



# COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

JANUARY 2020

WWW.GAACOUNTABILITYCOURTS.ORG

## ACCOUNTABILITY COURT NEWS & SPECIAL EVENTS

### COWETA COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS

Article appeared in *The Newnan Times-Herald*; Submitted by Marlowe Dix, Coweta County Family Treatment Court Coordinator

BY SARAH FAY CAMPBELL  
sarah@newnan.com

The inaugural "Turkey Trot" 5K and fun run for healthy families was a tremendous success, raising more than \$10,000 for Coweta Accountability Courts.

The money raised goes to the nonprofit associated with the accountability courts, which include Drug Court, DUI Court, Veteran's Court and Family Treatment Court. The money is used to help court participants in their recovery with things like work boots, medical and dental care, or emergency housing.

"The money is really needed for our participants to help them get back on their feet and start living productive lives," said Jennifer Barnett, Coweta Accountability Courts manager. The accountability courts also try to give participants fun experiences with gift certificates for cultural events, but Barnett said she is usually able to get those items donated.

The 5K and family fun run was held Nov. 23 at the Coweta County Fairgrounds. The event was put together by four accountability court participants as their service project.

All court participants must complete a service project before they can graduate from the court program.

"These four participants decided to do this 5K so the proceeds could go back into the 501(c)3 to help their fellow participants," Barnett said.

"They took it and ran with it."

Barnett said the event was so successful they hope to do it next year and will apply for it to be a Peachtree Road Race qualifying event. The course at the fairgrounds is already a certified route.

Court participant Londie Houston took up running in April and fell in love with it. She said she'd never really had any hobbies until she took up running.

"It was the first time that I ever started doing something like that," Houston said. When thinking about her service project, a run was the obvious choice.

She talked to Barnett about the idea and got the go-ahead. "And I was overwhelmed at first," Houston said. "I didn't think that I could do something like that."

She brought in fellow participants Amy Cook, Kevin Paquette and Alex Williams to help organize the event.

"I'm extremely proud of the hard work and dedication that these four individuals put into this amazing fundraiser," said Marlowe Dix, family treatment court coordinator.

Houston is a participant in Family Treatment Court, and said the experience has been a blessing. "It's pushed me to do things that I never thought I could be capable of, and to try new things," she said. "It's given me the opportunity to see what I could actually do and accomplish."

In addition to organizing it, Houston and several other participants ran in the race. She came in third place in her age group. Her son came in first in his age group.

"It was an all-around, cool fun family event," Houston said. Representatives from Coweta CASA came out, as did Judge Joe Wyant and some of the attorneys who work with the court, and there was a large number of sponsors.

"It was good to see the community come together to raise awareness of addiction," Houston said. "Sometimes people just need a little help learning that there is a better life. Some people really don't know that you can live your life differently," she said of the accountability courts. "Being able to have someone show you how to live differently and how to be productive – that's an awesome thing."

After all the expenses have been paid, the event will have cleared about \$8,000, said Bill Larkey, treasurer for the accountability court nonprofit. He's been on the nonprofit board since 2013.

"It enables us to help facilitate recovery for the people who are going through the program," Larkey said. "Oftentimes the folks have some unmet medical needs, dental needs. Sometimes there is a need for short-term lodging and sometimes we have a need to help someone with work supplies."

Larkey said he's



amazed by how much the accountability court program has grown. In the beginning, in 2010, it was just the Adult Drug Court. Over the years, DUI, Veteran's and Family Treatment Court programs have been added.

"Each court has a

great group of people working down there that really care about the people, and they care about the community," Larkey said. Participants are held accountable for their actions – and also rewarded for doing things right.

As a person in long-

term recovery himself, Larkey said he's passionate about the accountability courts program and giving people the opportunity to benefit from long-term recovery. "I step in the office sometimes and I can feel the energy," he said.





## FAYETTE COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

*Submitted by Martha Hall, Fayette County State Court Coordinator*

Fayette County Veterans Treatment Court participated in a competitive application process for the FY2020 Veterans Treatment Court Planning Initiative Training. The implementation court was selected by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and Justice for Vets (JFV) and will receive a three-day on-site training instructed by the national organization.

## CLAYTON COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

*Submitted by Lakisha Dixson, Clayton County Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator*

The Clayton County Veterans Treatment Court received its first participant in January of 2019 and held its first holiday celebration at O'Charley's on December 11, 2019 with 6 of the 10 participants now in the program. The celebration included the VTC staff, Judge Robert Mack, Jr., Judge Steven Teske, and the VTC Mentors. We played the White Elephant game and exchanged gifts, courtesy of the staff. Food and fun were had by all. We are looking forward to the continued growth of the Clayton County Veterans Treatment Court.



## NORTHEASTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS

*Submitted by Jessi Emmett, Treatment Services Director*

December kept Santa's elves very busy in the Northeastern Judicial Circuit. Participants of the Hall County and Dawson County accountability courts, along with their families, were treated to a Christmas Party hosted by the local non-profit organization, Friends of Recovery. Each year, Friends of Recovery puts together a large-scale event including dinner, musical entertainment, door prize giveaways, pictures with Santa, and presents for children. On December 17, the Dawson County Friends of Recovery chapter partnered with New Life Baptist Church to serve a home-cooked meal to over 180 participants and their families. Santa made his arrival and provided each child with a stuffed animal donated by local board members. On December 19, the Hall County Friends of Recovery chapter had their turn to serve close to 800 people at First Baptist Church in Gainesville. The judges and program team members donned an apron and served a full meal provided by local restaurants to each participant and their family members. Over 300 children were able to unwrap a present from Santa that evening, and a family picture was taken to preserve the memory.



For many program participants, the holiday season spent during their time in an accountability court is the first sober holiday they have had in many years. Watching participants and their families enjoy their time together is truly heartwarming. These events



bring everyone together and provide an opportunity for lasting memories to be created. The accountability courts of Hall and Dawson Counties are very fortunate to have the support of Friends of Recovery. Along with the annual Christmas parties, Friends of Recovery sponsors pro-social events for accountability court participants, as well as community events which provide awareness surrounding recovery. Additionally, Friends of Recovery provides financial assistance through interest-free loans to program participants who face hardships. Program participants are

provided the opportunity to rebuild productive and meaningful lives while enriching our community through involvement in these events. All of this is made possible through the generous support of local businesses and individuals who recognize the value of supporting recovery efforts in our community and teaching recovering individuals and their families how to spend healthy, sober time together.

## MUSCOGEE COUNTY ADULT FELONY DRUG COURT

*Submitted by T.J. BeMent, District Court Administrator of the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial Administrative District*

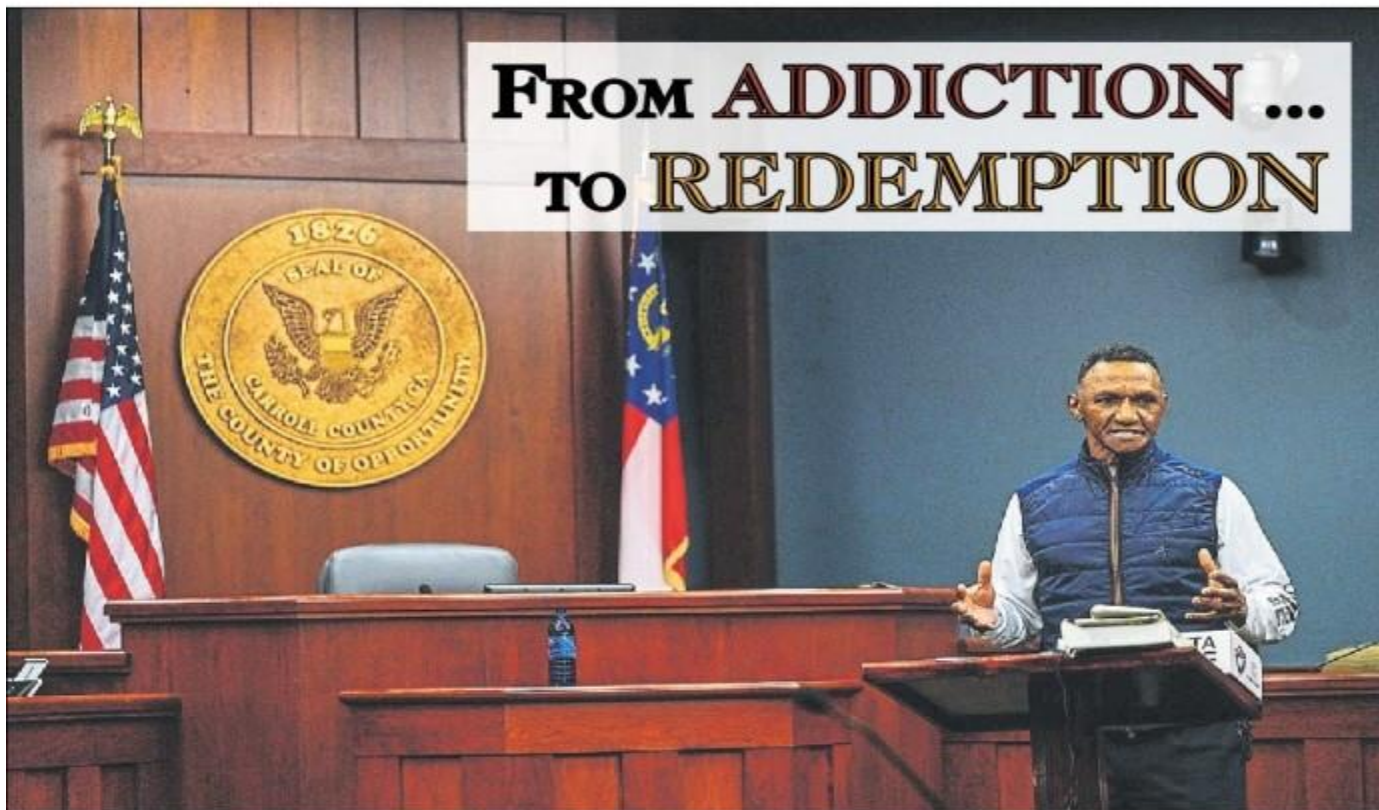
Congratulations to Dayna Solomon, Muscogee County Adult Felony Drug Court Coordinator! The Honorable B.H. "Skip" Henderson, III, Mayor of Columbus, proclaimed December 3, 2019 as Dayna Solomon Day!





CARROLL COUNTY DRUG COURT

Appeared in *The Times-Georgian*; Submitted by Susan Davenport, Carroll County Drug Court Coordinator



Photos by Jay Luzardo/Times-Georgian

Former Atlanta Braves standout Otis Nixon detailed his past struggles with addiction during Friday morning's Carroll County Drug Court graduation in Superior Courtroom C at the Carroll County Court House. Carrollton lawyer Preston Haliburton serves as the attorney for the Otis Nixon Foundation.



**Above:** Superior Court Judge Dustin Hightower, far left, stands with Carl Barber, Amanda White-Wall, Cody Kimball and Naaman Whitlock after their graduation at the Carroll County Court House on Friday. Judge Hightower resides over the Carroll County Drug Court. **Left:** Naaman Whitlock is overcome with emotion Friday morning as he shares his gratitude to the Carroll County Drug Court and Otis Nixon Foundation for helping him graduate and take a new look on life.

## PATAULA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT DRUG COURT GRADUATION

*Submitted by Beau Leyse, Pataula Drug Court Coordinator*

Congratulations to the three participants who graduated in November from the Pataula Drug Court!



## FAYETTE COUNTY DUI COURT GRADUATION

*Submitted by Martha Hall, Fayette County State Court Accountability Court Coordinator*

Congratulations to the six participants who graduated from the Fayette County DUI Court on December 4, 2019!

### Congratulations December Graduates!

- Carroll County Drug Court
- Dawson County H.E.L.P. Program
- Fayette County DUI Court
- Muscogee County Drug Court
- Pataula Drug Court



## COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES NEWS

### Important Reminders:

**\*Thinking for a Change Advanced Training (February 24-25)** is still open. There are a few remaining slots for treatment providers.

**\*NAMI Introduction to Behavioral Health and Addictive Diseases Training (February 25)** has a few remaining slots for new coordinators, new case managers, and law enforcement.

**\*Q2 (October 1 - December 31) data is due by January 14.** Georgia accountability court programs receiving state grant funds must report data quarterly during the state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). For circuits and counties with multiple programs, a report must be completed for each certified and/or funded court.

**\*Certification applications are due by January 17.** As always, the sooner you complete and submit your application, the sooner we can review and give you constructive feedback.

### Mark Your Calendar:

**\*The Court Operating Profile Survey** is scheduled to be released to all certified court programs on January 21.