

Drug/DUI Court Newsletter to Community

Wonderful Publicity

The Drug/DUI Court received coverage by the area newspapers and media that lauded the concept of these treatment courts and the positive impact on the lives of the Drug/DUI court participants. InVironments published a lengthy article on Drug Court in the Jan-Feb 2012 issue. The article in InVironments focused on 3 graduates of the program who are active in the newly formed C.L.E.A.N. Program Alumni Association (Choosing Life and Ending Abuse Now). The three alumni interviewed had extensive drug use histories involving heroin, crack, marijuana, and cocaine. A reoccurring theme from the interviews with the alumni was that Drug Court saved their life.

“I knew that Drug Court was the only way I could try to get my life back.”

“The program can be hard, very hard, but it is so worth it to be able to have a life again. That’s the most meaningful thing about the program. It helps you have not just a life, but a good, happy life.”

The Daily Chronicle is running a series of articles on one individual Drug Court participant and the first article appeared in January 2012. They are focusing on Matthew J. and his progress through the program. Matthew is a young man who used an assortment of drugs including opiates and was frequently in trouble with law enforcement. He characterized his life style when using drugs as dangerous, illegal and immoral. In December 2010, U.S. marshals arrested Jordan at work with an arrest warrant for charges of possessing and delivering cocaine. Jordan has been successful since entering Drug Court in March 2011 and is now in Phase 4 of 5 possible phases. He stated several times in the article that being in Drug Court was difficult because you have to abandon your old life and friends and start all over with the deep conviction that you want a clean and sober lifestyle.

Following the first article the Daily Chronicle published an editorial stating that the DeKalb County Drug/DUI Court was a benefit to the community. “Drug courts are a proven commodity in a community, and it’s good to see DeKalb County’s expanding”.



Judge Stuckert and a younger member of Drug Court.

Drug/DUI Court Give back to the community

Participants in both Drug and DUI Court are committed to giving back to the community and have demonstrated this commitment over the past year. One activity that everyone seems to enjoy is “Road Crew Saturday”. This activity is devoted to picking up trash on the two sections of DeKalb County highway that have been adopted by Drug/DUI Court. One section of Annie Glidden Road and one section of South 4th Street have been adopted from the DeKalb County Highway Department. Twice a year the court holds a “Road Crew Saturday” which is devoted to picking up trash and bonding with other court participants. Most organizations have only adopted one section of highway, but Drug/DUI Court found that because their assigned section of

South 4th Street was rural, it was easy to pick up because it wasn't much littered. So the court volunteered to clean another road and was assigned a section of Annie Glidden.

The participants have been actively involved in helping the Salvation Army during the holidays. The C.L.E.A.N. Alumni Association held a family oriented fun event in December to raise money for the Salvation Army Christmas gifts and collected over \$400. Following the fun event, they attended the Salvation Army Christmas giving day and helped distribute gifts to children. Participants also assisted the Salvation Army in the distribution of food at both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The C.L.E.A.N. Alumni Association also arranged to provide and serve food to residents at Hope Haven, the DeKalb County homeless shelter. Those who were involved in the 2 events of providing food at Hope Haven reported it was a wonderful event that affirmed the importance of giving back to the community.

Participants also have volunteered at Goodwill, TAILS, and the DeKalb County Animal Shelter and provided hundreds of hours of free help.



**2011 Road Crew Doing Public Service
on Drug Court Adopted Roads**

Proud to report outcomes of Drug Court

One of the most common questions the general public has is “What happens once people graduate? Findings from drug court evaluations show that participation in drug courts results in fewer rearrests and reconvictions, or longer periods between arrests.

- An evaluation of drug courts in Florida and Missouri, which tracked drug court participant progress for 24 months, found a substantially lower re-arrest rate for drug court graduates relative to the comparison group: 12% vs. 40% in Florida and 45% vs. 65% in Missouri.¹ These represent a reduction in re-arrest rates of 70% and 31%, respectively.
- Six drug courts in New York State averaged a 29% reduction in re-arrest measured over 3 years following participants’ initial arrest.²
- Recent research suggests that these reductions in re-arrest extend beyond the first few years following treatment. An evaluation of the Multnomah County, Oregon drug court found a 24% reduction in drug arrests for participants thirteen years after initial entry into the program.³

We investigated the criminal backgrounds (DeKalb County, Illinois, and the US) of all graduates from Drug Court from the first graduation on January 9, 2009 to the latest graduation on May 20, 2011. There were 35 graduates during this 3 year period of time:

- 51% (18) of graduates did not have new charges.
- 49% (17) of graduates had new charges after graduation from Drug Court.
 - 20% (7 graduates) had traffic charges
 - 14% (5 graduates) had DUI charges
 - 11% (4 graduates) had misdemeanor charges
 - 20% (7 graduates) had felony charges
- The totals do not equal the number of graduates because some graduates had multiple charges.
- Illinois prison recidivism rate is 51.7% (2011). If you include only the felonies charged then drug court recidivism rates is 20% or 31.7% lower than the state recidivism rate.

We are proud of that fact that an investigation of local and national criminal date systems showed the overwhelming majority of Drug Court graduates have not been rearrested or convicted for a crime.

¹ Steven Belenko, *Economic Benefits Of Drug Treatment: A Critical Review of the Evidence for Policy Makers*, Treatment Research Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, 2005, p. 2.

² Michael Rempel, Dana Fox-Kralstein, Amanda Cissner, Robyn Cohen, Melissa Labriola, Donald Farole, Ann Bader, and Michael Magnani, *The New York State Adult Drug Court Evaluation: Policies, Participants, and Impacts (Executive Summary)*, Center for Court Innovation, 2003, p. 2.

³ Michael W. Finigan, Shannon M. Carey, and Anton Cox, *The Impact of a Mature Drug Court Over 10 Years of Operation: Recidivism and Costs*, NPC Research, 2007, p. 28.

Facts About the DeKalb County Drug Court

Drug Court has been extremely lucky to have had the services of Dr. John Webster, Consultant in Research and Evaluation, from the inception of the court. Dr. Webster produces an extensive evaluation of the treatment court every year which is shared with the DeKalb County presiding judge and the County Board. Dr. Webster also serves as the evaluator for the federal grants that Drug Court has received in the past several years. It is interesting to note that the average length of time in the program for people that graduated was 25 months, the acceptance rate is 35.8%, and a graduation rate of 70%.

Characteristics of Participants Admitted to Drug Court 2009-2012 (n=64)			
Variable	Attribute	Number	Percent
Age		27.3 Mean	
Gender			
	Male	46	71.9
	Female	18	28.1
Ethnicity			
	African American	7	10.9
	White	53	82.8
	Hispanic	3	4.7
	Asian	1	1.6
Drug Of Choice			
	Alcohol	7	10.9
	Cocaine	7	10.9
	Crack	14	21.9
	Heroin	14	21.9
	Marijuana	16	25
	RX Drugs	6	9.4
Education			
	Completed less than 12 years		20.6%
	Completed 12 years		29.6%
	Completed more than 12 years		22.3%

Dr. Webster's yearly evaluations always includes an in depth discussion of areas for the Drug Court Team to address that would improve the court. The Team spends significant time reviewing his suggestions for improvement and is not shy about changing court procedures or practice based on his suggestions. This willingness to continually evaluate itself and openness to suggestions for improvement has helped make the treatment court successful. The success of Drug Court is documented by pre-graduation and post-graduation-surveys given to the participants found:

“significant differences on the following criminal thinking scales between intake and gradation: entitlement; justification; power orientation; cold heartedness; criminal rationalization and personal irresponsibility.”

In other words, Drug Court was able to significantly decrease the criminal thinking of the participants as they went through the program.



Table set for graduation reception



Capacity crowd attends graduation 2011.

Continual Training for Drug Court Staff

educational events to keep current everything that is happening and provide the best service possible to the participants of Drug Court. The Team attended the national American Association of Drug Court Professionals conference held in Washington, DC last July. It was a 4 day conference with literally hundreds of different educational sessions that the Team

What you can do to help the DeKalb County Drug/DUI Court

members could attend based on their own specialty, e.g. sessions for Judges, probation officers, public defenders. An effort is made every year to send as many members of the Team to the national meeting because of the commitment to continually improve what we do. The Team never attends these national meetings without coming back with new ideas and approaches to make the court even better.



Deputy Ray Nelson, Sheriff's Office, Regina Harris, Public Defender, and Matt Nielson, Drug Court Probation Officer in Washington, DC 2011. Judge Stuckert and Marilyn Stromborg also attended this national conference.

The Team also attends the annual meeting of the Illinois Association of Drug Court Professionals which is held every Fall. Marilyn Stromborg is actively involved with the Illinois association and is presently on the planning committee for the 2012 conference.

People are always asking what they can do to help us in fulfilling our mission. After several years of operation, the Team has determined the following will go a long way in assisting the DeKalb County Drug/DUI Court:

- ✚ Donations of money are spent on gift certificates for drug court participants so they can purchase grooming materials, clothes etc. to assist them in securing jobs. A typical drug court participant has limited financial, transportation, and housing resources.
- ✚ Donations of money are spent on gift certificates for gas and taxi certificates since many of the drug court participants do not have transportation.
- ✚ Certificates for food from local grocery stores, free passes to movies, certificate to a restaurant, gas or phone card, or other small certificates which can be given to participants when they are rewarded for adhering to drug court rules.
- ✚ Encourage businesses to hire a drug court participant. Drug court participants have a nonviolent history and are intensively monitored for drug and alcohol use and adherence to all drug court rules.
- ✚ Any small donation is appreciated and will go directly to something that can be used by drug court participant to assist them in obtaining a clean, sober and law abiding life.

Any donation you could provide would be greatly appreciated and may be mailed to the below address. A receipt can be provided for tax purposes if desired. If you have any questions or request or pick up the small donation, please don't hesitate to call 815-895-7224 or e-mail mstromborg@dekalbcounty.org.

**DeKalb County Drug/DUI Court
DeKalb County Courthouse
133 West State Street
Sycamore, Illinois 60278**

FAX 815-895-1605