

PRESS RELEASE

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Burlington Vicinage to Celebrate 15th Drug Court Graduation

The Burlington Vicinage will hold its 15th drug court graduation on Thursday, Sept. 12 at 2 p.m. at the Burlington County Library, 5 Pioneer Blvd., Westampton. Ten candidates will graduate and three will commence to the final phase of the program.

Superior Court Judge Susan L. Claypoole, who leads the drug court team, will host the graduation with Judge James W. Palmer Jr. "I was pleased that Judge Bookbinder asked me to be the drug court judge when I was transferred to the criminal division," said Claypoole. "Since taking over from Judge Palmer in early July, I have seen participants overcome addiction, reunite with their families, enroll in college and obtain jobs."

Drug court is a high specialized team process within the existing Superior Court structure that addresses nonviolent drug-related cases. Drug courts are unique in the criminal justice environment because they build a close collaborative relationship between criminal justice and drug treatment professionals.

Drug court targets offenders who, were it not for their substance abuse, might never have been involved with the court system. Drug court programs are rigorous, requiring completion of four phases during five years of intensive drug and alcohol treatment and testing, and a tightly structured regimen of treatment and recovery services.

The Burlington Vicinage implemented drug court in 2004. Since then, it has graduated 77 participants. The program has been successful in breaking the cycle of addiction, improving the lives of individuals and their families and benefiting the community. There are 176 active participants in the Burlington Vicinage Drug Court program.

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