



Richmond City Sheriff's Office
Sheriff C. T. Woody, Jr.



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
June 19, 2017

Media Contact: Dr. Sarah Scarbrough
Office: 804-646-0987
Cell: 804-837-7779

RICHMOND SHERIFF'S OFFICE, VCU, AND CARITAS WORKS PARTNER FOR PILOT CONSTRUCTION TRAINING PROGRAM

Richmond, VA—Last month, the Richmond City Sheriff's Office partnered with Virginia Commonwealth University and Caritas Works to establish a pilot program to teach the basics of construction to Richmond residents who have struggled with addiction or incarceration, in order to give them a new opportunity and career. The first class, which was four weeks long and ended last week, comprised of individuals who were either a participant in Sheriff Woody's Recovering from Everyday Addictive Lifestyles (REAL) Program or the Caritas Works program, a program of The Healing Place. Fourteen individuals completed the class, which was led and taught by the Associated Builders and Contractors and Builders of Virginia.

"We do a great job of rehabilitating our residents while they are in our custody, but once they leave the jail, many of them have no way to earn a decent, honest living," explained Sheriff Woody. "This pilot program gave them the opportunity to learn a trade that is highly sought after, pays well, and is desperately needed not just in Richmond, but in cities all over the United States. The companies participating in this program are well respected, and now have the benefit of gaining employees that they know have already gone through all the necessary training and are ready to work on day one."

The pilot program, called Quick Start Construction Training, was created by Richard Sliwoski, associate Vice President of Facilities Management at VCU. "We're teaching them basic construction 101. The goal is jobs, but, in a bigger sense, it's about breaking the chain of poverty and giving hope to people," he said in a statement.

Program Director for the Richmond City Sheriff's Office Dr. Sarah Scarbrough echoed both the sentiments of Sheriff Woody and Mr. Sliwoski. "It's no secret that finding employment for felons is difficult — and often a major contributor to relapse and recidivism. Even more difficult for a felon is finding a job making a living wage. The opportunity that has been presented to us and Caritas Works is incredible — now our clients not only have an opportunity for a job, but a

The Richmond City Sheriff's Office is responsible for maintaining a secure jail and a safe court system, along with seamless inmate transport and civil process to preserve public safety. We remain committed to performing these duties with unsurpassed integrity and professionalism, with progressive training that incorporates best practices and technology. While partnering with the community, we strive to lower recidivism by providing faith-based and community-based programming that empowers ex-offenders to become productive members of society.

career path. They are equipped with top-notch training and followed by employment in the industry.”

The pilot program has already produced results. Torrance Allen, a former resident at the Richmond City Justice Center and also a graduate of The REAL Program, completed the Quick Start Training program and said, “The VCU pipeline program allowed me to attain valuable information, certifications and training, which is a head start into launching my new career in construction.” Torrance begins working today at a Richmond based company that hired him on the last day of the class during an onsite interview.

For those participating in the program, they also receive an OSHA 10 card, a certification that is required for several construction jobs. This will bolster the chances of finding work for those who participate in the training, because companies will not have fund that for them. The course also trained in subjects such as hand and power tools, construction drawing, material handling, and communication skills. Additionally, participants received work boots, tools, and other safety equipment, making them very attractive to companies who are looking to hire workers.

Patrick Dean, president of Associated Builders and Contractors of Virginia, was excited to immediately sign on as a partner in this program, stating: “The need for skilled craftsmen is off the charts. But the only way you get [workers] to that point is you gotta start them somewhere,” he said. “We’re probably short 10,000 craft workers in Virginia right now. While these [workers] aren’t considered craft workers yet, they basically enter the job as a laborer and what they will do is, once they get through the summer, then their companies would put them into our apprenticeship programs.”

The Richmond City Sheriff's Office is responsible for maintaining a secure jail and a safe court system, along with seamless inmate transport and civil process to preserve public safety. We remain committed to performing these duties with unsurpassed integrity and professionalism, with progressive training that incorporates best practices and technology. While partnering with the community, we strive to lower recidivism by providing faith-based and community-based programming that empowers ex-offenders to become productive members of society.