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INMATE GRADUATES — Twenty-six inmates at the county jail were honored inside the facility on Tuesday for graduating from several educational programs. Sheriff Robert M. Maciol hosted the ceremony. (Sentinel photo by Sean I. Mills)

Inmates earn hope, certificates from education programs at jail

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TOWN OF WHITESTOWN — Upon graduating from several continuing education programs inside the county jail, 26 inmates were recognized with a ceremony at the facility on Tuesday.

The inmates, ranging in age from 16 to 55, received certificates and tassels from their teachers and then enjoyed a celebratory slice of cake, jail officials said.

They are in lockup on charges such as kidnapping, stabbing, robbery and drug possession, among others.

The classes “hopefully make a positive change in their lifestyle,” said Sheriff Robert M. Maciol, who hosted the ceremony.

“We’d love nothing more than to have you leave here and never come back. It’s a huge accomplishment,” the county sheriff added.

The classes came from the Alternatives to Incarceration and the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release programs, as well as the Madison-Oneida BOCES Adult Education and the Oriskany Alternative High School equivalency programs.

“You have to at least consider what is possible. For me, jail is just a different kind of classroom,” said guest speaker Dr. Mark Montgomery, the associate dean of social sciences at Mohawk Valley Community College. Montgomery once worked for the jail as a supportive case manager.

Montgomery told the inmates that they clung to the limits that other people placed on them and that led to them ending up in jail.

“You’ve said ‘to heck with that’. You’ve chosen to accomplish,” Montgomery told the inmates.

“The outside world is about taking the time to dig deep and get serious.”

Graduates: Sharonica Barber; Angela Bonhomme; Patrick Brady; David Crowell; Jasmine Jones; Keyshawn Nobles; Penta Thomas; Jason Belton; Donald Bouse; Eric Caras; Samson Gorton; Shaniya Nevith; Kevin Ragin; Ricky Woods; Carey Dunn; Daquan Kelly; Alexander Wilson; Annalea Bucenec; Jay King; Joseph Swancott; Josh Fiorentino; Garrett McConnell; Josh McConnell; Jihad Muhammed; Jamel Howard and Damarkus Smith.

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