project (UMPP) Graduation Ceremony for eight inmates and two correctional officers yesterday, (August 22, 2023) at the Tower Street Adult Correctional Centre.

“Let us stand united in our commitment to creating a society that embraces second chances and nurtures the potential of every individual,” stated Minister Flynn.

The graduates received Certificates in Entertainment Business from the Institute of Caribbean Studies & Reggae Studies Unit (ICS), University of the West Indies, Mona.

Minister Flynn told the graduands that their accomplishment proves that the human spirit can triumph over adversity and urged them to use the experience to emerge as champions.

The four-month pilot programme ran from March 13 to July 31, 2023, and is part of a partnership between the University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona, and the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) through the Ministry of National Security.

While lauding the various partners and the DCS for a successful programme, the Minister encouraged the inmates to **“embrace the knowledge you have gained, wield it with determination, and let it serve as a foundation for a brighter tomorrow”**.

In response, one of the inmates, who spoke on behalf of the graduates, mentioned that resilience has been the keyword during the period. He went further to highlight the importance of education as a tool for rehabilitation in the prison system.

“As we prepare to re-enter society it is imperative that we recognize the importance of tertiary education. The skills and knowledge we have gained will serve us well as we seek to rebuild our lives and make a positive contribution to the Jamaican society,” the inmate said.

Additionally, Acting Commissioner of Corrections in the Department of Correctional Services, Dr. Marc Thomas, said he hopes that the University Mona-Prison Project (UMPP) is one that will continue under the Department of Correctional Service's mission to improve rehabilitation in the penal system.

The UMPP had inmates engaging in face-to-face sessions at the tertiary level for the first time with sessions facilitated by lecturers at the University of the West Indies, Mona, and ending with a practicum done by all ten participants.

The UMPP is a pilot programme focused on education in business and management within the entertainment and creative industries to improve, re-entry and reintegration outcomes for people in Jamaica.