



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 25, 2018

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### **Toastmaster's program gives local youth a second chance**

**Fredericksburg, Va.** – From April to June, Stafford County's Rappahannock Juvenile Center (RJC) sponsored a Toastmasters Youth Leadership Program for 10 teen boys currently in detention.

"These young men realize that they have made a mistake in their lives, and now they want to do something positive to fix that and be better citizens," said Bobby Anderson, one of the volunteers who facilitated the program.

RJC Principal Dr. Janet Hodges led the public speaking program which was designed to help build confidence, teamwork and personal responsibility among each of the participants who graduated on June 11.

During eight weekly, two-hour sessions, FailSafe-ERA and Office on Youth volunteers worked with RJC staff to coach and mentor the students, who later assumed key speaking and meeting roles in the workshop, including President and Toastmaster of the Day. Speech topics included organizing a speech, impromptu speaking, listening skills, and using voice, vocabulary and gestures during a speech. One session focused on mock job interviews. The last session offered each student a unique opportunity to formulate and present their own plans after leaving RJC and to commit to how each participant would reach their individual goals. Plans included continuing their education at the college level, entering a culinary school, joining the military, attending trade school, and becoming a dental assistant.

The presenting staff included FailSafe-ERA volunteers Tony Roman, Danica Baxter and Bobby Anderson. Deb Lokrantz represented the Office on Youth. RJC faculty members Jill Luffey and Monteiz Hicks contributed significantly to the program, by personally preparing the students for each session.

The program was initiated by RJC Superintendent Carla White and FailSafe-ERA President and CEO Juanita Shanks.

A second program will be offered later this year.

FailSafe-ERA assists returning citizens and those families affected by incarceration by providing the resources and tools to help these families rebuild, succeed and thrive during their transition back into our communities.

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