



# COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

FEBRUARY 2018

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## Council of Accountability Court Judges Semi –Annual Meeting

On Friday, January 19, 2018, the Council of Accountability Court Judges held our second annual Semi-Annual Meeting. Present at the meeting were Superior, State, and Juvenile Court Judges that preside over our Accountability Court programs. The meeting was held at the UGA Continuing Education Center. During the meeting, Executive Committee members briefed the group on each Committee’s progress and discussed what is ahead for Fiscal Year 2019.

## Seeking Safety Training

January 22-23, 2018, a training was held for court program treatment providers in the Evidence –Based Seeking Safety curriculum. The two day training was facilitated by trainer Mark Lowis from the Joy Fields Training Institute. Seeking Safety is an evidence-based counseling model to help court participants attain safety from trauma and/or substance abuse. It can be conducted in group and/or individual sessions. It is an extremely safe model as it directly addresses both trauma and addiction, it is relevant to a broad range of clients, and it is easy to implement. There were 33 Accountability Court program treatment providers in attendance. Treatment Providers were excited to use the model with program participants.



*Photo 1: Trainer Mark Lowis instructs class participants the Seeking Safety curriculum.*

*Photo 2: Jasmine Copeland shares the group’s exercise activity results.*

*Photo 3: (Left to Right) Breakout group members Cheryl Ballow, Sheila Storey, Renee Bell, Latrelle Mims discuss an exercise activity.*

## Congratulations to Participants of all the January Graduations!

Clayton County DUI Court

Forsyth County DUI Court

Hall County Drug Court

Hall County Veterans Treatment Court

Savannah-Chatham Adult Felony Drug Court

Tallapoosa Circuit Mental Health Court

Towaliga Accountability Courts

## DRUG COURT CELEBRATES MORE CHANGED LIVES

Conasauga Adult Felony Drug Court made the news in a positive way. The Court was featured in the local newspaper, The Daily Citizen. The article shared highlights and featured a brief description from the most recent graduation in November. The article was shared by Catherine Schueman.

Making it through the Conasauga Drug Court program is the “hardest thing” participants will ever do, says Judge Jim Wilbanks.

At the same time, Drug Court, says Wilbanks, is the “best thing” he does in his role as a Superior Court judge.

That’s why Wilbanks and the rest of the Drug Court staff – along with the families and other members of the participants’ support system – were so excited to see five more people graduate from the program during an emotion-packed ceremony at the Whitfield County Courthouse on Nov. 30.

“I tell people most of the time it seems as a Superior Court judge, what I’m doing is I’m cleaning up train wrecks,” Wilbanks said, reacting with legal solutions to common problems like lawsuits, divorces, or crimes.

What’s different about Drug Court, he says, is that it’s a proactive program. “We are helping people make changes in their lives,” he says, “that will keep them from coming back in front of us. And that’s what this is all about. This is about not only restoring these lives but keeping these people out of the criminal justice system. That’s the goal; that is what we work hard to accomplish.”

Drug Court graduates discussed some of their accomplishments during the program.

“I have my own job, my own home today, my license and my own vehicle, I have a well-respected job that has benefits, and I started school.”

“I have been able to accept and forgive myself.”

“I have learned how to love the young woman I see in the mirror.”

“Thank you for this incredible opportunity that I have been blessed with.”

“I would not be where I am today without you, Judge Partain, and the entire team that has helped guide me to the place I am today. This journey has not been easy at times, but most definitely worth it!”

Participants also praised the Drug Court staff.

“I could tell you story after story about how each staff member has helped me through my recovery and changed my life for the better,” Amos said. “I cannot express my gratitude for the better; Drug Court has saved my life. I thank you, Judge Wilbanks and Judge Partain, my arresting officers, and all of the staff for your time and energy and efforts.”





Left Photo: Newton County Adult Felony Drug Court celebrated participants' graduations on Friday January, 29, 2018. CACJ Certification Officer, Rachel Gage attended the graduation ceremony.



Right Photo: Fayette County DUI Court Judge Jason Thompson is pictured congratulating a program graduate. Photo was submitted by Fayette DUI Court Coordinator Ms. Martha Hall.

Bottom Photo: Henry County Accountability Court graduates are pictured with Henry County Superior Court Judge Amero (far left) at the program graduation in December. Photo was submitted by Henry County Accountability Courts Director, Craig Ogilvie.



Do you have news to share or would like to include an entry in the monthly CACJ newsletter?

Contact Kim Howard at [kimberly.howard@georgiacourts.gov](mailto:kimberly.howard@georgiacourts.gov)



February 5, 2018	Winter Coordinator Training	Macon, Georgia
February 7, 2018	CBI Training registration opens	(Treatment Providers)
February 12, 2018	Accountability Court Residential Resources survey released	
February 13, 2018	Accountability Court Operating Profile survey due	
February 19, 2018	FY19 Grant Released	
February 27, 2018	MRT Trauma Training	Macon, Georgia