



Spring 2015



Hartford Community Court News & Updates

Volume 17, Issue 1

Produced by Chris Pleasanton



HARTFORD PARKS

The Hartford Community Court community service crew working in Hartford parks (see more on pg. 2)

HCC NAMED MENTOR COURT

In September, the Hartford Community Court was selected by the Center for Court Innovation, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, to serve as a mentor court for jurisdictions seeking to enhance procedural justice and promote the use of alternatives to jail when appropriate. Hartford was selected along with community courts in Dallas, TX and Orange County and San Francisco, CA, to serve in this capacity. The mentor courts, which were chosen through a competitive application process, will host site visits, answer questions over the phone or internet from justice reformers and participate in conferences and workshops. The Hartford Community Court was also a mentor court under the previous initiative launched in 2009.

During a two-day site visit by the Center for Court Innovation, the Hartford Community Court was recognized for achieving mentor court status in a ceremony at the court. Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers, Director of Technical Assistance for the Center for Court Innovation Julius Lang, Judge Raymond R. Norko, Judge Thelma A. Santos, Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane and community leader Hyacinth Yennie of the Maple Avenue Revitalization Group all spoke at the ceremony about the positive impact of the Hartford Community Court. They were joined by other judicial leaders, community representatives and court staff who also attended in celebration of this honor.

"We are very grateful to be selected to be a Mentor Court once again," Judge Norko said. "Thanks to BJA and CCI for this great honor."

Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane, Deputy Chief Court Administrator Hon. Elliot N. Solomon, Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers, Hon. Raymond R. Norko, Hyacinth Yennie of M.A.R.G., and Julius Lang of CCI



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Community Court Statistics

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	TOTALS
Total Arraignments	296	209	362	357	1,224
Community Service Hours	1,510	1,050	1,722	2,148	6,430
Value of CS (\$9.15 Min Wage)	\$13,816	\$9,607	\$15,756	\$19,654	\$58,833
Social Service Referrals non DMHAS	19	29	42	89	179
Appearance Rate	92%	90%	91%	92%	91% AVG
Suburban Caseload	23%	36%	22%	25%	27% AVG

COMMUNITY SERVICE IN HARTFORD PARKS

The Hartford Community Court strives to have its community service work crews perform tasks that will have a positive impact on Hartford and as many residents as possible. In that spirit, the community service work crews have been working with the great staff of the Hartford Department of Public Works to help clean and beautify several Hartford parks. Recently, the community service team assisted the DPW and park volunteers to help clean and restore the flower beds in Elizabeth Park. In addition, the community service crews have helped clean in Keney Park, Colt Park and several of the small neighborhood parks throughout Hartford.

“The Hartford Community Court is appreciative of the Hartford Department of Public Works staff for having our crews help out in Hartford’s parks,” Judge Norko said. “We could never do what DPW does, but we are glad to work together to help make the parks more enjoyable for all of Hartford’s residents.”

Hartford Community Court community service work crews helping rebuild the flower beds in Elizabeth Park (PLEASE NOTE: Faces obscured to protect privacy)



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR SUCCESS

The Department of Labor program at the Hartford Community Court continues to experience excellent success as it helps people connect with job training, job search skills and, in some cases, employment.

According to DOL Career Development Specialist Heidi Sulewski, 98 people were referred to the program by the Court and 70 people completed the curriculum, for a 72% completion rate. (PLEASE NOTE: There was no February 2015 session due to snow).

Participants in the DOL/Community Court program are required to attend one 2-hour session at the Community Court with Ms. Sulewski that consists of an introduction to DOL services and soft skills including interview training. Participants are then required to attend a one-on-one class at the main Hartford DOL office located at 3580 Main Street that is tailored to their individual needs. Services available at the DOL office include resume writing and printing, computer access for job searches, veteran services and access to job listings.

“A great deal of people who come before the court are dealing with unemployment and have a lot of obstacles to conducting a focused and productive job search,” Judge Norko said. “The DOL Community Court program clears a lot of those obstacles and gives people looking for meaningful work a helping hand.”

Find more information on the State Department of Labor and programs that are available through the Hartford Office at: http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/ContactInfo/CTWorks/HTFD_Info.htm



Heidi Sulewski, Department of Labor

THANK YOU LINDA MANCHESTER!

The Hartford Community Court would like to say thank you and extend our best wishes to Court Monitor Linda Manchester upon her impending retirement. Linda, who has been a court monitor for over 19 years, worked at the Hartford Community Court from its inception in 1998 through 2003 and again from 2013 to the present. As a court monitor, Linda records the court sessions for the official record and produces transcripts when needed.

“Linda is a wonderful person who has embodied the spirit of the community court and been a big part of our success,” Judge Norko said. “I want to wish her happiness and health in her retirement.”

Linda, a great lover of literature, plans to spend her retirement catching up on her reading, volunteering with special needs adults and visiting her family.



Linda Manchester

THE COMMUNITY COURT CLERK'S OFFICE

As in most courts, the Clerk's Office at the Hartford Community Court is one of the most vital components of the court. The Clerk's Office is responsible for maintaining the official files for the court, documenting court action in those files, and entering case updates into the Judicial Branch database for the development of the court's daily dockets.

"I would like to thank the Hartford Community Court Clerk's Office for the outstanding job they do," Judge Norko said. "Their accuracy and professionalism is essential to the court's operation and I can say they are the best."



The Hartford Community Court Clerk's Office (Clockwise from top left) Deputy Clerk Gloria Hall, Administrative Clerk Joyce Williams, Administrative Clerk Linda Ruffino, and Courtroom Clerk Valerie S. Myrick

THE COMMUNITY COURT CLERK'S OFFICE



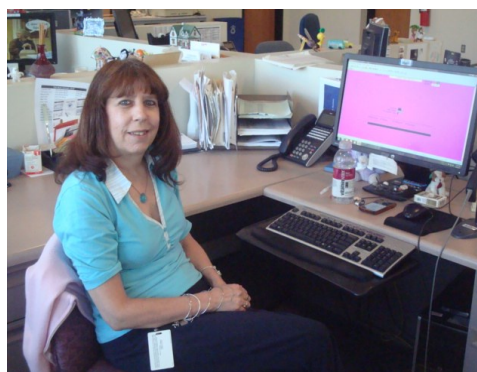
Gloria Hall, Deputy Clerk

Deputy Clerk Gloria Hall has been with the Hartford Community Court since 2002. A 28-year employee of the Judicial Branch, Gloria first started in Jury Administration answering calls to the jury hotline and worked her way through the ranks to become a deputy clerk. She worked at GA14 on Lafayette Street from 1992 until she moved to the Hartford Community Court in 2002. As deputy clerk, Gloria oversees the Clerk's Office staff at the community court.



Valerie S. Myrick, Courtroom Clerk

Valerie S. Myrick is celebrating her 30-year anniversary with the Judicial Branch. Valerie started in Hartford's civil court in 1985 and moved to GA14 at 101 Lafayette Street the following year. Valerie served as courtroom clerk in the Community Court from 1998 to 2004 and again from 2009 to the present. As courtroom clerk, Valerie maintains the Clerk's case files, updating case status for continuance, dismissals, bonds and warrants. She also assists the others in the Clerk's Office by answering inquiries from the public and developing the daily dockets.



Linda Ruffino, Administrative Clerk

Administrative Clerk Linda Ruffino started with the Judicial Branch in 1987 first working at the civil and family courts in Middletown. Linda moved to the Community Court in 1999. As an Administrative Clerk, Linda takes all new arrest files from the police departments, enters the information into the Judicial Branch database and creates the Clerk's case files for the courtroom. She also processes continuances and case updates for inclusion on future dockets or case dismissals. Linda also helps answer public inquiries both on the telephone and at the Clerk's Office window.



Joyce Williams, Administrative Clerk

Administrative Clerk Joyce Williams has been with the Judicial Branch since 2001. She started in Jury Administration, then moved to the housing court and came to the Community Court in 2006. As an administrative clerk, Joyce takes all new arrest files from the police departments, enters the information into the Judicial Branch database and creates the Clerk's case files for the courtroom, processes continuances and case updates for inclusion on future dockets or case dismissals. Joyce also helps answer public inquiries both on the telephone and at the Clerk's Office window.

EVIDENCE-BASED SCREENING STRATEGIES

By TOM O'BRIEN – SENIOR ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY

We often fail to recognize the significance of the most basic acts that occur each workday, for example, when a defendant chooses to present themselves before the Court. Certainly this shows respect for, or perhaps fear of, the court but more importantly it demonstrates that the defendant respects himself, and that he or she is concerned about the potentially disruptive consequences that often result from interaction with the court. Their mere presence shows that they have not disconnected from their communities and that they are someone that the Court can work with. In the previous issue we reviewed the concept of procedural justice and the factors that impact court users' perceptions of how they were treated by the Court. We also touched upon how adherence to the concepts of procedural justice promoted the restorative justice mission of Community Court by holding defendants accountable to their communities while attempting to eliminate or at least limit the rate of recidivism.

Each offender who appears before the Court is unique in terms of the risk they pose to the community and in their specific needs for intervention by the Court. The prosecutor makes the initial screening of each case and is most often the decision maker who has the first substantive contact with the defendant or their counsel. While being vigilant to protect an individual's rights against self-incrimination, much can be learned about an individual without ever discussing the details of their particular case. Research has identified a group of eight criminogenic risk/need factors, known as the "Central Eight," that are strongly associated with recidivism.

According to available research the four most important factors are: a prior history of criminal behavior, a tendency or pattern of anti-social personality, criminal thinking patterns, and association with anti-social peers. Of slightly less importance, but still influential, are the presence and stability of an individual's family, their employment and educational status, engagement in positive social or leisure activities and a history of substance abuse. Research is divided on the impact of mental health disorders on recidivism. From a practical perspective, not everyone who suffers from substance abuse or mental health issues becomes involved with the criminal court and it is a mistake to focus solely on these factors without also considering at least the first four of the Central Eight risk factors.

The use of these evidenced-based screening tools allows the Court to more accurately identify an individual's risk to the community and likelihood to re-offend. Based on this initial screening the Court is better able to direct an individual towards a more thorough and targeted assessment of their individual treatment needs. By identifying and addressing the specific risk factors of the individual defendant, the Court is in a better position to formulate a disposition of the case that protects the community and limits the frequency of repeated offenses.

NCCC CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDENTS VISIT

Students from Northwest Connecticut Community College Criminal Justice program visited the Hartford Community Court for their 14th annual visit on March 31. Led by Professor Mike Emmanuel, more than 20 students watched a session of the court and met with Judge Norko for a question and answer session.

"We are always pleased to have the Northwest Connecticut Community College students visit with us," Judge Norko said. "Professor Emmanuel prepares the students excellently and they ask great questions based upon what they see."



Mike Emmanuel and Judge Norko

COMMUNITY SERVICE SITES

February 2015

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2 Snow closing	3 Russ St., Babcock St., Main St., Woodland St., Linnmore St., Asylum Ave., Homestead Ave.,	4 Foodshare, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	5 Barbour St., Preston St., Foodshare, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	6 Foodshare, Place of Grace Food Pantry
9 Foodshare	10 Foodshare, Crayons for Cancer, Asylum Ave., & Woodland St. (bus stops), Ebony Horse Women	11 Foodshare, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry, Ebony Horse Women	12 Abraham Lincoln's Day	13 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women
16 President's Day	17 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women	18 Foodshare, Community Renewal Team (Mobile Foodshare), Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	19 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	20 Foodshare
23 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women Salvation Army (Mobile Foodshare)	24 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture Ebony Horse Women	25	26 Foodshare, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	27 Foodshare

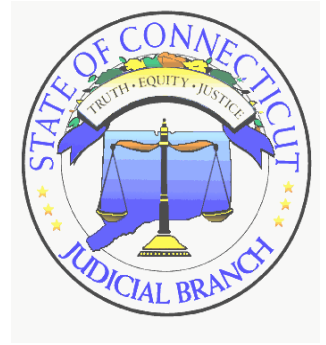
March 2015

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2 Foodshare, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	3 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women	4 Foodshare, Community Renewal Team (Mobile Foodshare), Holy Trinity Church	5 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women	6 Foodshare, Pace of Grace Food Pantry, Riverfront Recapture
9 Foodshare, Salvation Army (Mobile Foodshare) Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	10 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	11 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	12 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Riverfront Recapture	13 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture
16 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Department of Public Works	17 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Hartford Public Safety Complex	18 Community Renewal Team (Mobile Foodshare), Union Baptist Church Mobile Foodshare	19 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	20 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture
23 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Salvation Army (Mobile Foodshare), Department of Public Works (Parks)	24 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women	25 Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	26 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	27 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture
30 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Department of Public Works (Parks)	31 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Hartford Public Safety Complex			

April 2015

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
		1 Foodshare, Capen St., Washington St., Union Baptist Food Pantry	2 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women	3 Foodshare, Soldier's Field Cemetery
6 Foodshare, Foodshare at Salvation Army	7 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Albany Ave., South Marshall St.	8 Riverfront Recapture, Hispanic Health Council, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	9 Maple Ave.—Barry Square Ebony Horse Women, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	10 Foodshare, New Britain Ave., Riverfront Recapture, Ebony Horse Women
13 Foodshare, Colt Park w/DPW, Waverly Field Little League Baseball Diamonds, Mark Twain Dr.	14 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Waverly Field Little League Baseball Diamonds, Mark Twain Dr.	15 Foodshare, Park St., Chesnut St., Niles St., Gillette St., Forest St.	16 Elizabeth Park, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	17 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Riverfront Recapture, Amity St., Rowe Ave.
20 Foodshare, Keney Park w/DPW, Barnard St.	21 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women, Barbour St., Capen St.	22 Hartford Public Safety Complex, Union Baptist Food Pantry, Holy Trinity Food Pantry, Putnam St.	23 Foodshare, Elizabeth Park w/DPW, Rosemont St., Tower Ave., Hazel St.	24
27 Foodshare, Colt Park w/DPW, Riverfront Recapture, Homestead Ave.	28 Foodshare, Ebony Horse Women	29 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry	30 Foodshare, Elizabeth Park w/DPW, Union Baptist Church Food Pantry, Ebony Horse Women	

HARTFORD COMMUNITY COURT



SPRING 2015 NEWSLETTER

PLEASE VISIT US ON THE WEB: www.jud.ct.gov

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