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DCF job fair transforms gym into hub of opportunities

GREENWOOD – Delta Correctional Facility recently held a job fair to help women see that, with the right resources and support, they can transform their lives and contribute positively to society upon leaving incarceration and returning to their communities.

“Such initiatives are imperative in bridging the gap between incarceration and community reintegration, ensuring that these women are not left without guidance and direction,” said Rochelle Gunn-Hudson, who directs programming at Delta. “By implementing regular job fairs and resource events, we can ensure that every incarcerated individual has access to the guidance and support they need.”

A total of eight booths were strategically placed in a large circle, transforming the gym into a hub of possibilities.

As they entered, the women first encountered the Mississippi WIC Department's booth, represented by Deondrianna Davis, the coordinator. Davis elaborated on the role of Mississippi WIC, a federally funded nutrition program that provides healthy foods, breastfeeding support, and healthcare referrals to pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, as well as to infants and children under 5 years of age.

At the second booth, the women met with Daniela Griffin and Yolanda Houston from the Get2College program. This program reaches students and their families, regardless of income, providing them with indispensable guidance on admissions, scholarships, and career choices. It extends support to individuals currently incarcerated and their families, ensuring they, too, have a chance at higher education and a brighter future. From there, the women also had the opportunity to travel through the Get2College mobile unit.

America’s Catch, represented by Senior Human Resources Manager Cyndi Saia, was next. The business, founded in 1987, is a U.S. farm-raised catfish processing company in the Mississippi

Delta with 5,000 acres of catfish ponds and a daily production capacity of about 225,000 pounds of fish.

“The importance of returning citizens finding gainful employment is crucial, not only for reducing recidivism rates but also for enabling them to become independent and reintegrated members of the community,” Gunn-Hudson said.

The women’s fifth encounter was with the WIN Job Center, which connects job seekers with employment opportunities.

Also present were representatives from the Mississippi Delta Community College (MDCC) and the Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU). MDCC, represented by Bianca Epton, Tiffany Massey, Jalisha Kee, Teela Rivera, and Jacoby Praboy, presented an innovative post-release box, a thoughtful gesture designed to aid offenders as they reintegrate into society after incarceration. Dr. Kathryn Green from MVSU actively recruited students for the PEPP Program, emphasizing education as a critical component for personal and professional advancement.

Next was the Getting Ahead While Getting Out program, guided by MARC Association and its dedicated facilitators. This program provides the formerly incarcerated with a business plan, re-entry resources, and access to halfway houses.

The city of Greenwood, represented by Leslie Addison and Keidra Glass, was the final booth. Addison and Glass demonstrated a commitment to providing job opportunities to individuals currently incarcerated. These jobs are in sectors such as the street division, trash division, sanitation division, park and recreation, mechanic/tire shop, and wastewater treatment plant.

