



NEWSLETTER

October | 2022



From the CACJ Staff

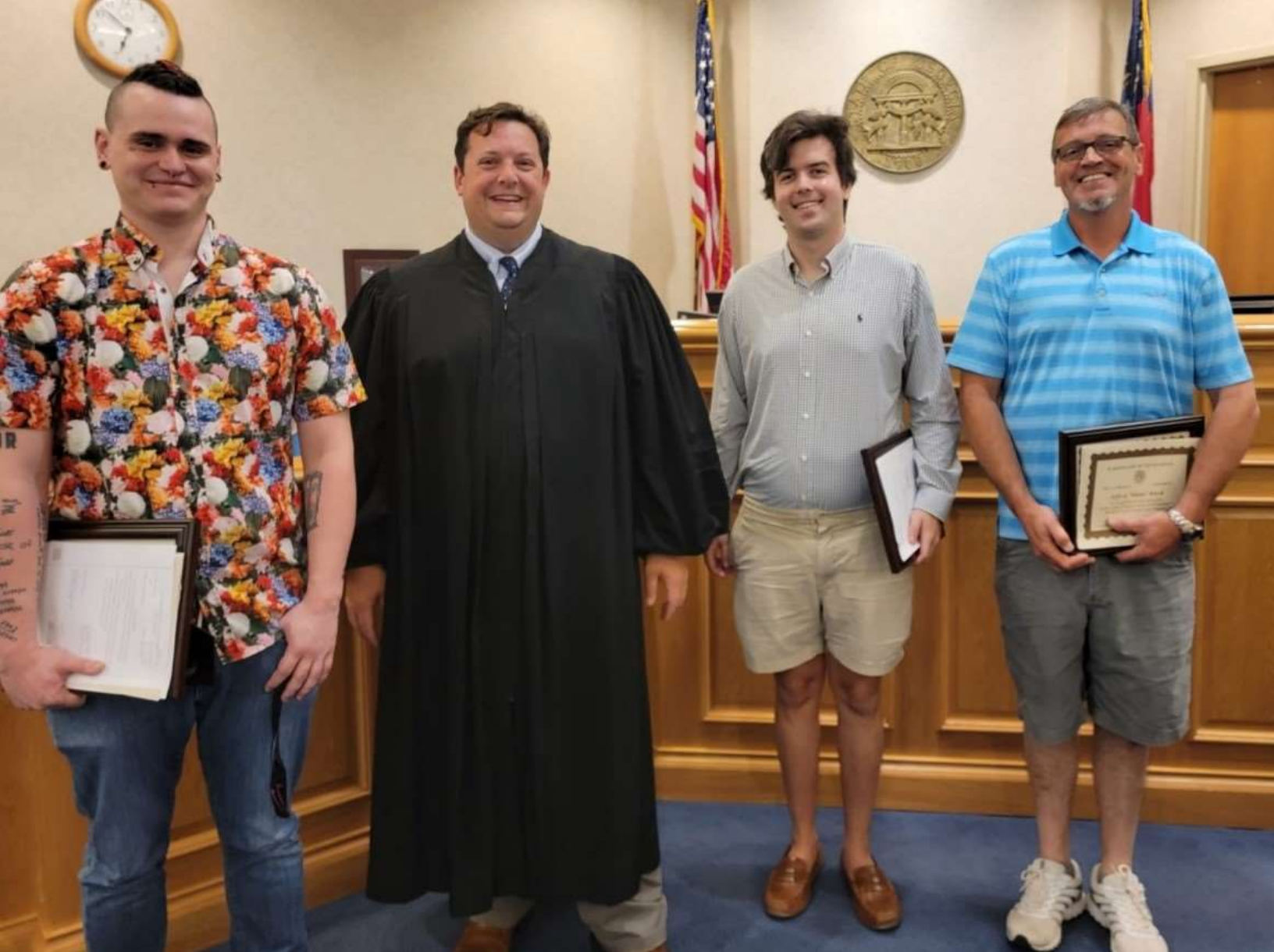
CACJ is excited to welcome over 1,300 accountability court professionals to Athens, Georgia! Staff and the Training Committee have worked together during the last 13 months to plan a conference event that provides education and networking opportunities for all first-time attendees and experienced accountability court professionals. Staff worked tirelessly to introduce new features for the 2022 event. The CACJ partnered with Bravura Technologies, LLC to customize an event management software (EMS) to manage the online registration of conference attendees. When attendees arrive to Athens, you will notice check-in kiosks to print your name badge, wayfinding signage to navigate the Classic Center, and many volunteers ready to assist you!

The 2022 CACJ Conference mobile app is also new and improved. Please download the app before your arrival to the event and access your QR code for check-in, the conference agenda and personal course schedule, view session handouts, schedule meetings with exhibitors, and more. Registered attendees can simply search "CACJ 2022" in the App Store or Google Play. To log in, use the same email address you used to register for the conference. Lastly, for networking and enjoyment, the conference features "badge swag ribbons", a scavenger hunt, a digital activity wall for conference photos and real time posts, a photo booth, and team roundtables! Additional information about each is available in the [2022 conference program](#). In summary, we hope that you enjoy the conference and ask that you please share your feedback about your daily experience by completing the conference evaluations. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you,
Kimberly Howard, Training & Operations Manager

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Hall County Drug Court

On September 22, 2022, the Hall County Drug Court held its 117th commencement ceremony with Honorable Judges Jason Deal and Clint Bearden. In celebration of National Recovery Month, the keynote speaker was former Drug Court graduate, Dani Lewellan. Ms. Lewellan shared the tragic loss of her sister to a fentanyl overdose. This loss strengthened her passion to help others struggling with their recovery. She stated, "I want the story of my loss to remind graduates the importance of staying connected with their support networks and not to be afraid to ask for help."

The team celebrated a total of seven graduates along with their families and friends. Judge Bearden and Judge Deal spoke on what led each graduate to Drug Court and their accomplishments while in the program. The graduates were given an opportunity to share their stories and what they have learned throughout their time in Drug Court.

Assistant District Attorney Robert Gardner closed the ceremony by reminding graduates that they are not alone on their road to recovery, and they have a continued support system with the Drug Court team.

As a team, we look forward to the commencement ceremonies. They are a symbol of growth and a time to celebrate the many accomplishments of our participants.

Submitted by Suzanne Stanley, Treatment Services Assistant Director

Enotah Circuit Family Treatment Court



Brittany Gilbert was arrested on June 8, 2020 as part of a giant drug raid in Towns County. Twenty-two people were arrested that day. Brittany sat in the back of a squad car and watched her son drive away with DFCS. She said she felt as low as she could get and vowed to turn her life around. She joined Enotah FTC on June 25, 2020. She turned her life around and, after living in transitional housing for 11 months, managed to get her own place. Her son was returned, and since then she has had another child born drug-free. Brittany has maintained sobriety, stable employment, and stable housing. Brittany got married in June 2022, and DFCS closed her case officially in August 2022. Brittany graduated Enotah FTC on September 15, 2022.

Submitted by Magdalene McDonald, Enotah Judicial Circuit Family Treatment Court Coordinator



Fulton County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court

On September 23, 2022, Fulton County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court celebrated its 15th graduation hosted by Presiding Judges Cassandra Kirk and Patsy Y. Porter. Gone are the days of virtual, hybrid, or limited guests, as the atmosphere was full of celebration, breakfast treats, and all the MMC Team members and supporters from the Fulton County Marshal's Department and Board of Commissioners.

The program was honored by a very special keynote speaker, Dr. Rashad Richey, National TV & Radio Host for *Rashad Richey Morning Show, News & Talk 1380-WAOK*, and *Indisputable with Dr. Rashad Richey*. Dr. Richey inspired all who attended with his very personal story of how accountability courts and intervention transformed his life path. Our two successful graduates expressed their gratitude for the support and opportunity for a new beginning.

Submitted by Georgee Corley, Fulton County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court Coordinator

Forsyth County CARE Court

On September 1 of this year, Forsyth County CARE Court hosted a graduation for two participants. These participants have recently completed a minimum of 24 months program designed to help offenders who have been identified with severe and persistent mental health diagnoses by linking those individuals to treatment and local, community-based resources.

During the program, the two graduates succeeded in many goals and life accomplishments. One graduate became a father and started his own business, while the other has plans to return to school and has maintained consistent employment for the first time in many years. In the last two years, Forsyth County CARE has served 42 individuals and had 14 graduates.

Submitted by Carol Simpson, Forsyth County Accountability Courts Assistant Director



Douglas County Family Treatment Court

On September 22, 2022, the Douglas County Family Treatment Court hosted a Recovery Month celebration at the Douglas County Courthouse. This event recognized graduates for 2020, 2021, and 2022. Our 2020 and 2021 graduates were unable to have an in-person ceremony due to the pandemic. FTC recognized each one of them as well as our graduates in 2022.

We celebrated four graduates in 2020, four graduates in 2021, and four graduates in 2022. We also honored a 2020 graduate who passed away from cancer a couple of months after completion.

Judge Michelle Harrison was our Master of Ceremonies and spoke about the successes and benefits of Family Treatment Court. Peer Specialist Deena Davis spoke of Recovery Month and the power of language. Judge Harrison and Case Managers Migdalia Roman-Ortiz and Don Paul called the graduate names and presented them with flowers. The guest speaker was former FTC graduate Rachel Hendricks. She shared her life story and recovery journey.

Coordinator Jennifer King recognized community partners in attendance, including Dr. Gerald Rhett with Recovery Unlimited and Jocelyn Croft with Never Alone Clubhouse.

Douglas County Family Treatment Court has been in operation since 2008 and continues to fulfill the mission of the team approach to promote healthy, stable, permanent, drug-free, and safe families for children. Since 2008, we have celebrated 22 babies born drug-free and 66 graduates!

Submitted by Jennifer King, Douglas County Family Treatment Court Coordinator

Cordele Circuit Drug Court



On September 29, 2022, the Cordele Circuit Adult Felony Drug Court, with presiding Judge Denise Fachini, held a graduation ceremony where Mr. William “Chad” Ball successfully completed the program. Throughout his time in the program, Chad was determined to complete the program. He worked hard and applied what he learned to his life and since being in the Drug Court program he has accomplished goals. He obtained and maintained employment, became the local chairperson for the Narcotics Anonymous meetings, paid fines and fees to get his license reinstated, and bought a vehicle.

Chad had a few setbacks during the program; however, he did not allow these setbacks to cause him to relapse. He was dedicated to his sobriety, the program, his family, and his peers. Lastly as Chad summarized his graduation capstone project, he told his peers that they couldn’t half do it, it’s either give it your all or do not waste everyone’s time. We wish Chad the best in this next chapter of life. Well done, Chad!

Submitted by Barbara Little, Cordele Circuit Adult Felony Drug Court Coordinator



Fayette County DUI/Drug Court

On September 7, 2022, Fayette County DUI/Drug Court, with the honorable Judge Jason B. Thompson presiding, held its 20th commencement ceremony, where Rafael Rodriquez received a certificate of graduation for successfully completing the program. The keynote speaker, Matthew Groover, CACII, delivered an inspirational message offering encouragement and guidance to the graduate and active participants. Rafael joined the program March 24, 2021 with determination to change his life. Rafael went through the program embodying the mindset of change and seeking recovery. While in the program, Rafael successfully earned his G.E.D. and passed the real estate exam. Rafael has committed himself to remain involved in the Fayette County R.I.S.E. Alumni Group as a peer mentor and program advocate.

Submitted by Christa Grayson, Fayette County DUI/Drug Court Coordinator



Enotah Circuit Family Treatment Court

Katlynn Merritt joined FTC on February 12, 2021. When she joined she wasn't working. She wasn't making visitation with her child. She didn't think she would ever be a mother. She completed the program with only one sanction on September 29, 2022. She stayed employed and even got certified to be a tattoo artist. She was reunited with her daughter and is a great mother. Once she believed that she could be a mother she accomplished it. We are very proud of Katlynn! In her exit survey, she said that her life was crappy before FTC. She said that because of FTC she is able to maintain stable housing, has her child back, and loves herself now. She said CBI and individual counseling were the most helpful services that she received.

Submitted by Magdalene McDonald, Enotah Judicial Circuit Family Treatment Court Coordinator



Clayton County Mental Health Court

On Tuesday, September 27, 2022 the community gathered for the Inaugural graduation for the Clayton County Behavioral Health Accountability Court. Two participants were honored for completing the rigorous steps and maintaining compliance with all court requirements. One was able to secure fulltime employment with the City of Atlanta during his participation and has maintained that employment for over 15 months. The other participant was able to secure independent housing and has been able to be a full-time parent to his young son. All these feats were completed during a worldwide pandemic with many service agencies closed or with limited assistance/opportunities available. Each of the graduates spoke to the challenge of completing an accountability court while encouraging the other participants to persevere and complete the phases to reach their own graduation day. The Clayton County Behavioral Health Accountability Court began in July 2020 under the direction of Judge Shana Rooks Malone.

Submitted by Adrienne Bowen, Clayton County Behavioral Health Accountability Court Coordinator



Conasauga Drug Court

When Destiny entered the Conasauga Drug Court program in 2020, she had lost everything that ever meant anything to her, including custody of her 7-year-old daughter, Presleigh.

"If you watch the news, you know we are in a national health crisis," Drug Court Judge Jim Wilbanks said. "We are being inundated with illegal drugs; specifically, fentanyl is killing us. We lost two 16-year-old girls in this circuit in the last month. Did you hear about that? I want you to understand the enemy we fight is here to take our children's lives, it's here to destroy our families, it's here to destroy our communities. We will not let that happen!"

To prove his point, Wilbanks had only to look toward Destiny and her little girl, who was on hand for her mom's graduation from Drug Court and bravely grabbed the microphone to tell the audience: "Honestly, I'm just grateful for her. I'm really, really proud of her and what she's done. Whenever I saw that [booking photo], I was like, who is that? That's not my mom! But the person that she is right now, she is the best mom that anybody could ever have!"

During the 86th graduation ceremony on Sept. 21, Destiny and three other graduates – Annette, Christina, and Timothy – shared their uplifting stories of overcoming drug addiction with the help of Drug Court, which was also celebrating its 20th anniversary during the special program at Rock Bridge Community Church's Stage 123 in downtown Dalton.

The program also featured the Pledge of Allegiance led by some of the children of Drug Court participants (Hayden, Gavin, Richard, Presleigh, Logan, Grace, and Alyssa), singing of the national anthem by Jennifer Smith, and inspirational music throughout the night by Soul Talk, a contemporary praise and worship band from Salem Baptist Church that includes Scott McAllister, John Buckner, Randy Parker, Sandy Hankins, Mickey "Moose" Hall, and Paxton Bennett.

"Twenty years of changing lives is a big deal," said Pastor Scott Young, who led an opening prayer after relating that he had struggled for 13 years himself in addiction. "I want to tell you that if my life can change - because I was awful - anybody in here's life can change. These four people that have graduated, I am super proud of you and the effort that you have put forward in trying to change your life. This is a big moment for you. I want you to let it all go and bask in this moment."

Timothy, for one, was basking in the moment because he admits when he entered the program on August 13, 2020, he was "lost and defeated" after a drug addiction of more than 25 years "had taken its toll on me."

Completing the program wasn't without its struggles, he says, but it's a "good process, a process that works."

"Today is a big accomplishment for me," he said in his letter to Judge Wilbanks. "Probably the biggest in my life, but leaving the program is not important to me like it once was. Today my whole life has changed – it's an open book. I have nothing to hide or no one to hide from. I'm a law-abiding person, I contribute positively to society, my community, on my job, and with my family and peers. I can't imagine going back to the way I lived, and thanks to God and this program, I'm more prepared than I've ever been to keep that from happening."

Christina, meanwhile, says she entered the program in March 2019 "with a chip on my shoulder the size of Mount Everest."

"I was broken, battered, and hopeless, knowing that I needed to change but not willing to make an honest effort towards anything," she said. "Although I grew to play the victim and 'poor me' card throughout my life, let me set the record straight: I am not a victim, but I am a survivor."

More than three years later, she completed the program – "it takes what it takes," she says – and has even been sharing her story with other organizations like Camp Aim, a trauma camp for young ladies, and the Courageous Group of Narcotics Anonymous.

Drug Court, she knows now, is “all about building and rebuilding ourselves, and I am proud to say I am the best version of myself to date.”

Likewise, Annette can point to several achievements of her own during the Drug Court program, saying, “I learned to set boundaries, I learned to say no to my family, I learned to put myself first, I learned about the importance of recovery in my life, I learned not to take life for granted, I learned my health is very important, I learned to stay away from certain people, places, things, I learned to love myself, I learned how to pay my bills on time, and I learned how to be responsible.”

Destiny, meanwhile, admits she was “the definition of reckless” when she entered the program after having used methamphetamines daily for three years, though she says she didn’t ever limit herself to that drug alone. “Whatever I could find, I used,” she says.

The addiction was so bad that when she finally entered Drug Court, she was close to losing her daughter forever. “My life was of no value to me after I lost my daughter, so my mindset was, ‘Why live, especially the right way?’ I never thought I was going to get her back, not ever. She was very close to being adopted when I entered Drug Court.”

Despite her belief that she was “unfixable,” the Drug Court team stood by her through it all, “and I started putting every tool I was learning into action in my life.”

Unfortunately, not every participant is as fortunate to make it through the program successfully. “Photos have been scrolling all night long (on large screens), and I will tell you some of those people are not here anymore because they left recovery and overdosed,” Wilbanks said as the program neared an end. “So, I’m back to where I started – this is war ... this is war, put your armor on, get your swords out, we’re here to fight. Now I want you to fight with us – you’ve shown your leadership in this community tonight by showing up.

“Our participants are living recovery out loud – I love that. Drug Court is teaching and supporting recovery hour by hour. Continue to work with us, and we will continue to work with you. I promise you for the next 20 years we’ll continue to turn out and fight for this community and fight for the children and families and communities and our participants.”

Wilbanks thanked all his team members, along with retired Judge Jack Partain, who started organizing Drug Court in 2001, and the many community partners who have helped with the program over the past 20 years.

Written by Mitch Talley, Whitfield County Director of Communications

Rockdale County Family Treatment Court



The Rockdale County Family Treatment Court held its graduation ceremony on September 21, 2022 with the Honorable Judge Maureen Wood presiding. The graduation was held at Costley Mill Nature Park and Event Venue. The ceremony celebrated the successful completion of four honored participants: Savannah Dean, Jessica Schust, Jessie Plunkett, and Michelle Plunkett. The graduates and attendees were able to share their positive successes in the program and celebrate with gift cards and BBQ donated by team members to support Rockdale Prevent Child Abuse. We were excited to have State Representative Rhonda Taylor, Superior Court Judge Nancy Bills, Director of Rockdale DFCS Veronica Parrot, and Director for Phoenix Pass Auvronette Guilbeaux in attendance. We extend a special thank you to the Rockdale Board of Commissioners, community partners, and our Treatment Court Team. Thank you, CACJ, for making this possible.

Submitted by Beth Smith, Rockdale County Family Treatment Court Coordinator



Dawson County Drug Court

On September 7, 2022, the Dawson County Drug Court held its 65th commencement ceremony with Honorable Judge Jason Deal. In celebration of National Recovery Month, the keynote speaker was former Drug Court graduate, Tim Ray. Mr. Ray shared his history with addiction and the criminal justice system, most notably how he changed his life in Drug Court. The time he spent building a strong recovery network while in the program motivated him to chair meetings and gave him a strong desire to help others struggling with their recovery. He stated, "If one person can get anything out of my story, then I'm happy. I want participants to understand that there are people in the justice system like the judge, attorneys, and treatment court staff that are there to help you and want to see you succeed." The team celebrated a total of five graduates along with their families and friends. Judge Deal spoke on what led each graduate to Drug Court and their accomplishments while in the program. The graduates were given an opportunity to share their stories and what they have learned throughout their time in Drug Court. As a team, we hold a special place in our hearts for commencement ceremonies. They are a time to celebrate the many accomplishments of our participants and the immense growth and success we've been able to witness.

On September 8, 2022, the Dawson County Treatment Court held its first DCTC Family and Friends Game Night. Participants and graduates were invited to bring anyone in their support network to the Treatment Center to play different board games such as Jenga, Bingo, Battleship, and more. The participants even thought up their own games and formed a creative game of "Hopscotch Island"! Treatment staff were able to see participants interact with their peers and support people in a relaxed environment, which has allowed more in-depth work in treatment sessions and groups. As a team, we hope to bring more opportunities for participants to engage their support network into their program and recovery lifestyle!

Submitted by Brittany Currans, Dawson County Treatment Court Coordinator



DeKalb County Wellness Court



The DeKalb County Accountability Courts celebrate participant Thato Mthenjane for successfully completing his bachelor's degree. Mr. Mthenjane graduated from the University of Maryland Global Campus with his Bachelor of Science in Psychology on August 8, 2022. Mr. Mthenjane is a Phase II participant of the Wellness Court program. He is a hard-working, driven, and ambitious individual with a love for learning. Mr. Mthenjane demonstrates his dedication and determination for learning new things as he makes positive progress in treatment. He reflected on his journey and the challenges he faced to obtain his degree and stated, "I persevered because it was something I really wanted to do and I had a dream of getting my degree in psychology for a long time, and I fulfilled it." Mr. Mthenjane shared that he enjoys reading and taking care of his mental health.

Submitted by Annalisa Sherrill, DeKalb County Wellness Court Coordinator

Model Courts Feature

The goal of Georgia's Accountability Court Model Court program is to recognize the great work of accountability courts across the state, as well as identify strong programs that may serve as mentors for other courts. Programs identified as Model Courts are those that have met and exceeded adherence to Georgia's Standards as dictated by strong performance on certification and peer review processes. To recognize the talent and expertise of the accountability court community, each month CACJ will recognize a model court or two and their work in the substance use and mental health fields.

Hall County DUI Court Model DUI Court (2021-2024)



Hall County DUI Court Team Members

Judge – Honorable Larry A. Baldwin, II
Coordinator – Katie Bruner
Case Manager – Nathan Strong
Prosecutor – Stephanie Woodard, Solicitor-General
Defense Attorney – Joseph Summer
Treatment Liaison – Amanda Hardin
Probation Officer – John Lucas
Law Enforcement – Bob Watterson
Judicial Assistant – Pam Cheeks

Court Type: DUI Court

Presiding Judge: Judge Larry A. Baldwin II has presided over the Hall County DUI Court since October 2011.

Coordinator: Katie Bruner has served as the Coordinator since 2009.

Inception Date: March 2003

Number of graduates to date: 937

Current Program Census: 65

Innovative Practices/Unique Programming:

Ms. Bruner: “Hall County is fortunate in that all accountability court programs fall under the single umbrella of Treatment Services. This allows our programs to share appropriate resources with one another, which, in turn, provides a unique opportunity to individualize treatment and case management plans in innovative ways. For example, a DUI Court client who needs parenting classes can receive these services through Treatment Services without additional fees. This kind of resource sharing means clients can access more than 50 treatment groups and ancillary service classes each week.”

Why do you choose to preside over the accountability court?

Judge Baldwin: “Presiding over the Hall County DUI Court is the most rewarding part of my job. In most other court settings, I see only a snapshot of a defendant’s life, and that snapshot is often a picture of the individual at his or her worst. In DUI Court though, I have the opportunity to really get to know the participants and watch as they change and evolve into their best selves.”

What are you most proud of in terms of the program’s success? What do you hope to accomplish as a model court?

Ms. Bruner: “Witnessing the transformation that occurs when a participant chooses recovery and change is what makes me most proud. Change takes a lot of courage and hard work. Our efforts to support our clients are manifest in the lives of the people on whose behalf we work. When our participants are successful, we are successful.”

“Being named a model court is an honor that comes with responsibility. As Coordinator, my hope is that we continue to provide continuity of services that adhere to best practices/standards by 1). prioritizing quality of programming over quantity of people, 2.) staying open to learning and being adaptive and innovative as needed, and 3). engaging in ongoing critical program evaluation both by other courts and through participant feedback.”

What is something you wish you knew at program inception that you hope to impart to newer courts?

Judge Baldwin: “Policies and procedures are an essential in providing the framework for any accountability court program. They function as a guide to ensure consistency and program fidelity. My advice to a newer court program is to be flexible and client centered. What works for one person may not work for another. A successful program is dependent upon your team’s ability to strike a good balance between policies and procedures and individual needs and circumstances. Be adaptable when necessary.”

Anything else you would like to add?

Judge Baldwin: “I would like to express gratitude for the Hall County DUI Court Team. The dedication and service of our team members are unmatched. Collectively, our team has close to 80 years of service to the Hall County DUI Court Program. Individually, the average length of service is about 12 ½ years. It’s my belief that having a team of professionals who passionately support the mission of Hall County DUI Court has a direct positive impact on overall program success. It is an honor and privilege to work alongside such dedicated individuals.”

**Enotah Circuit Family Treatment Court
Model Family Treatment Court
(2022-2025)**



Enotah Circuit Family Treatment Court Team Members

Judge – Honorable Jeremy D. Clough

Coordinator – Magdalene McDonald

Case Manager – Shelby Fernandez

SAAG – Ridge Rairigh, Paul Stanley, Stephany Zaic, William Mercer

Parent/Child Attorney – Kris Ann Poe, Martin Welch, Rosalind Henderson, Beth Martin, Andrea Conarro, Karen Brouse

Treatment – Cornerstones Counseling

CASA Supervisor – Nicole Lolano, Brett Myers, Katie Dunlap, Gina Bennett

DFCS – Tina Teater, Courtney McGreevy, Grace Caamano, Lois Wilson

Court Type: Family Treatment Court

Presiding Judge: The Honorable Jeremy D. Clough has presided over the program for the past seven years.

Coordinator: Magdalene McDonald has served as Coordinator for the past eight years.

Inception Date:

Judge Clough: “The Enotah FTC was initially founded in 2008 by the late Judge David Turk, but was substantially built by Jerry Bruce, now Georgia’s Child Advocate, while he was Enotah Juvenile Court Judge. Jerry built the basic structure of the program and got us involved with the Casey Foundation’s multi-year training program that provided services to the first nine FTCs in Georgia, the “Casey Nine”, that developed the Georgia Model, which focuses heavily on judicial leadership, evidence-based treatment, and model fidelity.”

Number of graduates to date: “We only have records from 2014: 48 graduates”

Current Program Census: 17

Recidivism Rate: “We have a 50% success rate. We are not a criminal court.”

Innovative Practices/Unique Programming:

Judge Clough: “There are a few things we do a little differently—such as giving gift cards as incentives when participants finish a class or phase up and graduating them individually as they are ready rather than as a cohort—but most of our focus is on trying to do the normal things well. They say a black belt is really just someone who does white belt stuff very, very well, and we try to get the foundational things right. Things like keeping strictly to our target population, so that we only take people we can actually help and inviting in anyone who meets those objective criteria. We try to be strong on surveillance and testing. We know addiction can usually find a way, but we want our drug testing program to be as close to airtight as possible, since accurate monitoring is a bedrock thing for recovery. No testing regime is perfect, but we want participants trying to beat it to have to work so hard to do it that staying clean becomes a much more attractive option. We want the most robust treatment we can deliver for the indicated level of need, so that each participant gets the dosage Of treatment they need to get better. And we do not tolerate dishonesty. I think people do best when there’s something they’re trying to get away from—continued addiction—paired with something they’re trying to move towards, and we encourage

parents to pursue success, as they define it, in addition to staying clean and having their children home. You can incarcerate someone long enough to get them clean, but that is not success; we encourage participants to take the skills they learn to get and stay clean and apply those in other areas as well. Timeliness, delayed gratification, good communication skills, the ability to make thoughtful decisions and to handle interpersonal conflict, are all marketable skills that are highly sought after in the job market. Many of our participants wind up in managerial positions while they're still in the program. At graduation, most are doing better in virtually every measurable way than when they entered, and often than they've ever done before. While it is up to them to maintain the choices that brought them there, I think encouraging success based on hard work gives participants a stronger sense of self-worth and a greater sense of what they would lose if they returned to active addiction."

Why do you choose to preside over the accountability court? What do you hope to accomplish as a model court?

Judge Clough: "Prior to being appointed to the bench, I was a fairly hardened career prosecutor and somehow found myself assigned as a charter member of the Mental Health Court founded by Judge Murphy Miller. I knew next to nothing about accountability courts, but I watched a participant I had prosecuted for years get the treatment they needed, stop being violent, and become a functional, productive citizen, and I became convinced that accountability courts work. I love watching the process of someone achieving freedom and living the life that they choose without a chemical telling them what to do. It is truly the best work we do."

"I hope to continue to learn from our fellow FTCs ways we can do things better and more efficiently, and to share what's worked for us. No one can live long enough to learn everything on their own. If another program picks up something useful that has taken us 10 years to figure out, that gives them a head start that lets them progress even further."

What are you most proud of in terms of the program's success? What do you hope to accomplish as a model court?

Ms. McDonald: "I am proud to be a model court and a peer review court. I learn every time I peer review another court. I am proud of the relationship we have with DFCS and the buy-in to the accountability court model our team members have. We have a large and mighty team that cares about the success of the families in our program. As a model court, I hope to provide the fundamentals of FTC to other FTC coordinators and continue to offer a lifeline to the families in our communities in need. Success for me is seeing the graduates of our programs in the communities with their heads held high holding the hands of their children."

What is something you wish you knew at program inception that you hope to impart to newer courts?

Judge Clough: "There's a recognizable cycle to how people progress. It may take a couple years to start to see it, but it's very useful to understand that someone acting badly and continuing to use doesn't mean they're not progressing or need to be removed from the program: it's just Phase One behavior, and it'll pass. Once the treatment starts to take hold and participants turn their considerable resourcefulness towards getting clean instead of using, the ones who were the most trouble at the start often become the most successful. Stubbornness is a gift; it just takes a while for that ship to get turned around and pointed where it needs to go. We are responsible for making the best decisions we can about how to run a program, but we are not responsible for the choices of our participants. You can't change anyone: you can only provide an environment and resources that make it possible for them to change, and use sanctions and incentives to encourage that change. The choice, the work, and the accomplishments are truly theirs and their alone. Relapse is a part of recovery. That doesn't mean it's ok when it happens, but it shouldn't be surprising. Some participants and graduates, even the ones you thought were model participants, will relapse and not survive. It is devastating to stand over the casket of someone you graduated just weeks before, but at some point this will happen to all of us who do this work. When it does, look closely at what the program did right or could have done better, learn the hard lessons, grieve, and carry on. There are many more lives that we save: the ones that never make the news and that we never hear from again because they simply graduate and live quiet lives as good parents. And that's exactly what we want."



Approved Continuing Education Provider

CACJ is pleased to announce its recent approval from the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) as an Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP). NBCC is the largest counselor credentialing body in the United States and advances counseling as the premier certification body of the profession. The NBCC Approved Education Provider program highlights a continuing education provider's commitment to quality education and dedication to professional knowledge and skills.

NBCC Approved Education Providers offer training and education for professional counselors who are seeking to become certified/licensed and for those who want to maintain their certification/license at the state or national level. The NBCC Approved Education Provider emblem signifies authorized providers of training programs have satisfied NBCC ACEP eligibility requirements and have been granted ACEP status consistent with the NBCC Continuing Education Provider Policy. This rigorous review process ensures that learners receive a consistent, reliable, and quality learning experience that is applicable to their careers and advances their understanding as credentialed professional counselors. CACJ, as a NBCC Approved Education Provider, offers Georgia's accountability court professional counselors an extra incentive towards accruing continuing education credit, thus minimizing retention challenges for employers.

Current learning opportunities may be found on the CACJ website: <https://cacj.georgia.gov/training>

Submitted by Keisha Ray, CACJ Treatment Fidelity Program Monitor

November 2022 Newsletter Submissions

Please send submissions for the November 2022 newsletter to Debbie Mott (Debbie.Mott@GeorgiaCourts.gov) by Friday, October 28. If you plan to include a photo where participants can be identified, please be sure to send a signed photo consent with your submission.



Georgia Accountability Courts Career Opportunities

Please see the Career Opportunities tab (under About Us) on the CACJ website for information about these job postings:

- | | |
|--|--|
| *Rockdale County CBI-SA Group Facilitator | *DeKalb County Lab Technician |
| *DeKalb County Wellness Court Counselor | *DeKalb County Clinical Coordinator |
| *Hall County Drug Court Coordinator | *Hall County Drug Court Counselor |
| *Fulton County DUI Court Associate Licensed Clinician | *Fulton County Compliance Coordinator |
| *Forsyth County Accountability Court Case Manager | *Griffin Judicial Circuit Contract Counselors |
| *Fulton County Behavioral Health Clinician II | *Henry County Case Manager |
| *Henry County Behavioral Health Clinician | *Cherokee Judicial Circuit Mental Health Counselor |
| *Forsyth County Contract Counselors | *Glynn County Lead Clinical Director |
| *DeKalb County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court Social Worker | |
| *DeKalb County DUI Court Treatment Coordinator | |

JOB OPENING

Virtual Office Hours

Wondering about something? We are here to help Wednesday! Join CACJ Staff for virtual office hours!



Who: CACJ Teams –
Data, Executive Director/Legal/Grants, Standards & Certification, Training, and Treatment

When: One Wednesday of the month from 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (times changed as of August 1, 2022)

Meeting Schedule

- October 5, 2022** (*Register in advance: [Here](#)) 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
- Rachel Meyer will answer your Data questions
- Nov. 18, 2022** (*Register in advance: [Here](#)) 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
- Staff will answer questions about Certifications
- Dec. 7, 2022** (*Register in advance: [Here](#)) 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
- Staff will answer Treatment Session questions
- February 8, 2023** (*Register in advance: [Here](#)) 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
- Staff will answer questions about the FY23 grant application

Where: Zoom – We are pleased to offer this new form of technical assistance!

Why: Virtual office hours give you the opportunity to ask your questions and receive support in a streamlined fashion. You can meet with CACJ Staff on a regular basis to stay informed and get the answers you need.

CACJ Court Operating Profile Due October 28, 2022

FY24 Court Operating Profile Report will open Monday, October 3, 2022

Each CACJ accountability court (existing and proposed new programs) is required to complete the Court Operating Profile. **This report is mandatory for all courts that will apply for state grant funds during the upcoming FY24 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024).** The CACJ FY23 Court Operating Profile will open on Monday, October 3, 2022 and is due no later than Friday, October 28, 2022.

On Friday, September 30, CJCC provided by email the username, password, and survey link to complete the COP to program coordinators. Please read more [here](#).

2022 CACJ Annual Training Conference

Athens, Georgia | October 9-12, 2022