



State of Connecticut
Judicial Branch
Community Court
Session
At
Hartford

80 Washington Street, Hartford, CT 06106

March 2004 News & Updates

Produced by Chris M. Pleasanton, Volume 6, Issue 3

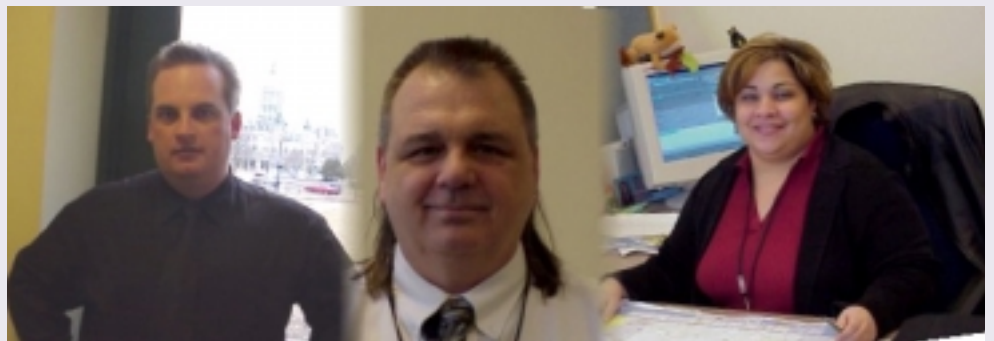
HARTFORD SHELTERS AND COMMUNITY COURT

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

One of the harsh realities faced by the Community Court staff is the consistent caseload of defendants who reside in local shelters or are homeless. Faced with overwhelming personal issues and social needs, these individuals often become entangled with a legal system struggling to provide a reasonable balance of social help while also addressing the criminal aspects of their situation.

As part of the effort to improve the ability of the Community Court to meet the social and legal needs of the shelter population, Court Coordinator Chris Pleasanton, accompanied by Community Court-based DMHAS staff Michael Hatt and Mildred Hickman, attended the monthly meeting of Hartford-area shelter directors at Park Street's Immaculate Reception Shelter on March 4, at the invitation of Mark Hightower, Director of McKinney Shelter. Among the many topics discussed were how to keep the lines of communication open between the court and the shelters and how to better utilize services to improve the social service response for the individuals we both serve.

"The Court realizes that social needs, rather than criminal motivation, are the driving force behind the illegal actions for many of these individuals," Mr. Pleasanton said. "While the Court must address their criminal behavior according to the law, understanding the social angle often helps us tailor a better response to assist the defendant as well as sanction them."




(L to R) Chris Pleasanton, Michael Hatt, and Mildred Hickman

"We would like to thank Mark Hightower and the other shelter directors and staff for inviting us to meet with them," Mr. Pleasanton continued. "Their open approach to working together and sincere interest in helping their clients inspires us to work harder for those we mutually serve."



MONTHLY COMMUNITY COURT STATISTICS FEBRUARY 2004

Hours of Community Service	2,508
Total Number of Cases Processed	523
Number of Human Services Referrals	124
Referrals to HAMP (Hartford Area Mediation)	26



NOW MARSHALS, FORMER POLICE OFFICERS

BRING THEIR EXPERIENCE TO COMMUNITY COURT

The diversity of staff of the Community Court in both life experience and professional ability is one of the many things that help the Court succeed in its mission to provide restorative justice for quality of life crimes. Among the many wells of experience the Court is fortunate to draw upon is the police experience of Marshals Joe Conti, Jack Goldberg, and Ray Sullivan.

Both veterans of the Hartford Police Department, Marshal Conti served 28 years as a patrolman and detective, and Marshal Sullivan served 26 years, starting as a patrol officer, also working in crime analysis and as a homicide detective. Marshal Goldberg served on the Wethersfield Police Department for 32 years, and is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy and Bomb School.

In addition to being a valuable resource in police matters, their experience serving in the field and now in the Courthouse has given these Marshals a unique perspective of the criminal justice system.

Regarding the Community Court's commitment to restorative justice through community service and social services, Marshal Sullivan said, "The Community Court makes defendants more accountable for their actions. It helps both the police and the public to have a serious response to low level crimes, and gives the Superior Court more time to address the violent crimes."



(L to R) Judicial Marshals Jack Goldberg, Joe Conti, and Ray Sullivan

Marshal Conti said. "Before the Community Court, we had few options to get help for the drunks and others with social problems. We could just lock them up. The Community Court opens up the possibility to get some help for these guys that I wish was there when I was a police officer."

Marshal Goldberg added, "A lot of the people I saw as a police officer needed help more than punishment, but the Community Court's community service serves a valuable purpose. It gives our defendants some sense of worth. When they clean up their neighborhoods, they realize that it's their community too and will think twice about doing the same things."

"These Marshals have added a lot to our Court," Judge Jorge Simón stated. "I am very proud to work with each of them."

WEAVER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

JOB SHADOWING AT COMMUNITY COURT

The Community Court in Hartford was pleased to host several students from Hartford's Weaver High School for a Job Shadowing Program on March 15. Arranged by Robyn Oliver, Administrator of the Judicial Branch's Volunteer/Intern Program, and Court Coordinator Chris Pleasanton, the Weaver students spent a couple hours working directly with the Community Court staff in order to expose themselves to the professional skills and expertise required to work in the legal field.

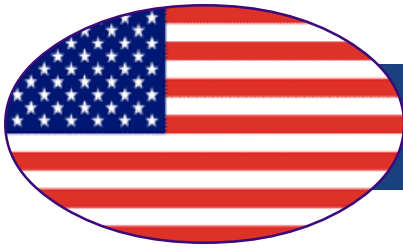
Led by Weaver High Career Specialist Valerie Donar, the three Weaver students, Chris Collins, Nadia Redway, and Nyvea Sibilly, arrived at the Community Court at 9 A.M. After listening to a brief description of the Court by Chris Pleasanton, Mr. Collins paired off with Community Service Field Supervisor Mamie Bell, where he helped her conduct pre-service interviews with clients. Ms. Sibilly worked with Public Defender Ray Cuatto, sitting at his courtroom desk and discussing the finer points of legal defense efforts, and Ms. Redway joined Judge Jorge Simón on the bench as he presided over the Community Court's morning session. Assistant State's Attorney Glenn Kaas and Supervising Judicial Marshal John Maloney also visited with the students and shared some of their expertise.

"The Weaver students impressed us with being articulate, well mannered, and inquisitive," Judge Simón said. "These are qualities that will ensure their success in the pursuit of careers in the legal field."

"We were very pleased to host the Weaver students for the Job Shadowing Program," Chris Pleasanton added. "We look forward to hosting more Weaver students in the future."



(Top) Nadia Redway and Judge Simón
(Middle) Community Service Field Supervisor
Mamie Bell with Chris Collins, and
(Bottom) Nyvea Sibilly with Public Defender
Ray Cuatto



Community Service



Community Pride



COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK SITES FEBRUARY 2004

- February 2 South Whitney St.
- February 3 Walnut St., Homestead Ave.
- February 4 various street corner snow/ice removal projects
- February 5 Flatbush Ave.
- February 6 FOODSHARE - La Casa de Puerto Rico, Faith Manor
- February 9 Tower Ave.
- February 10 Franklin Ave.
- February 11 Jefferson St.
- February 13 Sigourney St.
- February 17 Charter Oak Ave., Airport Rd., Maxim Rd.
- February 18 Stonington Ave., Park St., Cedar St.
- February 19 Granby St., Charter Oak Landing
- February 20 FOODSHARE - La Casa de Puerto Rico, Faith Manor, various trash collection projects, Broad St.
- February 23 FOODSHARE - Grace Episcopal Church, Hamilton St.
- February 24 Cedar St., Zion St., Park St., Capitol Ave., Affleck St., Westbourne Parkway, Forrest St.
- February 25 Seymour St., Affleck St., Babcock St., Russ St., Putnam Heights, Ward St.
- February 26 Evergreen Ave., Gray St., Sisson Ave.

COM. SERVICE PERFORMED AT MERCY HOUSING & SHELTER & EBONY HORSE WOMEN RANCH THROUGHOUT THE MONTH
INFORMATION PROVIDED BY CHRIS MENA, CPA, COMMUNITY COURT COMMUNITY SERVICE TEAM

RECENT VISITORS TO THE COMMUNITY COURT



Glastonbury Police Chief Thomas Sweeny with Judge Simón



Hartford's Americorps, led by Zohra Ayub, visit on March 26



Marshal Bill Faber, his wife Connie, daughter Cheryl, grandson Tyler, and friend Kevin meet Judge Simón

Please feel free to email the court with questions or comments at:
Hartford.Commcourt@jud.state.ct.us

and visit the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch website at:

www.jud.state.ct.us