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A Message from Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio



In past newsletters and in this one, there are articles citing recognition for the Court's Crossroads Program. And there is more to come. Crossroads has been a topic at national conferences for its innovative concept of collaboration with child-serving agencies in the community to identifying and seeking treatment for co-occurring disorders involving substance dependence and mental illness.

The Crossroads Program is being recognized for the unique methods it utilizes to address every facet of treatment, from the process that identifies candidates to enter the program to the inclusive manner from which the case plan is developed with the Probation Officer and the parent to the intensive probation its probationers must complete to leave the year-long program.

It is heartening to receive the kind of recognition Crossroads has enjoyed since its inception two and a half years ago. It is an acknowledgement that what we are trying to achieve with the program is working.

The awards and the invitations to share the techniques used in Crossroads pale in comparison to seeing what we apply in the Crossroads Program yielding results with the youth in the program and their families.

There is no better validation. For all the national conferences staff members and I have attended discussing the program, for all the articles and interviews about the program, for all the awards, plaques and certificates the program has been fortunate enough to receive, nothing quite captures the essence of the program better than that gathering of families and staff members who attend the Crossroads graduation ceremony at the Court. It happens three or four times a year. It is there that we see true, tangible results of the hard work everyone has put into the common goal of wellness for the youth in our program.

But what makes me most proud is that I truly feel the Crossroads Program is just an example of the hard work and dedication of all of our staff members who embrace the philosophy that, through their work, every child that comes before the juvenile justice system, for whatever reason, can come away wiser and better for the experience.

Linda Tucci Teodosio

"My primary goal is to improve the overall professionalism of the department," Alexander said. "I hope to continue to develop programming that will allow our juveniles to learn life skills."

Alexander added that he fully embraces the philosophy that Judge Teodosio has introduced to the Court, particularly the expanded educational opportunities and activities that he hopes will better prepare the juveniles in detention to leave there, never come back and take with them lessons that they can apply to everyday life.

Steve Stahl served as the interim superintendent of the Detention Center for three months. The former Munroe Falls police chief believes Alexander was a great choice.

"I worked very closely with Bruce in the time I spent at the Detention Center and I can tell you beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is completely committed to making the Center run correctly," stated Stahl. "I know that the staff members in Detention respect Bruce and I fully expect a seamless transition."

Jonathan Pooler has worked in the Detention Center with Alexander for 11 years, and he feels Alexander is the right man for the job.

"He has taught me so much, such as how to handle different situations that we face in Detention. He is a leader by example, really," said Pooler. "Bruce has become a kind of father figure for a lot of us here in Detention and I think he's going to do a great job."

In addition to his duties at Juvenile Court, Alexander has been active in the community, working with behaviorally and physically handicapped children, participating in the Big Brothers of Youngstown program and volunteered with the Youngstown YMCA to assist mentally retarded children.

A former Beacon Journal Basketball Player of the Year, Alexander has also conducted a clinic for the Fairlawn Elementary Enrichment Program.

Alexander resides in Akron with his wife and two children.

Alexander Named Detention Superintendent

Bruce Alexander has been promoted to Superintendent of the Court's Detention Center. He began his duties on Monday, April 3rd.

A graduate of Akron North High School, Alexander received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Health from Youngstown State in 1985 and began his tenure at Juvenile Court in 1986 as a Group Counselor. He most recently held the position of Detention Supervisor.

"I value Bruce's decision-making ability and his vast experience in the Detention Center," said Judge Teodosio.

"He displays a quiet confidence and leadership and he has played an integral role in developing and implementing some of the innovative programming the Court has introduced to the Detention Center."

Alexander said he plans on hitting the ground running.



CASA/GAL VOLUNTEER HONORED BY UNITED WAY



If Ethel Fox had it her way, Tuesday, April 25th would just be another day where she worked on behalf of a child involved in the juvenile justice system. The United Way had other ideas.

Ms. Fox was be one of the honorees at the organization's 5th Annual Volunteer Celebration. The theme for the event was *Volunteers Inspire by Example*, which, frankly, perfectly describes the manner Ms. Fox approaches the work she has

done for the Court's CASA/GAL Program for 19 years. She is the third CASA/GAL honored in this fashion by the United Way. Dorothy Finna and Rose Verleny have been previously acknowledged.

The soft-spoken Ms. Fox, known as Precie to her friends, became a Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem in 1987. In that time, she has served over 70 children who have been introduced to the Juvenile Court system as a result of abuse, neglect or dependency.

The role of a CASA/GAL is to assure that the best interests of a child in Court are considered. The CASA/GAL is charged with investigating and researching the background of each case he or she is assigned. The CASA/GAL will then reveal the findings to the Court and make recommendations of behalf of the child and then monitor the case as it moves through the Court process.

Ms. Fox provides a quiet comfort for the children she represents and she brings an earnest, matter-of-fact demeanor to her testimony in Court during hearings. "I know that when Ethel appears before me at a hearing that she will be well-prepared and thorough in her report," said Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio. "She does a tremendous job as a CASA/GAL and I think the United Way made a wise choice by honoring her for her work." Ms. Fox has also served the CASA/GAL Program as a mentor, trainer, office volunteer, original board member of CASA, Inc. as well as a board member with the state CASA/GAL. "Ethel has been part of the program's growth. When she started with us, she was among perhaps a couple dozen volunteers working with a part-time staff," said Director Julie Wayman. "Now, the program has over 240 volunteers, a full-time director, nine office staff members and our program is now one of the few in the state to receive certification.

Ethel has been with us every step of the way and she is one of the reasons we've experienced this kind of growth. We are indebted to her." As one might expect, the humble Ms. Fox thinks otherwise. "I feel very honored, but this isn't about me," Ms. Fox said. "It's about the children and it's about the program. I am just so pleased with the growth and direction of the program, and the support we have received from Judge Teodosio is immeasurable." Ms. Fox says she plans on continuing in the program indefinitely. "Working in the CASA program is something I can see myself doing constantly. It's not work; it's a passion." And for 19 years, she has personified the CASA/GAL motto: *A Powerful Voice in a Child's Life*. In the case of Ethel Fox, quiet, perhaps, but powerful.

CROSSROADS TOPIC AT FOUR CONFERENCES

The Court's Crossroads Program is gaining notice literally from coast-to-coast.

The program's innovative concept of serving youth with co-occurring substance abuse and significant mental illness once again provided a topic of discussion at recent conferences in California, Colorado and Massachusetts with another appearance scheduled for May in Pennsylvania.

In February, Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio presented background about the formation and function of the Crossroads Program in Santa Monica. In March, Judge Teodosio was a featured presenter at the 33rd National Conference on Juvenile Justice in Denver. The event was co-sponsored by the

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the National District Attorneys Association.

Judge Teodosio addressed the Denver conference as part of a segment entitled *Diverting Youth and Mental Health Needs from the Juvenile Justice System*. The Judge related how she implemented the co-occurring disorder treatment concept after research revealed that substance abuse and mental health issues are often intertwined and afflict a high percentage of court-involved youth at risk of incarceration.

In April, the Judge made a similar Crossroads presentation at the GAINS national conference in Boston. Program Administrator Dawn Jones

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BANNER OBSERVES KING BIRTHDAY, BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Over 300 people affixed their signatures to a 5' x 5' banner that stated: *"Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio's Juvenile Court observes Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with a Pledge of Non-Violence."* An image of the late civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner was emblazoned on the banner and below the image was the pledge. It read:

- I pledge to do everything to do everything I can to make America and the world a place where equality and justice, freedom and peace will grow and flourish.
- I pledge to make non-violence a way of life in my dealings with people.
- I will reject all forms of hatred, bigotry and prejudice and I will embrace the values of unconditional, universal love, truthfulness, courage, compassion and dedication that empowered Dr. King.
- I will dedicate my life to creating the Beloved Community of Dr. King's dream where all people can live together as sisters and brothers.

Visitors to Chapel Hill Mall and the William P. Kannel Juvenile Court Center were asked for their autograph on the banner during the months of January and February.

"I wanted to find a proper way to convey the message and mission of Dr. King's work and this seemed to be something people responded to," said Judge Teodosio.

Additionally, the same pledge was sent to various schools throughout Summit County for students to sign and the Court received over 700 responses.

The banner has been displayed at the Juvenile Court Center, and will be donated to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in Washington, D.C.



accompanied the Judge to Boston and will be a co-presenter during the Pennsylvania Conference on Co-Occurring Mental & Substance Use Disorders in Hershey, PA on May 15-17.

"What we're finding is that Juvenile Courts across the nation are just setting up their mental health and drug court dockets," said Jones. "The Crossroads Program provides some guidance and direction on how to develop those dockets because of what the program has been able to accomplish the last two and a half years."

Judge Teodosio is encouraged with the response from the organizations who have asked for the Crossroads message to be delivered at the conferences and workshops.

"It's an opportunity we welcome," said Judge Teodosio. "If our Crossroads Program can help other communities create an efficient and effective program, that just means they can provide their youth with a better chance to achieve wellness."

PROJECT: GREENHOUSE AFFECT BEGINS

Last year, Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio enlisted the expertise of Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Bing to spearhead an effort to introduce the Court's detainees to gardening. Bing holds a degree in horticulture and with the detainees planting and nurturing the garden it yielded a variety of vegetables that were cooked and served in the detention center cafeteria or donated to local food banks. Pumpkins were also grown and given to children to decorate.

Because of that initial success, the seed was planted and it has taken root with the detainees and from that experience, another idea has blossomed to cultivate a growing interest in gardening (that will be the last of the gardening metaphors, that's a promise).

Still, the promise shown from last year's garden experiment has caused the Court to pursue a way to maintain that interest year-round. The result - Project: Greenhouse Affect.

Once again, with the generosity of the Women's Board, the Court was able to purchase a greenhouse that can be used during the autumn and winter months, especially. The Women's Board offered \$1,500 for the greenhouse structure, boarding and graveling. The greenhouse will be climate controlled with a standard electric heater.

A \$1,000 grant has been secured from The Ohio State University Extension Service that will be used to purchase soil, seed, plants, flats and fertilizer.

"(Grants Administrator) Woody Tyrrell has done an excellent job writing the grant proposals," said Bing. "He has really helped us get this project going."

Local businesses Dayton Nurseries and Norton Flowers have inquired about donating landscaping materials. The detainees have also heard from Chickory Koren from Summit Soil & Water Conservation. She taught a course about soil conservation and water preservation and the organization also donated some plants native to Ohio.

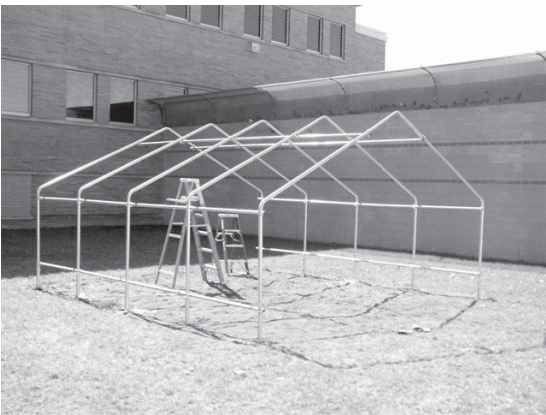
Bing will continue to oversee the work of the detainees. He noted that they will concentrate on propagation, which involves shaving a portion off a wood-

stemmed plant such as a rhododendron and creating a new plant from that. They will also grow perennials that could be donated or used on the Court grounds. During the holidays, poinsettia will be grown in the greenhouse, as well.

"The greenhouse isn't extravagant, by any means," said Bing. "But it is definitely good enough to be able to teach the kids what they need to know about growing and nurturing these plants."

Bing added that the outside garden won't be forsaken now that the greenhouse is up and running. On the contrary, tilling has already begun and the garden will be planted very soon, including a new feature this year: a strawberry patch. The Court also hopes to expand the project to include a small orchard of fruit trees.

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"Anything we can do to introduce our youth to different options and positive interests we'll try," said Judge Teodosio. "I was very happy with the participation last year and it just seemed the next logical step was to try to create something that would maintain that interest as much as possible."

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