

Superior Court of California County of Orange



Collaborative Courts 2010 Annual Report

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Introduction

Collaborative court programs are specialized court tracks that combine judicial supervision with rigorously monitored rehabilitation services. Their focus is on problem-solving — accomplished by the integration of treatment and social services, a team approach to decision-making, strict oversight and accountability, and a proactive role for the judicial officer that involves frequent, direct interaction with the defendants. Collaborative courts have been shown to increase public safety and to save money by stopping the revolving door of incarceration and re-arrest for many offenders. They also provide profound human and social benefits.

The Orange County Collaborative Courts, which began in 1995 with one Drug Court at the Central Justice Center, have expanded to embrace a wide variety of court tracks at five Justice Centers. In the pages that follow, the accomplishments during 2010 of Orange County's nationally recognized Collaborative Courts are recounted. The substantial monetary and social benefits that have resulted from these programs are a tribute to the unwavering support of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, and to the commitment and hard work of the staff from the partnering agencies that comprise the Collaborative Courts.



"Seven years ago, I grimly stood in the doorway of my courtroom waiting to preside over my first Drug Court. I knew very little about Drug Court other than it involved a "collaborative" approach to processing drug cases and, it seemed to me, focused more on coddling than consequences.

The room became silent as I prepared to enter. Grumpily, I looked into the audience. Time to bring some order to their disorderly lives, I thought. Before stepping forward, I glanced into the crowd expecting the usual sights: nervous fidgeting, sweaty faces, bored fatigue, and phony respect. I expected impatient silence and tired resignation. I expected surly disinterest and defiant stares. Instead, I saw something unexpected: I saw eyes filled with hope.

As I looked into the expectant faces of the Drug Court participants, I felt their hope for understanding, their hope for patience, their hope for compassion and their hope for a new beginning. The reality of their hope was startling and quite disturbing. I was the wrong judge in the right place. My expectations, my point of view based on years processing criminal cases changed in that moment. I was being forced into a new arena, challenged to re-define the purpose of a courtroom, pushed to change course. I turned abruptly, returned to my chambers and closed the door.

I sat in my leather chair and considered the feelings pouring over me. I was fully prepared to be a critic. I was ready, willing and able to mete out punishment. I was totally unprepared to dispense hope."

Hon. Matthew Anderson (2007)
Supervising Judge of Harbor Justice Center

CHAPTER 1

Drug Court

Located at four justice centers, the adult Drug Court program works with seriously addicted offenders to help them achieve sobriety and rebuild their lives. The program is a collaboration between the Court, the Probation Department, the Health Care Agency, the offices of the Public Defender and the District Attorney, the Sheriff's Department, and other local law enforcement agencies.

Drug Court is a four-phase voluntary program which includes intensive probation supervision, individual and group counseling, regular court appearances, frequent and random drug and alcohol testing, and residential treatment or residence in a "sober living" facility as necessary. Participants are assisted with accessing ancillary services such as educational counseling, vocational rehabilitation, employment skills training, job searches, medical and dental treatment, government benefits, housing, and child care.

Defendants admitted into the Drug Court program work with their Treatment Care Coordinator and Probation Officer to develop and follow a life plan, remain clean and sober, and have consistent attendance at all court hearings, probation meetings and counseling appointments. In order to complete the program, they must also obtain suitable housing, complete their education by obtaining a high school diploma or GED, and find stable employment. Team members oversee the progress of the participants and, at the regular team meetings, discuss areas of concern and make recommendations to the judicial officer. During their appearances in court, participants are rewarded with incentives for program compliance or given sanctions for non-compliance. Phase advancements and graduations include written self-evaluations by the participants, which are read aloud in court. At these times, the people in the audience are able to understand clearly the dramatic life changes the participants are undergoing.

Program continuity is ensured by the Drug Court Oversight Committee, which meets regularly to set policy. Operational guidelines are provided by a Memorandum of Understanding that is signed by all participating agencies, as well as by a Standards Manual that promotes uniformity among the Drug Court programs at the different sites.

The first Orange County Superior Court Drug Court program began in March 1995 at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana. Over the next several years, as its social and economic successes became clear, the program expanded to the other justice centers in the County – to the Harbor Justice Center in Laguna Niguel in January 1997, to the North Justice Center in Fullerton in January 1999, to the West Justice Center in Westminster in January 2000, and to the Harbor Justice Center in Newport Beach in July 2000. In 2009, following the closure of the courthouse in Laguna Niguel, the Drug Court program there was moved to the Harbor Justice Center in Newport Beach; and, in 2010, it was merged with that Drug Court program.

Funding for Drug Court comes from several sources. The Orange County Board of Supervisors approves annual budget allocations for the Probation Department, Health Care Agency, and the offices of the District Attorney and the Public Defender, all of which allocate personnel who are essential to the success of the program. The State of California provides annual funding under the Drug Court Partnership Act of 1998 and the Comprehensive Drug Court Implementation Act of 1999, both of which are offered through a partnership between the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs and the Judicial Council of California.

Drug Court, continued

Additional funds for treatment and other participant services come from grant awards. The California Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) provides annual grant funding which is allocated to residential treatment, drug and alcohol testing, bus passes for participant transportation to appointments and court appearances, participant incentives, and training for Drug Court team members. During fiscal year 2009-2010, \$41,320 was received from the AOC. An additional grant was received from the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the amount of \$200,000 to enhance services for female abusers of methamphetamine. This grant provides funding to cover the costs of substance abuse therapists, residential treatment, and drug and alcohol testing.

At the start of 2010, there were 460 participants in the Drug Court program countywide. During the year, 464 defendants were evaluated for admission, 215 of whom were admitted into the program. A total of **127** program participants successfully graduated during the year, and 8 participants were transferred to another treatment Court program which better suited their needs. A total of 167 participants were terminated from the program, either at their own request or because of program non-compliance. As of December 31, 2010, **373** participants were active in the program.

Since inception, the Orange County Drug Court program has admitted 3,951 participants and, as of December 31, 2010, **1,664** participants had graduated from the program. As set forth in more detail on the following pages, the recidivism rate for Drug Court graduates, three years after graduation, is **31%** for any crime, compared with a recidivism rate for comparable non-participants of **74%**. In 2010, **9** drug-free babies were born to program participants, bringing the program total since inception to **121** babies born free of addiction.



Judicial Officers Presiding Over Drug Court

Central Justice Center *

1995 - 1998	Hon. David McEachen
1998 - 1999	Hon. David Velasquez
2000	Hon. Ronald Kreber
2001	Hon. David Thompson
2002 - 2010	Hon. Wendy Lindley

Harbor Justice Center

Laguna Niguel **

1996—2001	Hon. Wendy Lindley
1998—1999	Hon. Ronald Kreber
1999—2003	Hon. Carlton Biggs
2000—2001	Hon. Gail Andler
2000—2008	Hon. Matthew Anderson

Newport Beach

2000—2003	Hon. Geoffrey Glass
2003—2007	Hon. Jamaa Moberly
2007—2009	Hon. James Odriozola
2009 **	Hon. James Odriozola / Hon. Matthew Anderson
2010	Hon. Matthew Anderson

North Justice Center

1999—2001	Hon. Erick Larsh
2000	Hon. Gerald Johnston
2001	Hon. Allen Stone
2001—2010	Hon. Ronald Klar

West Justice Center

2000—2001	Hon. David Thompson
2001	Hon. Michael McCartin
2001—2002	Hon. Mary Fingal Schulte
2002—2004	Hon. Peter Polos
2004—2006	Hon. Glenda Sanders
2006—2007	Hon. Linda Marks
2007—2010	Hon. Michael Cassidy

* Central Justice Center program moved to the Community Court beginning in 2009

** Laguna Niguel program moved to Harbor Justice Center / Newport Beach in 2009, and unified into one court in 2010.

Drug Court - Results and Benefits

Reduction in Recidivism

An important measure of the success of Drug Court is the reduction in the rate of recidivism, or re-arrest, for graduates of the program. In determining the rate of recidivism, the arrest records of Drug Court graduates are reviewed three years after their graduation, and any arrest during that time is noted. For graduates of the Orange County Drug Court program, **the recidivism rate for any crime, is 31%.**

In contrast, as part of a 2007 study of the Drug Court program at the West Justice Center*, the arrest records of a group of 1,685 defendants who were eligible for but did not participate in Drug Court programs in California were reviewed three years after the date of their program eligibility. **This comparison group had a recidivism rate of 74% for any crime.**

Cost Savings

The alternative sentence of Drug Court saves the County of Orange and the State of California the costs of housing the defendants in jail or prison. To ensure accuracy, cost savings calculations are made only for program graduates, and any incarceration days that result from in-program sanctions are subtracted from the total number of jail or prison days that were stayed as a result of the alternative sentence. The daily cost of a jail bed day is set at \$116.21, which is an average of the 2010 costs at the five Orange County jail facilities. The cost of a prison bed day is set at \$134.25, based on an annual per prisoner cost of \$49,000.00 (CDCR Facts and Figures, Q4 2008).

In 2010, the Drug Court program **saved 24,853 jail bed days, for a cost savings of \$2,888,167** and **saved 10,297 prison bed days, for a cost savings of \$1,382,372.** Since inception, the program has saved approximately **\$19,501,697** in jail bed costs and **\$11,157,742** in prison bed costs.

The Administrative Office of the Courts, in a cost study that tracked and valued the time of each person involved with selected Drug Court programs in California, including those at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana and Harbor Justice Center in Laguna Niguel**, found that both programs yielded a net cost savings compared with processing the offenders through "business as usual", and noted that **every dollar invested in the Drug Court program at the Central Justice Center resulted in a net benefit of \$7.30.**

* California Drug Courts: Costs and Benefits; Phase II, Piloting the DC-SET, Superior Court of Orange County, West Orange Drug Court Site-Specific Report; Shannon M. Carey, Ph.D., et al., October 2007

** California Drug Courts: A Methodology for Determining Costs and Benefits; Phase II: Testing the Methodology, Final Report submitted to the Administrative Office of the Courts; Shannon M. Carey, Ph.D., et al., April 2005, at p.31. The full report is available at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/documents/drug_court_phase_II.pdf.

Drug Court - Results and Benefits, continued

DRUG COURT						
Recidivism Data for Participants, Three Years After Graduation						
Justice Center	Central	Harbor	North	West	total	percent
total graduates	494	357	270	145	1266	100%
re-arrested, any charge	162	108	83	35	388	31%
re-arrested, any charge	33%	30%	31%	24%		31%
convicted, any charge	150	99	74	38	361	29%
re-arrested, substance abuse	130	76	54	26	286	23%
re-arrested, substance abuse	26%	21%	20%	18%		23%

Drug-Free Babies

Drug-addicted babies are a healthcare nightmare. The costs of their initial hospitalization and other specialized care can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars, and there are likely to be significant, ongoing medical and socialization challenges as they grow up. Special perinatal training and program management are offered to Drug Court participants to ensure that pregnant mothers deliver drug-free babies — another important measure of program’s success, both in human and in economic terms.

During 2010, **9 drug-free babies** were born to female participants in the Drug Court programs, bringing the total of drug-free babies born since the inception of the program to **121**.

Other Program Benefits

Community service hours are an essential component of the Drug Court program. Community service is utilized as both a sanction when participants are not in compliance with the program and as a productive use of time for those participants who are not working or going to school. During 2010, participants performed more than **2,009 hours of community service**.

During 2010, **139** Drug Court participants were graduated from the program “clean and sober”, and each was also employed or pursuing educational goals. Changing the lives of drug-addicted criminals who are often jobless and homeless into responsible, tax-paying members of society has obvious social and economic benefits, challenging though these may be to quantify.

Similarly clear but difficult to value with precision are the future costs to crime victims which are avoided, and the enhancements to the quality of life of the community that are gained as a result of transforming the lives of drug-addicted offenders.

DRUG COURT					
2010 Program Totals					
Justice Center	Central (capacity 120)	Harbor (capacity 100)	North (capacity 100)	West (capacity 50)	total
active as of 12/31/2009	170	129	117	44	460
admitted during 2010	62	52	56	45	215
transferred from another Drug Court program	0	5	0	0	5
terminated - - window period	16	18	22	9	65
terminated - - extenuating circumstances	0	1	2	0	3
terminated - - program non-compliance	41	25	24	9	99
transferred to another Drug Court program	0	5	0	0	5
transferred to an alternative program	7	0	1	0	8
graduated	42	37	31	17	127
active as of 12/31/2010	126	100	93	54	373
drug-free babies born during program	7	2	0	0	9
jail bed days saved	4,615	9,477	6,701	4,060	24,853
prison bed days saved	6,320	477	2,540	960	10,297
defendants evaluated for admission into program	85	169	124	86	464



"I think the other thing that makes a difference is our collaborative courts programs - Veterans Court, Drug Court - where people are diverted into programs. If you don't stick with the program, you go to jail. Most comply, and I think that's keeping them out of jail."

Sheriff Sandra Hutchens
as quoted in the LA Times, 11-15-2010

DRUG COURT - Demographic Information							
2010 Admissions							
Justice Center		Central	Harbor	North	West	total	percent
admissions		62	52	56	45	215	100%
gender	female	25	23	29	22	99	46%
	male	37	29	27	23	116	54%
age	18 - 21 years	4	12	5	10	31	14%
	22 - 30 years	30	24	30	16	100	47%
	31 - 40 years	13	11	10	7	41	19%
	41 - 50 years	13	4	10	8	35	16%
	51 - 60 years	2	1	1	4	8	4%
	over 60 years	0	0	0	0	0	0%
race	African American	2	1	4	0	7	3%
	Asian	2	1	1	1	5	2%
	Caucasian	36	45	34	31	146	68%
	Hispanic	20	5	17	12	54	25%
	Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	other	2	0	0	1	3	1%
education	needs HS / GED	22	6	24	14	66	31%
	has HS / GED	31	25	27	16	99	46%
	some college	7	19	5	13	44	20%
	college degree	2	2	0	2	6	3%
marital status	married	11	5	7	2	25	12%
	separated	3	1	8	3	15	7%
	divorced	3	9	7	10	29	13%
	single	45	37	32	29	143	67%
	widowed	0	0	2	1	3	1%
parental status	with minor children	21	6	29	14	70	33%
employment	employed	15	23	14	17	69	32%
	unemployed	47	29	42	28	146	68%
drug of choice	alcohol	0	2	1	0	3	1%
	cocaine	4	3	0	1	8	4%
	heroin	14	16	7	11	48	22%
	marijuana	5	3	6	2	16	7%
	methamphetamine	36	20	39	31	126	58%
	opiates	1	6	0	0	7	3%
	prescription drugs	1	2	2	0	5	2%
	other	1	0	1	0	2	1%

DRUG COURT - Demographic Information							
2010 Terminations							
Justice Center		Central	Harbor	North	West	total	percent
terminations		41	25	24	9	99	100%
gender	female	14	5	7	5	31	31%
	male	27	20	17	4	68	69%
age	18 - 21 years	7	9	6	1	23	23%
	22 - 30 years	22	10	8	3	43	43%
	31 - 40 years	4	2	4	2	12	12%
	41 - 50 years	8	3	4	3	18	18%
	51 - 60 years	0	1	1	0	2	2%
	over 60 years	0	0	1	0	1	1%
race	African American	2	0	1	0	3	3%
	Asian	1	0	0	1	2	2%
	Caucasian	20	21	14	6	61	62%
	Hispanic	18	2	9	2	31	31%
	Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	other	0	2	0	0	2	2%
education	needs HS / GED	18	4	12	3	37	37%
	has HS / GED	13	10	11	2	36	36%
	some college	9	9	1	2	21	21%
	college degree	1	2	0	2	5	5%
marital status	married	5	2	2	1	10	10%
	separated	2	0	2	0	4	4%
	divorced	2	2	5	2	11	11%
	single	32	21	15	6	74	75%
parental status	with minor children	13	6	8	2	29	29%
employment	employed	16	8	9	4	37	37%
	unemployed	25	17	15	5	62	62%
drug of choice	alcohol	2	0	0	0	2	2%
	cocaine	1	3	0	1	5	5%
	heroin	13	10	3	1	27	27%
	marijuana	4	1	2	1	8	8%
	methamphetamine	20	6	19	6	51	51%
	opiates	0	3	0	0	3	3%
	prescription drugs	0	2	0	0	2	2%
	ecstasy	1	0	0	0	1	1%

DRUG COURT - Demographic Information							
2010 Graduations							
Justice Center		Central	Harbor	North	West	total	percent
graduations		42	37	31	17	127	100%
gender	female	19	11	15	7	52	41%
	male	23	26	16	10	75	59%
age	18 - 21 years	4	4	2	1	11	9%
	22 - 30 years	16	15	16	5	52	41%
	31 - 40 years	16	10	6	7	39	31%
	41 - 50 years	6	5	6	4	21	17%
	51 - 60 years	0	3	1	0	4	3%
	over 60 years	0	0	0	0	0	0%
race	African American	1	0	0	0	1	1%
	Asian	5	1	1	1	8	6%
	Caucasian	29	30	20	12	91	72%
	Hispanic	6	4	7	4	21	17%
	Native American	0	0	1	0	1	1%
	other	1	2	2	0	5	4%
education	needs HS / GED	11	10	7	7	35	28%
	has HS / GED	16	15	21	6	58	46%
	some college	11	10	1	3	25	20%
	college degree	4	2	2	1	9	7%
marital status	married	5	3	4	4	16	13%
	separated	1	1	1	0	3	2%
	divorced	8	8	6	2	24	19%
	single	28	24	20	11	83	65%
	widowed	0	1	0	0	1	1%
parental status	with minor children	18	15	18	9	60	47%
employment	employed	21	19	9	14	63	50%
	unemployed	21	18	22	3	64	50%
drug of choice	alcohol	1	3	0	0	4	3%
	cocaine	3	4	3	1	11	9%
	heroin	3	0	0	1	4	3%
	marijuana	3	4	1	1	9	7%
	methamphetamine	32	24	26	14	96	76%
	opiates	0	1	0	0	1	1%
	prescription drugs	0	1	1	0	2	2%

Community Partnerships Assist Drug Court Participants

During 2010, participants in Drug Court and other treatment court programs were assisted in their efforts to reclaim their lives through a number of beneficial arrangements between the Collaborative Courts and partners in the community.

The Community Courts Foundation, a non-profit agency that was founded by Executive Director, Kathy Burnham, provides vital support to Collaborative Courts participants — including help in accessing restorative dental care, emergency medical care, and assistance with educational and personal needs. Under the inspired and tireless leadership of Ms. Burnham, the Foundation obtains grant funding and donations to improve the lives of those who have found themselves involved in the criminal justice system because of their chronic substance abuse, mental illness, or homelessness.

Each year, the Foundation hosts seminars for both the juvenile and adult offenders, providing education in areas such as financial literacy, employment skills, job searches, and self-improvement. In addition, the Foundation arranges site visits to local cultural events such as the Getty Museum, to stage productions, and to sporting events. The Foundation also provides incentives for program participants who are achieving their program goals, and provides the Juvenile Court program participants with access to safe activities.

On October 30th, community support for the Collaborative Courts was on display at *Autumn in Venice*, a gala event presented by the Foundation at the Surf and Sand Hotel in Laguna Beach. The evening's festivities, which included a reception, dinner, entertainment and a silent auction, raised more than \$30,000 to benefit the Collaborative Court programs. During 2010, the Foundation also obtained a \$5,000 grant from the Allergan Foundation and a \$4,500 local community grant from the City of Laguna Beach. The Foundation will be hosting a golf tournament on March 31, 2011. For more information, please phone (949) 494-6369.

Educational partnerships are also important to the success of Drug Court. Scholarships and assistance with books and supplies are provided by Cypress College, Santa Ana College, Golden West College, and Saddleback College. Since 2001, the "Positive Life Attitudes" class at Santa Ana Community College — a popular eight-week class that encourages participants to view their lives in a positive manner and establish attainable goals — has been a graduation requirement of the Central Justice Center Drug Court.

Other community partners also provide vital services to participants. Through a partnership with the Coastal County Regional One Stop Center, participants are offered direction and resources in preparing for their GED exams, in planning their continuing education and their career development, and in conducting job searches. The California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation provides job counseling and job search assistance.

For veterans in the programs, VA Healthcare System Long Beach provides medical and mental health treatment, and the Veterans Center provides counseling and other services. The Public Law Center and the Legal Aid Society assist with non-criminal legal matters. The Orange County Rescue Mission and the Mental Health Association of Orange County provide care and support to participants in the mental health courts and the Homeless Outreach Court; and the Salvation Army and providers under contract to Health Care Agency provide shelter for participants who are homeless.

CHAPTER 2 DUI Court

DUI Court targets second- and third-time DUI offenders, with the goal of helping them to achieve sobriety while reducing the dangers that their driving under the influence presents to the community. Based on the Drug Court model, the DUI Court program was designed by a stakeholders committee under the leadership of Hon. Carlton Biggs. Following the receipt of a two-year grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the first DUI Court session was held in October 2004 at the Harbor Justice Center in Newport Beach.

Thereafter, grant awards from the Administrative Office of the Courts and from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, enabled the program to be expanded - first to the North Justice Center in 2006, then to the Central Justice Center in 2008 and to the West Justice Center jurisdiction in 2009. Presently, staff resources to sustain DUI Court are provided by Health Care Agency, the Probation Department, and the offices of the District Attorney and the Public Defender, through annual budget allocations from the Orange County Board of Supervisors, supplemented by Penal Code §23649 alcohol problem assessment fees.

DUI Court is a voluntary four-phase sentencing alternative that is a minimum of twelve months in length. It includes regular court appearances, substance abuse treatment, intensive probation supervision, individual and group counseling, frequent and random drug and alcohol testing, and residential treatment as necessary. Participants are assisted with accessing ancillary services such as educational counseling, vocational rehabilitation, employment skills training, job searches, medical and dental treatment, housing, child care, and family reunification.

In addition to sobriety, the program emphasizes rebuilding family ties, maintaining employment and a stable living environment, and pursuing educational goals. All participants are assisted through partnerships that include the Superior Court, the Probation Department, the Health Care Agency, the offices of the Public Defender and the District Attorney, the Sheriff's Department, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and local law enforcement agencies.

In 2010, a total of 167 defendants were admitted to DUI Court, and **146** participants successfully completed the program. Since its inception in 2004, a total of **643** participants have graduated from DUI Court.



Judicial Officers Presiding Over DUI Court

Harbor Justice Center /NB	2004 - 2010	Hon. Carlton Biggs
North Justice Center	2006 - 2008 2008 - 2010	Hon. Douglas Hatchimonji Hon. Donald Gaffney
Central Justice Center	2008 - 2010	Hon. Wendy Lindley
West Justice Center	2009 - 2010	Hon. Carlton Biggs

DUI Court - Results and Benefits

Reduction in Recidivism

Of the **643** participants who have graduated from DUI Court in the six years from the inception of the program in 2004 through December 31, 2010, only **29** have been re-arrested for a subsequent DUI offense — **a recidivism rate of 4.4%**. The 2009 Annual Report of the California Department of Motor Vehicles, at p. 49, shows that, **by comparison, 17%** of repeat offense drunk drivers who were arrested in 2000 were re-arrested for DUI within five years.

Cost Savings

A significant benefit of the DUI Court program is the savings to the County of the cost of incarcerating the DUI offenders. The average cost to house an inmate at one of the five county jail facilities is \$116.21 per day. In 2010, the DUI Court program **saved 23,364 jail bed days**, resulting in **a cost savings of \$2,715,130**. Since its inception, the DUI Court program has saved **81,699 jail bed days**, for a total savings of **\$8,074,106** in jail bed costs.

Other Program Benefits

In addition to its direct financial benefit, DUI Court produces a tremendous savings in human lives by reforming repeat offense drunk drivers, who are likely eventually to cause death or serious injury to themselves or to innocent victims. The value of these avoided costs are not easily calculated, but are clear nonetheless.

Community service hours are an essential component of DUI Court — both as a graduation requirement and as a sanction when participants are not in compliance with the program. During 2010, participants performed more than **1,217 hours of community service**.

DUI Court participants gave birth to **2 healthy babies** while in the program in 2010 — bringing the total, since the inception of the program, to **5 babies** born free of addiction or fetal alcohol syndrome.



DUI Court in the National Spotlight

During the past year, the DUI Court at the Harbor Justice Center — which had received nationwide recognition through its selection by the National Drug Court Institute as an Academy Court — served as a training site for jurists and administrators from around the country, at which they were able to learn best practices and procedures for the creation of DUI Court programs in their own jurisdictions.

On June 4, 2010, the program was featured in a panel discussion held at the annual conference of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals in Boston, Massachusetts. Hon. Carlton Biggs spoke about the creation and operation of the DUI Court, and highlighted its results and benefits.

DUI COURT					
2010 Program Totals					
Justice Center	Central (Capacity 50)	Harbor (Capacity 100)	North (Capacity 50)	West (Capacity 50)	Countywide total
active as of 12/31/2009	46	110	49	29	234
admitted during 2010	36	77	29	25	167
transferred from another DUI Court program	0	2	0	1	3
terminated - - window period	3	16	7	3	29
terminated - - extenuating circumstances	0	0	0	0	0
terminated - - program non-compliance	2	8	5	2	17
transferred to another DUI Court Program	1	1	1	0	3
transferred to an alternative program	0	0	0	0	0
graduated	30	77	26	13	146
active as of 12/31/2010	46	87	39	37	209
drug-free babies born during program	2	0	0	0	2
jail bed days saved	4,171	10,680	5,546	2,967	23,364
prison bed days saved	0	0	0	0	0
defendants evaluated for admission into program	69	157	75	52	353

"I'd always told myself that being an alcoholic was being the guy on the street corner who was panhandling. Actually I know now that I've been one most of my life — it wasn't until I sat next to a man in group who panhandled that I realized we had a lot in common."

from a participant's 2010 graduation speech

DUI COURT - Demographic Information							
2010 Admissions							
Justice Center		Central	Harbor	North	West	total	percent
admissions		36	77	29	25	167	100%
gender	female	12	29	6	5	52	31%
	male	24	48	23	20	115	69%
age	18 - 21 years	1	1	1	0	3	2%
	22 - 30 years	15	24	13	8	60	36%
	31 - 40 years	13	18	9	10	50	30%
	41 - 50 years	4	27	2	6	39	23%
	51 - 60 years	3	7	3	1	14	8%
	over 60 years	0	0	1	0	1	1%
race	African American	0	1	0	4	5	3%
	Asian	1	0	2	1	4	2%
	Caucasian	19	65	10	12	106	63%
	Hispanic	16	7	16	7	46	28%
	Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	other	0	4	1	1	6	4%
education	needs HS / GED	5	4	1	1	11	7%
	has HS / GED	15	14	19	12	60	36%
	some college	13	33	3	5	54	32%
	college degree	2	23	6	6	37	22%
marital status	single	22	41	18	14	95	57%
	married	6	17	7	6	36	22%
	separated	1	4	3	1	9	5%
	divorced	7	13	1	4	25	15%
	widowed	0	2	0	0	2	1%
parental status	with minor children	14	6	14	9	43	26%
employment	employed	22	48	22	19	111	66%
	unemployed	13	28	7	5	53	32%
	no information	1	1	0	1	3	2%

DUI COURT - Demographic Information							
2010 Terminations							
Justice Center		Central	Harbor	North	West	total	percent
terminations		2	8	5	2	17	100%
gender	female	0	2	1	0	3	18%
	male	2	6	4	2	14	82%
age	18 - 21 years	1	1	1	0	3	18%
	22 - 30 years	0	1	4	1	6	35%
	31 - 40 years	0	2	0	0	2	12%
	41 - 50 years	1	4	0	1	6	35%
	51 - 60 years	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	over 60 years	0	0	0	0	0	0%
race	African American	0	1	0	0	1	6%
	Asian	0	0	1	0	1	6%
	Caucasian	0	7	2	2	11	65%
	Hispanic	1	0	2	0	3	18%
	Native American	1	0	0	0	1	6%
	other	0	0	0	0	0	0%
education	needs HS / GED	1	0	1	0	2	12%
	has HS / GED	1	2	2	2	7	41%
	some college	0	2	0	0	2	12%
	college degree	0	3	2	0	5	29%
marital status	divorced	0	2	0	1	3	18%
	married	1	3	1	0	5	29%
	separated	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	single	1	3	4	1	9	53%
parental status	with minor children	1	3	0	1	5	29%
employment	employed	1	7	3	1	12	71%
	unemployed	1	1	2	1	5	29%

DUI COURT - Demographic Information							
2010 Graduations							
Justice Center		Central	Harbor	North	West	total	percent
graduations		30	77	26	13	146	100%
gender	female	7	22	3	3	35	24%
	male	23	55	23	10	111	76%
age	18 - 21 years	1	3	0	0	4	3%
	22 - 30 years	16	26	11	5	58	40%
	31 - 40 years	7	23	7	2	39	27%
	41 - 50 years	3	18	8	6	35	24%
	51 - 60 years	2	5	0	0	7	5%
	over 60 years	1	2	0	0	3	2%
race	African American	0	0	0	0	0	0%
	Asian	3	2	3	2	10	7%
	Caucasian	14	58	11	8	91	62%
	Hispanic	12	8	11	3	34	23%
	Native American	1	1	0	0	2	1%
	other	0	8	1	0	9	6%
education	needs HS / GED	7	1	2	2	12	8%
	has HS / GED	13	21	18	4	56	38%
	some college	7	33	3	4	47	32%
	college degree	3	19	3	3	28	19%
	no information	0	2	0	0	2	1%
marital status	married	4	9	4	3	20	14%
	separated	0	1	0	1	2	1%
	divorced	1	12	3	2	18	12%
	single	25	52	19	7	103	71%
	widowed	0	2	0	0	2	1%
	no information	0	1	0	0	1	1%
parental status	with minor children	11	16	12	5	44	30%
employment	employed	21	58	21	9	109	75%
	unemployed	9	17	5	4	35	24%
	no information	0	2	0	0	2	1%

Chapter 3 - DUI Outreach

Choices and Consequences

Choices and Consequences — an educational outreach program developed by Hon. Kimberly Menninger which vividly depicts the dangers of drunk and distracted driving — was presented to **more than 2,300 students at seven high schools** in Orange County during 2010. Initial funding for the project was provided in 2008 by the Administrative Office of the Courts through its Real DUI Court in Schools project. This year, during the fall semester, the Superior Court partnered with the Orange County Sheriff's Department to present the program. In October, a grant for the enhancement of the program was received from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Choices and Consequences is presented without cost to schools in a 90-minute campus assembly. Program partners include the Orange County District Attorney's office, which provides a Deputy District Attorney; the Orange County Sheriff's Department, which provides a bailiff; local defense counsel; and the program presenters. The event includes:

- the live sentencing of one or more DUI defendants — preceded by an overview of the case from the prosecutor, and followed by a question and answer session with the defendant;
- an interactive presentation by Judge Menninger on the legal and monetary costs of drinking and distracted driving;
- a presentation by a former DUI offender who lost scholarships and other educational opportunities as a result of his substance abuse;
- interactive discussions about how to avoid making bad, life-altering decisions, led by two youth counselors who have worked with teens exposed to trauma; and
- a film presentation on distracted driving, created by the family of a teenager who died on prom night in an accident caused when the driver reached for a pack of gum.



Hon. Kimberly Menninger speaks to students about drunk and distracted driving

During 2010, presentations were made at Canyon High School in Anaheim, Rossier Park High School in Buena Park, Hebrew Academy in Huntington Beach, Woodbridge High School and Tarbut V' Torah High School in Irvine, Hillview High School in Tustin, and Yorba Linda High School. Since the inception of the program, **22** presentations have been made at local high schools, to more than **9,700** students.

CHAPTER 4 Mental Health Courts

Opportunity Court / Recovery Court

Opportunity Court and Recovery Court, which began as two separate programs, have now evolved to include the same criteria for admission.

Opportunity Court was opened in October 2002 as a voluntary program for non-violent drug offenders who had been diagnosed with chronic and persistent mental illness and who, because of that mental illness, were unable to comply either with the requirements of the Proposition 36 (PC §1210) program or with those of Drug Court. Recovery Court was established in 2006, through a grant awarded to the Orange County Sheriff's Department under the Mentally Ill Offenders Crime Reduction Act (MIOCR), in order to provide voluntary psychiatric services for mentally ill offenders who were in custody at the jail. Funding for the MIOCR program was eliminated as a result of the State's budget crisis.

The programs are based on the Drug Court model, which includes regular court appearances, weekly meetings with a Probation Officer, frequent and random drug and alcohol testing, and the requirement that participants develop a life plan. Residential treatment is available when necessary, funded through a grant awarded by the State to the Orange County Health Care Agency.

Therapeutic treatment includes individual and group counseling sessions, and coordinated substance abuse and psychiatric treatment when possible. Although the partnering County agencies provide staff and resources for the program, as a result of budget cutbacks to Health Care Agency, only 25% of the participants are presently able to be treated by a Health Care Agency therapist. It is hoped that sufficient resources will become available soon to restore the program to its full status as an effective, research-based, treatment alternative to incarceration for mentally ill offenders.

In acknowledgement of the success and leadership of Orange County's mental health courts, the National Center for State Courts selected the programs to develop and pilot standardized, nationwide outcome measures. A final report was distributed in the fall 2010, and can be read at: www.ncsc.org/mhcpm.

At the end of 2010, a total of **67** participants were active in the Opportunity Court and Recovery Court programs.



"I had stopped caring, I wanted everything to go away. I wanted the anxiety and the worry and the constant 'trying to figure it out' to end. I thought I was going to die. ...You have given me the chance to re-build my life."

from a participant's 2010 graduation speech

Mental Health Courts, continued

WIT (“Whatever It Takes”) Court

The WIT (“Whatever It Takes”) Court is a voluntary program for non-violent offenders who have been diagnosed with chronic and persistent mental illness, and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. At the end of 2010, **108** participants were active in the program.

Begun in 2006, WIT Court is funded through the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63). The WIT Court program involves regular court appearances, frequent drug and alcohol testing, meetings with the WIT Court support team, and direct access to specialized services. The team consists of the judicial officer, representatives from the Health Care Agency’s Mental Health Services division, the Probation Department, the offices of the District Attorney and the Public Defender, and the Mental Health Association of Orange County.

The Orange County Health Care Agency has contracted with the Mental Health Association of Orange County to provide a variety of services to the participants in WIT Court, including mental health and psychiatric services, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, residential treatment, family counseling, and peer mentoring. In addition to these services, program participants are also provided with access to medical services, employment counseling, job training and placement, and assistance with obtaining government benefits and housing.



Mental Health Courts						
2010 Admissions by Mental Health Disorder						
	diagnosis	Opportunity Court	Recovery Court	WIT Court	total	percent
admissions		31	14	82	127	100%
	Bi-Polar Disorder	15	5	35	55	43%
	Schizophrenia	5	1	6	12	9%
	Major Depressive Disorder	5	4	8	17	13%
	Schizo affective	4	0	9	13	10%
	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	1	0	0	1	1%
	Mood Disorder NOS	1	3	21	25	20%
	other mental illness	0	1	3	4	3%

Mental Health Courts — Results and Benefits

Reduction in Recidivism

An important measure of the success of the mental health court programs is the reduction in the rate of recidivism, or re-arrest, for graduates of the programs. In determining the rate of recidivism, the arrest records of all program graduates are reviewed each year after their graduation, and any arrest since graduation is noted. As shown in the chart below, the average rate of re-arrest for mental health program graduates for any offense is **26.6%**.

MENTAL HEALTH COURTS					
Recidivism Data for Participants					
	Opportunity Court	Recovery Court	WIT Court	total	percent
total graduates as of 12/31/2010	70	18	36	124	100%
re-arrested, any charge	23	2	8	33	26.6%
% re-arrested, any charge	33%	11%	22%	26.6%	
convicted, any charge	15	1	6	22	18%
re-arrested, substance abuse	11	1	4	16	13%
% re-arrested, substance abuse	16%	6%	11%	13%	

Cost Savings

Mental health court programs provide savings, to both the County and the State, for the costs of housing the defendants in jail or prison. The daily cost of a jail bed day is calculated at \$116.21 — which is an average of the 2010 costs at the five Orange County jail facilities; and the cost of a prison bed day is calculated at \$134.25, based on an annual per prisoner cost of \$49,000.00 (CDCR Facts and Figures, Q4 2008).

The computation for the cost savings is only made for program graduates, and any incarceration days that result from in-program sanctions are subtracted from the total number of jail or prison days that were stayed as a result of the alternative sentence. In 2010, the mental health court programs together **saved 3,950 jail bed days**, resulting in a **cost savings of \$459,030**, and they also **saved 3,550 prison bed days**, which resulted in an **additional cost savings of \$476,588**.

Other Program Benefits

Community service hours are an essential component of the mental health courts. Community service is utilized as both a sanction when participants are not in compliance with the program and as a productive use of time for those participants who are not working or going to school. During 2010, participants performed more than **3,146 hours of community service**.

Mental Health Courts - Demographic Information

2010 Admissions

		Opportunity Court	Recovery Court	WIT Court	total	percent
admissions		31	14	82	127	100%
sex	female	20	10	44	74	58%
	male	11	4	38	53	42%
age	18 - 21 years	1	2	6	9	7%
	22 - 30 years	7	3	23	33	26%
	31 - 40 years	10	3	23	36	28%
	41 - 50 years	10	6	21	37	29%
	51 - 60 years	2	0	8	10	8%
	Over 60 years	1	0	1	2	2%
race	African American	2	0	4	6	5%
	Asian	1	0	1	2	2%
	Caucasian	23	13	58	94	74%
	Hispanic	5	1	16	22	17%
	Native American	0	0	0	0	0%
	other	0	0	3	3	2%
education	needs HS / GED	5	5	16	26	20%
	has HS / GED	12	2	37	51	40%
	some college	10	5	26	41	32%
	college degree	4	2	3	9	7%
marital status	married	4	3	2	9	7%
	separated	3	0	12	15	12%
	divorced	7	5	14	26	20%
	single	16	5	54	75	59%
	widowed	1	1	0	2	2%
parental status	with minor children	11	2	23	36	28%
employment	employed	5	2	1	8	6%
	unemployed	25	12	80	117	92%
drug of choice	alcohol	7	4	12	23	18%
	cocaine	1	1	8	10	8%
	heroin	4	1	18	23	18%
	marijuana	2	2	7	11	9%
	methamphetamine	12	5	34	51	40%
	opiates	0	0	0	0	0%
	prescription drugs	3	1	0	4	3%
	other	1	0	1	2	2%
	no substance abuse	1	0	2	3	2%

Mental Health Courts - Demographic Information						
2010 Terminations						
		Opportunity Court	Recovery Court	WIT Court	total	percent
terminations		12	4	35	51	100%
gender	female	8	3	19	30	59%
	male	4	1	16	21	41%
age	18 - 21 years	0	1	5	6	12%
	22 - 30 years	4	2	14	20	39%
	31 - 40 years	4	1	9	14	27%
	41 - 50 years	2	0	3	5	10%
	51 - 60 years	2	0	4	6	12%
	over 60 years	0	0	0	0	0%
race	African American	1	0	2	3	6%
	Asian	0	0	0	0	0%
	Caucasian	10	3	27	40	78%
	Hispanic	1	1	5	7	14%
	Native American	0	0	0	0	0%
	other	0	0	1	1	2%
education	needs HS / GED	3	1	11	15	29%
	has HS / GED	6	2	13	21	41%
	some college	2	0	10	12	24%
	college degree	1	1	1	3	6%
marital status	married	0	0	1	1	2%
	separated	1	0	5	6	12%
	divorced	3	0	4	7	14%
	single	8	4	25	37	73%
	widowed	0	0	0	0	0%
parental status	with minor children	4	0	8	12	24%
employment	employed	2	1	0	3	6%
	unemployed	10	3	35	48	94%

Mental Health Courts - Demographic Information						
2010 Graduations						
		Opportunity Court	Recovery Court	WIT Court	total	percent
graduations		11	5	20	36	100%
gender	female	6	4	10	20	56%
	male	5	1	10	16	44%
age	18 - 21 years	1	0	1	2	6%
	22 - 30 years	4	2	3	9	25%
	31 - 40 years	3	1	4	8	22%
	41 - 50 years	3	2	6	11	31%
	51 - 60 years	0	0	5	5	14%
	over 60 years	0	0	1	1	3%
race	African American	0	0	2	2	6%
	Asian	2	0	0	2	6%
	Caucasian	7	5	15	27	75%
	Hispanic	2	0	1	3	8%
	Native American	0	0	0	0	0%
	other	0	0	2	2	6%
education	needs HS / GED	2	3	7	12	33%
	has HS / GED	3	0	6	9	25%
	some college	4	0	3	7	19%
	college degree	2	2	4	8	22%
marital status	married	0	2	3	5	14%
	separated	1	0	3	4	11%
	divorced	2	2	3	7	19%
	single	8	1	10	19	53%
	widowed	0	0	1	1	3%
parental status	with minor children	3	3	7	13	36%
employment	employed	3	2	0	5	14%
	unemployed	8	3	20	31	86%



Community Court Featured at International Conference

The Orange County Community Court was featured at an international conference of community courts, *Community Justice 2010*, held on October 19 and 20, in Dallas, Texas. The event, sponsored by the Center for Court Innovation, attracted participants from throughout the world to share ideas and best practices for this fast-growing judicial response to offenses that primarily impact a neighborhood's quality of life.

Attendees at the conference learned about the Orange County's co-location of partnering agencies at the Community Court, 909 N Main St. in Santa Ana, where criminal offenders and others who are homeless, addicted, or mentally ill can access services to address needs such as mental health assessment, veteran's benefits, and employment skills. An additional aspect of the Court's approach that generated considerable interest was the inclusion of case calendars at the facility for Drug Court, DUI Court, several mental health courts, Combat Veterans Court, and Homeless Outreach Court.

Inspired by the presentation, and in anticipation of the creation of a Community Court program in its own jurisdiction, Community Legal Services in Melbourne, Australia, has arranged for a representative to visit the Community Court in February, 2011, to observe several court sessions and discuss with the criminal justice partners their roles and responsibilities in the Community Court, and in the collaborative programs available there as therapeutic alternatives to incarceration.



Treatment Courts Reach Graduation Milestones

Orange County's Collaborative Court programs, which provide therapeutic alternatives to incarceration for offenders who are homeless, addicted, or mentally ill, reached significant milestones during the month of June, 2010, as the adult Drug Court program recorded its **1600th** graduation, the DUI Court program recognized the **600th** participant to graduate, and the three mental health courts noted their **100th** program graduation.



"I want to thank you for giving me a chance to prove that change is possible. You are a saint in a black robe."

a treatment court participant
from her 2010 graduation speech

CHAPTER 5

Combat Veterans Court

Combat Veterans Court was established in November 2008 to serve combat veterans with mental health issues who have become involved with the criminal justice system. This groundbreaking program — the first to be established in California, and the second in the nation — embodies a new approach that has been encouraged by an amendment to Penal Code section 1170.9, which now says that if a person convicted of a criminal offense is a military veteran and can show that he or she is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, sexual trauma, or other psychological problems, the court may order that person into a treatment program instead of jail or prison.

The program, which is held at the Community Court, has attracted national attention as an innovative and effective way to help combat veterans overcome the issues that impede their full re-integration into society, while protecting public safety and reducing the costs associated with recidivism.

Combat Veterans Court structures treatment intervention around the authority and personal involvement of the judge in a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere — where the judge, the court staff, and the treatment team all work together with the participants to break the cycle of substance abuse and criminal behavior, and to address ongoing mental health issues. An environment with clear and certain rules is created, and each participant's compliance is within his or her own control.

A full-time case manager, who is funded by a grant obtained by the VA Healthcare System Long Beach, and a half-time Deputy Probation Officer, who is funded by the County, guide participants through a phased program that includes self-help meetings, regular court-review hearings, weekly meetings with a care coordinator and a Probation Officer, frequent and random drug and alcohol testing, and the development of a life plan. The VA Healthcare System also provides residential and outpatient treatment for seriously addicted substance abusers, and handles other health-related issues. New partnerships have been formed with other service providers to offer additional support to veterans in the program.

In October, the Combat Veterans Court held its first graduation ceremony; and by the end of the year, **seven** participants had graduated. At the end of 2010, **43** participants were active in the program.



COMBAT VETERANS COURT - Demographic Information

2010 Program Totals

		admissions	percent	graduations	percent	terminations	percent
total		28	100%	7	100%	4	100%
gender	female	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
	male	27	96%	7	100%	4	100%
age	18 - 21 years	2	7%	0	0%	1	25%
	22 - 30 years	18	64%	6	86%	1	25%
	31 - 40 years	3	11%	0	0%	1	25%
	41 - 50 years	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
	51 - 60 years	3	11%	0	0%	1	25%
	over 60 years	1	4%	1	14%	0	0%
race	African American	1	4%	0	0%	1	25%
	Asian	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Caucasian	16	57%	3	43%	3	75%
	Hispanic	8	29%	3	43%	0	0%
	Native American	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	other	3	11%	1	14%	0	0%
education	needs HS / GED	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
	has HS / GED	13	46%	1	14%	3	75%
	some college	9	33%	6	86%	0	0%
	college degree	2	7%	0	0%	1	25%
	no information	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
marital status	married	7	25%	1	14%	1	25%
	separated	3	11%	1	14%	0	0%
	divorced	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
	single	16	57%	5	71%	3	75%
parental status	with minor children	4	14%	2	29%	0	0%
employment	employed	12	43%	3	43%	0	0%
	unemployed	16	57%	4	57%	4	100%
drug of choice	alcohol	13	46%	4	57%	1	25%
	cocaine	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	heroin	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
	marijuana	5	18%	1	14%	0	0%
	methamphetamine	4	14%	1	14%	1	25%
	opiates	2	7%	0	0%	2	50%
	prescription drugs	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
	other	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
	not applicable	0	0%	1	14%	0	0%

Undersecretary Chavez Visits Combat Veterans Court

On March 30, the Undersecretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, Rocky J. Chavez, attended a session of Veterans Court, affirming the importance placed by the Governor on this innovative, collaborative approach to addressing the problems faced by returning combat veterans. The visit also included a tour of the Community Court, and a discussion with Hon. Wendy Lindley, Public Defender Deborah Kwast, and other program partners.



Film Portrays Life *In Their Boots*

Orange County's Combat Veterans Court is featured in *Other than Honorable*, part of the documentary series, *In Their Boots*, about the impact of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on the lives of U.S. service personnel. The forty-six minute film depicts the challenges faced by returning combat veterans who become involved in the criminal justice system, and the therapeutic alternative to incarceration offered by the Combat Veterans Court. It can be viewed at: <http://www.intheirboots.com/itb/shows/special-presentations/other-than-honorable.html>



Hon. Wendy Lindley, with Brian Clubb of NDCI

Combat Veterans Court Selected as National Mentor Court

The National Drug Court Institute (NDCI) has named the Orange County Combat Veterans Court as a Mentor Court — one of only four programs in the nation to be selected for the honor. As a Mentor Court, it will host visitors from throughout the western United States who are interested in starting Veterans Court programs within their own jurisdictions, and will be a center for training, technical assistance, and research.

from **The Promise of Veterans Court**
by Hon. Wendy Lindley

After the war in Vietnam, our combat veterans returned home to an indifferent, if not hostile, reception. During the years which followed, our society as a whole seemed to turn its back on the returning veterans, and to ignore the terrible psychological damage that many had suffered as a result of their combat experience. For the criminal justice system, it remained business as usual: addicted veterans found themselves on the wrong side of the “war against drugs”; mentally ill veterans often found themselves in jail, untreated, and then released to a life on the streets; and homeless veterans found themselves reviled as an unpleasant nuisance. To our shame as a country, we did not acknowledge our moral obligation to those who had sacrificed so much for us.

Now, however, there is a growing recognition that the mental health of combat veterans returning from service overseas is a serious national concern. News media carry stories about the issue, and discuss what can be done in response to it. In the justice system, too, there has been an increasing momentum to do things differently. In Combat Veterans Court, the focus is on the offender rather than the crime. The goal is to understand and address the causes of the criminal behavior, and to realize that – for an offender suffering from PTSD – reckless driving, domestic violence, and substance abuse may all be manifestations of an underlying problem that can be successfully treated; but the effective treatment won’t be obtained through traffic school, or through a traditional batterers intervention program, or through prison.

Recently, a Combat Veterans Court participant stood before me for his case review. When he was first accepted into the program, this man was a walking time-bomb. Trained in violence, steeped in post-traumatic stress, he was beset with psychological problems and tormented by issues resulting from his combat experience – and all of it was locked up inside of him. Outwardly, and ominously, he did not connect with others. He made no eye contact; he spoke very little; and when he did speak, his voice was flat and without emotion. Had he been sent to prison, his withdrawal, his repressed anger, and his alienation would surely have gotten worse; and upon his release, our society – having sown the wind – would surely have reaped a devastating whirlwind.

Instead, he has been participating in Combat Veterans Court – receiving counseling, attending group and individual therapy, and accessing a wide range of resources tailored to meet his needs. In the hushed courtroom, this man spoke clearly and from deep within his heart. He recounted his slow but steady progress, he thanked the team that was helping him regain control over his life and emotions, and then he looked at me and said he had finally come to realize that “it’s all right for a soldier to cry”.

We, as a society, owe it to our veterans to do everything we can to help them overcome the problems that result from their military service. When these men and women become involved in the criminal justice system, we must seize the opportunity to intervene in their lives, and work together to make them whole once again.

CHAPTER 6

Homeless Outreach Court

Homeless Outreach Court was started in 2003 as a way to address the outstanding infractions and low-level misdemeanors of homeless people, while connecting them to a wide range of supportive services. This innovative program is held at four sites in the County – in Tustin at the Orange County Rescue Mission, in Santa Ana at the Community Court and at the Mental Health Association of Orange County’s homeless shelter, and at a community meeting hall in Laguna Beach.



Chief Deputy Public Defender, Jean Wilkinson
at Homeless Outreach Court

The program provides a compassionate response to the fact that the homeless participants, many of whom suffer from chronic mental illness, may receive infractions simply because they are homeless, with the ironic result that such charges may hinder their efforts to obtain the government disability assistance that could aid in their rehabilitation. Instead of the usual court sanctions of fines and custody, program participants receive credit for accessing appropriate physical and mental health care; for attending alcohol or drug-dependency recovery meetings; for engaging in community service activities; for attending classes in life-skills, computer skills, and literacy; and for becoming employed.

The program strengthens and re-enforces the efforts of the participants, and respects the relationship and trust that homeless service agencies share with them. When participants work with agency representatives to identify and overcome the causes of their homelessness, they are in a better position to successfully comply with court orders.

Homeless Outreach Court is an unfunded collaboration of the Court, the Public Defender, the District Attorney, the Orange County Department of Housing and Community Services, the Health Care Agency, the Veterans Administration, the Orange County Legal Aid Society, local law enforcement agencies, and a variety of homeless services providers. The Public Defender has assumed the primary responsibility for the task of managing the very large caseload — which at the end of the year numbered **692 participants**.

In 2010, **273** people completed the program. During the year, participants completed **2,808 hours of community service**. Since its inception, 998 people have completed the Homeless Outreach Court program, and have been helped to access the tools they need to regain their self-sufficiency. Of those who completed the program during 2008, **only 26.4%** have been arrested for other than traffic infractions within the next two years.

CHAPTER 7

Dependency Drug Court

Located at the Lamoreaux Justice Center, Dependency Drug Court is a family reunification program designed to address the issues of parents whose children have been removed from the home by the County because of the parents' abuse of drugs or alcohol. Participants who qualify for acceptance into this program must comply with the specific requirements of each program phase, which include frequent and random drug and alcohol testing, individual and group counseling, regular court appearances, and attendance in perinatal or parenting classes.

The Dependency Drug Court program is a collaborative effort that includes the Social Services Agency, the Health Care Agency, the Orange County Counsel, the office of the Public Defender, the parents' retained legal counsel, and the Law Offices of Harold LaFlamme, which has been retained by the County to provide legal representation for the children. Funding for Dependency Drug Court comes from several sources. The Orange County Board of Supervisors approves annual funding for the County agencies which allocate personnel and services that are essential to the success of the program. In addition, grant funding for the program is obtained through the Comprehensive Drug Court Implementation Act, applied for and administered by the Orange County Health Care Agency.



Hon. Gary Bischoff (l) and Hon. Dennis Keough (r) have each presided over a Dependency Drug Court since the inception of the program

From the inception of the program in 2005 through the end of 2010, each of the six judicial officers assigned to hear dependency matters also presided over a Dependency Drug Court calendar. Beginning in 2011, the Dependency Drug Court calendars will be combined, and all will be heard in one courtroom.

The success of the Dependency Drug Court was acknowledged by the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care, which held public hearings regarding dependency challenges and responses in 2008. Thereafter, in carrying out the recommendations of the Commission, the Administrative Office of the Courts selected the Orange County Dependency Drug Court as one of two programs in the State that would develop and pilot a standard, state-wide outcome evaluation system for this effective treatment intervention. This pilot program, which established common elements for dependency drug court data collection and evaluation throughout California, was completed in 2010.

Dependency Drug Court — Results and Benefits

Cost Savings from Early Reunification

During the first eleven months of 2010, 104 assessments were conducted, which resulted in **65** new admissions to the program. During that time, **18** parents graduated from the program, **150** children received services, and **33** children were reunified with their parents — who were now clean, sober, and committed to raising their children in a safe and secure environment.

A study conducted for the Social Services Agency* found that families in the Dependency Drug Court program reunified an average of 183 days earlier than those who did not participate in the program. Early family reunification translates directly into a cost savings to the County because of the avoided costs of out-of-home placement. **The total annual savings for 2010 is estimated to be more than \$1,030,000, of which the County's share is approximately \$465,000.**

Since the inception of the Dependency Drug Court program, 370 children have been reunified with their parents significantly earlier than would otherwise have been the case. It is estimated that the savings to the County in the costs of out-of-home placement since program inception has amounted to more than **\$5,203,000.**

* Orange County Dependency Drug Court Summary Report; Robin O'Neil, Ph.D., April 2005 – December, 2006; prepared for the Orange County Social Services Agency (at p.17).



Judicial Officers Presiding Over Dependency Drug Court

2005	Hon. Gary Bischoff, Hon. Donna Crandall, Hon. John Gastelum, Hon. Dennis Keough, Hon. Carolyn Kirkwood, Hon. Ronald Kreber, Hon. Gary Vincent
2006	Hon. Gary Bischoff, Hon. John Gastelum, Hon. Dennis Keough, Hon. Carolyn Kirkwood, Hon. Caryl Lee, Hon. Gary Vincent
2007	Hon. Gary Bischoff, Hon. John Gastelum, Hon. Dennis Keough, Hon. Carolyn Kirkwood, Hon. Caryl Lee, Hon. James Marion, Hon. Gary Vincent
2008	Hon. Gary Bischoff, Hon. John Gastelum, Hon. Dennis Keough, Hon. Carolyn Kirkwood, Hon. Caryl Lee, Hon. James Marion, Hon. Salvador Sarmiento
2009	Hon. Gary Bischoff, Hon. Douglas Hatchimonji, Hon. Dennis Keough, Hon. Caryl Lee, Hon. Salvador Sarmiento, Hon. Jane Shade
2010	Hon. Gary Bischoff, Hon. Douglas Hatchimonji, Hon. Maria Hernandez, Hon. Dennis Keough, Hon. Caryl Lee, Hon. Cheryl Leininger, Hon. Jane Shade

DEPENDENCY DRUG COURT		
2010 Demographic Information of Parents		
admissions		65
gender	female	50
	male	15
age	18 - 21 years	3
	22 - 30 years	36
	31 - 40 years	20
	41 - 50 years	4
	51 - 60 years	2
	Over 60 years	0
race	African American	0
	Asian	1
	Caucasian	37
	Hispanic	24
	Native American	1
	Other	2
education	needs HS / GED	22
	has HS / GED	21
	some college	20
	college degree	2
marital status	married	16
	separated	5
	divorced	6
	single	36
	widowed	2
employment	employed	14
	unemployed	51
drug of choice	alcohol	16
	cocaine	1
	heroin	4
	marijuana	13
	methamphetamine	28
	prescription drugs	2
	other	1
years of abuse	less than 2 years	5
	2 to 5 years	14
	6 to 10 years	19
	11 to 15 years	14
	16 to 20 years	6
	20 years or more	7

CHAPTER 8

Juvenile Drug Court

Juvenile Drug Court, which is held at the Lamoreaux Justice Center in Orange, addresses the serious substance abuse issues of minors. The goal of the program is to support the youthful offender's commitment to sobriety by providing the treatment and supervision needed to promote abstinence from drug and alcohol abuse and to deter criminal behavior.

The Juvenile Drug Court team includes representatives from the Court, Health Care Agency, the Probation Department, the offices of the District Attorney and the Public Defender, and any retained counsel. Minors participating in the program are required to attend frequent progress review hearings with the judicial officer; remain clean and sober; attend weekly self-help groups; participate in group, individual, and family counseling; attend skills-building classes and other educational activities; and follow the terms and conditions of probation.

Planning for the program began in 1998 pursuant to a grant awarded to the Orange County Juvenile Court by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Drug Court Program Office. In 1999, program implementation began with funding received from a Juvenile Accountability and Incentive Block Grant. Subsequently, grant funding has continued through the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act.

During 2010, Juvenile Drug Court participants were afforded guidance in preparing for life through events sponsored by the Community Courts Foundation in partnership with the Orange County Women Lawyers Association. On March 26, participants attended the second annual Independent Living Conference, at which presentations were made about the legal effects of turning 18, effective goal setting, living on a budget, strategies for college, and the benefits of healthy hobbies. The Independent Living Conference was made possible by grant funding from the Allergan Corporation.

On April 23, the third annual Teen Career Conference offered participants an opportunity to develop the skills they will need in order to find and keep gainful employment, and to turn their life experiences into marketable job skills. Attendees were given practical advice with regard to creating a resume, filling out job applications, interviewing with prospective employers, and conducting job searches to find current job opportunities.

At the beginning of 2010, Juvenile Drug Court had 45 active participants. During the course of the year, 32 additional participants were admitted into the program, 26 participants were terminated and **14 graduated** after spending an average of fifteen months in the program. These participants typically started using drugs before their 15th birthday and nearly all of them were using drugs several times per week at the time of their admission. At the time of their graduation, they had been **sober for an average of seven months**, some for more than a year. At the end of 2010, the Juvenile Drug Court program had **37** participants.

Judicial Officers Presiding Over Juvenile Drug Court

1999 - 2000	Hon. Ronald E. Owen
2000 - 2008	Hon. Robert E. Hutson
2008 - 2009	Hon. Carolyn Kirkwood / Ref. Maureen Aplin
2009 - 2010	Hon. Donna Crandall

Juvenile Drug Court — Results and Benefits

PROGRAM TOTALS FOR 2010	
active participants 1/1/2010	45
admissions	32
terminations	23
no-fault terminations	3
graduations	14
active participants 12/31/2010	37

PROGRAM TOTALS SINCE INCEPTION	
	totals
admissions	485
terminations	291
graduations	152
drug-free babies	18

Cost Savings

Despite having come into the program with an average of two prior arrests, and some with as many as six, none of the Juvenile Drug Court participants were arrested on a new law violation while they were in the program. These minors came into the program with an average of 205 days of custody stayed, and upon graduation had their charges dismissed.

The average cost of housing a minor at one of the five Orange County juvenile correctional facilities is \$317.47 per day. The 14 participants who graduated in 2010 had **2,868 days of custody stayed**, resulting in a **cost savings to the County of \$910,504**. Since the inception of the program, the 152 program graduates have had **24,855** custody days stayed, for a total annually updated cumulative savings of more than **\$4,168,977**.

Low Recidivism

For graduates of Juvenile Drug Court, recidivism is defined as any new arrest that results in a referral to the Probation Department, and arrests that do not result in a referral to Probation are not included in the analysis. While the majority of participants are terminated from probation upon graduation from the program, some remain on administrative probation due to remaining financial obligations. In these cases, violations of probation are included in the recidivism statistics.

One hundred thirty-eight graduates have had an entire year of follow-up since graduating from the Juvenile Drug Court program. Of these 138 graduates, **only sixteen (11%)** had a new referral to the probation Department within one year of graduation. One hundred eighteen graduates have been out of the program for at least two years; and of these 118 graduates, **only seventeen (14%)** had a new referral to the Probation Department within two years of graduation.

JUVENILE DRUG COURT			
Participant Demographics as of 12/31/2010			
		total	percent
active participants 12/31/2010		37	100%
gender	female	9	24%
	male	28	76%
age	13 years	0	0%
	14 years	1	3%
	15 years	6	16%
	16 years	14	38%
	17 years	16	43%
race	African American	0	0%
	Asian	6	16%
	Caucasian	9	24%
	Hispanic	22	59%
	Native American	0	0%
	Other	0	0%
education	attending high school	6	16%
	attending alternative school	31	84%
	has diploma/GED	0	0%
	has some college	0	0%
marital status	single	37	100%
	married	0	0%
employment	employed	0	0%
	unemployed	37	100%
drug of choice	alcohol	5	14%
	cocaine	0	0%
	ecstasy	0	0%
	heroin / opiates	0	0%
	marijuana	23	62%
	methamphetamine	9	24%
	prescription medications	0	0%
years of drug abuse (graduates only)	less than 2 years	6	16%
	2 to 5 years	3	8%
	6 to 10 years	5	14%
	11 or more years	0	0%

CHAPTER 9

Truancy Court

Truancy Court, located at the Lamoreaux Justice Center, is the third and most intensive intervention level of the County's *Truancy Response Program*, which targets chronically truant youth * and their families. Established by Hon. Robert B. Hutson in 2001, the program has the goals of stabilizing school attendance in order to increase the chances of future academic success and reduce the number of youth who go on to commit crimes resulting in the filing of formal petitions pursuant to Welfare & Institutions Code §602. The Truancy Court has been supported through funding received by the County pursuant to the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act.

When a student is identified as truant by a participating school district, the student and the parents are given notice to attend a mandatory meeting with school officials that is conducted by a representative from the District Attorney's Office. If the truancy problem is not corrected in response to this school-level intervention, the school district forwards a truancy referral to the Probation Department. If the student and the parents do not cooperate with the Probation Department in addressing the truancy problem, or if the student is younger than 12 years old, the family is referred to Truancy Court.

Truancy Court involves students and their parents in a collaborative effort to resolve the problem with the District Attorney's Office, the Probation Department, the Department of Education, the Juvenile Court, the Public Defender, the Social Services Agency, the Health Care Agency, the community-based Parent Empowerment Program, and other support organizations. The students are supervised by the Court and monitored by the District Attorney, and they are directed to attend school daily and to provide proof of attendance to the Court each week.

A Deputy Public Defender assists the youth and the family in accessing community resources and helps them to comply with the Court's orders. The Court will order the parents to attend the Parent Empowerment Program, and may also refer the family for counseling services provided by the Health Care Agency and to the CalWorks program through the Social Services Agency. Unless the family moves out of the County or there is a subsequent criminal charge, Truancy Court participants remain active until the chronic truancy problem, and such other issues that have contributed to problem, are remedied to the satisfaction of the Court. Participants may be under Court supervision for as little as two months, or for twelve months or longer.

During 2010, 154 truant youth and their parents were referred to the Truancy Court for more intensive oversight of their school attendance, and **110 successfully completed** the program. Of those who were admitted in 2010, 62 were female and 92 were male. Ninety-one, or 59%, were Hispanic and 23% were Caucasian. Grade levels ranged from kindergarten to high school seniors, with a heavy concentration of students between the 8th and 11th grades.

* As defined by California Education Code section 48260, a student is truant if absent from school without valid excuse for three days in one school year, or is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period, or any combination thereof.

Truancy Court — Results and Benefits

Improved Attendance

A key measure of the effectiveness of the program is an improvement in the student's school attendance. Of the 110 students who successfully completed the Truancy Court program during the year, **86.3%**, had an improved attendance rate, and **53.6%** had **90 or more consecutive days of perfect attendance**. Ten students were referred to and graduated from the Sunburst Academy, a highly-structured school setting which provides students with the values, skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed. The parents of 83 of the students in Truancy Court completed the Parent Empowerment Program, and three families participated in In-Home Parental Assistance. The average time in the program for Truancy Court participants who successfully completed was 308 days.

During 2010, 52 participants did not successfully complete the Truancy Court program. Of these, five turned 18 during the year and were terminated because of their age; twenty-six were the subject of formal petitions filed under Welfare & Institutions Code §602; ten were unable to be located; eight students continued to have poor attendance; and three students were terminated for other reasons. More than half of the parents of these students, however, attended the Parent Empowerment Program — which provided them with skills that can help them improve their children's chances for success.

Decreased Delinquency

Of the 1,171 students who have successfully completed Truancy Response Program since the inception of the program, **only 5.8%** were arrested for violating the law in the six months following their exit, **compared with 20%** of the 539 students who did not successfully complete the program. This suggests that when the justice system intervenes with chronic truants and the truancy problem is successfully resolved, the likelihood of subsequent criminal behavior is significantly reduced.



Hon. Deborah Chuang presides over Truancy Court

Judicial Officers Presiding Over Truancy Court

2001 - 2008	Hon. Robert B. Hutson
2008 - 2009	Hon. Carolyn Kirkwood / Ref. Maureen Aplin
2009 - 2010	Hon. Donna Crandall
2010	Hon. Deborah Chuang

CHAPTER 10

Dependency Teen Programs

Girls Court

The Girls Court program was established in 2009 to support young women in the dependency system. Studies have shown that most adolescent girls in county dependency systems have suffered trauma or abuse at some point in their lives. For many, the psychological effects of such trauma can be a major factor in their inability to become secure, responsible adults as they age out of foster care; and it has also been shown that they are at high risk of dropping out of school, using drugs, becoming homeless, and becoming involved in the criminal justice system.

Girls Court participants, many of whom are living in foster care group homes, receive appropriate treatment and counseling, and are helped to gain the skills and resources they need to build healthy, appropriate relationships and to achieve stable, independent, productive lives.

Under the direction of Commissioner Jane Shade, Girls Court is convened at the Lamoreaux Justice Center each week for case reviews and court hearings. The team includes representatives from the Court, Social Services Agency, Health Care Agency, the Probation Department, Orange County Counsel, Public Defender, Juvenile Defenders, the Department of Education, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Orangewood Children's Foundation, Law Offices of Harold LaFlamme, and other appointed counsel.



Hon. Jane Shade presides over Girls Court

Engagement, involvement, and participation are vital components of the program. The team members meet regularly with each girl to address challenges and to provide encouragement and support. In addition to frequent case reviews, the program includes a comprehensive assessment; joint case planning and management; educational and cultural activities; and linkage to role models and mentors.

There are currently **29** participants in Girls Court, 26 of whom started in 2009. Prior to entering the program, only three girls had spent less than a year in the foster care system, while eight girls had been in the system for more than four years. In 2010, two girls left the program because of a change in their dependency status. During the year, funding from the Mental Health Services Act enabled the program to expand the range of services, add case management and support, and admit additional participants.

Girls Court — Results and Benefits

Increased Placement Stability

Because frequent changes of homes and schools can negatively impact a child’s behavior, self-esteem, and ability to form positive relationships, one of the goals of Girls Court is to reduce the number of placement changes. Prior to their starting Girls Court, the number of each participant’s individual placements ranged from 1 to 24, with **an average of 9 placement changes** per participant. During their time in the program, the average number of placement changes per participant **has dropped to 2**.

Fewer Runaway Incidents

Another measure of program success is the frequency of AWOL or runaway incidents. For the seventeen girls who had a history of AWOL behavior, the number of AWOL incidents per girl at the time of program entry ranged from one to ten, with an average of three incidents per girl. Of those seventeen girls, **8 have not been AWOL** since they started Girls Court, and the remaining **9 have decreased AWOL activity** to an average of fewer than 2 incidents each.

School Success

The education level of the 26 Girls Court participants at the time of entry ranged from 8th through 12th grade — with 12 in public schools, 8 in alternative education, and 4 in continuation schools. **More than 60%** of the participants **improved their grade point averages** during the year; and, of the 15 girls who took the English and Math sections of the California High School Exit Exam, **80% passed the English section and 60% passed both sections**. Two girls received their high school diplomas during the year, one of whom is continuing her education at community college. None of the participants were referred to the Probation Department for being truant.

Law-Abiding Behavior

Of the 29 participants, **21 have no new involvement with the juvenile justice system since entering the program**. Of the 8 participants who were referred to Probation while participating in the program, three had their cases handled through an informal sanctioning process that required the completion of an activity such as writing an essay, performing community service, or attending a class; and four still had cases pending at the end of the year.



“An investment now to stabilize the lives of these adolescent girls is a small cost compared to the financial burden that will be imposed if they remain in the justice or social welfare system.”

Hon. Carolyn Kirkwood

GIRLS COURT			
2010 Demographic Information at Time of Program Entry			
		total	percent
admissions		29	100%
age	12 years	1	3%
	13 years	1	3%
	14 years	5	17%
	15 years	8	28%
	16 years	13	45%
	17 years	1	3%
ethnicity	African American	1	3%
	Asian	1	3%
	Caucasian	5	17%
	Hispanic	21	72%
	other	1	3%
history of substance abuse		14	48%
history of mental illness		29	100%
type of placement	Orangewood Children's Home	2	7%
	Court return facility	3	10%
	group home	6	21%
	non-relative foster care	11	38%
	relative foster care	2	7%
	parent	3	10%
	hospital	1	3%
	runaway	1	3%
initial permanent plan	family reunification	2	7%
	legal guardianship	1	3%
	adoption	2	7%
	long-term foster care	24	83%

Dependency Teen Programs, continued

Boys Court

On October 1, 2010 a new collaborative program opened at the Lamoreaux Justice Center to serve adolescent boys in the dependency system who have unaddressed substance abuse, mental health, or other socialization problems. These youth, many of whom have had multiple foster care placements, are at high risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system as adults. The new program, which in many ways mirrors the successful Girls Court, will help participants to become clearly focused, responsible, and goal-oriented. Both programs were established by Hon. Carolyn Kirkwood, the Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court.



Hon. Maria Hernandez presides over Boys Court

The program is under the guidance of Hon. Maria Hernandez, who works with a team of representatives from a variety of partnering agencies – including Orange County’s Health Care Agency, Social Services Agency, the Department of Education, Probation Department, County Counsel, Public Defender, Juvenile Defenders, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Orangewood Children’s Foundation, and the Law Offices of Harold LaFlamme. Currently, there are **28** participants in Boys Court.



College Day and Career Day

On August 17, 2010, the Superior Court combined with California State University at Fullerton to present a College Day event on campus for seventeen of the participants in Girls Court. Following a welcome by CSUF President Milton Gordon, the girls learned about a variety of interesting topics — including efforts to rescue young women from the sex trade in Nepal, community service opportunities, careers in the culinary industry, and techniques for self-defense against rape and aggression. The participants were also given a tour of the campus and were introduced to Guardian Scholars, a program that offers support to college-bound youth who are leaving the foster care system.

On February 26, 2010, a Career Day was held at the Social Services Agency for participants in Girls Court, at which the young women learned how to get and keep a job, and then were given the opportunity to meet informally with a wide variety of professionals from the community to discuss career opportunities. The featured guests included a doctor, a cosmetologist, an attorney, an artist, a systems engineer, a police detective, a high school teacher, an author, a travel agent, a fashion designer, and a probation officer.

CHAPTER 11

Domestic Violence Outreach

Heroes and Healthy Families

On June 10, 2010, the 8th Heroes and Healthy Families leadership awareness conference was held at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton before an audience of **more than 1,000** active duty Marines and Sailors. The all-day event is designed to increase knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of family violence, post traumatic stress and risk-taking behaviors. Speakers and special guests included Hon. Michael Naughton and Hon. Pamela Iles (ret.), as well as representatives from Headquarters Marine Corps and Marine Forces Reserve.

The Heroes and Healthy Families conference is a partnership of the Orange County Superior Court, the non-profit The Family Violence Project, and MCCA Marine and Family Services. On May 26, 2010, the program was expanded to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where the first east coast Heroes and Healthy Families conference was attended by **more than 1,000** active duty Marines and Sailors. Since 2004, more than **8,000** active duty personnel have been reached by these conferences.



Hon. Michael Naughton addresses service personnel at the conference



Safe Families Program

In late 2009, the responsibility for handling misdemeanor DV cases, which had previously been assigned to a single bench officer at each of four justice centers, was re-assigned to the master calendar judge at each justice center. At the same time, the Safe Families Program, which promoted the treatment and accountability of batterers while providing supportive services to the victims of domestic violence and their children, was consolidated at the Community Court.

During 2010, a group of Batterers Intervention Program providers began work to develop a revised Safe Families pilot program that would employ a standardized batterers intervention curriculum incorporating evidence-based best practices. The pilot program was scheduled for implementation in February 2010; but before it could begin, a decision was made to close the Safe Families Program — which had been challenged by a decline in the voluntary enrollment of offenders, and by the adverse impact on staffing from agency budget cuts. The effort to standardize the Batterers Intervention Program curriculum will continue, however, with the expectation that its outcomes will be the subject of a formal evaluation in the future.



Thank you for your support
of the Collaborative Courts