

JDC NEWS

Governor Hoeven Proclaims National Drug Court Month

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Governor John Hoeven proclaims May as "National Drug Court Month." "We recognize the practitioners and participants who make drug courts work and the significant contributions that drug courts have made, and continue to make, in reducing drug usage and crime."

Juvenile Drug Courts have been in operation in North Dakota for seven years. Juvenile drug courts in Fargo and Grand Forks began operation on May 1, 2000, Bismarck's began operating on October 18, 2002, and Minot on January 18, 2007. A juvenile drug court in Williston is in the planning stages and will begin operation in January 2008.

Since May 1, 2000, there have been 213 juveniles in the program and 72 graduations. The courts have gone through many changes in the last seven years and continue to adapt the program to meet the juvenile's ever changing needs. The commitment and dedication of the team members are what

has made this program so successful.

Justice Mary Muehlen Maring who has served as the director of the program since its inception, recalls:

"For the past seven years, teams comprised of judges, juvenile court officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, treatment providers, school representatives, coordinators and law enforcement officers have worked tirelessly to reduce the abuse of alcohol and drugs by juveniles that come into our juvenile courts. These teams have received special training so they can facilitate the program and achieve the best possible results. The juveniles that participate are held accountable for completing community service, completing their treatment plans, complying with no alcohol or drug use, attending and completing high school and completing all other requirements imposed by the court. The juveniles must appear weekly before the drug court judge and report on their progress for

that week. The drug court judge is the accountability leader and can sanction or provide incentives depending on the juvenile's progress.

The program is not easy and there is hardly a day when the participant does not have contact with someone on the drug court team. The outcomes, however, say it all. The studies completed by Dr. Kevin Thompson, Chair, NDSU Criminal Justice Department, indicate lower recidivism for these youth, both while in the program and after graduation; improved grades, and school attendance, improved lives and relationships and substantial treatment gains and success. What more could we ask from our juvenile drug courts. Many 'thanks' are due to the dedicated juvenile drug court teams who are doing this difficult work and to our Chief Justice, Gerald VandeWalle, who has been so supportive of the program."

Judge's Perspective

By the Honorable Karen Kosanda



It was a dreary fall day in October, 2001, and my first day on the bench as the Grand Forks Juvenile Drug Court Judge. I was filling big shoes. Judge Debbie Kleven, the original JDC judge and one of the founding team members of our program and the North Dakota JDC Program, was turning over the program reins to me. I had been able to attend staffings and drug court sessions with Judge Kleven presiding for about a month prior, but I still was apprehensive since I would be terminating two young men from our program. Clearly termination from the program was the correct decision...we really had no choice as they were on "Last Chance" contracts and still continued to test positive and turn their noses up at our rules and policies. It was at the point where the other participants were being negatively affected by the behaviors of these two and, at staffing prior to court, the team made the decision to terminate.

So why was I unable to sleep well that night? I guess there was a certain feeling of perhaps we gave up on these two young men... seems that there should have been something more we could do through drug court to help them get on the right path to leading clean and sober and crime free lives?

It is now more than five years later and I still have those moments where I worry about not doing enough. Some of our treatment professionals may call this co-dependent behavior (it probably is!), but I call it just caring. Each and everyone of our team members, from the police detective and the school representative to the addition counselors and probation officer, care deeply about what happens to these young people who enter our program.

We are here to educate, treat, and provide support, whether through sanctions or rewards or just being there for them, to these drug court participants and their families with a goal of ending the youth's abuse of or addiction to chemicals. After completion of drug court, those young people, at a minimum, will have completed a treatment program and have under their belt twelve months of being clean and sober. They will have a better understanding of how chemicals affect them and their families, learn how to stay chemically free, and hopefully have a taste of how good life can be without chemicals.

Unlike other cases that I pre-

side over, in drug court we have a team that makes decisions on a consensus basis. If we cannot reach a consensus, then I have to make the ultimate decision. However, I find it to be quite a luxury to have a team of experts bringing their knowledge and ideas to the decision-making process. Our team is probably the greatest strength of our Juvenile Drug Court. We have a very dedicated team with long term members. At least two of our team members have been involved with JDC since the planning stages. As a matter of fact, jokingly our JDC was called at the beginning the "Deb" court . . . for judge Deb Kleven, Deb Carlson, the Grand Forks Juvenile Court Supervisor, and Deb Davis, Administrator of Center for Adolescent Treatment Services (CASTS). Deb Carlson and Deb Davis are still on our team. We enjoy a cooperative relationship with the city police thanks to the efforts of our team member, Detective Mike Iwan. Likewise we are fortunate to have John Fuehr, counselor with Valley Junior High School, on our team to assist us with all the school issues our participants present. Rounding out our team is the probation officer, Mike Pesch, and our coordinator, Shawn Mattingley, along with our prosecuting attorney, Dale Rivard, and defense counsel, John Thelen. Additionally, individual treatment counselors from Northeast Human Service Center, Candy Iverson

and Nate Faa, often attend our staffings to report on the participants they are working with in treatment. Just looking at this impressive list of team members, you can see why I call it a luxury to be able to discuss and consult with them and reach a consensus decision regarding our participants. It gives me a great deal of confidence that the decisions we reach are the best possible for that participant.

My favor thing about JDC has to be the kids. The participants range in age from 14 through 18. They come from all different backgrounds. Most come from difficult family situations, often with other family members having chemical abuse and addiction issues. Most are quite challenging. . . some come with a chip on their shoulder and others will not open up to say anything at all.

It is very rewarding to see the changes in the behaviors and attitudes of the kids as they progress through the program and how proud they are of their accomplishment when they graduate. Improved grades in school is a direct result of drug court as the kids are now going to school regularly.

I may still have some sleepless nights when someone is terminated from drug court. But, for me, the rewards of presiding over JDC that come from getting to know and work with the kids and the team far outweigh those few sleepless nights!



Judge Romanick Called to Military Service



South Central Juvenile Drug Court Judge Bruce Romanick has been ordered to active military service as a legal officer with the U.S. Army Reserve.

Romanick, who is a lieutenant colonel in the USAR, will be activated June 4 as a member of the 87th Legal Services Organization. He expects to be on active duty for a year. "What I do during this deployment is really only in support of those

soldiers who are called to serve in both Iraq and Afghanistan and they will receive my best efforts," said Romanick.

Romanick has been the primary judge for the South Central Juvenile Drug Court since it began operation in October of 2002. Referee John Grinsteiner will fill the position while Judge Romanick is away.

Interesting data

- Over 1,900 drug courts are currently operational in the U.S.
- 16,000 individuals graduated from drug courts.
- More than 840 babies were born drug free.
- Drug courts are in all fifty states and U.S. territories.
- Juvenile drug courts started in 1994.

Juvenile Drug Court Expands To The West

Juvenile Drug Court is expanding to the west. In early spring of 2006, a team from Minot began training to begin a juvenile drug court in January of 2007. Judge Douglas Mattson is the primary judge for this court. The seven member team consists of Todd Cresap, Robert Slorby, Jason Anderson, Harlan Johnson, Valerie

Potter, Steve Kukowski, Lester Malnaa, Susan Hoffer, Gloria Maragoes, and Dixie Knoebel.

Williston will be the next site for a juvenile drug court with plans of opening in January of 2008. Judge David Nelson will serve as the primary judge. Other team members consist

of Peter Furuseth, Marlyce Wilder, Jack Colby, Holly Webster, Jerry Chapman, Cory Collins, and Jason Germundson. The Williston team members have begun training with the National Drug Court Institute.

"Williston will be the next site for a juvenile drug court ."

Teens Clean Up Lives, Gardens

Four teens from the Fargo Juvenile Drug Court participated in a Youth Summer Employment program with Fargo's Forestry Department. The program began in the summer of 2006 and plans to continue for the summer of 2007 are underway.

"The positions are paid jobs and an opportunity

for them to learn valuable work skills," says Suzanne Lass, juvenile drug court coordinator. The participants worked for eleven weeks with the Forestry Department. The teens did not spend eleven weeks just gardening, the program also involved mentoring sessions on

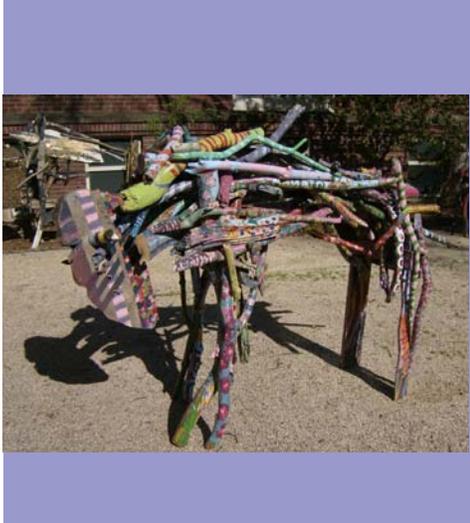
Friday's when guests talked to the teens about responsibility, money management, and leadership skills.

"I think the mentoring is probably the most important part of the job." Employment provides the teens with an opportunity to earn money and spend time productively.



However, most exciting, "we are teaching life lessons."

Buffalo on the Prairie



The Northeast Central Juvenile Drug Court spent the summer of 2006 constructing six life-size buffalo made completely of driftwood from the banks of the Red River. The purpose of this program is to enrich the participants lives in art, history, and community service. The program increases the knowledge and ability in the

areas of Art and Art History. This program is possible through coordination with the Grand Forks Park District who provided a facility to work on the art projects. These buffalo have been on display at the North Dakota Museum of Art located at the University of North Dakota. Participants were also

given homework assignments pertaining to a locally known artist and an art assignment each week that included research and essay writing. Funding for this program was provided by the Learn and Serve Grant. A photography project is planned for this summer.

Fargo and Grand Forks Juvenile Drug Courts Celebrate 7th Anniversary



Grand Forks Team (L to R)

Nathan Faa, Mike Pesch, Deb Davis, Mike Iwan, Dale Rivard, Judge Karen Braaten, John Fuehr, Shawn Mattingley

On May 1, 2000, pilot juvenile drug courts were established in Grand Forks in the Northeast Central Judicial District under the judgeship of the Hon. Debbie Kleven, and in Fargo, under the judgeship of the Hon. Ralph Erickson, in the East Central Judicial District. The two courts have now served a total of 165 participants.

The courts are now under the judgeship of the Hon. Karen Braaten in the Northeast Central Judicial District and the Hon. Wade Webb from the East Central Judicial District.

Team members who have been with the program since its inception are Steve Mottinger, Nicole Leitner, Ron Schneider, Deb Davis, and Deb Carlson. Dr. Kevin Thompson, NDSU, the evaluator for the program has also been with the drug court program since its inception. Their dedication to the program is greatly appreciated.

The Grand Forks court meets on Thursday with court at 4:00 p.m. and Fargo on Monday's with court beginning at 4:00 p.m.

The courts are planning bowling, pizza, and a picnic to celebrate their anniversary and National Drug Court Month.



Fargo Team (L to R)

Jonathan Anderson, Tara Hansen, Nicole Leitner, Judge Wade Webb, Ron Schneider, Steve Mottinger, Sue Lass

Minot Juvenile Drug Court Begins Operation



L to R

Tim Whilhelm (filling in for Bob Slorby), Judge Douglas Mattson, Karrie Francis, (filling in for Todd Cresap), Jason Anderson, Valerie Potter, Cliff Hovda, Lester Malnaa

Minot Juvenile Drug Court opened its doors on January 18, 2007, with the Hon. Douglas Mattson as the primary judge. Planning for the court began in January of 2006. Partnerships with the Northwest Judicial District were formed with Bob Slorby, State's Attorney's Office; Harlan Johnson, Magic City School System; Jason Anderson, Northeast Human Service Center; Lester Malnaa, Juvenile Court, Todd Cresap, defense counsel; and Steve Kukowski, Minot Police Department. Valerie Potter was hired as the coordinator for the program. The team received comprehensive training with the National Drug Court Institute and also spent time training with the Grand Forks Juvenile Drug Court where they were able to see first-hand a court staffing and a court session. The court will be evaluated by Dr. Kevin Thompson, NDSU.

South Central JDC Celebrates National Drug Court Month

On May 17, 2007 the South Central Juvenile Drug Court team and participants enjoyed an evening of bowling. It has become an annual event celebrating National Drug Court Month. The team and participants enjoyed pizza and pop provided by Judge Romanick

and John Grinsteiner.

L to R

Brad Peterson, Chris Montgomery, Marcia Peterson, Jackie Presley, John Grinsteiner, Liz Romanick, Judge Bruce Romanick, Brandi Sasse Russell



My Thoughts

By Marilyn Moe

Welcome to the first newsletter for juvenile drug court! It will be seven years this fall since I began working as the state drug court coordinator. I joined the ranks five months after the first two courts got off the ground. What an interesting seven years! We have seen many comings and goings.

Despite all the struggles and challenges, the teams continue striving to help these kids beat their substance abuse and alcohol problems and they do it with such compassion. We have all heard the old saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." When you listen to a staffing or court session you

see the village at work. A team of caring people who have come together to help families through their struggles and who do their best to guide them down the right path. I often hear doubt from team members when a participant is let go, and I am reminded that we can only "plant the seed.

and move on.

I hope you have enjoyed this newsletter and I look forward to sending you one next fall.

*Have a Great
Summer!*

North Dakota Drug Court Association

John Grinsteiner

The NDADCP has joined the growing number of states to have a state-wide association of drug court professionals. Our *mission is reducing substance abuse, crime and recidivism by promoting and advocating for the establishment and funding of Drug Courts and providing for the collection and dissemination of information, technology assistance, and mutual support to association members.*

The association currently has 32 paid members and we are hoping to grow that number at our upcoming annual membership meeting on June 13, 2007, which will be held at 7:00 p.m. in Bismarck at the Ramkota Hotel. We are currently working on obtaining our corporate and non-profit status with the State and the Feds respectively.

Our Association has eight board members and four officers, which were elected to three staggered panels to ensure a steady flow of new ideas and leadership. At this year's annual meeting two new board members will be elected.

We are working towards two immediate goals of building an Association web page and establishing an email list serve for members to bounce ideas and solutions off of each other. John Grinsteiner, Board President, has established the long term goal of establishing a scholarship fund for graduating or graduated drug court participants, both adult and juvenile.

The Evaluator's Corner

Dr. Kevin Thompson



I have been involved in North Dakota's Juvenile Drug Court movement from the planning stage in October of 1998 to the present. Since that time, I have been impressed with the way that the drug courts in the state have evolved. Some observations I have gleaned during this time period: 1) All of the courts struggled in the first year to find their identity and figure out exactly what it is they are trying to do. This is largely a function of attempting to get accustomed to a multidisciplinary team approach to resolving youth substance abuse is-

sues, combined with implementing a new model. 2) All of the courts continue to wrestle with targeting program appropriate participants for drug court. No team has been interested in admitting "light weights" to the program. By the same token, it is risky to admit severe, deep end juveniles into the program. I believe we have all learned that the drug court model is not appropriate for all juveniles. 3) It is evident based on the data, that drug court is not effective for the following types of juveniles: a) have at least a modest level of

parental support b) do not exhibit severe family conflict c) are not completely struggling in school d) are not diagnosed with some type of severe mood disorder 4) It is easy to get burned out working with the drug court model. This is particularly true of the judges. Consequently, it is important for judges to sometimes "take a timeout" from drug court. 5) Team members have learned a great deal from each other about the different philosophies, theories, and strategies for addressing substance abuse issues in youth.