



MEDINA COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

Probate and Juvenile Divisions

93 Public Square, Room 104, Medina, Ohio 44256

KEVIN W. DUNN
Judge

MEDIA RELEASE

August 23, 2019

Medina County Juvenile Detention Center to Become First Pilot Site for *because I said I would* Correctional Programming for Youth



It's a simple concept: Make a promise and follow through with it. *because I said I would* is a social movement and nonprofit dedicated to the betterment of humanity through promises made and kept. The message reaches across the world through Promise Cards, awareness campaigns, and character education in middle schools, high schools, colleges, and beginning this month... the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center.

On May 24, 2019, Jaelyn Balliet, the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center (MCJDC) Youth Fulfillment Coordinator,

will begin working with facility residents on the first 12-week *because I said I would* program tailored specifically for detained youth. The curriculum, created by Kay Spatafore, M. Ed. and VP of Character Education, and Sherry Rosenfeld, MA and VP of Chapter Programs for *because I said I would*, will cover topics including how to handle broken promises, the courage to say no, and "why people suck at keeping promises."

"Unfortunately, in today's society, we do a very poor job at keeping our promises," said MCJDC Superintendent Ron Stollar. "And people notice when good intentions aren't fulfilled. We judge ourselves by our last good intention, but everyone else judges us by our last worst action."

Alex Sheen, founder and CEO of *because I said I would*, has visited the MCJDC twice and created a lasting impact on residents. There is currently a curriculum in place at Pendleton Correctional Facility in Indiana, but it is tailored for adult inmates. This is what prompted Stollar to reach out and see if a program for detained youth could be created and utilized to continue spreading the inspiring message with the residents and facility staff.

"I hope this curriculum is going to impact more than just our youth," Stollar said. "We want the message to be as widespread throughout our building, and ultimately our community, as we can make it."

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Balliet said the curriculum was created to work as individual workshops each week, meaning while most residents will not remain detained for the full 12-week course, they will still attain valuable skills from the program for any amount of time they are there.

“This program goes beyond talking about promises,” she explained. “Our residents will learn the tools to communicate during conflict, to express their feelings during disappointment, to take responsibility for themselves rather than focus on external factors, and will ultimately help them understand what is within their power and control.”

Balliet said all detained youth will participate in the mandatory curriculum and will begin by writing down their own promise to complete. She said the promise has to be something attainable and must be within the residents’ means to complete on their own. After they identify a promise they would like to fulfill, they will work on a Promise Planner, detailing all parties involved, best practices they will need to use, and discuss any barriers to completing their intention.

The residents will need to identify necessary actionable steps and may earn achievement badges throughout the process. Achievement badges can be earned for apologizing, sharing a personal story, maintaining a personal code of honor based on core values, and accountability. The badges are designed to help inspire the youth to continue creating and following through with thoughtful, impactful individual promises moving forward in their lives. Upon successfully completing each promise, the cards will be returned to them.

“It’s a true show of character to make a promise and fulfill your word,” said Judge Kevin W. Dunn. “It is a promise that overcomes all boundaries that can be imposed by an environment or ideology. The act of hand delivering a written promise to another is an intense first-step of human interaction, and claiming back ‘your card’ after fulfilling your promise is an accomplishment in developing integrity and self-worth. We are excited and honored to be a pilot site for such a worthy endeavor.”

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