



New Hampshire Department of Corrections

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NHDOC Hosts First-Ever Corrections Choose Love Graduation

Concord, NH – Yesterday, New Hampshire Department of Corrections Commissioner Helen Hanks welcomed Scarlett Lewis, founder of the Choose Love Movement, to the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women for the first-ever Corrections Choose Love Program graduation. Sixteen residents participated in the 12-week pilot program, which teaches adults how to thoughtfully respond to any situation with kindness by using the Choose Love Formula (Courage + Gratitude + Forgiveness + Compassion-in-Action). The program teaches ways to handle adversity, have courageous conversations, and respond with love. It also promotes self-empowerment, resilience, connection, and optimism.

This pilot program is leading the nation for the incarcerated population. It serves as a model for other correctional institutions across the United States.

In addition to Scarlett Lewis, New Hampshire Department of Corrections staff collaborated with Shannon Desilets, Program Director of the Choose Love Movement for the state of New Hampshire, and Amanda Bastoni, Ed.D, a Research Scientist at CAST, Inc., to bring this program to New Hampshire. The Corrections Choose Love Program incorporates the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to ensure the material is accessible in a prison environment. The Corrections Choose Love Program includes daily engaging activities implemented during group sessions that reinforce and support social and emotional learning skills.

“In corrections, we have a social responsibility to engage in transforming lives for the betterment of the individual, families, and humanity,” said Commissioner Helen Hanks. “Choose Love is part of our path of transformation for people incarcerated in New Hampshire. By acknowledging that adults in our state prisons have experienced adverse childhood experiences and have had long-term negative effects on their conduct, the Choose Love program has the power to assist people in adopting lifelong skills focusing on self-regulation and social and emotional learning by creating a common language across our facilities.”

"I feel so honored to be bringing Choose Love to the New Hampshire Department of Corrections to spread hope, healing, and love to all," says Scarlett Lewis, Founder and Chief Movement Officer of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement. "Love is the most powerful force in the universe, and to see

how it is transforming the lives of these men and women is truly remarkable."

"I have been serving as Program Director of Choose Love for just over three years," said Shannon Desilets, Choose Love Program Director for the State of New Hampshire. "Meeting the residents in the women's facility is a day I will always remember. The impact was palpable. Choose Love has the power to change lives. These skills and tools may not have been learned growing up, but it is never too late for any of us."

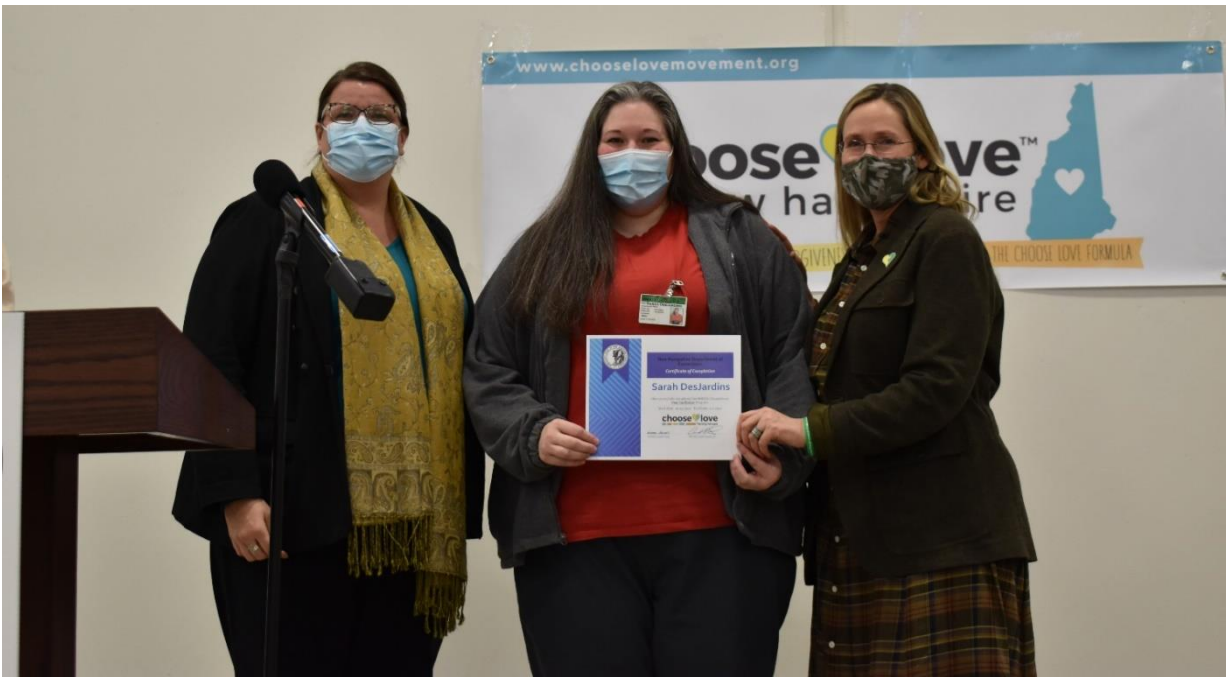
The Choose Love Movement includes school programs and many other no-cost programs like Choose Love for the Home, Communities, Athletic leadership, and the Workplace. The Choose Love Movement has been accessed in all 50 states and more than 100 countries, reaching 2 million children. Implementing Choose Love in NH Department of Correction's facilities will improve all participants' social and emotional learning to enhance the resident's relationships and interactions with their families and communities, better preparing them for reentry.

Funds were awarded to NHDOC's Family Connections Center from DHHS's Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families. Dr. Bastoni was contracted to interface the Choose Love Curriculum and practices to create social and emotional-based programming to pilot at NH Correctional Facility for Women and Shea Farm Transitional Housing Unit. The goal is to utilize the Choose Love philosophy in all program offerings at the NH Department of Corrections to include Education, Case Management, Religious Services, Family Connection Centers, and Transitional Housing. An added value to the Choose Love program is the connection with incarcerated parents and their children since most schools throughout the State of NH have adopted Choose Love into their daily curriculum.

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Scarlett Lewis congratulates the Corrections Choose Love graduates.



(L to R) Commissioner Hanks, graduate Sarah DesJardins, and Scarlett Lewis pose for a picture following Sarah's graduation.



A resident of the NH Correctional Facility for Women hugs Scarlett Lewis following the Corrections Choose Love graduation ceremony, while another resident looks on.