

C-GCC Prison Program Helps Graduate 23

HUDSON — Columbia-Greene Community College celebrated 23 students, who are part of the Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison program, who graduated with their Associate of Science in Individual Studies.



Photo courtesy of Stanley Leon Photography and Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison

The commencement ceremony took place at Green Haven Correctional Facility in Stormville, N.Y.

Columbia-Greene started its partnership with Hudson Link in 2022, offering educational opportunities to incarcerated individuals through degree programs administered by the college. Since the program started, Columbia-Greene has graduated 86 students through the program.

“We are incredibly proud of the academic achievements of our students,” said Dr. Victoria L. Walsh, president of Columbia-Greene Community College. “The Prison Education Program speaks to one of our primary missions as an institution; serving the community in a holistic way. Providing incarcerated individuals with the tools required to pursue their purpose in life, helps to prevent recidivism, and serves our community.”

The student speaker at the Green Haven ceremony, Jason Q., remarked, “I want to express my gratitude to Hudson Link and my professors for upholding a high standard of excellence and making a positive impact on the narrative of incarcerated people.”

Columbia-Greene Community College works closely with the SUNY Office of Higher Education in Prison and Hudson Link. The partnership enables students to achieve their academic goals and receive support through re-entry programs.

“Our collaboration with Columbia-Greene Community College enables Hudson Link to offer the men at Green Haven the educational opportunities that were not available to me during my time there,” said Joel Jimenez, program director for Hudson Link. Jimenez himself completed degree work at Mercy University through Hudson Link when incarcerated at Green Haven before being transferred to Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

“I am delighted to attend the third graduation ceremony since the program’s inception. Education is a transformative tool that can help level the playing field for incarcerated individuals, both during their time in prison and after their release into society,” Jimenez continued.

“What you’ve done here today is nothing short of miraculous,” said Darryl Epps Jr., deputy director of SUNY’s Office for Higher Education in Prison and the ceremony’s keynote speaker. “Earning a college degree within these walls is not merely an academic achievement; it is a powerful declaration. It is a declaration that you are more than your past. It is a declaration that you are committed to growth and change. It is a declaration that you believe in yourselves and the potential that lies within you. It’s about reclaiming and owning your narrative. It’s about saying: ‘I am not a statistic. I am not my lowest moment. I am a role model, a human being, a father, a leader, and an architect of my destiny.’”

“Education, in all its forms, is transformative within a correctional setting and serves as the foundation to both the Department’s mission and an individual’s success,” said Daniel F. Martuscello III, commissioner of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS). “I am committed to supporting college programs because they make our facilities safer and foster a positive environment for both the incarcerated population and our staff.”

For more information about C-GCC, please visit columbiagreene.edu.