

For further information
Contact
Chris Cline
Communications Director
Tele: 573/522-1118
Direct FAX: 573/751-4099
P.O. Box 236
Jefferson City MO 65102



For Immediate Release...

Corrections News

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Southeast Correctional Center joins Wheels for the World effort

Offenders at Southeast Correctional Center (SECC) in Charleston are cleaning and repairing walkers for the less fortunate in developing countries. SECC joins Ozark Correctional Center (OCC) in Fordland and the Women's Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center (WERDCC) in helping the Wheels for the World Ministry. The ministry provides refurbished wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and canes to developing countries.

Offenders at SECC just completed cleaning and performing light maintenance on its first round of walkers. The initial allotment consisted of about 100 walkers, but the offenders want to increase that to 300 in the coming months, according to Joe Robins. Robins is a volunteer with Chair Corp, a volunteer organization that collects used wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and canes for Wheels for the World. He said WERDCC cleans approximately 500 walkers per year and OCC cleans numerous wheelchair parts.

"We are hopeful to open a wheelchair restoration shop at Ozark Correctional Center in the near future," Robins said. "Wheels for the World is a win, win organization. It helps people all the way around. From the offenders who restore the walkers and wheelchairs to the people who receive them, it has a profound impact."

Currently, Wheels for the World has wheelchair restoration shops in correctional facilities in Colorado, Tennessee, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Florida, Kansas, Indiana, Ohio, Louisiana, Arkansas, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and California.

"Wheels for the World is one our many Restorative Justice projects that offenders in all 20 of our prisons are involved in," said Department of Corrections Director George A. Lombardi. "It's a great opportunity for them to give back in some small measure for the crimes they have committed and is a significant teaching moment for showing compassion towards others."

After the wheelchairs and walkers have been restored to like-new condition, they are shipped to countries worldwide for distribution to those in need. The Department of Corrections' (DOC) partnership with Wheels for the World is part of the department's Restorative Justice Initiative. Through Restorative Justice programs and activities, offenders receive the opportunity to give back to society for the harm they have caused.

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