

# Dept. of Corrections: Jackson Correctional Institution hosts appreciation night for Can Do Canines fosters

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BLACK RIVER FALLS – Jackson Correctional Institution (JCI) Warden Lizzie Tegels joined program staff, JCI staff, and inmates to celebrate the graduation of the first group of dogs trained by JCI inmates. Over the last year, inmates trained a number of service dogs to assist individuals with various disabilities. Last Friday, inmates demonstrated skills the dogs have learned before they leave JCI to complete their training.

Can Do Canines is a non-profit organization that trains dogs for individuals with hearing loss, mobility challenges, seizure disorders, Type I Diabetes, or childhood autism. During the training process, each dog is assigned to specific inmates. The inmates teach basic commands to the dogs and prepare them for service in the community. The dogs are fostered on the weekends by members of the community who provide training experiences not available within the prison. The dogs graduating today will return to Can Do Canines for further training and socialization before being placed with a disabled person.

By partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Can Do Canines decreases the cost to train service dogs, increasing the number of dogs who can be trained and placed with recipients. It costs more than \$25,000 to train one service

dog.

A number of Department of Corrections facilities across the state host dog programs, which provide inmates with valuable skills and improve the institution climate.

JCI Warden Lizzie Tegels said: “It is an honor to participate in this program and know that we are helping people in the community. The participating inmates feel a sense of pride in their accomplishments and are extremely grateful to others for the chance to give back. This program has also had a very positive effect on the climate at our institution. We’re excited to continue our partnership with Can Do Canines.”

Can Do Canines Executive Director Alan Peters said: “We are so very grateful for the love, attention, and training that the inmates provide each of the dogs. Working with JCI has been a win-win situation for all involved.”