
ECAD commences new partnership with York Women's Correctional Facility Reintegration Center

Niantic, CT February 19, 2016

ECAD is proud to announce a partnership with the York Women's Correctional Facility in Niantic, CT. On February 16, 2016, ECAD began contracting with the Department of Corrections in CT. This is the first of multiple locations in which ECAD hopes to implement this vocational program.

For twenty years, ECAD has been educating and placing highly skilled Service Dogs that exceed industry standards. And, at \$30,000 per dog placed, it is a daunting task to accomplish without the support of many different agencies and organizations. At the York Reintegration Center, female offenders will now have the chance to lend their support to ECAD's mission while they prepare for reentry into society.

Five Service Dogs in Training were brought to the York Correctional Facility just days ago to continue their education and further their journey into service work. The dogs will be paired with Inmate Instructors who, led by ECAD Master Instructors, will learn the art of educating a Service Dog over the next 12-14 months until the dogs are placed with "their person". The offenders will be responsible for teaching the dogs all 89 of the foundational commands before the dogs return to ECAD to graduate. And, in the coming months, five more Service Dogs in Training will be placed in the facility to be educated by inmates as well.

"This is a win-win for both ECAD and the Corrections Department, ECAD will be working under Governor Molloy's new 'Second Chance Society' initiative administering vocational classes to inmates to prepare them for rejoining the workforce once they are released", said ECAD Executive Director Dale Picard.

Co-Founder and Director of Programs, Lu Picard feels extremely positive about the benefits to be reaped by all parties. *"The inmates who are close to release and meet certain standards will be granted the opportunity to join this program and gain a marketable skill. It fills their needs as well as their communities', their families, and ECAD's",* says Lu.

Beyond the goal of fulfilling the mission of placing highly educated dogs with people living with disabilities, it's been proven that all lives touched by these loving and devoted animals are changed for the better: Instructors, caretakers and Clients alike. And, ECAD feels, the offenders will benefit from their interactions with the dogs as well. The therapeutic and societal benefits of programming like this are incalculable, all of which is an added bonus.

Anyone interested in getting involved or making a donation can visit ECAD's website at www.ecad1.org for more information.