



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
19th Judicial Circuit
Lake County
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

Date of Release: 5/12/09
Point of Contact: James K. Booras
Diane Flory
Telephone: 847.377.4500
847.377.3818

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

Local Drug Court Celebrates “National Drug Court Month” With Graduation Ceremony

In recognition of “National Drug Court Month”, Lake County will celebrate the graduation of two participants of its own Drug Court program. All 2,301 Drug Court programs across the United States have been asked to conduct ceremonies recognizing their own participants as part of the nationwide celebration of the successes of Drug Courts. The graduation ceremony will be held on May 15, 2009 in Courtroom C-201 of the Lake County Courthouse in Waukegan. The event will begin at 2:00 p.m. with all of the members of the Lake County Drug Court Team, public officials, law enforcement officers, families and friends in attendance.

At the ceremony, the Lake County Drug Court will graduate two participants from its Therapeutic Intensive Monitoring (TIM) Drug Court Program. For both David Hoff and Harold “Rick” Cline, the ceremony is the culmination of an intensive 30-month program which included drug treatment, weekly appointments and close scrutiny from all the team members.

“National Drug Court Month” is coordinated on a national level by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), which was established in 1994 to assist the planning, implementation and operation of Drug Courts. This year marks a historic milestone in the Drug Court movement reflected in May’s National Drug Court theme, “Celebrating Twenty Years of Drug Court: Restoring Lives, Reuniting Families and Making Communities Safer.”

What started in a Florida courtroom twenty years ago has become the nation's most successful strategy for dealing with substance abusing offenders and has led to the very uplifting commencement ceremonies that are being planned for May 15 throughout the country.

Like many of the 2,301 operational Drug Courts in the United States, Lake County's Therapeutic Intensive Monitoring Drug Court Program hears cases of offenders charged with drug-related crimes. Drug Courts relieve already overwhelmed court dockets, placing offenders in an environment, where they undergo treatment and counseling, submit to frequent and random drug testing, make regular appearances before the judge and are monitored closely for program compliance. Graduated sanctions, including jail time, are imposed for noncompliance. Conversely, incentives are applied for continual compliance. Like the other 2,300 operational Drug Courts, this Court works better than jail or prison, better than probation, and better than treatment alone.

Nationally, more than 70 percent of Drug Court participants have successfully completed the program or remain as active participants, and the cost of Drug Court programs are significantly less than the cost of incarceration in the traditional court system. A recent study by the Department of Justice found a cost/benefit of \$3.36 for every \$1.00 invested in treating drug-addicted offenders under the watchful eye of Drug Court. "In twenty years Drug Court has been one of the most researched programs in the criminal justice system," said NADCP CEO West Huddleston. "The scientific community has put Drug Court under the microscope and concluded that they work. In fact, Drug Courts significantly reduce drug abuse and crime and do so at less expense than any other justice strategy. This May, all across the nation, thousands are graduating Drug Court with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to serving their community. This is changing the face of our justice system." Mr. Huddleston acknowledged the progress of the last twenty years but stated that more can be done. "In order to truly end the cycle of substance abuse and crime," he added, "we must put a Drug Court in the reach of every American."

###

About NADCP

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), a not-for-profit organization located in the Nation's Capital, was founded in 1994 by a group of judicial visionaries to

reverse the growing impact of drug-related crime. They created a court model using a combination of accountability and treatment to compel and support drug-using offenders to change their lives. From that vision came the Drug Court movement and the NADCP. In 1997, NADCP and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) then partnered to create the National Drug Court Institute (NDCI), the professional services branch NADCP. Today, NADCP is the premier membership, training and advocacy organization for Drug Courts, representing over 22,000 multi-disciplinary Drug Court professionals. NADCP hosts the largest annual training conference on drugs and crime in the nation and annually provides over 80 Drug Court training and technical assistance events, benefiting tens of thousands of drug court professionals