

MEDINA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDGE KEVIN W. DUNN JUNE 2014

VOLUNTEER GUARDIANSHIP PROGRAM CELEBRATES 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Approximately 30 volunteer guardians, wards, court personnel and donors celebrated the 10th anniversary of Medina County Volunteer Guardianship Program June 5, 2014 at the Brunswick Eagles Club.

The program, which began in Medina County in 2004, currently has 23 active wards – people

incapable of managing their own affairs, either because of age or mental illness – and 37 trained volunteer guardians.

“Your dedication to your wards is astronomical,” Judge Kevin Dunn told the volunteers. “You’re providing a human touch that these people so desperately need when they don’t have family members of their own to assist them.”

Judge Dunn and Volunteer



Annual Volunteer Guardianship Picnic 2014

Guardianship Coordinator Nicki Shook recognized and thanked each volunteer for their years of service, ranging from four to ten years, and The National Association of Legal Secretaries of Northeast Ohio who generously donated \$500 to the program this year.

Judge Dunn said he recently received phone calls from other counties asking specifically about the Medina County Volunteer Guardianship Program, seeking training manuals and advice for

creating a successful program.

The Judge credits not only the volunteers, but also Shook for her dedication to the success of the program.

“She works so hard investigating referrals for wards,” he said. “She’s the eyes and ears that helps make this program work.”

Court Administrator Sharon Danko echoed the Judge’s statements

about Shook, but also said she believes Judge Dunn has done a great job continuing and promoting the program created by his predecessor Judge John Lohn.

“Judge Dunn has done a wonderful job carrying on the vision of this program,” Danko said. “Receiving those calls from other counties asking for our input verifies that we are doing something right.”

To learn more about the Medina County Volunteer Guardianship Program, visit MedinaProbate.org.

Continued Legal Education

Judge Kevin Dunn and Medina County Probate Magistrate Lorie Brobst emceed the Medina County Bar Association Continued Legal Education seminar May 30, 2014 at Williams on the Lake.

One of the topics of this seminar was about possible changes and updates to rule making in the process of guardianships—an appropriate topic for Medina County Probate Court as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Volunteer Guardianship Program.

Judge Dunn said there are currently 11 attorneys registered as guardians in our county.



Judge Dunn with members of the National Association of Legal Secretaries of Northeast Ohio



Volunteer guardians Mary Keller and Linda Darling, with Leonard, one of Medina County’s active wards.

**Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court will be closed Friday, July 4, 2014.
Court will resume Monday, July 7, 2014 at 8:00 a.m.**

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TESTIFY TRAVELING YOUTH CHOIR RETURNS TO MEDINA COUNTY JDC FOR A PERFORMANCE

Testify Youth Choir returned to the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center June 18, 2014 to perform for residents who chose to attend.

Approximately 50 youth and ten adult members of the non-denominational group from Lake Norman, North Carolina performed a skit about forgiveness and sang eight songs in the JDC gymnasium.

In the skit, a teen chooses to drink and drive before a school dance. The passenger in his car—his girlfriend—does not survive the crash. The young girl's mother, father, brother and sister act out the emotions of a grieving family, showing sadness, anger and eventually, forgiveness.

After the performance, JDC residents were invited to join choir members for prayer. Nearly every one of the facility's 25 residents participated.

"It blows me away to see how



Members of Testify Youth Choir and detention center residents join together to pray and offer each other words of encouragement.

these kids react to us," said Randy Clark of Testify Youth Choir. "It always starts the same. They come in here and sit down and appear very guarded. But it only takes one or two in the audience to get into it. It's really powerful to see that response."

Chaplain Susan Jarvis asked the JDC residents to complete worksheets after the performance

sharing their feedback.

"I'd like to thank the Testify group for being unashamed," said one resident. "The Lord did a great thing through them in the lives of the kids in the MCJDC, mine included. I was physically, mentally and spiritually moved by the prayer from those kids. The presence of God in that room was undeniable."

Some residents also asked for information on how to

keep in contact with the choir or possibly join the traveling group.

Testify Director Susan O'Keefe said the group will visit one other detention center this summer in Circleville, Ohio as they travel throughout North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia.

Additional responses from MCJDC residents can be found on page 3.

DETENTION CENTER EARNS 100 PERCENT COMPLIANCE SCORE 8TH YEAR IN A ROW



The Medina County Juvenile Detention Center passed its 2014 annual inspection by the Ohio Department of Youth Services with 100 percent compliance again this year.

The inspector reviewed policies and procedures, matching them against more than 100 mandatory state standards to

ensure that the facility is in compliance with the criteria for fire safety, water, light levels and the National School Lunch Program, providing nutritionally balance meals for the residents.

The inspector also conducted a physical inspection of the property with no findings of any violations.

"This is the eighth consecutive year that we have passed with a 100 percent rating," said Juvenile Detention Center Superintendent Ron Stollar. "This is a direct result of the efforts of our employees who do the real work of maintaining our facility. The credit is all theirs."

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MCJDC RESIDENTS REACT TO THE TESTIFY YOUTH CHOIR PERFORMANCE

After the Testify Youth Choir performance, Medina County Juvenile Detention Center administrators and Chaplin Susan Jarvis asked the residents of the JDC to share their thoughts about not only the choir, but the topics of forgiveness and faith discussed in the skits.

There was a lot of positive feedback. Most residents asked how they can keep in touch with the choir members or even how to join themselves. Below are some of the responses from the feedback worksheets.

"The part of the program I enjoyed most was when the kids came and prayed with us. I'd like to thank the Testify group for coming to our jail and showing me how to live better and for being so friendly to us."

"I'd like to thank the Testify group for being out here to share your faith with the rest of us."

"The part of the program I enjoyed most was how the kids were so into it and how well they brought (their) feelings out and how they talked at the end to us."

"As a result of the Testify skit, I learned that I'm never alone and forgiveness is the best thing a wounded heart can endure."

"I'd like to thank the Testify group for coming out and doing what they did. The part of the program I enjoyed most was the singing."

"I'd like to thank the Testify group for taking the time and effort to come all the way to Ohio to do such an amazing thing for a group of kids most people would look at as losers."



Members of Testify Youth Choir performing at the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center June 18, 2014.

"As a result of the Testify skit, I learned that I need to forgive and ask for forgiveness of those I have harmed. The skit had really touched me and spoke to my current situation."

"I'd like to thank the Testify group for being so kind and opening my heart to God to a better extent."

"As a result of the Testify skit, I learned if someone can forgive the person who killed a family member, I can forgive the petty things I have been holding onto."

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JUDGE, COMMUNITY SERVICE YOUTH JOIN FEEDING MEDINA COUNTY PLANTING DAY

Nine juvenile Community Service youth accompanied Judge Kevin Dunn, Community Service Supervisors Sheila Shuttera and Vera Stanley, Court Administrator Sharon Danko, and about two dozen other volunteers in planting a vegetable garden that will help Medina County residents in need.

The Judge and his daughters, Megan and Emily, broke first ground May 31, 2014 before volunteers began planting tomatoes, peppers, beans, spinach, peas, squash, cucumbers and carrots in the two-acre garden on Lafayette Road.

Medina County Juvenile Court began a collaborative effort with the community garden



Judge Kevin Dunn and Community Service youth ready to begin planting in the community garden.

during the first year in 2013. Juvenile Community Service workers not only assist in planting the produce, but they will return again this year as needed to help water, harvest and pull weeds.

In the next couple of months, the juveniles will also learn to prepare the food they helped grow with the assistance of Mark Williams and the staff of

Williams on the Lake.

All produce harvested from the garden will be used for Feeding Medina County's hunger outreach programs, including Free Fresh Produce Outreach Distribution, Staples for Seniors, and Weekenders for Children.

MEDINA COUNTY PROBATE OFFICE GAINS NEW CLERK, DRUG COURT GAINS NEW PROBATION OFFICER



Lisa Feher is joining Medina County Probate Court as the newest clerk this month.

Feher, who previously worked in banking for nearly 15 years, will be working part-time handling name changes, marriage licenses, and eventually helping with

accounts receivable in Probate Court.

"Staff here have been so welcoming," Feher said. "I think my background in banking where it's necessary to pay attention to details and make sure everything is in compliance make me a good fit for this position."



Jeremy Smith joined Medina County Drug Court as the newest specialized docket probation officer on June 9, 2014.

Smith, a former sergeant at the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center said he believes his experience at the MCJDC working with the juveniles

and their families will help him transition smoothly into his new role.

"Everyone has been really friendly and helpful to me," Smith said. "Some of the things I am used to, but there is definitely a lot of things to learn."