



# MEDINA COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

## Probate and Juvenile Divisions

93 Public Square, Room 104, Medina, Ohio 44256

KEVIN W. DUNN  
Judge

MEDIA RELEASE

October 25, 2016

## Juvenile Court Hosts GAL Training Highlighting Services Available and Reporting Expectations

MEDINA – The Medina County Juvenile Court hosted a training session on October 14 for Guardians *ad Litem* (GAL) to address expectations and requirements for appointed GALs, and increase awareness of newer services and programs available both through the Court and in the community.

The Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court appoints Guardians *ad Litem* to represent the best interests of children. The GAL is responsible for gathering relevant information regarding the child's home life, family history, and schooling in order to provide an informed recommendation to the Court.

“You are the first barrier to help protect a child in our community” Judge Kevin W. Dunn said. “It’s a heavy obligation but it’s important that you do a great job to protect that child’s best interests.”

Chief Magistrate Susana Lewis said that, unfortunately, the county is experiencing an influx of heroin use, creating a higher need for GALs. Job and Family Services Attorney Jennifer Moore also noted that she has seen an increase in heroin use in JFS referrals.

In addition to discussing expectations of GALs in situations of emergency, the goal of the training was to review Superintendence Rule 48, and Medina County Juvenile Court Local Rule 18, and an overview of programs and services provided by the Court and in the community to connect families to resources.

Judge Dunn has implemented new programs for youth and their families. The first implementation was the Juvenile Court Intake Department. Juveniles who appear before the Court for the first time meet with the Intake Officer one hour prior to their hearing for an Intake Interview. During this interview, the Intake Officer is able to gather information regarding mental health history, drug and alcohol history, school attendance, grades, and social history. This information helps the Judge and Magistrate’s determine the best services or programs needed for the Juvenile and their family, and to identify areas of concern. The Intake Interview also helps determine the level of supervision needed, as well as other orders necessary to protect victims and the community.

Another new program available through Juvenile Court is the Teen Intervention 180 (Ti-180) program. Ti-180 helps provide early intervention for substance use, increase resiliency, provide parents with education regarding signs and symptoms of substance use, and to identify those youth who could benefit

-more-

Contact: Kristyn Cooke, 330.764.8751

To learn more about the Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court or Court programs, visit our websites at [www.MedinaJuvenile.org](http://www.MedinaJuvenile.org) and [www.MedinaProbate.org](http://www.MedinaProbate.org).

from a behavioral health assessment based on the results of the screening tools that are administered prior to the program, as well as, urine drug screen results.

Magistrates Lisa Louy and Dennis Paul urged the GALs to not only speak with Court personnel, but to exhaust every possible source for information before submitting their Guardian *ad Litem* report to the Court.

“Dig deep into records from the schools and the doctor’s office, talk to neighbors and caretakers,” Magistrate Paul said. “There is a mountain of information out there. We need you to bring that mountain to us in the courtroom so that we can act in the best interest of the child.”

-end-

*Contact: Kristyn Cooke, 330.764.8751*

*To learn more about the Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court or Court programs, visit our websites at [www.MedinaJuvenile.org](http://www.MedinaJuvenile.org) and [www.MedinaProbate.org](http://www.MedinaProbate.org).*