



# 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 22, 2012

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

## **DRUG COURT GRADUATION AND REUNION**

The Ventura Superior Court will hold its 12th annual Juvenile and Dependency Drug Court Graduation and Reunion Ceremony on Thursday, May 24, 2012, at 3:00 p.m. in Courtroom 22 of the Hall of Justice. The ceremony will be presided over by Supervising Juvenile Judge Manuel Covarrubias, Judge Gay Conroy and Judge David Worley. The public, media and all past drug court graduates are invited to attend.

“National Drug Court Month” is coordinated on a national level by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). This year, Drug Courts throughout the nation are celebrating National Drug Court Month with the theme: “Drug Courts: Where Accountability Meets Compassion.”

Like the other 2,600 operational Drug Courts in the United States, the Ventura County Drug Courts are judicially-supervised court dockets that reduce correctional costs, protect community safety, and improve public welfare. In Drug Courts, seriously drug-addicted individuals remain in treatment while under close supervision. Drug Court participants must meet their obligation to themselves, their families, and community. To ensure accountability, they are regularly and randomly tested for drug use, required to appear frequently in court for the judge to review their progress, rewarded for doing well and sanctioned for not living up to their obligations. Research continues to show that Drug Courts work better than jail or prison, better than probation, and better than treatment alone.

Drug Courts are this nation's most effective strategy at reducing recidivism among seriously drug addicted, nonviolent offenders with long criminal histories. Nationally, 75% of individuals who complete Drug Court are not re-arrested. Drug Courts save up to \$13,000 for every individual they serve and return as much as \$27 for every \$1 invested.

"Drug Courts are a proven budget solution and must be expanded," said NADCP CEO West Huddleston in a recent statement. "This May, Drug Courts throughout the country are demonstrating that a combination of accountability and compassion should be the foundation upon which our criminal justice system handles drug addicted individuals. By treating our chronically addicted offenders, we can save vast amounts of money, protect public safety and reduce drug abuse in the community."

Mr. Huddleston acknowledged the progress of the last two decades, but stated that more can be done. "In order to truly end the cycle of substance abuse and crime," he added, "we must put a Drug Court within reach of every eligible American."

Many minors have been given a second chance to improve their lives since the inception of Juvenile Drug Court and the Recovery Classroom. These programs are for minors charged with drug violations who have a moderate to severe substance abuse problem. The goals of these programs 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 goal of the program is 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. Family re-unification rates are 50% higher for Dependency Drug Court participants.

The 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, Ventura County School Districts, 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.

###