Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole
Acting Chairman John Tuttle

April 2015 – Volume 1
www.pbpp.pa.gov

the **Green** sheet

Cooking up a new future

DOC holds 17th culinary graduation

In February, nine offenders graduated from the Department of Corrections' (DOC) Culinary Arts Training Certificate Program.

"This graduation symbolizes an important step in your life," said keynote speaker Deputy Executive Director Daniel McIntyre the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (Board). "The education and skills you have learned will help you to lead a different life when you leave prison. It will open up many opportunities."

The culinary program is part of the DOC and the Board's efforts to help offenders successfully reenter into society. Finding and keeping a job is one of the most significant challenges for offenders.

The objectives of the course include everything from preparation of stocks, sauces, and soups to preparation of leavened baked goods including yeasted dough to cake preparation. One of the most important objectives is a personal sense of professionalism to enhance their opportunities for success in the food services industry.

The graduates prepared a buffet lunch of London broil, swai ala anglaise, curried chicken, risotto, fresh field greens with raspberry vinaigrette, roasted broccoli, cauliflower and carrots. If the attendees were not full from the main course, the offenders prepared a wide array of desserts that included fruit salad, cheesecake and red velvet cupcakes.

Mr. McIntyre reminded the offenders that "your struggle, your past, doesn't define who you are. There will continue to be struggles, but hopefully you are learning that there are better ways to deal with them."

Continuing this sentiment, the inmate culinary instructor Chef Todd Lewis said, “They get valuable experience in this program. They learn everything from soup to nuts – literally. They learn how to make soup from scratch, even mayonnaise.”

To be eligible for the program, offenders must have:

- prior work experience in food production
- an intention to pursue a career in food service after they are released to the community
- no Class 1 misconducts within the last 12 months
- a high school diploma or GED
- enough time left on their sentence to participate in the program
- have a classification level of at least 2MC (medium supervision) or be eligible to attain this classification level

The program initially started in 2003 and currently runs every nine weeks. The program was funded by a Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency grant. The program was brought in-house to the DOC Academy in 2007.

Offenders are tested and scored weekly on the course outline.

In the first week, they need to complete and pass the 40-hour mandatory ServSafe course. This is a national standard test all food service handlers must pass to safely handle food.

After completion of the program, but before release, offenders will receive specialized training and/or technical assistance to develop a resume, learn how to appropriately complete a job application, and develop conversation skills.

Mr. McIntyre ended the program with these remarks. “As with all graduations, we are not recognizing the end of something but the beginning. It’s time to look to the future and seize the opportunities that will come your way.”

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~ Deputy Executive Director Daniel McIntyre