



DEARBORN SUPERIOR COURT II

Sally A. Blankenship, Judge

**SUPERIOR COURT II – JAIL CHEMICAL ADDICTIONS PROGRAM (JCAP)**

The Superior Court II Dearborn County Jail Chemical Addiction Program (JCAP) was implemented at the Dearborn County Law Enforcement Center in 2007. The initiative was started through the Superior Court II's new programs to address alcohol and substance abuse. The need to explore ways to address these issues in innovative ways had been recognized and through the combined efforts of our Court, Probation, the Sheriff, Jail Commander, Jail Staff, Attorneys and Prosecutor, the program has been building on the foundation set in 2007.

Chief Probation Officer Jennifer Lyness was instrumental in the development of the program and worked with the Court to develop the Director position and program. The Program Director, Ron Michaelson, is a Master's prepared licensed clinical social worker and certified addiction counselor who was hired through Superior Court II. Mr. Michaelson is the first full-time resource with this level of education and expertise in substance abuse for the Courts and Law Enforcement Center to address the issue of drug and alcohol addiction. Mr. Michaelson also directs the Court Alcohol and Drug Education Program which is certified by the Indiana Judicial Center and is an integral part of the Court's Pre-Trial Release and Probation program. The program is designed to provide effective intervention to prevent criminal activity and identify risk factors early. The Director position was approved by a majority of Dearborn County Council in 2007 at the request of the Court. All salary and costs for the Director and additional Probation staff have been fully funded since 2007 through the use of Superior Court II fees collected from probation fees and fees generated from the Superior Court II's other alcohol and drug education programs. In addition, the program has received support through grants from the community.

Both JCAP and the Court Alcohol and Drug Education program have the ability to save tax dollars. Effective intervention can reduce taxpayers cost through prevention of future crime. In addition, jail time and associated cost and other losses of tax dollars related to drug and alcohol abuse can be reduced. The number of crimes in our community initiated by drug and/or alcohol abuse are in the thousands each year comprising by conservative estimates 80% of all crimes committed. The cost for each day in jail to the taxpayers is a minimum of \$32.00 per inmate daily with the State estimating \$56.00/day as the cost to taxpayers. The cost to our community is not only dollars, but loss of lives, family strife, loss of productivity and increasing burdens on schools, businesses and welfare programs.

The Courts, law enforcement and our community also have many costs related to Child In Need of Services (CHINS), dissolutions, civil claims and evictions where substance abuse is the root of the problem. Our community has seen a rise in addiction in prescription drugs and heroin with an alarming increase among middle and high school students and young adults. The number of deaths due to drug

overdose has dramatically increased. The youth lost in the statistics are high school athletes, college students and neighbors. The number of cases involving young parents and babies born with drugs in their system is tragic.

JCAP addresses this critical issue in our community targeting those in jail. JCAP provides a comprehensive substance abuse program that has been accredited through the Indiana Department of Mental Health. The program promotes accountability and responsibility. Individuals with charges in any of the Superior or Circuit Courts may participate in the program. Participation is voluntary and inmates are selected based on commitment to change, criminal history and other factors. Currently one jail pod of sixteen males houses the program. All jail rules and additional rules and structure must be followed. No credit time or favorable treatment is promised. However successful completion may be considered at the discretion of the Prosecutor in sentencing recommendation or by the presiding Judge.

To further promote accountability, the program promotes involvement of the JCAP participants in giving back to the community. The participation of JCAP members presenting the program to community leaders and members provides them an opportunity to build skills and provide education into this issue.

Several programs have been provided by JCAP inmates at local high schools with the combined efforts of the Prosecutor, Sheriff, School and JCAP Director with the purpose to educate and prevent prescription drug use among students. The JCAP senior committee provides mentoring and development of the JCAP participants.

In 2009, JCAP had full occupancy of 16 males on a daily basis with a waiting list. Days in the program ranged from 66 to 210 with 90 days being the planned minimum. Eighty percent (800/o) were under age thirty. In 2009, Superior Court I initiated the ACC Court which contracts with CMHC to provide a comprehensive Drug Court program after jail and is available to all courts. The ACC Court works actively with Superior Court II to provide the structure needed after JCAP and jail for individuals to re-enter as responsible members of the community.

A woman's JCAP program is needed and being planned. Funding is an issue and several community leaders are assisting with the project. The current JCAP program and Director salaries are paid solely through fees collected through probation and court program fees and community grants. No county tax funds have even been used to date.

***Sally A. Blankenship***

***Dearborn Superior Court II***