

The Day: Malloy announces opening of new reintegration unit at Niantic prison

Published February 17, 2016 11:56AM//Updated February 17, 2016 3:58PM

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Governor Malloy on Wednesday announced the opening of a unit at York Correctional Institution that will try to help women prisoners reintegrate when released.

The goal of the Keys to Success Reintegration Unit at the state's only women's facility, which began operating Feb. 1, is to "promote successful opportunities for incarcerated women re-entering the community."

The third of its kind to be announced in less than a year, the unit is part of Malloy's [Second Chance Society initiative](#).

"These are our brothers and sisters that are in these institutions. These are our children and grandchildren," Malloy said. "The sooner we find a way to be more supportive and more helpful and get more of them employed, the better off we're going to be, and that's what we're trying to do."

Those accepted to the unit are able to choose activities and programs from the "pathway" in which they're most interested, whether that's education, recovery, relationships, faith and spirituality or community service.

From there, staffers work with the offenders to give them knowledge and skills related to their categories of choice while also addressing the issues that contributed to their incarceration initially.

Currently, 56 offenders participate in the program, which has a cap of 68.

According to Warden Stephen Faucher, women have to apply and be interviewed to be accepted. Only those who are "minimum level" offenders with sentences that are five years or less are considered.

Amy Marie Gully, a 49-year-old from Danbury who's about one year into her 30-month sentence at York Correctional, said the program already is positively impacting her.

"Three weeks ago, I was sitting in a cell locked up 90 percent of the time," Gully said. "Today, I'm up every morning. I am downstairs teaching. I know computers and typing and things like that. I have responsibilities, and I'm starting to feel useful again."

"When you're not doing anything, you don't feel needed," she continued. "It just reinforces that you're not wanted or needed or important."

Gully first spent time at York when she was 18.

Most recently, she was convicted of first-degree larceny for stealing money from her employer. It's her fourth stint at York, she said.

But, Gully said, life at the facility is different now than it was about 30 years ago, when almost no programs were offered.

(Reprinted. The Day.com - <http://www.theday.com/policefirecourts/20160217/malloy-announces-opening-of-new-reintegration-unit-at-niantic-prison>)