

Polk County Graduates Couple With Honors

Lisa and Brian England recently shook the hand of Drug Court Judge Jake Looney as he congratulated the couple on a successful graduation from the Mena Drug Court Program. The couple finished the program in just fifteen months without a single miss-step---no missed meetings or failed random tests, no missed phone calls---and they performed every task asked of them.

In an interview that appeared in the local paper, Brian told reporter Andy Philpot that he began with alcohol as a young teenager, then went to marijuana and finally on to methamphetamine drugs. The couple was arrested during a raid of their home by the 18th West Drug Task Force on October 23, 2008. They now look on that day as the day their lives started over. Lisa commented that it was like a huge burden was lifted from her. When she told her mother she had been arrested, her mother replied, "Thank God," because she knew Lisa would get some badly needed help.

Like so many other drug court participants who have graduated from Arkansas drug courts, both Brian and Lisa want to now "give back" to their community. Brian has indicated an interest in becoming a volunteer firefighter and a first responder. Lisa wants to help other people struggling with addiction in their return to the community.

The Mena Drug Court team celebrated the graduation with refreshments that featured a cake inscribed with the words: Congratulations! Keep Working The Steps. Members of the Mena Drug Court Team, in addition to Judge Looney, are Prosecutor Tim Williamson, Counselor Steven Free, Probation Officers Ashley George and Terry Ford and Work Program Advisor Cynthia Henderson.



State Conference Information to Date

• Getting Back to Basics

"Getting Back to Basics" is the theme chosen for the 4th Annual Statewide Drug Court Conference, coming April 8-9, 2010, at the Hilton Hotel in Little Rock, AR. Due to recent cuts in budgets, judges will convene on the afternoon of April 8 for a session with Dr. Doug Marlowe, Chief of Science, Policy and Law at NADCP. The meeting will reconvene at 9:00 a.m. on April 9 for the rest of the team members. The speaker list is still being finalized at time of press so please watch for forthcoming information, including the agenda. Applications will be made for continuing education credits for attendees. More information will be provided on site to complete this process.

• New This Year: Speed Innovation?

All drug court teams are asked to prepare a one-minute oral presentation of an innovation tried by your court that you want to share with your colleagues. During the plenary session before lunch, we will have a Speed Innovation session, where each court will report their idea to the audience. The presenter should be prepared to describe the innovation, tell why the team chose to try it, and report on its success during the sixty-second time frame. Judges Robert Herzfeld and Mary Ann Gunn will keep track of time and sound a buzzer if a team goes over the time limit. We look forward to hearing your ideas from the field!

Registration for the 4th Annual Statewide Drug Court Conference Closes March 15. See related notice on page 3.

NADCP Huddleston Visits Washington/Madison County Drug Court

NADCP Executive Director West Huddleston and Chris Deutsch, Associate Director of Communications, were skeptical of what they had heard---the Washington/Madison County Drug Court is broadcast over the cable television stations in Northwest Arkansas. How could this be? Wouldn't coverage be purposefully humiliating drug court participants? On February 16, 2010, both Huddleston and Deutsch got to see first hand the enormous success of the drug court program in operation under the gavel of Judge Mary Ann Gunn.

At the invitation of Judge Gunn, Huddleston and Deutsch attended a full day of drug court with over 86 participants appearing in court. The two also attended the staffing held that day to observe the behind-the-scenes teamwork of the Washington/Madison County Drug Court Team. At the end of the day, Huddleston commented how impressed he was with the relationship garnered between the prosecutor and the public defender who really worked together to get the best outcome for the participant. He described the team as a highly-functioning, well-orchestrated organization, exactly how all drug court teams should operate.

Many times, during the day, some lively bantering went around the conference table as Judge Gunn called on each area to express their thoughts concerning a particular fact about the behavior of a participant. For example, four participants had been videotaped by one of the probation officers gathering outside their 12-step meeting smoking for over twenty minutes on several meeting days. The team determined that this was a violation of expected behavior but, since they did not have a specific rule against such, decided to charge each participant a week in the program for every time they had spent an excessive amount of time outside their meeting. However, it was

made clear to all in attendance that such behavior would not be tolerated from that day forward. Judge Gunn, from the bench, clearly warned all participants to avoid disrupting such support groups in the future.

The videotaping of the drug court program is conducted in a very unobtrusive manner. Jones Production Company sets up cameras and lighting in the courtroom prior to the convening of court. A stationary microphone is used for participants who are asked to approach the bench. Judge Gunn wears a wireless microphone. Responses from other team members are picked up using microphones located near their stations in the courtroom. After the taping, some participants who have indicated to the court that they do not want to be videotaped are edited from the program. Former broadcaster Carolyn Long works with the technicians as the producer to develop two hour-long segments from each court session. Judge Gunn has complete control over the final content. After having worked with her for several sessions, the production specialists have a good feel for what needs to be cut and frequently do so without prompting from the judge.

After the long day, the two NADCP officials had the opportunity to receive input from the local community concerning the court program. While dining at a restaurant in Fayetteville, several members of the restaurant staff came over to Judge Gunn to acknowledge that they were regular viewers of the program and appreciate what her team does for people in the program.

Judge Gunn commented to Huddleston that the broadcast is a good prevention strategy. She frequently asked participants to tell her how their drug use began and at what age. Many viewers have told her that they watch each session to follow the progress of participants in the program, joining in their elation when they receive incentives and finally graduate or being disappointed if they are sanctioned by the court.

(cont. on page 3)



Judge Gunn shows West Huddleston the features of the historic courtroom being fully restored for her drug court program in the Washington County Courthouse.

(Washington/Madison cont. from page 2)

The visit of Huddleston to Arkansas was covered by local television channels in NW Arkansas. After the visit, two very positive editorials were written by the editorial staff of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, one appearing Saturday, February 20th for the Northwest Arkansas Section and another on Wednesday, February 24th that ran statewide. Both editorials supported television coverage of the drug court program. Congratulations Washington/Madison County Drug Court Team in shining a statewide light on the work of drug court programs in Arkansas.



Deutsch and Huddleston join Judge Gunn during her drug court staffing.

Do You Have A Place at the Table?

Registration for the 4th Annual State-wide Drug Court Conference will close on **March 15th**. If you have not registered by that date, we won't be able to seat you for the luncheon to be held on Friday, April 9. Membership in ADCPA will serve as your ticket to the luncheon. We need to provide the hotel with a viable count prior to that date. Please, take time now to complete your registration form and fax it to ADCPA at 501 682-9410.

Two Court Teams Awarded Training Scholarships

Two Arkansas drug court teams will be headed to sites of the National Drug Court Institute's (NDCI) FY 2010 Adult Drug Court Practitioner Training in the upcoming weeks. These newly formed teams will spend a week together developing their court's guidance and handbook, as well as learning the latest evidenced-based strategies to utilize with their courts upon their return to Arkansas.

The new team for the Fulton/Izard County Court will be attending training in Nashville, TN, on March 22-26, 2010. The combined team from the 15th Judicial District, representing both Morrilton and Danville courts, will travel to Pittsburg, PA on May 2, 2010, for their week of training.

Congratulations to Judge Jerry Don Ramey and Judge John Dan Kemp on successfully securing training funds for your teams! NDCI Drug Court Practitioner training is made available to newly formed drug courts each year by the National Drug Court Institute from a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. AOC has recently submitted an application for statewide drug court support to provide this training to additional teams next year.



The Line is a publication by the Drug Court Division of the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts. A copy of this issue can be found at <http://courts.arkansas.gov/drugcourt>. Contributions, comments, and inquiries are welcome. Please submit to:
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New Self-Paced Video Training Available

The National Drug Court Institute (NDCI), in collaboration with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), has produced a video designed to assist drug court teams with skills and information to plan and implement a drug court program.

Over eight drug court experts are featured on the video, including Carolyn Hardin, Executive Director of NDCI, Terrence Walton, a drug court trainer who came to the Arkansas 2008 Statewide Conference from Washington, DC, and Carson Fox, a member of the NADCP staff whose expertise is confidentiality and ethics.

The video is available through the AOC Division of Drug Court Programs. Contact Carol Roddy at carol.rodody@arkansas.gov to check out the video for your team's viewing.

In Memoriam

The Sixteenth Judicial District-Cleburne County Drug Court Team suffered a great loss on Saturday, January 16, 2010, with the unexpected passing of Deputy Prosecutor Tommy Edward Smith. Smith, age 52, died from complications from a pancreatitis incident. He had been med-flighted to Springhill Baptist Medical Center in North Little Rock the day before. He died surrounded by many family members and friends.

Tommy was a charter member of ADCPA and served on the board. He had practiced law since 1985 in Heber Springs and served as deputy prosecutor for many years for Cleburne County. He is survived by his wife, Sandy of Prim, AR and two sons, Drew of Conway and Jordan of Prim.