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**COURT-FUNDED PROGRAM WINS STATEWIDE AWARD**

As it was, Summit County Juvenile Court Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio was going to be in Dublin, Ohio on December 11<sup>th</sup> for the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges annual meeting. But now, she'll have a dual purpose for being there.

The Court and the East Akron Community House (EACH) learned on October 8<sup>th</sup> that EACH's Youth Outreach Center and two of the youth it has assisted will be recipients of the Community Recognition Award. The award is sponsored by the judge's association and the Ohio Department of Youth Services. According to its criteria, the award recognizes "the outstanding contributions of organizations that provide needed programs and services to youth, as well as the youth that have participated in these programs and have worked hard to make positive changes in their lives."

Given those conditions, it is small wonder the Youth Outreach Center was chosen for the honor. The Youth Outreach Center is funded by the Juvenile Court. It provides services for at-risk or Court-involved youth who can come to the center after school for tutoring, anger management classes and self-esteem building activities, instead of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. The ultimate goal for the center's staff is to get the youth to become serious about their studies, cease their unruly behavior and place them on the path toward high school graduation. EACH reports that 95 percent of Youth Outreach Center graduates do not return to the juvenile justice system.

Two of those individuals made a dramatic turnaround that symbolizes the good work done at the center. They are brothers who took very similar paths toward criminal activity. Each of them was charged with multiple offenses and both served 68 days in the Court's Detention Center. The older brother was referred to the Youth Outreach Center first. He made immediate progress and eventually earned the right to be placed in the center's work program. He excelled. Soon, the younger brother emulated the example set by his brother and he, too, was placed in the work program. They have embraced the opportunity given to them by the Youth Outreach Center and are on their right path to leading a productive life.

EACH Executive Director Cazzell Smith said, "I am very pleased with this recognition for the Youth Outreach Center and the two brothers. I appreciate the nomination by Judge Teodosio. It is just another extension of the partnership that exists between EACH and the Juvenile Court."

Mr. Smith and Judge Teodosio also cited the excellent job done by center director Pam Gibson and her staff.

"They do great things at the Youth Outreach Center every day," said Judge Teodosio. "The award for the center and for the two brothers is an acknowledgment for the entire program."

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