

PRESS RELEASE

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HM Prisons Hosts Second Annual Inmate Debate on 'Rehabilitation and Change'

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Inmates at His Majesty's Prison recently participated in the second annual **Inmate Debate**, an initiative designed to support rehabilitation and personal transformation.

The debate themed, "*How Can My Positive Prison Experience Make an Impact in Society?*" was a **collaborative effort between His Majesty's Prison and the New Life Baptist Church and** reflected a shared commitment to fostering positive change within the prison system.

Two teams of five inmates presenting arguments on how their time in prison could be used to contribute positively to society.

A second segment of the debate challenged inmates to respond to the question: "*What would you say to any inmate who says there is nothing positive in prison.*" The responses underscored the importance of mindset shifts, rehabilitation opportunities, and personal growth within the prison environment.

Team Two emerged victorious, earning a prize of **\$500**, while **Team One was awarded \$250** for its efforts.

Deputy Superintendent of Prison, Raymond Grant, praised the initiative, stating that these activities are aimed at *improving prisoners' morale*.

Mr. Grant said, "This is important because when inmate morale is high, staff morale is high, and that is what we aim to achieve every day. Think of the next project, the next event, the next competition that will assist with rehabilitation. It's never too late, and I hope you embrace these activities with open arms, cherish them, and walk away with something positive. Although it is a competition, I hope we listen to each other and learn from each other's remarks."

Acting Principal Officer overseeing the Rehabilitation Department Jazell Forde-Johnny encouraged inmates to embrace a new way of thinking. She echoed the words of author *Norman Vincent* who said, '*Change your thoughts and your mindset will change.*'

Mrs. Forde-Johnny added, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, and today, that first step is changing our mindset. We're starting on a new page -

this is progress. What are you going to look forward to when you leave prison? You have to change your mindset, change the way you think, and be a positive influence. Others around you will follow."

Deputy Governor Mr. David Archer Jr. presented each participant with a signed copy of his book, *Pioneering Greatness* in recognition of their participation and dedication to self-improvement. The gesture served as an encouragement for inmates to embrace personal development and strive for excellence despite their circumstances.

Building on the success of last year's inaugural debate, the second staging has reaffirmed the importance of such initiatives in the rehabilitation process. The partnership between **His Majesty's Prison and the New Life Baptist Church** remains a cornerstone of these efforts, with plans already underway to make next year's debate even more impactful.

In addition to fostering dialogue and personal reflection, His Majesty's Prison is actively addressing key needs identified by staff, prisoners, and stakeholders. In response to these concerns, and with the support of the Ministry of Health & Social Development, the prison now has a full-time Prison Counsellor, Rehabilitation Officer, and Teacher in place to strengthen its prisoner rehabilitation efforts. These professionals play a vital role in providing emotional support, educational development, and reintegration strategies to help inmates transition successfully back into society.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development through its subsidiary His Majesty's Prison remains committed to advancing the rehabilitation of prisoners in the Virgin Islands.

Gallery

