



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

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Contact: Holly Bullen
Phone: (619) 531-4373

Drug Court Graduation Salutes Oceanside Support

When ten individuals graduate from North County Drug Court on Wednesday, July 27th, the celebration will not only salute 18 months of hard work to sobriety, but will also recognize the City of Oceanside's efforts to keep the Drug Court system, itself, healthy.

The ceremony, which will be held at 6:00 P.M. at the AVO Playhouse (303 Main Street) in Vista, will highlight the city monies directed to the Drug Court. "Drug Court is a significant benefit to our community not merely because it helps people overcome their addiction," said Superior Court Judge William S. Dato who presides over the North County Drug Court. "Drug Court graduates become productive community members – they are responsible employees; they support their families; they pay their bills; they pay taxes. Most importantly, they don't commit crimes. Our community benefits financially as well as in a host of other ways." Judge Dato added, "Drug Court mainly operates with State grant money, but state budget cuts have threatened to reduce the number of people we can help. Recognizing the value of Drug Court to local communities, Oceanside has stepped up financially to ensure we can put as many people as possible into treatment."

Oceanside's \$50,000 donation will go directly to the County's Alcohol and Drug Services system which will, in turn, fund treatment providers for Drug Court. Drug Court participants, themselves, help offset costs by paying a minimal weekly fee of \$20 to the Court's designated drug treatment provider.

Established in 1997, the San Diego Drug Court is a countywide system of intensive treatment and monitoring for substance abusing adults and juveniles involved with the courts.

(More)



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The extensive year and a half program includes court supervision, drug treatment, random drug testing, counseling, educational and vocational training opportunities; all designed to promote a drug-free lifestyle.

The Drug Court has two goals: help defendants break the grip of drug addiction and increase public safety by reducing the number and frequency of drug-related crimes. Since its inception, more than 1,330 defendants have successfully completed adult Drug Court.

According to Howard Foster, manager of the North County Drug Court treatment program, Oceanside understands the benefits of Drug Court: "One of our successful participants told us about the number of crimes he committed per day while under the influence of methamphetamine; about 15 crimes against property and people. Thus by rehabilitating just this one person we reduced crime in Oceanside significantly." Foster says the goal of Drug Court is to teach participants to become taxpaying, crime-free citizens.

Oceanside Deputy Mayor, Ester Sanchez, will be the keynote speaker at this graduation ceremony. Sanchez, a Public Defender, was instrumental in alerting the Oceanside City Council to the needs of the Drug Court.

To learn more about the Superior Court Drug Court, visit the website at :

<http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/>

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