



# COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

MAY 2020

WWW.GAACCOUNTABILITYCOURTS.ORG

## ACCOUNTABILITY COURT NEWS & SPECIAL EVENTS

### ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES APPOINTED TO COURT OF APPEALS

The Council of Accountability Court Judges congratulates two Accountability Court Judges for their appointment to the Georgia Court of Appeals. Judge Verda M. Colvin recently presided over the Macon-Bibb Mental Health Court, and Judge John A. "Trea" Pipkin recently presided over the Henry County Veterans Treatment Court. Judge Colvin also served as a CACJ Executive Committee and Funding Committee member. Thank you to Judge Colvin and Judge Pipkin for their dedicated service to Georgia's Accountability Courts!



### FORSYTH COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS

*Submitted by Julie Puckett, Forsyth County CARE Court Coordinator*

#### "CARE Pantry" Provides Hope for Forsyth County Accountability Courts



Forsyth County participants were provided with some assistance during these recent challenges. Using funding from generous donations, items are being purchased for their 'Care Pantry.' Program participants in the Drug, Mental Health, DUI, and Family Treatment Courts have unlimited access to the pantry throughout the pandemic. The spirit of giving has caught on and participants are also making contributions to the pantry when they can and sharing resources with those in need.

The Accountability Courts Director, Jennifer Johnston, ensures the closet remains full of supplies and assists participants daily. Among the supplies are non-perishable goods, meat, fresh vegetables, and cleaning supplies. Participants who celebrate Easter were invited to provide their children's names and Easter baskets were also provided.



Due to social distancing and the loss of employment for some, this helps tremendously with keeping participants on track and focused on their overall well-being during difficult times. Serving over 200 participants, the need is great, and the results are a bright spot during this time, as well.

## ACCOUNTABILITY COURT GRADUATIONS

### NORTH ENOTAH DRUG COURT GRADUATION

*Submitted by Barbara Honaker, North Enotah Drug Court Coordinator & Program Director*

#### Graduation Goes Virtual for North Enotah Drug Court

There has been a great deal of firsts over the past two months, and the North Enotah Drug Court (NEDC) Team has been right on top of these challenges. The NEDC has been utilizing ZOOM for all classes, case management meetings, staffings, and court sessions. We have asked our participants to utilize the online community meetings and to call their sponsors at least once per week to continue the prevailing intent of keeping in touch. Our program has doubled up on surveillance; and screenings have been performed in the participants' homes utilizing assorted methods for screening, which preserves our participants' accountability. The Court Coordinator began this unexplored adventure with a daily letter to update the participants with resources and guidelines for the new way of experiencing drug court. After the first week, she changed her method of communication to weekly ZOOM meetings with the participants as a whole group to keep them informed and to have a weekly check-in with the Coordinator along with the Case Manager. We have been very upfront with the participants, and we have gone as far as to warn them that our Surveillance and Screening Team will be visiting each one of them more than ever. The Coordinator has explained that this was not with the intention to "catch" them doing something wrong; but, rather to keep things going smoothly for them, emphasizing that each and every participant is worth the extra recourse that our Team Members are taking to help with their recovery and sobriety.



When we originally began this journey of virtual drug court, we had hoped our April graduation would still be an in-person gathering to celebrate the accomplishments of the three outstanding individuals. As time drew near, it was apparent that another first was about to be experienced; we would have a virtual graduation. Although it did not go as smoothly as we would have liked, it was appreciated by our graduates and their loved ones that the graduation was to take place. We learned so much from doing this, and we have especially learned that we will continue to video our graduations in the future, allowing the out-of-state friends and family members to join in the celebration of "such a time as this".

The program was video Zoomed live by the Court Coordinator's husband, Chuck Honaker. Barbara and Chuck were literally shooting from the hip, not knowing from day to day, and sometimes hour to

hour, how things were going to be conducted. Judge Joy Parks did such an outstanding job explaining the program to the audience and keeping things moving right along. Our District Attorney, Jeff Langley, was simply dynamic with his own personal attachment to the drug court program, touching everyone's heartstrings with his personal testimony of family battling addiction. Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris emailed a personal video expressing his pride of the graduates' accomplishments and expressing his authentic admiration of the NEDC Program of which so many families within the community of Union and Towns Counties have benefited. Representatives from the CACJ and the CJCC watched and delivered words of praise for the NEDC putting our graduates first and sharing this beautiful event with all those who wanted to share in this moment but could not.



The pledge of allegiance was led by Dawn Felix, the Case Manager, and the program was opened and closed in prayer, delivered by Captain Doug Loyd of the Union County Sheriff's Office. Captain Loyd also delivered expressions of pride for the graduates of the North Enotah Drug Court Program. The speaker was internationally acclaimed Tim Ryan, from the nationally syndicated A & E show "The Dope Man" and author of *From Dope to Hope*. He personally addressed Judge Parks and the team of NEDC for giving so much effort to the program, and he named the graduates as well as all of the participants from the program, providing encouragement and

expressions of gratitude for all drug court programs. Tim is an inspiring speaker and amazing advocate for those in recovery. NEDC was blessed to have such a motivating and thought-provoking speaker.



The graduation and the speaker's video can be found on the NEDC website at [northenotahdrugcourt.vpweb.com](http://northenotahdrugcourt.vpweb.com).

## COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES NEWS

### DATA TIP – TRACKING PARTICIPANT PROGRESS DURING COVID-19

*Submitted by Rachel Gage, CACJ Certification and Special Projects Officer*

NPC Research in partnership with NADCP recently delivered a webinar entitled "Tracking Participant Progress During COVID-19: What data to collect and why". Courts are encouraged to watch the recorded webinar at the link below to learn about how to appropriately track changes in services in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**About the webinar:** The COVID-19 pandemic has already had substantial impact on how treatment courts operate and on the services that participants receive. Are the changes you have implemented helping your participants? Has stopping some services harmed your participants? How do you know what the impacts are now and long term? In this time of constant change and scarce resources, data collection and monitoring can help treatment courts keep track of how participants are doing and measure the impact of the changes you've made. Regular review of program operations and your data can also help improve the effectiveness of your program over time. This webinar will review the data you can and should collect, tips for how to collect it, and examples for how to use it to measure participant progress and your treatment court impacts.

<https://www.nadcp.org/covid-19-resources/training-and-publications/tracking-participant-progress-during-covid-19-what-data-to-collect-and-why/>

For any data-related questions, please contact Rachel Gage at [Rachel.Gage@georgiacourts.gov](mailto:Rachel.Gage@georgiacourts.gov).

## REMINDERS

- ❖ The weekly compilation of COVID-19 Resources is available on the CACJ website. Ms. Tara Zellous, Treatment Fidelity Program Monitor, publishes the weekly compilation. A link to the most recent compilation is available at <https://www.gaaccountabilitycourts.org/>.
- ❖ Registration for Seeking Safety Training is currently open for District 7 adult accountability courts. Each court can register up to 3 attendees. The training will be held virtually on June 16-17, 2020. For details about the evidence-based curriculum and to register an attendee, please visit <https://www.gaaccountabilitycourts.org/seeking-safety>.
- ❖ Accountability Court Contact Information – Coordinators, please review the FY20 Accountability Court directory. Please verify that your contact information (name, email address, and telephone number) is correct. Also indicate if the presiding judge should be updated. If there is a change, please contact Ms. Sacha Greene to update the information.
- ❖ Reentry Partnership Housing (RPH) Reminder – At this time, the AOC-supported intranet for Court Coordinators is not available. As a result, resources for accountability court participant housing are no longer accessible using the platform. To continue operations and provide housing resources for program participants, please contact Kimberly Howard for the following:
  - Reentry Partnership Housing Application
  - HUD 8.11 Housing Application
  - CACJ Residential Resource Guide
- ❖ Please submit submissions for the June 2020 newsletter to Debbie Mott ([debbie.mott@georgiacourts.gov](mailto:debbie.mott@georgiacourts.gov)) by Wednesday, May 27. If you plan to include a photo where participants can be identified, please be sure to include a signed photo release consent with your submission.

# SAVE THE DATE

## 2020 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE



40+ Breakout Sessions  
4 Plenary Sessions  
Sunday Networking Event  
Model Court, Data Driven &  
Star Awards Recognition  
Participant Art Exhibit  
Plus More!

Registration opens  
July 15, 2020

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