



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Michael D. Planet
Executive Officer/Clerk
and Jury Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 16, 2011

Contact: Robert Sherman
Assistant Executive Officer
(805) 654-2964

DRUG COURTS: A PROVEN BUDGET SOLUTION GRADUATION AND REUNION

The Ventura Superior Court will hold its 11th annual Juvenile and Dependency Drug Court Graduation and Reunion Ceremony on Thursday, May 26, 2011, at 3:00 p.m. in Courtroom 22 of the Hall of Justice. The ceremony will be presided over by Presiding Juvenile Court Judge Donald Coleman and Judge Tari Cody. The general public and all past drug court graduates are invited to attend.

Four Drug Court participants will graduate during the ceremony. Several past graduates from both programs are also scheduled to speak. Eleven Dependency Drug Court participants and 12 Juvenile Drug Court participants have successfully completed their programs this fiscal year.

Drug Court is a program that holds substance abusers responsible for their actions while providing them with the tools necessary to rebuild their lives. Graduation is the final step that highlights the completion of a minimum 12-month program of comprehensive drug treatment, close supervision and full accountability. All drug court participants undergo treatment and counseling, submit to frequent and random drug testing, make regular appearances before the drug court judge, and are closely monitored for adherence to the program.

Nationwide, for every \$1 invested in Drug Courts, taxpayers save as much as \$3.36 in avoided criminal justice costs alone. When considering other cost offsets such as savings from reduced victimization and healthcare service utilization, studies have shown benefits range up to \$12 for every \$1 invested. Family re-unification rates are also 50% higher for Dependency Drug Court participants. Here in California, drug courts result in a savings of \$18 million per year. A \$14 million investment returned \$43.3 million in savings over two years.

Many minors have been given a second chance to improve their lives since the inception of Juvenile Drug Court in September of 1999. This program is for minors charged with drug violations who have a moderate to severe substance abuse problem. The goals of the program are to decrease juvenile criminal recidivism, increase school attendance and performance, achieve sobriety, reduce juvenile arrests for drug and alcohol related offenses, and decrease violent crimes.

Dependency Drug Court has been in operation since November of 2000. This program is for mothers who have given birth to newborns prenatally exposed to alcohol and/or drugs. The goals of the program are to provide the earliest possible intervention for these newborns while strengthening the ability of mothers to care for them. The program offers a secure environment for mothers and their newborns to develop an early mother/child bonding relationship in an intensive residential treatment program followed by a safe supervised transition to an outpatient treatment program. Participation in Dependency Drug Court results in early reunification of the family.

These two drug court programs are a collaborative effort by the Ventura Superior Court, Ventura County District Attorney's Office, Ventura County Public Defender's Office, Ventura County Probation Agency, Ventura County Behavioral Health Alcohol and Drug Programs, Ventura County Public Health, Ventura County Human Services Agency Children and Family Services, CalWORKs Job and Career Centers and local community treatment providers to end the cycle of crime and substance abuse, making our county a better place in which to live.

###