

Northern Hills Drug Court

Volume 3, Issue 2

April - June 2010

Northern Hills Drug Court Mission Statement

The Northern Hills Drug Court's mission is to increase community safety, foster healthy families, and proficiently utilize public funds. This will be accomplished by streamlining and coordinating services to felony offenders whose crimes are substantially related to the abuse or dependence upon a controlled substance with a primary consideration given to methamphetamine abuse or dependence. The Northern Hills Drug Court will increase long term abstinence by holding offenders accountable and ultimately reducing drug-related crimes.

When a man has done his best, has given his all, and in the process supplied the needs of his family and his society, that man has made a habit of succeeding.

Mack R. Douglas

Whenever you see a successful person you only see the public glories, never the private sacrifices to reach them.

Greg Evans

The elevator to success is out of order. You'll have to use the stairs... one step at a time.

Joe Girard

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed.

Booker T. Washington

Northern Hills Drug Court

FAQs

Is Drug Court a real court? *YES. The Northern Hills Drug Court is a treatment court, within the Unified Judicial System, for persons guilty of a felony related to the abuse or dependence upon a controlled substance.*

How often is Drug Court held? *Drug Court convenes every Tuesday at 1p.m. Participants stand before the Drug Court Judge and report about their week. This reporting may include day-to-day struggles, goal setting, family issues, and self-awareness through treatment sessions or AA/NA meetings.*

Why not save money and send the offenders to prison? *Northern Hills Drug Court actually saves tax payer dollars verses incarceration. Nonviolent substance abusers who go through drug court stay out of jail, get a second chance at life and save precious dollars by not occupying jail cells for long periods of time.*

Each participant is required to maintain employment and/or attend school. Those who have children under DSS custody strive to reunify with their children. While in the program the participants are given the tools to become productive family and community members. 90% of NHDC graduates are drug free and have become constructive citizens.

How many people are in the Drug Court Program? *Currently the drug court supervises 13 participants. Of these thirteen participants, seven are single mothers with a combination of 13 minor children. Three of the male participants have also fathered one child respectively. The Drug Court actively collaborates with the Dept. of Social Services and the Crisis Intervention Women's Shelter. An incidental actuality of the program is the reuniting the children with clean and sober parents.*

Is Drug Court an easy program?

When asked if it is easier to be in the drug court or incarcerated, these participants agreed that drug court is far from easy: (continued to page 2)

FAQs--continued

- *“No. No it isn’t [easier in drug court]. I don’t want to go to jail. It may be easier to go to prison and do nothing for a year but lay around and I mean, you know, what’s the use, then that’s the lifestyle you’ve become accustomed to. . . . They will not hire felons. That’s all there is to it.” – A Drug Court Participant*
- *“Some people will want to continue to do their drugs so they rather go to jail, do their time, get back out to do their drugs.” –A Drug Court Participant*
- *“Jail doesn’t help you get clean. This program helps you get clean and there is no way around it. You have to get clean one way or the other or you’re not gonna get on the program. And once you go to these groups, you don’t ever want to get high again ’cause they give you the strength and courage not to ever want to do that, to move on to a better life. Jail doesn’t do anything for you. The program helps you get clean and stay clean”. –A Drug Court Participant*

“Many of them say, ‘I’d rather sit in jail for nine months or go to prison, because this is too much effort,’” says Circuit Court Judge Donald Zuidmulder of Brown County, Wisconsin.

What are Sanctions?

Drug courts employ a variety of strategies to encourage offenders to adhere to program requirements. However, the main tactic available to drug court administrators to hold clients accountable is the use of intermediate sanctions such as jail or revocation of privileges. For example a sanction may include extra community service hours, writing and presenting a plan of action, House Arrest or starting over in a phase. (A participant is required to complete 4 phases in the drug court program.)

How many people have successfully completed Northern Hills Drug Court?

Ten Northern Hills Drug participants have graduated from the program. Three of the graduates are attending college as well as maintaining employment. One graduate operates a successful business. Four are employed full-time, three of which are primary providers for their families. One is on disability but has set a goal of getting her medical coding certification.

They are productive, law-abiding citizens and all of us benefit from their success.

The graduates of the Northern Hills Drug Court have formed an alumni! These individuals gather as a support to one-another and they have developed a mission statement to be a service to drug court, its participants and to their community. Graduates have been invited to speak at various clubs, schools and organizations.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!



**Northern Hills Drug Court
Web Site**

ujs.sd.gov/drugcourt.htm



Northern Hills Drug Court

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