

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Community Court Session At Hartford

**SUMMER 2007
News & Updates**

Produced by Chris Pleasanton, Vol. 9, Issue 2

COMMUNITY COURT PARENTHOOD PROGRAM

In an effort to provide young parents who come before the court with parenting information, the Community Court in Hartford initiated its first parenting class this summer. Developed with the assistance of Lisa Davis of the State Department of Public Health and Horace McCauley of the State Department of Social Services, the program consisted of five sessions focusing on physical and emotional development of infants, nutrition, child safety, and setting goals as a parent.

“From the bench, I see too many kids who have kids,” Judge Curtissa Cofield said. “It is my hope that we can use their involvement with the court to enhance their parenting skills.”

Working in collaboration, Ms. Davis, Mr. McCauley, and Court Coordinator Chris Pleasanton arranged for different speakers for each session, including Megan O’Hanlon of Community Health Services and Marian Storch and Charlie Slaughter of the State Department of Public Health.

“We are very grateful to the speakers who volunteered their time and expertise,” Chris Pleasanton said. “Because of their efforts, four young parents were able to participate in and graduate from our program.”



Horace McCauley, Lisa Davis, and
Chris Pleasanton

ABH - DMHAS VETS PROGRAM WORKING WITH COMMUNITY COURT

With an ever increasing number of Connecticut’s military service members serving deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq, the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc. are working together on the Military Support Program to provide help to those service members and their families before, during, and after their deployment. Services include help with veterans’ benefits and entitlements, mental health and stress issues, substance abuse treatment, and employment and educational programs.

Realizing that some people who qualify for assistance from the Military Support Program may have involvement with the criminal justice system, sometimes as a result of the stresses of military service, MSP representatives recently met with staff from the Community Court to make their services more readily available to those in need.

“The Community Court is grateful for the Military Support Program’s efforts to help those who have served our country face the unique challenges their service presents,” Judge Cofield stated.

For more information on the Military Support Program please visit its website at www.ct.gov/msp.

(Pictured L to R; Community Court unless indicated) Nate Cotton, John Sims of ABH, Terrell Hartfield, Patricia Dupree and Jim Tackett of DMHAS, Francis Simcic of ABH, and Chris Pleasanton



COMMUNITY COURT STATISTICS

SPRING 2007

MAR

APR

MAY

	<i>MAR</i>	<i>APR</i>	<i>MAY</i>
Total New Cases	1000	815	810
Community Service Hours	2220	1920	2658
Social Services Referrals	174	165	160
Referrals to Mediation	52	41	81
Rate of Compliance	90%	91%	91%
Suburban Caseload	9%	12%	18%

STAFF NOTES



Two members of the Community Court family graduated from Springfield College in May. CPA Community Service Field Supervisor Samantha Benjamin graduated with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Social Work. Denise Holloman, of Paul & Lisa, Inc., who is lead facilitator of the Court's Women's Holistic Health/Prostitution Protocol Program, also earned her Bachelor's of Science Degree in Human Services.



City of Hartford - Community Court social worker Yanira Rodriguez and her husband Arcadio are proud to announce the birth of their son Ethan Arcadio who was born at 7:41 a.m. on April 4, 2007. Ethan Arcadio Roadriguez was born weighing 6 pounds two ounces and measuring 18 inches.

CARMEN DIAZ RETURNS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE TEAM

Longtime Community Service Field Supervisor Carmen Diaz returned to the Community Service team in June after living for a year in Puerto Rico. As a Field Supervisor, Carmen is responsible for transporting community service work crews to and from the works sites and supervising their work. The Community Service Team is comprised of staff from Community Partners in Action, under a contract with the Judicial Branch.

“We are glad to have Carmen back on the team,” CPA Community Service Program Manager Chris Mena said. “She brings a lot of experience back to the team and enhances our ability to provide quality community service to the community.”



Carmen Diaz

BAIL COMMISSIONER NATE COTTON PROMOTED



Nate Cotton

Bail Commissioner Nate Cotton was recently promoted by his division to Supervising Bail Commissioner. A Bail Commissioner for 19 years, Nate will now be responsible for the supervision of other Bail Commissioners at Community Court and working to maintain and enhance existing Bail Commissioner programs, in addition to continuing his day-to-day bail duties. Bail Commissioners' duties include checking a defendant's prior criminal history, making bond recommendations to Judges, and performing supervision of some clients.

“I am pleased for Nate that he has been recognized with this promotion,” Judge Cofield said. “His hard work and experience add greatly to the quality of the Community Court.”

Nate is also a verteran of two military tours in the Middle East and his son William is currently deployed in Iraq.

'MAD DOG' SPEAKS AT THE COMMUNITY COURT

The Community Court strives to provide educational opportunities for all who come before the court. Those opportunities come in many forms, whether through formal classes, having a heart-to-heart conversation with a social worker or by working on a community service project. One of the most unusual educational opportunities presented itself when Dale "Mad Dog" Messmer came to Hartford.

Mr. Messmer is a former United States Marine who went from being a millionaire businessman to jail due to piloting drugs into the United States. After being released, Mr. Messmer chose to share his experiences with as many young people as he can so they don't make the same bad choices he did. He currently travels the country speaking to young people at schools, community centers, and is a frequent guest on television's "The Maury Povich Show." He speaks in a straightforward manner, without being obscene or offensive, yet still "tells it like it is" as only someone who has been there can. In addition to speaking at the Community Court, Mr. Messmer also spoke at several Hartford-area schools and youth programs.

"I see too many kids who are drawn by the fast money and so-called glamour of the street life, but the reality is the whole stop-snitching gang culture is a dead-end street" Judge Cofield said. "Mr. Messmer spoke eloquently and to the point on what those bad choices lead to, incarceration or death, and it isn't pretty. I could see his speech making an impact on many of those who listened to him"



Judge Cofield with Dale "Mad Dog" Messmer

MAPLE AVENUE RESIDENTS VISIT COURT



The Community Court in Hartford strives to have an open door policy where residents not only observe court proceedings, as they can in any open court session, but take a tour and meet with the staff to have their questions answered. On June 22nd, the Community Court was honored to host such a visit by Maple Avenue-area residents Marian Cardone, Anna Malootian, and Clare Murphy. They are each involved in their neighborhood through the Maple Avenue Revitalization Group, which invites the Court to make a monthly presentation on its activities and conducts improvement projects such as neighborhood clean-ups.

"We were much honored to be visited by these ladies," Judge Cofield said. "Their interest in their community and city sets an inspiring example for us all."

Maple Avenue-area residents Clare Murphy, Anna Malootian, and Marian Cardone visit Judge Cofield at the Community Court June 22, 2007.

MY INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE AT THE COMMUNITY COURT

by Nisha Mungroo

My name is Nisha Mungroo and I am a 20-year-old resident of Connecticut. I will begin my senior year in September at The University of Massachusetts-Amherst as a double major in Journalism and Legal Studies with a minor in Spanish. I plan to attend law school in the fall of 2008, with hopes of becoming a lawyer.

My experience interning at the Hartford Community Court has been extraordinary and has cemented my decision to pursue a career as an attorney. I have observed the unique, progressive culture of the Community Court for the summer of 2007 and I have received an education that no class or legal education could offer. Working closely with Judge Cofield and Chris Pleasanton has been a fundamental part in making my experience as an intern fulfilling and educational.

Throughout my internship, I had the opportunity to work within various realms of the court including protocols such as the prostitution protocol, which was one of the most interesting. I found this protocol to be interesting because not only was Judge Cofield addressing the issue of prostitution, but she was simultaneously able to access the root of these women's problems which stems from drug abuse, abusive relationships, traumatizing childhoods, etc. Through addressing the root of the problem, the team of individuals working in the protocol eliminates an array of discouraging issues in their lives, reducing the risk of drug use in the future and the risk of their re-arrest as well.

I was excited to go to court every day because there was never a mundane task or dull day at the Community Court. Judge Cofield's personal interest and professional approach to each case makes going to court a pleasurable experience as well as an entertaining one. I have had quite an influential and unique experience interning here at the Community Court and I have been blessed with having an ideal role model like Judge Cofield to influence me in my legal career. Judge Cofield's dedicated and proactive involvement in the community coupled with Chris Pleasanton's tact, experience and efficiency makes for the perfect team of community heroes and I am honored to have been their third wheel for the summer. Working with Judge Cofield and Chris this summer has given me hope in my desire to impact my community and work with individuals who are financially underprivileged but need representation. I have fully enjoyed my term as an intern and I look forward to commencing my career in the legal field this semester with the application process to law schools!



Nisha Mungroo



Other Spring and Summer Community Court interns include Wanda Perez from the University of Hartford (L) Brenda Lujando and Taisha Lopez of Hartford High (above with Judge Cofield) and Marcus Thomas of Bloomfield's Big Picture High School (above right with Judge Cofield).

COMMUNITY COURT & SHELTERS WORKING TOGETHER

Over the years, the Community Court has developed good working relationships with several Hartford-area homeless shelters. This is due in no small part to the Court's participation in the Hartford-area Shelter Case Manager's monthly meetings, moderated by Mark Hightower of the CRT McKinney Shelter. In addition to Court Coordinator Chris Pleasanton representing the Court at each meeting, the Community Court has also hosted the meeting on two occasions.

Since opening in 1998, the Community Court in Hartford has handled many cases of individuals who are homeless or reside at an area shelter. The open lines of communication between the Court and the shelter case managers have resulted in improved services for the defendant clients and have reduced some of their involvement with the criminal justice system.



Mr. Hightower invited Mr. Pleasanton and John Sims of Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc. to participate in a panel discussion at the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness' 6th Annual Training Institute at Manchester Community College on July 27th, Mr. Hightower, Mr. Sims and Mr. Pleasanton discussed the benefits of non-traditionally linked organizations working together and the unique opportunities it presents.

"Mark's invitation to the Community Court to participate in the case manager's monthly meetings has helped the court better serve the homeless shelter population it works with," Mr. Pleasanton said. "We have also been able to expand the service opportunities for our defendants by connecting with providers including ABH who also attend these meetings."

(L to R) John Sims of ABH, Chris Pleasanton, Mark Hightower of CRT McKinney Shelter

COMMUNITY COURT CONTACT INFO

Please feel free to email the court at:

Hartford.Commcourt@jud.ct.gov

and visit the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch website at:

www.jud.ct.gov

Spring 2007 COMMUNITY SERVICE

**WORK
SITES**

MARCH

3/1/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare, Vine Street 3/2/2007 various Foodshare sites, Buckingham, Wadsworth & Grand Streets 3/5/2007 Nelton Court, Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare, Vine & Garden Streets 3/6/2007 Foodshare, Garden & Enfield Streets 3/7/2007 Foodshare, Enfield, Mansfield, Broad & Madison Streets 3/8/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Vine Street, Foodshare 3/9/2007 Foodshare: Faith Manor, La Casa & Asylum Baptist Church 3/12/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Vine & Garden Streets 3/13/2007 Foodshare, Lawrence, Babcock, Bond, Barker, Kibbe & Grafton Streets, Madison and Sherbrooke Avenues, Putnam Heights, Broadview Terrace 3/14/2007 Foodshare, Brook, Williams, Edwards, Chestnut, Carter, Green, East, Bethel, Seyms, Florence, Belden & Mather Streets 3/15/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Nelson, Judson, Clark, Mather, Pliney & Bethel Streets 3/16/2007 Foodshare: Faith Manor & La Casa 3/19/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare: Grace Episcopal Church 3/20/2007 Foodshare, Edgewood & Greenfield Streets 3/21/2007 Foodshare, Nelton Court, Westland, Edgewood & Battles Streets, Mahl Avenue 3/22/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Madison Avenue, Kibbe, Buckley, Kane & Grace Streets 3/23/2007 Foodshare, Bellvue, Blake, Battles, Wooster, Loomis, Sanford, Capen, Elmer, Clark, Acton & Judson Street 3/26/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare, Baltimore & Kent Streets 3/27/2007 Foodshare, Adams, Milford, Deerfield, Lenox, Cabot & Edgewood Streets, Oakland Terrace 3/28/2007 Foodshare, Nelton Court, Capen, Martin, Judson, Nelson, Acton, Clark, Naugatuck, Risley, Charlotte & Earle Streets 3/29/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare, York, Ward, Putnam, Affleck, Belden, Florance, Syms, Earle and Bethel Streets 3/30/2007 Foodshare, Brook, Williams, Green, Edwards & Affleck Streets

APRIL

4/1/2007 Russ, Lawrence, Mather & Ashford Streets Foodshare 4/2/2007 Foodshare, South Marshall, Marshall, Laurel, Case, Hawthorne & Forest Streets 4/3/2007 Foodshare, Washington, Madison, Lincoln, Jefferson, Affleck & Ward Streets 4/4/2007 Foodshare, Madison Avenue, Chadwick, Buckley & Kibbe Streets 4/5/2007 Foodshare: Faith Manor & La Casa 4/9/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch 4/10/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Leibert Road, Windsor Street Bridge, Blake, Wooster, Battles, Benton, Warner, Elliot, Whitmore, & Bond Streets 4/11/2007 Foodshare, Nelton Court, Ebony Horse Ranch, Mahl Avenue, Bethel, Pliny & Mather Street, Center, Green, Seyms, East Street, Florence & Belden Street 4/12/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare, Nelton Court 4/13/2007 Foodshare: Faith Manor, La Casa & Asylum Baptist Church, Enfield, Edgewood, Middlefield & East Raymond Streets 4/16/2007 Foodshare, Westbourne Parkway, Love Lane, Cornwell, Rockville, Winchester & Ward Streets, Laurel Street & Capitol Avenue underpasses, Ebony Horse Ranch 4/17/2007 Foodshare, Laurel Street & Capitol Avenue Underpasses, Nelton Court, Ebony Horse Ranch 4/18/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Baltimore, Kent, Adams, Milford, Sterling, Cabot, Edgewood, Burton Irving Streets, Harbinson Place, Oakland Terrace 4/19/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Brook, Williams, Edwards, Chestnut, Walnut, Green, Center, East, Florence & Seyms Streets 4/20/2007 Foodshare 4/23/2007 Bowles Park, Garden, Mather, Enfield, Broad & Madison Streets, Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare 4/24/2007 Foodshare, Center, Sanford & Bellvue Streets 4/25/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch 4/26/2007 Mahoney Village, Nelton Court, Nelson, Judson, Clark & Elmer Streets 4/27/2007 Foodshare, Magnolia, West Raymond, Mansfield, Capen & Irving Streets, 4/30/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare, Oakland Terrace, Nelson, Barbour, Sterling, Cabot, Edgewood, Kibbe, Madison, Buckley, & Grace Streets

MAY

5/1/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch 5/2/2007 Laurel Street & Capitol Avenue underpasses, Foodshare, Ebony Ranch 5/3/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch 5/4/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare 5/7/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Nelton Court 5/8/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Sanford, Loomis, Battles, Wooster & Blake Streets 5/9/2007 Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare, Stewart & Martin Luther Streets 5/10/2007 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture 5/11/2007 Foodshare 5/14/2007 Foodshare, Ward Street Hartford Police Substation 5/15/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch, Litchfield Street 5/16/2007 Westland, Garden & Martin Streets, Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare 5/17/2007 Foodshare, Edgewood, Enfield & Garden Streets, Ebony Horse Ranch 5/18/2007 Foodshare: Mahoney Village, Golden Age Senior Center, Capitol Avenue & Laurel Street underpasses 5/21/2007 Magnolia, Irving & Vine Streets, Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare 5/22/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch 5/23/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch 5/24/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch 5/25/2007 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Ranch 5/29/2007 Bowles Park 5/30/2007 Bushnell Park 5/31/2007 Sherbrooke, Grafton, Ebony Horse Ranch, Foodshare

**COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT HOTLINE
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COMMUNITY COURT SESSION IN HARTFORD

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SUMMER 2007 NEWSLETTER

IN THIS EDITION...

Military Support Program, Community Courts and Shelters Working Together, Interns, Mad Dog, Staff Notes & more...



State of Connecticut Superior Court
Community Court Session in Hartford
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