



# **BURLINGTON VICINAGE PRESS RELEASE**

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## **BURLINGTON TO HOLD FIRST DRUG COURT GRADUATION**

**MOUNT HOLLY** – The Burlington County Superior Court will hold its first drug court graduation celebration on Thurs., May 3 at 12:30 p.m. at the Historic Prison Museum Courtyard, 128 High Street, Mount Holly. Burlington County Drug Court Judge Patricia Richmond LeBon will preside over this event.

Drug court is a highly specialized team process with a judge, prosecutor, defense attorneys, probation and treatment providers working together. Participants appear regularly before a Superior Court judge and are required to undergo frequent drug testing, obtain jobs, pay their fines and support their families. The clients are closely supervised by specially trained probation officers.

Drug court targets non-violent offenders with substance abuse issues. Drug court programs are rigorous, requiring completion of four phases that can take up to five years of intensive drug and alcohol treatment and random drug testing. This level of supervision permits the drug court team to support the recovery process and to react swiftly to impose appropriate interventions in order to help clients.

Three participants will graduate from drug court on May 3. Those clients are in Phase IV of the program, have met all the requirements of the program and have successfully completed their terms of probation supervision.

In addition to our graduates, we will commence five clients to Phase IV of the program. Participants who reach commencement have been in the program a minimum of 18 months and have made significant progress in meeting the goals of drug court. Those five participants will receive certificates marking their completion of Phase III of the program. They will remain on probation and will be subject to random drug testing, as well as periodic reporting to the drug court judge. Both graduates and clients entering Phase IV will serve as positive role models for participants active in the drug court program.

First opened in 2004, the Burlington drug court program currently serves more than 60 participants. For more event information, please contact Donna Westhoven Plaza, Burlington Vicinage drug court coordinator, at 609-518-2747.

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