

# MEDINA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDGE KEVIN W. DUNN OCTOBER 2014

## PROBATE COURT COLLABORATES WITH LOCAL FIRST MERIT BANKS FOR TRAINING

Six First Merit Bank managers from Seville, Lodi, Medina and Wadsworth locations attended the first guardianship training session with Judge Kevin Dunn and Probate Court staff October 8, 2014. The purpose of the training session was to increase education on best policies and practices regarding guardianships and trust accounts.

During the one-hour session, Judge Dunn, Court Administrator Sharon Danko, Probate Clerk Karen Sliwinski and Volunteer Guardianship Coordinator Nicki Shook spoke to the First Merit Bank managers about types of guardianships, letters of authority and the difference between guardianships and power of attorney.

Judge Dunn said this training session was planned after First Merit Bank management voiced concerns to him regarding validation and enforcement on guardianship accounts.

In a guardianship or trust account, the bank helps the guardian set up the correct type of account for their ward. For minors, it is typically a restricted account where the juvenile cannot access the funds until the age of majority or without a specific court order. The Judge also explained to the managers that guardianship accounts always trump power of attorney orders.

"(The bank) is on the front line to notice if anything looks fishy," Sliwinski said. "We never want our wards to be exploited and (the bank) can often spot this before we would."

The bank also assists the Court when proof of assets, receipts and cancelled checks are required for the annual



account, which is submitted to the Court for review and approval.

Sliwinski said the first training session helped everyone get on the same page with terms, processes and timing for Court requirements, as well as factoring in bank regulations that may put restrictions on guardians.

"Most of the issues relate to regular expenditures," Sliwinski said. "Some banks say the guardian needs a

specific Court order for each check, but in reality, they typically get approval for an annual budget worth of spending. As long as the Court has approved an expenditure, the guardian has the right to spend the ward's funds."

Judge Dunn said only managers came to the first session to see how beneficial the training would be for the bank's time. Since the meeting was a success, Judge Dunn said there are plans to reach out to other bank managers and staff for training, even doing on-site trainings at the banks to minimize leaving facilities short staffed.

Danko said the intention of these training sessions isn't to practice law, but to educate the bank on basic practices with the hope to cut down on questions or confusion in the future.

"I believe (the bank) now understands what we do more fully, as well as the obligations of the guardian," Sliwinski said. "I think that through the training, we feel more like a team, rather than adversaries, with the goal of protecting the financial integrity of our wards."

## 2014 ANNUAL MEDINA COUNTY BUSINESS AWARDS

Judge Dunn joined other community and business leaders October 30 at the 2014 Annual Medina County Business Awards at the Blair Center in Westfield Center.

The event, presented by the Medina County Economic Development Corporation and Westfield Bank, celebrates the accomplishments of Medina County companies.



Left to right: Dave Mueller, CEO of RICO Equipment; Judge Kevin W. Dunn; and Andy DeLuna, Business Development Manager for Society for Handicapped Citizens



Left to right: Tim Hagerty, Executive Director of the Medina County Community Fund; Medina County Juvenile and Probate Judge Kevin Dunn; and Attorney Bill Hutson

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## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PLAN TO GIVE BACK THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE

This year's class of Leadership Medina County Young Professionals participated in Community Service Day October 15 where they learned how they may be able to collaborate with the Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court.

LMC Young Professionals is a group of individuals who participate in a program designed to provide those who are beginning in their career paths with the necessary tools, information and networking opportunities to benefit not only themselves, but the businesses they support. The goal of the program is to assist these young professionals in



developing the skills to become community and business leaders.

According to Lucy Sondles, Program Development Director for

Leadership Medina County, Young Professionals like to volunteer their time on small, hands-on projects. Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court Judge Kevin Dunn spoke with the Young Professionals and encouraged them to collaborate with the court to attain that volunteer work.

Because the 15 Young Professionals in this year's class are looking for work involving about three hours of volunteer time with a non-profit organization, the Judge suggested the following Court programs and was able to gain several volunteers.

### Medina County Juvenile Community Service Program

The Young Professionals would have the opportunity to join the juveniles during their court-ordered community service hours as they clean businesses, wash police vehicles, pick up trash, assist in community gardens and play games with elderly. Community Service work is provided Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

In 2013, the highest amount of Community Service hours were at the Wadsworth Police Department, Feeding Medina County, Soprema Courtyard Café in Wadsworth, Medina County Home and Buckeye High School.



### Medina Community Police Athletic League (MCPAL)

MCPAL is a youth crime prevention program utilizing athletic, educational and recreational activities between police officers and youth. According to the Montville Township Police Department website, the program is based on the conviction that young people, if they are reached early enough, can develop strong positive attitudes toward police officers and work toward the goal of maturity and good citizenship.

MCPAL currently has five after school programs in Medina, Lodi, Spencer and Brunswick, serving more than 150 children between the ages of 8 to 15 years old. During the program, officers, volunteers and children play basketball, dodge ball, kickball, interactive video games and board games. A tutoring component is also offered to help students complete homework assignments.

### Build-A-Bear Community Service Project



Every year, the Judge, members of the court staff and volunteers build and deliver over 100 Build-A-Bear stuffed toys to young children just before Christmas.

The bears arrive pre-stuffed with packed outfits. Volunteers insert fabric hearts into the stuffed toys before they are stitched up and dressed for delivery.

Last year, 160 children from the Achievement Center, the Help Me Grow program and children placed in the Medina County foster care system were surprised with a Build-A-Bear teddy bear, rabbit or dog.

The Build-A-Bear program, which began in 2007, has steadily increased the number of bears provided each year thanks to donations from local businesses and agencies.

Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court will be closed for the following holidays:

**Veteran's Day**  
Tuesday,  
November 11, 2014

**Thanksgiving Day**  
Thursday,  
November 27, 2014