

# MEDINA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDGE KEVIN W. DUNN OCTOBER 2013

## GIRLS CIRCLE CELEBRATES GRADUATION

Participants in the Medina County Girls Circle Program celebrated graduation October 28, 2013 at the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC).

Girls Circle, a program in collaboration with Alternative Paths and the Medina County Juvenile Court, is a Court ordered program providing girls from nine to 18 years of age on probation the skills to form authentic relationships, build self-esteem and abstain from drug and alcohol use. The Medina County extension of this national program began in 2009.

The girls celebrated their success alongside parents, siblings, Judge Kevin Dunn, Court Administrator Sharon Danko, Medina County JDC Assistant Superintendent Rick Reuss, Medina County Probation Officers, Drug and Alcohol Counselor Emily Sanderson, and Girls Circle Facilitator Carrie Sellers.

The five participants in this tenth round of the program have attended group sessions once a week for the past twelve weeks.

In those sessions, the girls talked and listened to one another on topics ranging from trust, friendships, body image, goals, sexuality, drugs and alcohol, boundaries and planning for the future.

The girls also worked to increase their skills to look beyond reputations and find commonalities with others who may be experiencing similar life events or issues.

"This group got along great," Sellers said. "There was drama going on outside of group, but it wasn't amongst them. They were all supportive of each



**64**  
girls have  
successfully  
graduated from  
Medina County  
Girls Circle  
Program since  
2009.

other."

Sellers said the lack of drama may be due to the fact that this was the smallest group of Girls Circle she's ever facilitated.

The girls had the chance at graduation to show off collages they created in the third week of the

program to their families. The collages depict images of a troubled past with poor choices, leading to a bridge illustrating those who provide support for the girls or positive things in their lives. The bridge then leads to the girls' goals and hopes for the future.

One mother said that she has seen a positive change in her daughter's behavior at home since group began.

Judge Dunn said he hopes the girls have gained some insight, self-respect and self-esteem from the program.

"You're limited only to how you limit yourself," Judge Dunn told the girls. "When things feel tough, I hope you remember you can turn to your support

staff with your families, Mrs. Sellers and your Probation Officers."

Probation Officer Nicole Zornes, who had one probationer in the program, added how proud she is and hopes the girls retain the skills they learned.

"There are always setbacks in life, but I hope you continue to move forward toward your goals and use your supports," Zornes said.

While the date for another series of Girls Circle isn't set yet, Sellers said she is hoping for a new session to begin in early 2014.

## HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT COMING TO BUCKEYE HIGH

Judge Kevin W. Dunn is helping promote and support the Bath Township and Copley Police Departments by encouraging parents to attend the Hidden In Plain Sign exhibit at Buckeye High School November 19, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. The exhibit was created to help parents identify the secret hiding spots and sneaky behaviors that can be found in a child's bedroom.

"Parents should make it a course to walk through their kids' bedrooms," Judge Dunn said. "Kids think of their room as an escape but parents need to check it out and know what their kids are engaged in."

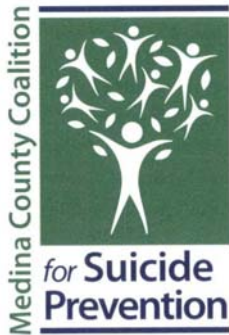
Parents will have the opportunity to interact with the exhibit, a set up of a child's bedroom with approximately 200 items, half of which are drug paraphernalia. Parents are challenged to spot potential items that could be a sign of risky behavior such as substance abuse, underage drinking, eating disorders, sexual activity and more.

There is no charge to attend the program. No youth are permitted. To learn more about the Hidden in Plain Sight traveling exhibit and future presentation dates, visit [www.BathTownship.org](http://www.BathTownship.org).

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## STUDENTS ASKED TO HELP “STOMP OUT SUICIDE”



Seven percent of Medina County Youth, grades 6-12, attempted suicide in 2012, according to the Medina County Community Needs Assessment 2012 — a statistic Judge Kevin Dunn doesn't think should be ignored.

That is why Judge Dunn is supporting the Medina County Coalition for Suicide Prevention, an organization he joined in August, by asking students residing in Medina County to help “Stomp Out Suicide” by creating a 60 to 120 second video educating others on suicide risk factors and what actions to take if you know someone who is suicidal.

“It takes a community to raise awareness about suicide prevention and to help our youth,” said Seth Kujat, Executive Director of United Way in Medina County. “Judge Dunn has been

part of our community for 22 years and is a model of true collaboration.”

Kujat said Judge Dunn is proving that to be true once again by helping to raise awareness on this issue. As of October 15, Judge Dunn has included Medina County Coalition for Suicide Prevention information in all hearing notices sent in the mail to juvenile offenders and their families. These mailings will continue to be sent to families for one month, until November 15, 2013.

“We are sending out this information to make people aware that there is help and alternative ways to cope other than to take your own life,” Judge Dunn said.

Judge Dunn said he hopes the Stomp Out Suicide video contest will allow students the opportunity to share that message with others.

The winner of the contest will receive \$1,000, plus \$1,000 for their school. Contest information and forms can be found at [www.AlternativePaths.org](http://www.AlternativePaths.org), also linked on [www.MedinaJuvenile.org](http://www.MedinaJuvenile.org). Video submissions are due by November 30, 2013.

2012 Medina County Youth  
Suicide Statistics  
(Grades 6-12)

**17%** of Medina County youth had seriously considered attempting suicide

**7%** of Medina County youth did attempt suicide

**25%** felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row

In Medina County, the 15-24 and 45-54 age groups had the highest number of suicides in 2010.

Source: Medina County Community Needs Assessment 2012

## JUDGE DUNN MEETS AND GREETS JDC STAFF



Judge Kevin W. Dunn holds Drug Court at the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) every Tuesday. Since he took the bench in August, he has become familiar with the facility,

but had not had much interaction with staff until October 8, 2013 when JDC administrators and employees invited the Judge over for an ice cream social.

Judge Dunn, who oversees 30 JDC employees, arrived between the first and second shift, allowing him to meet almost all of the JDC staff, comprised of one lieutenant, three sergeants, two corporals, 19 juvenile correction officers and five administrators. In addition, there are 21 volunteers, one clinician and two nurses at the detention center.

“He had a chance to come meet almost everyone and see first hand how well-cared for the kids are,” said Ron Stollar, Medina County Juvenile Detention Center Superintendent. “It was nice to get the employees exposed to him and hear a little bit about his life and prior work in private practice.”

Judge Dunn said he believes it's important to know everyone working with him and to let them know he appreciates all the hard work they do at the JDC.

“They're separate from the Court but I wanted to introduce myself and make sure they know I am not disengaged just because they're in a different building,” Judge Dunn said.

The Judge said the detention center is running smoothly and cosmetically still looks new, but there are plans to install more cameras, update security, and create a website for the detention center to provide information on visiting and release times, rules of the JDC, as well as medical and contact information. These updates are expected to begin within the next few weeks.