



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

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Inspiring Celebration of “New Life” at Drug Court Graduation

Sixteen San Diegans, along with their families and friends, will celebrate their “new lives” at a Drug Court graduation on Monday, July 10th . The 5:30 P.M. ceremony at the San Diego County Bar Association (1333 7th Avenue, Downtown San Diego) will honor those who have met the demands of a rigorous drug treatment program and have returned to work and to their families. Some of those graduating include:

- Cora, a 53-year-old who has transformed her life over the past 16 months from living in a canyon nursing a drug habit to working fulltime and regaining her family.
- Benny, who has kicked a 30-year drug habit (a habit which sent him to prison at various times for 12 years). Benny now works full-time at NASCO (National Steel and Shipyard Company) and has been such an inspiration that his former parole officer asks him to talk with others about his road to recovery.
- Karen, a woman in her 40s who is “clean” for the first time in 25 years and says she is only now *truly* happy.

The stories that will unfold at this hour-long ceremony are both moving and inspiring.

Those graduating have participated in a minimum 18-month program (*post plea means one enters the program after conviction, and charges are dismissed on successful completion of the course*) which includes intensive judicial supervision, drug treatment counseling,

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educational and vocational training opportunities, frequent random drug testing, the use of court-imposed sanctions for noncompliance and small incentives to reward positive behavior. Eligible offenders are those charged with non-violent felony cases where the underlying cause of the criminality is substance abuse. In many instances, the individuals have served considerable periods of time in county jail and prison before being afforded the drug court opportunity to change their lives and become law-abiding citizens.

Drug Court was founded in 1997 as a cooperative effort between the San Diego Court, San Diego District Attorney's Office, City Attorney's Office and the Office of the Public Defender in response to a prevalent drug problem among many criminal defendants that led to revolving door when it came to re-arrests.

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