

MEDINA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDGE KEVIN W. DUNN MARCH 2015

JUNIOR LEADERSHIP MEDINA COUNTY CLASS OF 2015 VISITS DRUG COURT

Junior Leadership Medina County Class of 2015 returned to the Juvenile Detention Center this month to witness a session of the Medina County Juvenile Drug Court hearings first hand.

When the class first visited the detention center in February for their Government Day, Judge Dunn, Court Administrator Sharon Danko, and Chief Magistrate Susana Lewis offered the class an opportunity to voluntarily come back to sit in on the specialized docket hearings.

"We wanted to give these future leaders the opportunity to see what happens during a hearing and a true example of how the Court works to enforce restorative justice," Danko said.

Approximately 12 students from JLMC attended the Tuesday night hearings held at the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center. Before entering the room, Chief Magistrate Lewis and Court Administrator Danko insisted that the students



Junior Leadership Medina County Class of 2015 with Judge Kevin Dunn, Court staff, MCJDC Superintendent Ron Stollar and JLMC advisor Susan Vlcek following Drug Court March 10.

understand that confidentiality is required of them.

"This is a first for us to give you all the privilege to come in and view actual Drug Court hearings," Danko told the class.

She added that these hearings are not open to the public and if the Court receives notice that confidentiality was compromised, this would be the first and last time JLMC would be invited to attend the hearings.

"Please don't ruin this opportunity for future Leadership classes," Danko said.

Chief Magistrate Lewis then put the JLMC class members under oath before entering the room. The students sat in the back of the room to witness ten review hearings from juveniles involved in the Intensive Component of the Drug Court program. During this

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MCJDC CORPORAL ADVANCES TO SERGEANT WHILE OTHER EARNS ANNUAL IN-HOUSE MVP AWARD



Sgt. Megan Millikin

"The Medina County Juvenile Detention Center is pleased to announce the promotion of Megan C. Millikin to the rank of sergeant," MCJDC Superintendent Ron Stollar said. "This promotion was the culmination of a competitive process that included a written exam on the policies and procedures of the detention center, regulations of the Ohio Department of Youth Services, a close examination of her leadership qualities, and a series of oral

interviews. Sgt. Millikin consistently puts forth outstanding effort and excels at her job."

Millikin has been employed by the detention center since October 2012. In July 2014, she was promoted to corporal.



Sgt. Dee Arndt

"Sgt. Dee Arndt, through affirmation of her peers, has received the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center's 2014 Most Valuable Player recognition. Sgt. Arndt consistently exemplifies the mission of the detention center and routinely performs beyond the scope of her regular work duties. Sgt. Arndt is always positive, helpful, encouraging to her coworkers, and demonstrates superior service to others," Stollar

said, noting that this honor is limited to only one employee each year.

Sgt. Arndt has been with the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center since August 2011.

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MEDINA JUVENILE COURT CONTINUES TO PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL BUCKEYE DAY

2015 Buckeye Day Local Vendors

Advanced Spine and Joint
and Wellness

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Boy Scouts of America

Buckeye Activity Center

Buckeye Education
Foundation

Buckeye Local Schools

Cleveland Clinic
Community Outreach

Country Life Kids Camp

Erhart Fire Department

Girl Scouts of America

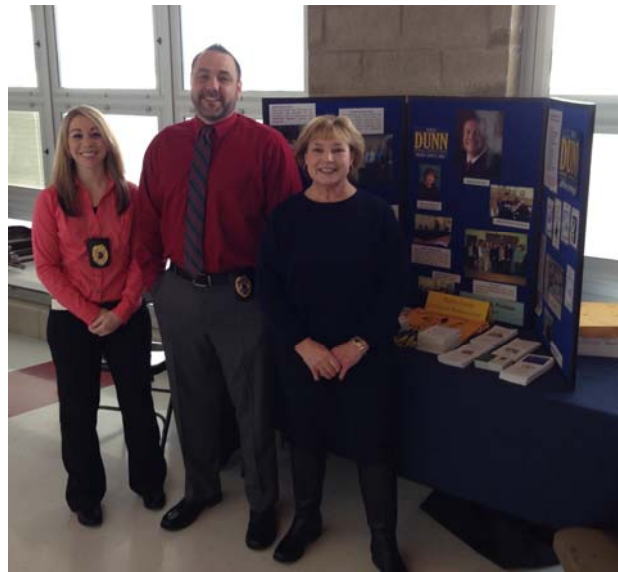
Medina County Juvenile
Court

Medina County Juvenile
Detention Center

Medina County Sheriff's
Office

Relay for Life—American
Cancer Society

Valley City Chamber of
Commerce



Probation Officers Jamie Tropkoff and Jeremy Smith with Court Administrator Sharon Danko at Buckeye Day March 7.

Court Administrator Sharon Danko and Probation Officers Jamie Tropkoff and Jeremy Smith attended the fourth annual Buckeye Day March 7, 2015 at Buckeye Elementary School. During the event, community members, vendors and school officials gathered to celebrate the community and the Arts.

“The Arts are an essential part of public education. From music to theatre to the visual arts, the Arts give children a unique way of expressing themselves, understanding their emotions, and allowing

them to explore new ideas,” Buckeye Local School District Superintendent Brian Williams wrote in the event brochure.

Middle school and high school band members performed various concerts throughout the day with the fourth grade students playing recorders and excerpts from *SHREK the Musical!* as attendees wandered around speaking to various local agencies. Tropkoff and Smith, Juvenile Probation Officers assigned to Buckeye School District, were there to distribute Court literature and answer any questions about the Court and its programs community members had.

“Making sure we participate in these events is beneficial to maintain positive relationships and to show our support,” Danko said. “We receive tremendous support from the schools and other agencies so we want to make sure that we reciprocate that and be as helpful on our end.”



Probation Officers Smith and Tropkoff with Buckeye Local Schools Superintendent Brian Williams at the 2015 Buckeye Day.

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MEDINA JUVENILE DRUG COURT SEEKS GRANT ASSISTANCE FROM MCDAC

The Medina County Juvenile Drug Court submitted another grant application this month with hopes to receive funds from the Medina County Drug Abuse Commission. These funds, as in past years, will be used to help offset the costs of the specialized docket program.

Drug Court has received a grant of varying amounts from MCDAC for the past 12 years. This year, Drug Court is hoping to again receive \$11,600 to help offset the cost of retaining two contract clinicians through Solutions Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.

The contracted clinicians provide drug and alcohol and mental health counseling to juveniles involved in the Medina County Juvenile Drug Court Program, in both the non-intensive and intensive components of the program.

In these counseling sessions, the juveniles learn to apply skills to manage problems they may be facing without resorting to alcohol or drug use. They develop treatment plans, teach juveniles about refusal skills and goal setting, and attend the weekly Drug Court hearings to provide treatment updates and recommendations to the Judge as needed. The goal of Drug Court is to



Court Administrator Danko assists with the MCDAC booth at the Medina County Home and Garden Show March 7.

provide increased guidance, supervision, support and encouragement to the participants and their families.

“Treatment is necessary to identify a youth’s strengths and weaknesses,” said Program Director Phillip Titterington. “The clinicians create individual case plans to help foster a drug- and alcohol-free, pro-social lifestyle and evaluate the participants’ progress along the way.”

As a thank you for the continued assistance in funding, the Medina

County Juvenile Court assists the Medina County Drug Abuse Commission with community events.

Sharon Danko, Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court Administrator and the MCDAC Commissioners Alternate Representative since 2014, recently helped with the MCDAC booth at the Medina County Home and Garden Show March 7.

“I was a board member of MCDAC years ago and I’ve always valued what they stand for,” Danko said. “Last year I had the opportunity to return to the board so I took advantage.”

In addition to the Home and Garden Show, the Court also assists with the MCDAC booth at the annual Medina County Fair and showcases the agency’s symbol in the Court hallway and Court literature.

“We display the MCDAC logo as an understanding that they help fund our program, but MCDAC also works to reduce drug and alcohol in our community and that’s a common goal we have at the Court,” Danko said. “They help us and in turn, we work to rehabilitate and cease drug and alcohol abuse with the juveniles we see in our Court.”

RALPH E. WAITE WINS MCPAL CHAMPIONSHIP



Judge Kevin Dunn tips-off MCPAL Championship Game March 26.

Ralph E. Waite Elementary walked away with the championship trophy after the second annual Medina Community Police Activities League (MCPAL) March Madness Tournament Thursday, March 26.

Judge Kevin Dunn volunteered to tip-off the championship game at the Medina Community Recreation Center between Ralph E. Waite and Ella Canavan Elementary, who came up short with a 56-62 final score.

MCPAL, a non-profit organization funded in large part

by the Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court, is a partnership between the Court, area police departments and the schools to bring officers and kids together utilizing educational, athletic and recreational activities to create trust and understanding between police officers and youth.

To learn more about MCPAL, visit www.MontvilleTwp.org or www.MedinaProbate.org and click on the Medina Community Police Activities League link.

Photo courtesy of Rebecca Byrne, Assistant Director, MCPAL

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MEDINA COUNTY VGP COORDINATOR SPEAKS TO SOCIETY FOR HANDICAPPED CITIZENS STAFF

Medina County's Volunteer Guardianship Program Coordinator Nicki Shook presented an in-service guardian training at the Society for Handicapped Citizens February 26.

Shook said she was asked to speak to the staff of SHC due to first hand experiences the staff was facing with the developmentally disabled population. Specifically, what rights wards have and how to effectively deal with informed consent when a ward has been deemed incompetent.

Shook addressed this issue by saying that decisions should only be made after full disclosure of the facts and guardians should consult with the ward when possible. However, when a ward has been deemed incompetent, the guardian is urged to make decisions in the wards best interest based on what the guardian believes the ward would want.

"Best interest' is protecting the ward and seeking services that will help the ward reach or maintain his or her highest degree of functionality in the least restrictive environment possible," Shook said.

Shook emphasized that guardians must always act in the best interest of the ward when carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Those responsibilities include decisions regarding appropriate home care or

facility placement, medical decisions and funeral arrangements, among other things.

"These decisions should support the individuals wishes whenever feasible and not be harmful," Shook said citing Revised Code 2111.50.

Shook also spoke to the SHC staff about the use of Court intervention in a guardianship matter when needed.

"If it seems that guardians are not appropriately carrying out their duties, any interested party, including the ward, may ask the Probate Court to review the guardianship,"

Shook said. "The Court is the superior Guardian of the ward."

Shook told the SHC staff that during any Court hearing regarding the

guardianship, the ward has the right to be present at the hearing, to contest the application for a guardian, to have a friend or family member present, and the right to be represented by an attorney.

"Having these rights empowers individuals to advocate for themselves and help the Court possibly investigate any concerns, issues, or the relationship dynamics of the potential or current guardian," Shook said.

For more information regarding Guardianships or the Volunteer Guardianship Program, visit www.MedinaProbate.org.

What Is Guardianship?

A guardianship is an involuntary trust relationship in which one party, called a guardian, acts for an individual called the ward. The law requires the ward as incapable of managing his or her own person and/or affairs.

A guardian may be appointed for either a minor or an incompetent—any person who is mentally impaired as a result of a mental or physical illness or disability, or as a result of chronic substance abuse, that he is incapable of taking proper care of himself or his property or fails to provide for his family.

91 Incompetent Guardianship cases were filed with the Medina County Probate Court in 2014.

This article DOES NOT take the place of consulting an attorney, financial advisor or any other legal advice.

Junior Leadership continued...

particular Drug Court session, a majority of the youth involved in the program received praise for increasing their participation in treatment and counseling, doing well in school and at home, and for passing random drug screens. As a reward for their good efforts, the Judge, Drug Court Probation Officers and Counselors handed out candy bars, iTunes gift cards and pens, among other things.

"Giving someone a candy bar might seem silly to people who aren't involved in this program," Judge Dunn said. "But for a lot of the kids involved with our Court, they're not used to being rewarded for good behavior. We want to give them credit



Chief Magistrate Lewis conducts a confidentiality oath with JLMC Class of 2015 before entering Drug Court March 10.

and let them know that we recognize when they're trying to work hard and improve their behaviors."

The JLMC students noted after the hearings that the process overall seemed positive for both the juveniles and their parents who are also required to attend the Drug Court hearings. One JLMC student even commented that she has noticed better behavior at school from one of her fellow classmates who is in the Drug Court program.

"I noticed he has been completely different at school and doing better in class," she said. "I've definitely seen an impact so it's cool to see that this program is where it's coming from."