

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY



GREGORY EDWARDS
Trial Court Administrator
Middlesex Vicinage
56 Paterson Street
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903-0964
(732)519-3428

WAYNE FIORINO
ATCA – Operations Manager
NATALIE H. MYERS
Human Resources Manager
MARY CAMILLE CHURGIN
Vicinage Finance Manager
JACK FAILLA
Information Technology Manager
Cheryl Williams
Municipal Division Manager

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For further information contact:
Tammy D'Aloia, Drug Court Coordinator
732-565-5057

Middlesex Drug Court Holds Graduation Ceremony

The Middlesex County Drug Court will hold its sixth graduation ceremony on Friday, May 4 at 10 a.m. in the jury room of the Middlesex County Courthouse, 56 Paterson St, New Brunswick. A total of 23 participants will be awarded certificates marking their completion of the final phase of a rigorous 3- to 5-year program of comprehensive drug treatment and intensive supervision.

Assignment Judge Travis L. Francis will deliver the welcome. Judge Lorraine Pullen, who presides over the Middlesex County Drug Court, will officiate. Judge Dennis Nieves will present remarks about the success of the program. Former Gov. Jim McGreevey will deliver the keynote address.

The drug court program is a highly specialized team process that functions within the criminal division of the Superior Court to address non-violent drug-related cases. Drug courts are unique in the criminal justice environment because they build a working relationship between criminal justice and drug treatment agencies.

Eligible defendants receive a sentence of three to five years of probation, with the requirement that they complete drug treatment and all aftercare requirements, attend self-help meetings and weekly drug court sessions, comply with random drug tests, pay legal obligations and obtain employment. Participants are closely monitored by designated drug court probation officers as they transition through four phases of recovery over the course of their sentence and eventual graduation from the drug court program.

New Jersey's drug courts have proven effective at breaking the cycle of drug abuse and crime, providing people who have drug addictions the opportunity to become productive citizens. They offer an effective alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders, and they help reduce minority over-representation in prison.

Since the program's inception, offenders have found employment and begun meeting their financial obligations, parents have regained custody of their children and dozens of drug-free babies have been born to participants around the state.

Since the Middlesex County program began in September 2004, 62 participants have graduated. Of these graduates, six regained custody of children; 34 regained their NJ driver's license; and 46 were eligible for medical benefits with their jobs. Twenty-six percent of the graduates improved their level of education or obtained vocational training.

Drug courts operate in every vicinage in New Jersey and serve more than 4,300 people statewide. Today, 316 Middlesex County Drug Court participants are in the program.

More information on drug courts can be found at njcourtonline.com.

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