



NEWSLETTER

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Florida Association of Drug Court Professionals
June 2008 Issue 2

Dear FADCP Members:

It has been my honor to serve as Chair of the Florida Association of Drug Court Professionals for the last two years. Thank you to the Board for its dedication and diligence in support of Florida's drug courts. It is through the work of the Board and our membership that we have been able to accomplish so much over the past two years. As I look back, I am extremely proud of our accomplishments and initiatives which include: 1) pursuit of legislative funding options (maybe next year); 2) collection and dissemination of information on statewide drug testing options; 3) creation of the treatment fidelity and accountability committee; and 4) the 2007 Florida Drug Court Conference held in April 2007 in Orlando with over 300 attendees (our largest statewide conference so far).

With the current budget situation that threatens our courts and drug court programs, the FADCP Board voted to transform the September 3-4, 2008 statewide training conference into a distance learning session. With current travel restrictions for many of our drug court program staff, the Board believed it was best to postpone the conference until we are all in a better financial situation. Under the leadership of your new chair, Judge Gisele Pollack, FADCP is developing a distance learning session to be held on Thursday, September 4th from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. We are working on the logistics, but plan to present our speaker through the court's videoconferencing network. Specific information will follow as the plans unfold, but we wanted you to have advance notice of our intention to provide this important training, which will allow our membership to earn much needed CJE, CLE and CUE credits.

Currently, we have 249 FADCP members. We will begin our 2008-2009 membership drive over the summer. We encourage everyone to join as we have been able to provide our membership over the past few months with valuable information regarding legislative and funding issues. Through your support FADCP can pursue initiatives that help strengthen and enhance Florida's drug court system.

Please join me in welcoming our directors for 2008-2009, who are listed on the following page. It is exciting to see new faces join the Board. They bring with them a wealth of experience and fresh enthusiasm. Congratulations to Judge Pollack, who I know will provide outstanding leadership and direction as your new Chair. I would like to recognize and thank outgoing Board members Linda Burd and Jim Hornsby for their hard work and dedication.

I am honored to know each and every one of you. Through your hard work and perseverance, we are able to help people change their lives and become productive citizens again. Keep up the good work! You do make a difference!

Congratulations!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
2008-2009 FADCP Board of Directors

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*Ex-Officio Directors

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DRUG COURT FOUNDER JANET RENO JOINS BROWARD'S 58TH DRUG COURT GRADUATION *By Judge Melanie May*

The holidays started early for Broward's Drug Court Graduates. December 4, 2007, marked the 58th Drug Court Graduation for the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit, and a special guest was in the house. Former Attorney General Janet Reno, one of the creators of the Miami-Dade Drug Court attended the graduation to provide words of wisdom and encouragement to the graduates. Judge Mark Speiser led the festivities as emcee.

It's hard to believe that almost twenty years ago, Janet Reno and others came up with the problem-solving concept we all now know as Drug Court. Just shy of that twenty-year anniversary, Ms. Reno graciously accepted the invitation of Judge Marcia Beach to join the drug court team and graduates in celebration.

True to her nature, Ms. Reno, spoke from her heart and shared memories of her childhood with the graduates. Without a note, but with a wealth of experience, her usual self-confidence, and the spirit of hope and encouragement, she delivered a powerful, poignant message to the graduates. Everyone has the ability to change. Given the proper tools, she assured each graduate the future of a happy and productive life.

She joined Judge Marcia Beach and Gisele Pollack to hand out certificates and personally congratulate the graduates. It was indeed a great evening!



Judge Marcia Beach and Former Attorney General Janet Reno



Former Attorney General Janet Reno, Judge Marcia Beach, and Judge Melanie May

Santa Rosa County Juvenile Drug Court:
A Serious Approach To An Intense Problem
By Frederick V. Longmire, Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator

Drug Courts are continuously evolving and forever improving. Yet those of us in the trenches know everyday brings new problems, new lives, and new challenges. Working with a population of individuals who are familiar with lying, breaking the law, and getting their way often times proves arduous and disheartening. It is for these reasons that success stories bring us hope. Our juvenile drug court program focuses not only on reducing substance use, but also increasing school performance, reducing recidivism, increasing family communication, and increasing community involvement.

When I think of success for our program, one youth in particular comes to mind. He started our Juvenile Drug Court in April 2006 with a long drug and alcohol history. His two brothers, along with both his parents also had criminal histories. He could not keep a job and his chances of graduating high school dwindled each day. He joined Drug Court figuring he would get his charges dismissed and it would be the easy way out. Throughout the program he was shocked when court personnel, probation officers, and sheriff deputies performed random home visits, random urinalysis, and random curfew checks. He was astonished when the Court ordered his older brother out of the home for drug use, and he was baffled when his mother was drug tested.

Yet after added community service hours, multiple detention stays, and many other trials he finally decided to give Drug Court a real shot. By May 2007, he was graduating high school, working, and even role modeling for his entire family. Prior to completing Drug Court, he set up a presentation in which he, his younger brother, who was also on probation, and other Drug Court youth went and spoke to Teen Court juveniles in an attempt to help prevent them from any further law violations.

On October 2, 2007, he graduated Drug Court, not only drug free, but also a high school graduate, a mentor, and a better role model for his older brother and his younger brother. He has since moved to Missouri and remains in contact. On January 26, 2008, he called to thank the Santa Rosa County Juvenile Drug Court Team for pushing him and his family to do better. He was grateful for our continued persistence. Because he did so well in school it is possible he may be able to attend college for free.

Working with Drug Courts may not always be the easiest job, but when having a bad day, or wondering if the cycle ever ends, or if we are really making a difference, take solace in knowing you are.

MISDEMEANOR DRUG COURT---FINDING NEW WAYS TO IMPROVE ON SUCCESS

By Judge Gisele Pollack, County Court Judge, Broward County, 17th Judicial Circuit

In preparation for our 23rd Misdemeanor Drug Court Graduation it's hard to believe the time has passed so quickly. Our newsletter of February 2006 announced the commencement of our court in September of 2005. The program consisted of a little over one hundred (100) participants in December 2005. The number has increased to date to well over five hundred (500). Graduations have been held monthly with 918 participants have graduating, including the upcoming graduation.

The Misdemeanor Drug Court Program (MDCP) has proven itself as a successful intervention against not only rearrest in general, but felony rearrest in particular. A comparison of six (6) months of graduates, July through December 2006, to six (6) months of those who declined the program July through December 2006, one year later, concluded that felony rearrest for graduates was cut in half compared to the group who declined the program.

A comparison of our first graduating class of March 2006 to a group who declined entering the program in February of 2006, one year later, resulted in a recidivism rate of 12% for graduates versus a recidivism rate of 51% for those who declined the program. Of particular significance, the 12% factor included 3 misdemeanor arrests, while the 51% factor included 10 felony arrests. The graduates in this comparison group did not have any felony rearrests.

We have been pleased with these statistics, but also looked for ways to improve our program. Thanks to the hard work and expertise of our team partners, the Broward Sheriff's Office, Guy A. Wheeler Group (G.A.W.G.), Nova Southeastern University, The Starting Place, Inc., and the United Way of Broward County Commission on Substance, evidence-based practices were developed to better address our particular population, consisting mainly of young adult offenders. All program components have been modified toward this goal.

The Broward Sheriff's Office Day Reporting and Reentry Division managed by David Scharf, has been the community supervision and case management partner of the court since inception. In the summer of 2007, this Division applied for and was awarded a Byrne/JAG grant for the expansion of supervision and case management services in the MDCP. These funds were earmarked for more intensive community supervision and services to address an 18-25 young adult population fitting specific criteria considered to be at heightened risk of reoffending. These two specialized case managers have nearly filled their quota of 60 participants each.

Our screening process has been replaced with a standards-based full biopsychosocial assessment, which is performed by licensed mental health professionals at either JCAHO or CARF accredited facilities. Participants are now referred to best evidenced-based substance abuse awareness and intervention counseling in JCAHO or CARF accredited treatment modalities. Psycho-educational groups are also included or substituted for those who necessitate more lifestyle counseling, than substance abuse intervention.

Our 12-hour education piece has become more specialized as well. Taught by Dr. Guy A. Wheeler, MSW, CAP, CCJAP, the LEG course, Lifestyle Education Group, blends evidence-based substance abuse information with criminal justice knowledge to teach MDCP members the tools to change their faulty thinking and dysfunctional behavior.

The MDCP is fortunate to have partnered with Nova Southeastern University's Department of Family Therapy under Dr. Tommie Boyd, Chair, and Gary M. Forrest, Ph. D. Student, to assist in better understanding the relationships between the services being offered and results we are achieving. Our desire as a drug court team is to continuously assess and improve the program adopting an action-oriented research approach to our model. Using this approach we will be better able to articulate an understanding of the current program, take deliberate action steps to improve upon it, and measure these outcomes.

Submitted by Sheree Beau-Wells, Prevention Director, 20th Judicial Circuit

“I Never Realized What I was Missing”

My name is Shannon, I am a 21 year old single mother of two and a member of **Family Drug Court**; I am also an addict.

Because of my drug use I have had my kids taken away from me by DCF twice. The first time was in January 2006 and I went through regular dependency court. I got my kids back six months later and I started to use again. Six months after that I tested positive and my kids got taken *again*, right when my case was getting ready to close. I was so angry, I hated DCF, but they told me that my last resort to get my kids back would be **Family Drug Court**, so without hesitation, I said yes.

At the time, January 2007, it was exactly one year after the first time they were removed and I didn't really believe that I had a drug problem. My plan was to pretend the whole time and tell them what they wanted to hear to get my kids back. When I went to my first court appearance the girls in **Family Drug Court** were having a meeting that I had to go to, I had no clue what it was and I thought it was stupid; it was an AA meeting.

From January until June I really struggled, my plan to pretend was not working. The team was smarter than that. Because I couldn't do my drug of choice (cocaine) I was drinking a lot, not realizing that I was starting to turn into an alcoholic. I thought I was getting away with everything until I started getting caught. I even went to jail twice. At one point, I was ready to sign over my rights to my children and just give up. What was wrong with me? Why did I keep messing up? I finally had my last relapse in June. I had enough and wanted to change my life.

What **Family Drug Court** did next saved my life; they put me into a 28 day program. After that I moved into the halfway house and now I am getting an apartment on the campus. I learned in the 28 day program that I have a disease of addiction, and I know that without **Family Drug Court** I would be doing drugs for the rest of my life. My children would suffer because their mommy couldn't stop doing drugs.

I've been clean for 5 months now and that may not sound like much but I've had to go through a lot of obstacles to get where I am today. I've received more blessings in the past 5 months than I've ever received in my whole life. And **Family Drug Court** is right by my side.

If you want a good successful future for you and your children, **Family Drug Court** will show you how you can have that. They guide you, give you resources, help you in any way they can and with all of that you have a much better chance of getting and staying off drugs.

I came from nothing, living in the hood, no job, no car, no life... just drugs and doing what I thought life was all about never realizing what I was missing. Now I have a car, I have a good job and I'm about to get an apartment. But the best thing I've gotten from **Family Drug Court** is that I finally love me and my desire to use drugs, for the most part, is gone.

So if you really love your children, and you really want a better life for you and them; if you really want to get off drugs and be happy, please join our way of life and become a part of **Family Drug Court**, they turn dreams into reality.

Juvenile Drug Court Celebrates 10 Years
Second Judicial Circuit

Submitted by Martha Sheetz, Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator, Disc Village, Inc.

CONGRATULATIONS!

In June of 1995 a Juvenile Drug Court Planning Committee was established in the Second Judicial Circuit to assess the feasibility and need for a Juvenile Drug Court Program as an alternative to traditional case processing. After much research and many meetings, it was determined that in order to meet the growing needs of the youth in our community such a program would meet those needs. A partnership was formed between DISC Village, Inc., the State Attorney's Office, Public Defender and the Department of Juvenile Justice to provide services and treatment for youth and their families. The Juvenile Drug Court Program was formed to provide substance abuse treatment for youths who have been arrested and present with substance abuse issues.

In August 1997, the first three youth were enrolled into the Leon County Juvenile Drug Court Program. By December, the number had grown to 15 and the program had its first graduate. Within the first few months of operations the program expanded from non-judicial diversion to including youth also on probation.

As the program has progressed changes have been made to provide better treatment for our youth and their families. The curriculum has been expanded and updated, staff has been added and the program enhanced from four to five months. In the beginning of 2003 the Juvenile Drug Court partners met and decided to meet the needs of our youth in Wakulla and Gadsden County. In the spring of 2003, Juvenile Drug Court was established in both of these counties. As of today, all three programs have served an estimated 700 youths and graduated approximately 425.

In 2006, the Legislature has provided help with Drug Courts statewide by passing the *Robert J. Koch Drug Court Bill*. It was signed into law by the then Governor Jeb Bush on June 5, 2006. This bill has established the protocol for the courts to identify participants for programs (adult and juvenile), established authority for the court to impose sanctions of secure detention for program non-compliance, provides authority for the State to contract community substance abuse treatment providers and authorizes the establishment of an advisory committee in each judicial circuit, to list some of the high points of the bill.

The Juvenile Drug Court Program and its partners is committed to helping our youth to make positive lasting changes to their lives and has a major impact on the structure of their family's lives as well. It all culminates in seeing that smile on a graduate's face when they come forward to stand before the Judge. Knowing how hard they have worked to make it to this point in their life, then the judge asks everyone to join together to congratulate "our graduate" in completing this program and the court room burst with applause, it couldn't get better than that!

“Hope and Success--Family Dependency Treatment Court”
By Amy Philbrick, Drug Court Specialist, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

It's a typical day in the courthouse. The corridors are full of people yelling, crying, pacing, and sitting stone faced waiting for their case to heard in the dependency division. As the cases are called and the lawyers are wrapping up their statements the judge takes this time to inform the parents of this pilot program we have started called the Family Dependency Treatment Court. He explains how it works, what is done and what the parent can expect if he or she chooses to become involved in this program. What is barely overheard next, the parents and their attorneys whispering about what they should do. The judge encourages the attorney and the parent to think about it and if there are any questions they can feel free to call me. That was back in March of 2005.

Today the program is no longer voluntary; the dependency judges are now able to order the parents into treatment court after the disposition. Those early days of our treatment court were a learning experience for all of us. It began quickly but grew slowly. There were times we thought it would remain less than 10 participants and we worried about the future of this program. Not to worry anymore, Judge Espinosa is busy hearing case reviews daily. The program has grown. Relationships with outside agencies and service providers were established and built upon. A sense of trust was overshadowing the thoughts and feelings of those earlier skeptics. People in our community were starting to believe drug courts worked and started paying attention. This certainly did not mean our work was close to done.

Our treatment court was started with absolutely no funds for treatment. Those agencies in Hillsborough (and sometimes outside of the county) were called upon to help our parents in any way they could. There were 3 agencies that stepped up to the plate without any hesitation at all and the program started taking on more willing agencies to become involved in our treatment court. We had the judge, the treatment court team, the treatment agencies and even some of the child welfare agencies paying attention to what we were doing. Today those same treatment agencies are taking advantage of any funding they can obtain and are truly active participants in our treatment court. If you work it, it works!

I was moved to share an experience I had on April 2, 2008. There was a motion hearing scheduled by the state to terminate protective services on one of our early treatment court participants and eventual graduate. She began drug court September 2005 (remember this was when it was voluntary). Of course when she began this process she was willing to do whatever necessary to have her infant returned to her (sound familiar). As with many addicts, the further away from the crisis they get, the easier it is to lose track of what's important, why you're involved in the court and why you are in treatment. So, she began to make some unhealthy decisions on her own, heard what she wanted to hear and failed to see the seriousness of the situation. This, like many of our cases, this was not just a case with drug issues, it had numerous others that all needed to be addressed before we could even consider unsupervised visitation. There were times I am sure she felt she would never be finished with us.

As hard as she fought us, we fought back and continued to hold her accountable. She eventually successfully completed treatment, got married and had a healthy, drug-free baby girl. She was compliant with her case plan and was reunified with her daughter approximately 7 months ago. Today I proudly sat at the table with her, holding her 11 month old daughter and listened as the judge reviewed her case and ultimately praised her for all her hard work and terminated supervision.

This mother is only one of the successful graduates of our treatment court. There have been many. They don't always finish treatment their first go around. They don't always do the things they promised to do. They hardly ever make the twelve month mark to permanency. They don't always like us and they don't always dislike us. But, when they share their stories each and everyone includes their gratitude to the court and to Judge Espinosa. We get to meet their children and the family members who just about given up on them. We see how damaged relationships can and have been repaired. We get the opportunity to show off the drug free babies born

to the mothers in our court. We may only be in their lives for a short period of time but their experience with treatment court lives on inside of them forever.

It appears that there may be many people in this state that are unaware of addiction, recovery and the successes of our drug courts. The individuals who graduate from our programs work very hard and deserve our attention and our respect. I have heard many of them say that without the support of drug court they probably would not be alive. I have watched as the mothers and fathers in our Family Dependency Treatment Court have struggled, fought, became successful and were reunited with their children. I have watched the sorrows and the joy. For me, there is nothing better then watching a parent go through their program, watch the light bulb finally light up, reach out to others, learn how to be a better person, a better parent and to be sitting next to them the day Judge Espinosa reunites them with there children.

I hope we can continue to be a guiding force in these parents and children's lives.



2008 Florida Drug Court Training Conference

Due to the current budget situation, the next statewide drug court training will be held on September 4, 2008 from 1:00 pm-5:00 pm as a distance learning session. The FADCP Training Committee discussed having Dr. Andrew Osborne present how to structure sanctions and incentives in a cultural proficient way to meet the diverse needs of clients. As many of you know, Dr. Osborne will conduct a free two-day training session on cultural proficiency for five drug court teams in Florida. The site of the training has not been decided. Dr. Osborne can tailor the distance learning presentation to focus on the outcomes from the two-day training to better guide Florida drug court programs in embracing and understanding cultural proficiency and program deficiencies. Dr. Osborne may present the distance learning session from the host site of the two-day training.

“Statewide Drug Court Graduation

The Statewide Drug Court Graduation was hosted by the 18th Circuit on May 15, 2008 who we generously thank for coordinating. Thank you to all of our drug court programs who participated in this worthwhile event.

“National Drug Court Month Celebration” Who’s Got The Best Drug Court Motto?

Unfortunately, we were unable to produce medallions for the drug court graduation celebration and National Drug Court Month. We are in the process of pricing medallions to be distributed to our programs. The winner of the “motto” contest is none other than our statewide drug court coordinator who fiercely works on our behalf...Jennifer Grandal. She will receive a free FADCP membership for 2008-2009.

The Winning “Motto”
“Drug Court Works” with the Serenity Prayer on the reverse.

Future FADCP Newsletters

Thank you to all our programs that contributed to our newsletter this edition. We have held off distributing the newsletter until the legislative process was concluded and a final decision was made on the training conference. This newsletter is far more interesting with all of the segments provided by our programs.