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Mercer Drug Court Graduation

The Superior Court of New Jersey, Mercer Vicinage will hold a commencement ceremony for 7 of its Drug Court participants on Wednesday, Sept. 28th at 10 a.m. in the Ceremonial Courtroom on the 4th floor of the Mercer County Courthouse at 209 S. Broad St., Trenton. Criminal Division Presiding Judge Maria Marinari Sypek will preside over the ceremony and Dory Rachel, community relations representative at Sunrise House, will be the keynote speaker.

All current and former Drug Court participants, the general public, and the media are invited to attend.

Drug Court is dedicated exclusively to cases involving non-violent drug-using offenders and offers comprehensive supervision, drug testing, treatment and immediate sanctions and incentives. The program involves a team approach on the part of the judge, the prosecutor, defense counsel, probation officers, law enforcement and correctional personnel, educational and vocational experts, and substance abuse treatment specialists. By closely monitoring participants, the court is able to actively support the recovery process and to react swiftly to impose appropriate therapeutic sanctions or to reinstate criminal proceedings in the event of non-compliance.

Drug Courts operate in every vicinage in New Jersey and currently serve 2,105 people statewide. Since the program's inception, offenders have found employment and have begun to meet their financial obligations, parents have regained custody of their children, and dozens of drug-free babies have been born to participants around the state. Drug courts have proven effective at breaking the cycle of drug abuse and crime, giving drug addicts the opportunity to become productive citizens. They are a cost-effective alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders, and they help reduce minority over-representation in prison.

The Mercer County Drug Court, which opened in 1999, currently has 137 participants. At Wednesday's ceremony 3 of the 7 participants will celebrate the successful completion of the 5-year program. The other 4 of the 7 participants will be recognized as entering the final and less restrictive phase of the drug court program. During this phase, these 4 participants will remain under close supervision of the Drug Court team.

Reporters and photographers are invited to attend this event.

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