

# Prison Program Helps Women with Addiction



Four women graduated from a special program to help women with addiction.

Charles Ringwalt, WLTX 8:07 p.m. EDT July 15, 2015

**Inmates at the Goodman Institute in Columbia gathered as four of their peers graduated from the prison's Addiction Treatment Unit program.**



Prison Program Helps Women with Addiction(Photo: Ringwalt, Charles)

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Columbia, SC (WLTX) - Inmates at the Goodman Institute in Columbia gathered as four of their peers graduated from the prison's Addiction Treatment Unit program Wednesday.

"This is the department of corrections not punishment. We're here to correct them, get them back on the street and get them to have a good life," said Lefford Fate Deputy Director of Health Services.

Fate said the program lasts between six and nine months and is intended to rehabilitate women who are serving a variety of sentences, but also suffer from addiction.

"Forty to forty-five percent on the personnel have some type of addictions in their background," he said.

During the ceremony fellow inmates celebrated their peers with songs and poems that they wrote.

"Imagine a woman who believes she is good. A woman who trusts and respects herself. Who listens to her needs and desires and meets them with tenderness and grace," one inmate read aloud from her poem, "Imagine a Woman".

Fate said many of the graduates go on to live very successful lives.

Dana Mallette is one example. Mallette graduated from the program in 2004 and said she turned her life around. Mallette now has a Master's degree and is a counselor with the ATU program.

"I know what they are going through because in the beginning, coming to the Goodman ATU program, I struggled and there were people there to say to me, 'You can do this, just give yourself a break,' so to be able to say that to them and know exactly what I'm talking about and how it feels. It's a good feeling," said Mallette.

Mallette said she comes to the graduations because each one inspires her to keep moving forward.

Fate said the Addiction Treatment Unit plans on having another graduation next month.