

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY MIDDLESEX VICINAGE

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Middlesex Drug Court to Hold Graduation

The Middlesex County Drug Court will hold its fifth graduation ceremony on Friday, May 13 at 10 a.m. in the jury room of the Middlesex County Courthouse, 56 Paterson St, New Brunswick. Fourteen participants will be awarded certificates marking their completion of the final phase of a rigorous program of comprehensive drug treatment and intensive supervision.

Assignment Judge Travis L. Francis will deliver the welcome. Presiding Criminal Judge Glenn Berman will speak about the success of the drug court program. Judge Lorraine Pullen, who presides over the Drug Court, will officiate at the graduation ceremony. John T., 2009 Middlesex County Drug Court graduate, 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 inception of the Middlesex County program in September 2004, a total of 62 participants have graduated. Of these graduates, six regained custody of children, 29 regained their driver's licenses 38 were eligible for medical benefits with their jobs, and 26 improved their level of education or obtained vocational training.

Drug courts operate in every vicinage in New Jersey and currently serve more than 3,900 people statewide. Currently there are 271 Middlesex County Drug Court participants.

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

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