

## **JUDGE LINDA TEODOSIO EARNS NATIONAL AWARD**

The MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change initiative honored Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio as a Champion for Change in juvenile justice reform for her work at the Summit County Juvenile Court. She was recognized at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Models for Change National Conference in Washington, D.C. on December 7<sup>th</sup> for her work to improve the lives of youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

It is the latest recognition for Judge Teodosio, who has been lauded locally, statewide and nationally for her innovative programming as well as her progressive approach in the areas of alternative dispositions, case management and educational outreach. In the nominations recommending Judge Teodosio for the award, the Court's Crossroads Program, the Family Resource Center and the Responder Program were cited as examples of Judge Teodosio's administration of the Court and how these programs embrace the mission of the Models for Change initiative.

Models for Change is the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's \$120 million, 16-state initiative to reform juvenile justice systems across the country. The project involves four core states and 12 additional states participating in issue-specific action networks. Ohio is part of the Mental Health Juvenile Justice Action Network and Judge Teodosio has served on Ohio's state team since the Network's inception. Now in its fifth year, Models for Change is accelerating movement toward a more effective, fair and developmentally sound juvenile justice system by creating successful and replicable models that use resources effectively to protect community safety and improve outcomes for youth. For more information about Models for Change, access its website at [www.modelsforchange.net](http://www.modelsforchange.net).

The criteria for the Champions for Change award include a demonstrable record of success that impacts youth, transferable results valuable to other locales, providing as an inspiration to others involved in juvenile justice reform and representing the Models for Change core principles: fundamental fairness, developmental differences between youth and adults, individual strengths and needs, youth potential, responsibility and safety.

Judge Teodosio's efforts to improve the lives of youth in the juvenile justice system, especially those youth with mental health issues, includes her ongoing participation on the Supreme Court of Ohio's Advisory Committee on Mental Illness and the Courts Juvenile Issues subcommittee, which operates under the leadership of Justice Evelyn Lundberg Stratton.

"Judge Teodosio has been a great innovator concerning juvenile justice and mental health issues," Justice Stratton said. "She has worked closely with our committee in our efforts concerning youth with mental health issues in the juvenile justice system. I am happy for her but especially happy for our program because this type of national recognition helps lend further support to the cause, which is so important for Ohio's young people."

In Judge Teodosio's seven-year tenure on the Juvenile Court bench, she has developed programming that has served as models for other Juvenile Courts to replicate, primarily the Crossroads Program, which recognizes that substance abuse and mental illness are primarily co-occurring disorders. Crossroads is an intensive probation, incentive-based

program that addresses each issue. Charges against the youth are dismissed if they successfully complete the year-long program.

The Family Resource Center is unique to the Summit County Juvenile Court. It offers case management, programming and referral services to youth and family confronted with such issues as teen pregnancy, domestic violence, truancy and re-entry into the community following a commitment in a juvenile detention facility.

The Responder Program, which was developed as part of the Mental Health Juvenile Justice Action Network, equips middle schools with a trained professional to screen youth for potential mental health issues that could contribute to unruly behavior and/or truancy. The Responder works with the youth, their families and the school to develop solutions beneficial for all concerned. Judge Teodosio has also been instrumental in the Action Network's Workforce Development and Family Engagement efforts that has resulted in extensive training for Court staff in Summit County and around the State of Ohio as well as for family members who can advocate for their children.

"To be recognized nationally for what we do in Summit County is certainly humbling and I'm deeply honored," said Judge Teodosio. "However, I am merely the representative of our staff and an entire network of devoted social service agencies and workers who prove on a daily basis what can be achieved through cooperation and collaboration. This award is a testament to their work."

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