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News & Updates

Produced by Chris Pleasanton, Vol. 10, Issue 1

2007: A BUSY YEAR AT THE HARTFORD COMMUNITY COURT

2007 was a very interesting year at the Community Court in Hartford where several programs including the underage drinking, truancy, and prostitution protocols have been created, enhanced, and expanded. In pure numbers alone, 2007 also turned out to be among the busiest years in the Hartford Community Court's history.

The Community Court in Hartford handled 9,342 arraignments in 2007, in addition to scheduling 11,620 appearances for follow-up. Of the 9,342 arraignments, 1,393 or 15% were from the court's suburban jurisdictions. Overall, the appearance rate remained high at 92%, with only 8% of defendants not appearing for required court appearances, thereby earning a charge of failure to appear.

Community Court defendants performed 27,901 hours of community service to pay back the community for their offenses, a 6% increase over 2006.

The Community Court's social services team issued over 1,800 social services referrals for everything from job training, to state assistance, to intensive inpatient substance abuse and mental health treatment.

As 2008 begins, the Community Court looks to continue at this busy pace while striving to continue to provide a meaningful response to quality of life crimes and providing opportunities for persons in need.



Judge Cofield

THE COMMUNITY COURT SEEKS YOUR INPUT!

**PLEASE CALL THE
COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT HOTLINE
756-7000
WITH YOUR PROJECT SUGGESTIONS**

COMMUNITY COURT STATISTICS

WINTER 2007-08

DEC

JAN

FEB

	<i>DEC</i>	<i>JAN</i>	<i>FEB</i>
Total New Cases	396	641	558
Community Service Hours	1890	1580	972
Social Services Referrals	112	117	120
Referrals to Mediation	40	67	71
Rate of Compliance	92%	93%	93%
Suburban Caseload	19%	24%	22%

STAFF NOTES

DAVE CLARK



The Community Court in Hartford would like to welcome a new Judicial Marshal to its team; Marshal Dave Clark. Dave is a 21-year veteran of the Windsor Locks, Connecticut Police Department where he developed a drug and alcohol awareness program for high school students. He has been a judicial marshal for three years, serving at the Superior Court in Enfield and at 101 Lafayette Street in Hartford.

“Marshal Clark is a highly professional marshal who puts forth pride and effort in his duties,” Supervising Marshal Nick Winn stated. “We are very pleased to have him on staff at 80 Washington Street.”

CARMEN DIAZ



Hartford has a new rising star in Angela Maldonado! Angela, the daughter of community service field supervisor Carmen Diaz, was named Mega Education Student of the Month for February at the M.D. Fox Elementary School. The Mega Education program was created by Attorney Jeffrey Dressler and is a media based scholastic incentive system designed to reward student achievement and effort.

Angela, whose favorite subject is gym, was also awarded a gold medal for her Black History Month report on Harriet Tubman. In addition to her academic pursuits, Angela is an avid equestrian rider who rides at the Ebony Horsewomen Equestrian Center in Hartford.

DANNIELLA GUZMAN



The Community Court in Hartford would also like to welcome Danniella Guzman to the Community Service Team. Danniella was recently hired by contracted service provider Community Partners in Action to serve as a full-time administrative assistant. Danniella will be responsible for maintaining important community service paperwork, answering the community service hotline, and interviewing defendants scheduled for community service.

“Danniella brings a good work ethic and skill set with her to the Community Court,” CPA Program manager Chris Mena said. “We are pleased to have her working with us.”

JUDGE COFIELD IN THE COMMUNITY

Judge Cofield continued to maintain a busy schedule in the community throughout the last part of 2007 into 2008, attending several community meetings and organizational events throughout the Greater Hartford area.

In November, Judge Cofield was honored by the Hartford Alumni of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity as one of the 2007 recipients of its Kappa Achievement Award. Judge Cofield, along with her husband, the Honorable Gary White, were also honored by the Village for Children and Families with the Champions of Children award for their dedication to helping children in need. She also spoke at a Village for Children and Families luncheon on March 10 before the Glastonbury Auxiliary Group.

One of Judge Cofield's highest personal priorities is education. She often quotes Victor Hugo, who said "Open a school, close a prison". As such, she makes every effort to speak at as many schools as possible. Over the past few months, Judge Cofield has spoken before students at Hartford Public High School and Buckley High School, the Fox Middle School, and the "Dream Camp" educational program at Trinity College among others.



(Above) Judge Cofield and Judge White with their shared Champions of Children award from the Village For Children and Families

Judge Cofield was a featured guest on Tony Magno's WWUH Saturday afternoon radio program Carosello Musicale Italiano to talk about the Community Court in Hartford and its depth of programs and protocols. She also taped an appearance on Tony's local public access television program "Did You Know?" scheduled to air in the spring.

Along with Court Planner Chris Pleasanton, Judge Cofield attended both the December and February meetings of the Maple Avenue Revitalization Group (MARG) led by Hyacinth Yennie. They also attended the Asylum Hill Problem Solving Revitalization Association meeting on March 3, 2008.

Judge Cofield welcomes your input and suggestions. Please feel free to stop by the Community Court during business hours or call Chris Pleasanton directly at (860) 756-7015.



(Right) Judge Cofield with Tony Magno and his brother Carlo Magno at the WHUS radio studio

UConn Law Students Building Bridges with People Through Community Court

Law school is a busy time in the lives of most students who often spend most of their days in class and late nights in the library studying complex legal concepts. Coupled with jobs and the ebb and flow of normal everyday life, law students have very little free time for themselves or to spend doing for others. Two UConn School of Law students who fit that description are James Moody and Alec Bates. James and Alec face the same challenges of every other law student, but they are truly exceptional in that they strive to devote time to others despite the demands on their time.



James Moody and Alec Bates

Having heard Judge Cofield speak at their orientation for first-year law students at the University of Connecticut School of Law and worked with the Community Court on last summer's UConn Law/Community Court community service project, Alec and James reached out to Judge Cofield during last year's holiday season to see if they could make the season a little better for someone and expand their personal horizons as well. Specifically, Alec and James proposed having Judge Cofield select two or three court clients to join them for Christmas Eve dinner at their home, to share in making the meal, and get to know each other in a friendly family-like environment.

After careful consideration, Judge Cofield selected three people known to her who did not have a lot of family or friends to voluntarily share the holiday with to join Alec and James for dinner. The three were joined by their spouses and in one case, their mother, making the dinner a large, festive occasion. Judge Cofield's intern Jamal Johnson also attended the dinner. The dinner was a success with wonderful food, cooked together by all, and shared over pleasant conversation. One court client said it was the best holiday dinner she ever had.

"I think Alec and James had a wonderful idea to bring people together who would not normally connect in their daily lives with an idea to build better understand and friendships," Judge Cofield said. "Doing so at the holidays made it all the more poignant for everyone."

"Alec and James are exceptional young men," Judge Cofield continued. "Their personal qualities and depth of character will serve them well as they enter the practice of law."



CORRECTION: In the previous edition of the Community Court's newsletter article on the UConn School of Law and Community Court joint community service project, UConn Law School Dean Jeremy Paul was misidentified as Dean Paul Chill. We regret the error and were pleased to work with both Dean Paul and Dean Chill on that project. Dean Paul is pictured at left between Patricia Kelley of the Ebony Horsewomen Equestrian Center, Judge Cofield, and HPD Chief Daryl Roberts and other friends during the summer clean-up effort. The Community Court in Hartford looks forward to continuing an exciting and dynamic relationship with the staff and students of the UConn Law School

SHELTER DIRECTORS MEETING AT COMMUNITY COURT

The Community Court in Hartford hosted the monthly Homeless Shelter Case Manager's Meeting on March 6, 2008 which was attended by nearly 30 participants. Co-chaired by Mark Hightower of the McKinney Shelter and Christie Corrigan of the Salvation Army Marshall House Beyond Shelter program, the meeting is an opportunity for those who work on Hartford-area shelters and the homeless population to discuss issues affecting their clients and to learn of new programs and services.

The March meeting featured presentations by Crane Cesario who is Director of Housing and Homeless Resources for the Capitol Region Mental Health/ Shelter Plus Care program and Katie Martin who represented the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness. Lunch was provided by the Judicial Branch.

"We work with a lot of homeless and shelter-based clients at the Community Court," Judge Cofield said. "Having open lines of communication with the shelter staff has helped us to develop more appropriate solutions for many of their clients with community court cases and has served to reduce the incidences of incarceration in a number of those cases."

For more information or to participate in a future Homeless Shelter Case Managers Meeting, please call Mark Hightower at (860) 722-6924 or Christie Corrigan at (860) 543-8438 ext. 6

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AT WESTFIELD

Court Planner Chris Pleasanton was recently invited to speak before Professor Tom Roscoe's Restorative Justice class at Westfield State College in Westfield, Massachusetts. The Community Court in Hartford practices a version of restorative justice by holding defendants accountable for their criminal violations and requiring that many perform community service to "pay back" the community for those crimes. At the same time, the Community Court provides defendants with the opportunity to address the social needs that may be driving their behavior through the on-site social services team.



Professor Tom Roscoe and
Chris Pleasanton

"It was a pleasure to speak to the students in Professor Roscoe's class," Mr. Pleasanton said. "They were attentive and had very insightful questions."

Professor Roscoe also invited Mr. Pleasanton to serve on the Advisory Panel for Westfield's Criminal Justice Department.

"I am very honored by Professor Roscoe's invitation and look forward to serving on the panel," Mr. Pleasanton said.

ADDRESSING TRUANCY AS AN UNDERLYING ISSUE FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS

When defendants appear before her in court, Judge Cofield often asks them questions about their lives in an effort to get to the heart of the reasons for their arrest. The reason people become involved in the criminal justice system is as varied as each individual person. This is as true for young offenders as it is for those who are over 18. However, for several young offenders (16 and 17-year-olds) who come before the Community Court in Hartford, one of the prevalent underlying issues of their lives is truancy from school.

Truancy in and of itself is not a crime that is handled by the Community Court, yet, for several young offenders who aren't in school, they become involved in criminal activities for which they end up in Community Court. In fact, some who skip school are arrested for crimes at exactly the same time they are supposed to be in class. Reasoning that the more kids are in school the more they would be off the streets and stay out of trouble, Judge Cofield began to look for ways to tackle truancy.

At the same time, Hartford Police Chief Darryl Roberts reached out to Judge Cofield to see if there was a way to work together to on truancy. Since becoming Chief of Police, Chief Roberts has successfully implemented several initiatives to get truant kids off the streets and back into school. Seizing the opportunity to work together to help kids, Chief Roberts and Judge Cofield, along with representatives from the HPD Juvenile Investigative Division, and Court Planner Chris Pleasanton brainstormed to develop a Truancy Prevention Protocol.

Now, when young offenders are arrested on community court cases during school hours, or it is otherwise determined that truancy is an underlying issue in their lives, the young offenders are diverted to the court's afternoon truancy program. Scheduled every three to four weeks during its operation, kids in the Truancy Protocol are scheduled to appear before Judge Cofield at 3 PM on the appointed day (so as to not miss school by having to attend court in the morning).

The fundamental purpose of the protocol is to have the kids return to school and to behave in class. Working with school resource officers, representatives from the HPD Juvenile Investigative division including Lt. Mark Tedeschi, Det. Sonya Watson, Det. Dixon Vega, Det. Marco Massa, and Sgt. Matt Eisele, provide Judge Cofield with detailed attendance reports that indicate not only if the kid went to school on a specific day, but also which classes the kid did or did not attend.

Judge Cofield also assigns the young offenders specific projects designed to educate and inspire the kids. Among the assignments Judge Cofield has issued is book reports on "We Beat the Street: How a Friendship Led to Success" by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt, and Sharon Draper. The kids have to submit their report to Judge Cofield at their next appearance and read it before their fellow participants. She has also assigned the kids to report about a piece on the chess board and how that piece's strategy can apply to life, and also to memorize the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling, which contains some important life lessons about not following the crowd in a bad direction.

ADDRESSING TRUANCY, continued

continued from page 6...

The students are also required to participate in an after-school program either through the Hartford Police Explorers or the Police Athletic League.

Twenty-nine students graduated the first session of the Truancy Prevention Program and received a diploma signed by Chief Roberts and Judge Cofield. Upon completion, their cases at the Community Court were dismissed.

“I am very pleased by the effort many of the kids made to make productive changes in their lives and get back into school,” Judge Cofield said. “This was not an easy program; they had to earn their graduation.”

“IF”

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master,
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breath a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: “Hold on!”

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much,
If you can fill the unforbearing minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

—*Rudyard Kipling*

CITY OF HARTFORD HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES STAFF MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR THOUSANDS AT COMMUNITY COURT

Along with the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the foundation of the Community Court in Hartford's Social Services Team rests with the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services. Since the Community Court opened in 1998, the City of Hartford staff has assessed tens of thousands of people and has made thousands of referrals for everything from job training and education to food stamps and housing assistance to outpatient drug treatment.

The ability to provide on-site access to social services is one of the most important aspects of the Community Court in Hartford. Many Community Court defendants end up in court because a social issue is driving their behavior, whether it is mental health or substance abuse problem, unemployment, or a simple lack of resources. Many of these in-need defendants do not connect to the service system in a traditional manner and even if they do the system can be very difficult to navigate. The on-site social services staff assesses each client for their needs and begins the connection process by making appropriate referrals and personally arranging appointments.

"I cannot underestimate the value of the social services team from the City of Hartford," Judge Cofield said. "They do a wonderful job and help a lot of people get help when they need it and stay out of trouble at the same time. It's a true win-win situation for all."

The Health and Human Services Department and the Community Court have developed a dynamic working relationship in the nearly 10 years that the Community Court has been in operation and continue to work together and communicate to develop new and innovative approaches. In the following article, we would like to profile the three staff people from the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services who help the Community Court make a real difference in people's lives: Denice Bermudez, Yanira Rodriguez, and Lorraine Sullivan.

Denice Bermudez

Denice Bermudez is a social worker with the City of Hartford, who earned a social worker degree in her home nation of Columbia. Denice's primary responsibility is to assess defendants for their social services needs and to make appropriate referrals. She usually interviews from 100 to over 250 defendants each month, often making several dozen referrals in the process.



Denice is also responsible for connecting "john's" charged with soliciting prostitutes with appointments for sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment at the City of Hartford's Department of Health and Human Services, a very important measure to promoting better public health.

Lorraine Sullivan

Lorraine Sullivan is one of the longest serving staff at the Community Court, joining shortly after the court opened in 1998. Lorraine is an administrative clerk who performs a wide array of office duties essential to the functions of the social services team. She is involved in maintaining and updating information on the Community Court's internal social services tracking database. Her other primary function is to run the public window of the social services office. Lorraine works with dozens of people each day, signing in defendants to begin the social services assessment process and directing clients to the appropriate offices. She is the initial gatekeeper for many people to connect for services through the court and as such is responsible for much of the success the Community Court has in making those connections.



Yanira Rodriguez

Along with Denice, Yanira Rodriguez has been working full-time at the Community Court since 2003. A graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a degree in criminology, Yanira also performs assessment interviews and makes referrals.

Yanira also makes the time to work in depth with young offenders and their parents to make sure they are getting the services they may need and to get the kids back on the right path. She continues to make a big impact on the lives of kids in Hartford. In addition, she has worked closely to connect participant's in the court's Prostitution Protocol with important services.



NWCC CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDENTS VISIT COMMUNITY COURT

The Community Court in Hartford was pleased to host the annual visit by Professor Barry D'Onofrio and his Criminal Justice class from Northwestern Connecticut Community College on March 10, 2008. The students learned about the court's operations from Court Planner Chris Pleasanton, observed a court session, met with Judge Cofield in a question and answer session, and went on a tour of the court.

"It was a pleasure to be visited by the students from Northwestern Community College," Chris Pleasanton said. "Professor D'Onofrio instills in his students a solid fundamental knowledge of the criminal justice process which they displayed with the great questions they prepared and their keen observations of the court."



Chris Pleasanton, Judge Cofield and
Professor Barry D'Onofrio

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

Winter 2007 - 2008 COMMUNITY SERVICE

**WORK
SITES**

NOVEMBER

11/1/2007 Garden St., Baltimore St. 11/2/2007 Zion St. 11/5/2007 Martin St., Flatbush Ave.
11/6/2007 Preston St., Bond St., John St., Colt Park 11/7/2007 Kent St., Cleveland Ave. 11/8/2007 Brandt St., Center St.
11/9/2007 North Main St., Rosemont St. 11/12/2007 White St., New Britain Ave. 11/13/2007 Windsor St.
11/14/2007 Melrose St., Park St., Adams St. 11/15/2007 Day St., Edgewood St., Magnolia St. 11/16/2007 Center St.
11/19/2007 Addison St., Waverly St., Charter Oak Health Center (Thanksgiving turkey distribution) 11/20/2007 South Green Park
11/21/2007 John St., Wadsworth St. 11/23/2007 Bushnell Park 11/26/2007 Collins St., Willard St. 11/27/2007 South Marshall St.
11/28/2007 John St., Wadsworth St., Gillette St. 11/29/2007 Homestead Ave., Walnut St. 11/30/2007 Zion St., Hillside Ave.

DECEMBER

12/3/2007 Sergeant St., Sterling St. 12/4/2007 Brook St., Pliny St. 12/5/2007 Rosemont St. 12/6/2007 White St., New Britain Ave.
12/7/2007 Bond St. 12/10/2007 Plainfield St., Green St., Magnolia St. 12/11/2007 Benton St., Milford St.
12/12/2007 Beacon St., Lincoln St., Capen St., Shultas Place 12/13/2007 Buckingham St., New Britain Ave.
12/14/2007 various Foodshare sites 12/17/2007 Capitol Ave., Brown St. 12/18/2007 Kent St., Nelson St.
12/19/2007 Franklin Ave., Maple Ave. 12/20/2007 Babcock St., Capitol Ave. underpasses
12/21/2007 Campfield Ave., Bushnell St. 12/24/2007 Oakland St., Madison St. 12/26/2007 Adams St., Westland St.
12/27/2007 Mortson St., Campfield Ave. 12/28/2007 Whitmore St.

JANUARY

1/2/2008 Durham St., N. Canaan St., Euclid St., Burnham St. 1/3/2008 Park Place, Russ St., Putnam St., Laurel St.
1/4/2008 Sisson Ave., Hazel St., Orange St., Capitol Ave. 1/7/2008 Holcomb St., Palm St., Manchester St., Tower Ave.
1/8/2008 Stonington St., Wawarme Ave., Wethersfield Ave., Maseek St. 1/9/2008 Park Terr., Hillside Ave., Zion St., Ward St.
1/10/2008 Capitol Ave., Laurel St., Broad St., Summit St. 1/11/2008 Elizabeth St., S. Whitney St., Asylum Ave., Albany Ave.
1/14/2008 Hamilton St., Bartholomew Ave., Sission Ave., Orange St. 1/15/2008 Locust St., Murphy Rd., Brainard Rd., E. Elliot St.,
1/16/2008 Hubbard St., Bolton St., Franklin St., South St. 1/17/2008 White St., Maple Ave., Ridge Rd., Campfield Ave.
1/18/2008 Sargeant St., Collins St., Farmington Ave., Hawthorn St. 1/22/2008 Bond St., Clifford St., Vernon St., New Britain Ave.
1/23/2008 Edgewood St., Ridgfield St., Love Lane, Rosemont St. 1/24/2008 Carle St., Garden St., Vine St., Capen St.
1/25/2008 Westland St., Cleveland Ave., Martin St., Ashford St. 1/28/2008 Ebony Horse Farm and Foodshare
1/29/2008 Sherbrooke Ave., Grafton St., Westbourne Parkway, Barbour St. 1/30/2008 Martin St., Judson St., Clark St., Brook St.,
Bedford St. Green St. 1/31/2008 Evergreen St., Fales St., Gray St., Julius St., Crown St., King St.

FEBRUARY

2/1/2008 Park St., Orange St., Madison St., Lincoln St., Allen Pl. 2/4/2008 Dalton St., Brunswick St., Casco St., Becket St.
2/5/2008 Van Block St., Sequassen St., Weehasset St., Nepaqqwash St. 2/6/2008 Hamilton St., Rose St., Belmont St.
2/7/2008 Ward St., Wilson St., Bonner St., Arnold St. 2/8/2008 Catherine St., Saybrook St., Bannister St., Ledger St.
2/11/2008 Brook St., Seyms St., Bethel St., Mather St. 2/13/2008 Main St., Center St., Liberty St., East St.
2/14/2008 Edwards St., Belden St., Walnut St., Irwin St. 2/15/2008 Winter St., Ely St., Windsor St., Ann St.
2/19/2008 Brook St., Williams St., Pliny St., Bethel St. 2/20/2008 Sargeant St., Ashley St., May St.
2/21/2008 Forrest St., S. Marshall St., Laurel St., Imlay St. 2/22/2008 Affleck St., Madison St., Bannister St., Ledger St.
2/25/2008 Church St., Pratt St., Bethel St., Trinity St. 2/26/2008 Greenfield St., Cabot St., Homestead Ave., Lenox St.
2/27/2008 New Britain Ave., Fairfield Ave., Newfield Ave., Newington Ave. 2/28/2008 Weston St., Wyllys St., Huyshope St.,
Van Block Ave. 2/29/2008 Pope Park Dr., Laurel St., Russ St., Summit St.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT HOTLINE
756-7000
PLEASE CALL WITH YOUR PROJECT**