

DOORS OF HOPE RECEIVES GRANT FROM DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Local nonprofit Doors of Hope is pleased to announce it has received a federal grant from the Department of Justice. This grant was established to aid state and local governments, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations in implementing effective criminal justice improvement projects. Maridel Williams, CEO, states the 3-year grant will help fund the work they are doing at the Rutherford County Adult Detention Center (RCADC).

Aptly named **Project HOPE**, the program is a case management and education project, designed by Williams and her staff to address the needs faced by females nearing release from RCADC and after release as they transition back into society. Last year, 3,507 females were incarcerated at RCADC, and of those surveyed, 100% reported anxiety related to their release, placing them at a high risk of recidivism. These concerns included maintaining sobriety, finding housing, employment, and clothing, and regaining custody of children. Through this grant, Project HOPE will provide transition planning which addresses four of these concerns: transportation, clothing, recovery of vital documents, and employment and education services.

"It's impressive for a young organization to receive a grant of such magnitude," says Williams. "We are the only people in the county specifically doing this work, so it is a good fit. We are so grateful to County Mayor, Ernest Burgess. Were he not so passionate about making a difference for this population, it would have never happened."

The Rutherford County Mayor's office will collaborate with Doors of Hope to plan and coordinate the work of Project HOPE. The staff at RCADC, Sheriff Mike Fitzhugh, and Major Bernard Salandy will coordinate efforts and share space for case management and classes for the benefit of those incarcerated at the facility who meet the criteria of the program.

Doors of Hope will be partnering with number a of volunteers and other nonprofits in the community to make Project HOPE succeed. Amelia's Closet will provide interview clothing for clients, Retired Judge Steve Daniel will conduct legal clinics to assists clients, Legal Aid will provide information on the services they provide, St. Thomas Rutherford/St. Louise Clinic's Dr. Pam Singer and staff will provide health seminars, Dr. Ellen Blaylock, Licensed Professional Counselor, will provide mental health seminars, Narcotics Anonymous will provide materials and informational seminars, Tennessee Career Center will provide materials and information on employment, Tennessee College of Applied Technology will conduct informational seminars on available educational opportunities, and MTSU's Social Work Department will provide social work interns who will assist with the program.