

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

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## Okaloosa County Jail Celebrates Inmate Success with 'Anchored' Program

**Okaloosa County, Florida** – On March 5, 2024, a significant milestone was achieved within the walls of the Okaloosa County Jail as 34 men successfully completed Phase I of the transformative "Anchored" program, administered by the Emerald Coast Life Center. This faith-based initiative is designed to equip participants with the tools and mindset necessary to break the cycle of recidivism and substance abuse.

"While we are committed to ensuring the safety of our inmates while they are in the jail, we can also make an effort to better their lives so that when they leave the jail, they never return," said Okaloosa Board Chairman Paul Mixon. "This program is one of the successes in our jail and we are extremely proud of this milestone that each one of these individuals has accomplished."

During the rigorous three-month curriculum, these dedicated individuals devoted themselves to 425 hours of intensive classwork, encompassing specialized coursework aimed at dismantling barriers to rehabilitation. Additionally, they undertook the challenge of crafting three 1,200-word essays, committing three scripture verses to memory, and delivering a comprehensive book report from the Phase I reading material.

The accomplishments of these men extend beyond academic achievement; they signify a profound commitment to personal growth and transformation. Through the "Anchored" program, participants embraced the opportunity to confront past traumas, discover their true identities, and cultivate positive change within themselves. Their dedication serves as a testament to their desire to become valued members of our community, as well as devoted husbands and fathers to their families.

"We are immensely proud of each and every one of these men for their unwavering dedication and determination. Their progress is not only commendable but serves as a beacon of hope for others seeking redemption and a fresh start," said Okaloosa County Department of Corrections Chief Nolan Weeks.

Looking ahead, these individuals are poised to enter subsequent phases of the "Anchored" program with renewed vigor and resolve. Upon completion of all program requirements, they will emerge equipped with a newfound mindset and a comprehensive understanding of the resources available to support them during challenging times post-release.

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