

# SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY

## Morris County Drug Court Program

P. O. Box 910

Morristown, New Jersey 07963-0910

(973) 326-6997 FAX (973) 326-6977

Stuart Minkowitz, JSC  
Drug Court Judge



Charles C. Johnson, Jr.  
Drug Court Coordinator

For further information:  
**Charles Johnson, Drug Court Coordinator**  
**973-326-6997**

For immediate release:  
**May 17, 2011**

### **Morris and Sussex Drug Court Graduations Coincide with Drug Court Month**

As part of its Drug Court Month observance, the Morris/Sussex Vicinage will hold two commencement ceremonies to honor the successes of its drug court participants.

On May 23, the Sussex County Drug Court program will hold a commencement and graduation ceremony at 2 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse, 3 High St., Newtown. Six participants will commence to the fourth and final phase of the Drug Court program and five will graduate. Superior Court Judge N. Peter Conforti, who presides over the Sussex County Drug Court, will give remarks. Robert Hughes, a drug court graduate, will be the guest speaker.

On May 26, the Morris County Drug Court program will hold a commencement and graduation ceremony at 2 p.m. in the freeholders' public meeting room on the fifth floor of the Administration and Records Building, Court St., Morristown. Twelve participants will commence to the fourth and final phase of the drug court program and seven will graduate.

Judge Stuart Minkowitz, who presides over the Morris County Drug Court, will congratulate the graduates. He will be joined by Criminal Division Presiding Judge Thomas V. Manahan and Family Division Presiding Judge Michael Paul Wright, a former drug court judge. Additional speakers will include Judge Philip J. Maenza and retired Judge John J. Harper, both of whom have presided over drug courts. Brian McAllister, author of the book *Full Recovery*, will be the guest speaker.

The ceremonies celebrate the completion by the graduates of a rigorous program of comprehensive treatment, intensive supervision and strict accountability.

National Drug Court Month is coordinated by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), which was established in 1994 to assist the planning, implementation, and operation of drug courts. This year, drug courts throughout the nation are celebrating National Drug Court Month with the theme: "Drug Courts: A Proven Budget Solution."

Drug courts began in New Jersey in the late 1990s. By September 2004, programs were in operation in every county of the state. Like the other drug courts in New Jersey and around the United States, the Morris County Drug

Court hears cases of offenders charged with drug-related crimes. Drug courts divert participants from state prisons into community-based treatment programs, where they must undergo random and frequent drug testing, intensive probation supervision, and regular court reporting.

Drug courts are a highly specialized team process that functions within the existing Superior Court structure to address nonviolent drug related cases. They are unique in the criminal justice environment because they build a close collaborative relationship between criminal justice and drug treatment professionals. Within a cooperative courtroom atmosphere, the judge heads a team of court staff, attorneys, probation officers, substance abuse evaluators, and treatment counselors who work in concert to support and monitor a participant's recovery. Hard-working drug court participants are publicly acknowledged and encouraged, while non-compliant participants can be subjected to sanctions, including prison time.

Morris County has more than 120 participants, and Sussex County has more than 80 active cases. The program helps to restore lives, reunite families, and make communities safer.

For more information about drug court program or the commencement ceremonies, contact Charles C. Johnson Jr., drug court coordinator, at 973-326-6997.

Reporters and photographers are invited to attend.

# # #