COURSE COMPLETION SPEECH

FOR

DANIELLE LITTLE

REVISED

Hello everyone and thank you all for being here in support of the graduates of this session of the Florida Basic Recruit Training Program. I want to welcome our special guests (**Name the wardens and assistant wardens if you can**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and of course all of us are excited to hear our special guest speaker, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Although we’re being trained for responsibilities within the walls of institutions, we never know what we might face. Even on the street. I recently heard of an officer who stopped a car at 2 am. In it was a little old man, and the officer became concerned for his safety. When asked what he was doing out so late, the old man said, “I’m on my way to a lecture about the hazards of alcohol abuse and smoking on the human body.” The officer was intrigued and asked, ”Who’s giving that lecture at this time of night?” …To which the old man replied, “My wife.” (**Wait for the laugh**) The past ten weeks have been interesting, informative, and essential for those of us who intend to pursue a career in law enforcement. Although thirty-five candidates may have started with us ten weeks ago, I am proud to stand as one of the thirty-two that you see here celebrating this course completion today. The curriculum gave us an opportunity to anticipate the circumstances we will soon face, based on our unique assignments and it’s now time to step up and show what we learned. (**If you want to, you can say)** Welcome to the real world!!

I’d like to acknowledge those officers that have taken the time to share their experiences and the curriculum of this course. With guides like Sgt Howard, who was only with us for the first few days, Lt. Jordan, Sgt Engel, Sgt Fortneir, Sgt Reddick,-you guys made us feel “at home on the range,” … we’re about to prove that we learned our lessons well and we’re ready to tackle the **real** classroom, and that’s the Florida Correctional system (**Please replace if another name is more appropriate**).

Senator Barbara Boxer once said, “Law enforcement officers are never ‘off duty.’ They are dedicated public servants who are sworn to protect public safety at any time and place that the peace is threatened…” The same is true of us and the responsibilities we are about to assume as professional corrections officers. I don’t think that any of us thought it would be smooth sailing when we entered the program almost three months ago, but what I have realized is that we learn from every circumstance and every life event. Everything we experience has an impact on who we are and how we conduct ourselves as officers, and knowing the responsibilities we are about to take on provides a new perspective for our actions and reactions. As we’ve learned, it’s essential to be tolerant yet assertive, compassionate yet prepared for any turn of events, and we have also observed how our relationships to each other have affected our performance, focus, and reactions to situations. The fundamental nature of our courses served to strengthen our reserve and hone our skills. We learned the importance of physical fitness and health, first aid and CPR, and how to protect ourselves with defensive tactics. We became familiar with facilities and equipment and gained important knowledge on supervising special populations. We ascertained critical knowledge on officer safety and responding to incidents and emergencies that I pray we will never have to use during our careers. We also learned the importance of teamwork. I think we would all have to admit that in the beginning, when we all got together, although there might have been some friction, we had the opportunity through learning how to manage group dynamics, just how valuable this training has been-to **ALL** of us. We learned how to pull together as a team and work together to achieve mutual goals. It’s okay to be an independent thinker as long as we have each others’ backs, and that goes for all of us.

I am proud to be this course’s class President and to have the opportunity to work with Officers Little and Reed, and I want to thank those from Suwannee who kept their word and supported the class with their donation of that delicious cake.

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge my colleagues who have won awards tonight, and I’d like to invite all of you to congratulate Officer Hunter from Madison for receiving the firearms award, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the recipient of the award for highest academics, and to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for receiving the Defensive Tactics award.

In a few short weeks we will all sit for the state examinations and we will be tested even further, but that will be nothing compared to the reality as we take our places in the profession and put what we’ve studied to practical use. Someone once said “Correctional officers are just like police officers, except we don’t get to rescue kittens from a tree.” Our jobs are tough and we will get first hand experience of how this course will serve us as we serve the citizens of Florida. Safety and security for our communities and families is our professional and civic priority, but we all must remember that the true goal at the end of the day is to be able to do our jobs effectively and with a positive impact on those with whom we interact …Then the **ultimate** goal is to insure our own safety and be able to go home to our families. Remember: **LEARN IT, LIVE IT, REPRESENT IT!!** Thank you all!