



# **BURLINGTON VICINAGE PRESS RELEASE**

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## **SUPREME COURT JUSTICE ALBIN TO SPEAK AT BURLINGTON VICINAGE DRUG COURT GRADUATION**

**MOUNT HOLLY** – Burlington Vicinage will conduct its sixth drug court graduation on Thursday, Dec. 4 at 1 p.m. in the Burlington County Courts Facility, 49 Rancocas Road, Mount Holly, Courtroom 7A.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Barry T. Albin will address the graduates and guests attending the ceremony. Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder states, "We are honored and pleased that Justice Albin will be speaking at this event."

Six participants are graduating and two drug court participants are commencing into the final phase of the program. Since the program began in the Burlington Vicinage in September of 2004, nine participants have graduated from the program.

Criminal Division Judge Patricia Richmond LeBon, who serves as the drug court judge, will preside over the ceremony and present framed certificates to the graduates and those commencing to the final phase of the program. "This graduation ceremony highlights that drug court has a positive impact on both the individuals participating in the program and the entire community," said LeBon.

Drug court is a highly specialized team process with a judge, prosecutor, defense attorneys, probation staff and treatment providers working together. Participants appear regularly before a Superior Court judge and are required to meet the goals of drug court by undergoing frequent drug testing, obtaining jobs, paying their fines and supporting 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 all four phases. In order to graduate, participants not only must successfully complete all treatment requirements, remain sober, and demonstrate a strong sobriety support system, but they also must be employed full-time and have no pending criminal charges or active bench warrants.

Two 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. Graduates and clients entering Phase IV will serve as positive role models for active participants in the drug court program.

For more information regarding the Burlington Vicinage drug court programs, please contact Michelle Consuegra, drug court coordinator at 609-518-2559.

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