



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

Administrative Office
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Bldg. 1, Room, E-316
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
(304) 340-2305 Jennifer Bundy
(304) 340-2306 April Harless
(304) 558-1212 FAX
Web Site: www.courtswv.gov
Facebook: [wvjudiciary](https://www.facebook.com/wvjudiciary)
Twitter: [WVCourts](https://twitter.com/WVCourts)
SmugMug:
<https://wvcourts.smugmug.com/>
Email: Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov
Email: April.Harless@courtswv.gov

Wood County Hosts Family Treatment Court Opening, Adult Drug Court Graduation

For immediate release Monday, July 12, 2021

PARKERSBURG, W.Va. – The Wood County Family Treatment Court is designed to reunite parents and children safely and quickly, Fourth Judicial Circuit (Wirt and Wood Counties) Judge Jason A. Wharton said Monday at the opening ceremony.

Chief Justice Evan Jenkins, Justice Tim Armstead, and Justice John Hutchison attended the ceremony, which also included a graduation for participants who have completed the Adult Drug Court program in the last year.

“We are here for you,” Chief Justice Jenkins said. “All five Justices of the Supreme Court care deeply about the Juvenile Drug Courts, Adult Drug Courts, and Family Treatment Courts. You are true success stories.”

He told Adult Drug Court graduates and current participants, “Your treatment and court team care deeply about you, your success, and your future. Today is your day.”

Justice Armstead said, “There are few things we see that can really turn lives around in the right direction, but drug courts can.” He urged the participants to remember what motivated them to participate in drug court. “The hardest part is the first step. We support you in your efforts to successfully complete the drug court program. We are part of your support team along with your families, your probation officers, your counselors, and all members of the treatment team.”

Justice Hutchison thanked all the family members and friends who attended the event. He encouraged the graduates to help other addicts. At least two of the graduates honored Monday are counselors in a hospital drug treatment program. “Reach back when you graduate from the program. Reach back and pull at least one other with you,” Justice Hutchison said.

All the drug court graduates who spoke said the drug court team saved their lives. They told other people still participating in the program that it is worthwhile even though it is difficult, and the Drug Court team members genuinely want to help them.

“I didn’t think I was going to make it at first. I struggled a lot at first,” said Chaz Howard. “I am surely grateful.”

“I don’t see any other way I would have stopped. I’m grateful it happened. It helped me,” said William Comuzie.

The Wood County Family Treatment Court is the eighth Family Treatment Court to open in West Virginia. The others are in Boone, Calhoun/Roane, Logan, McDowell, Nicholas, Ohio, and Randolph Counties.

Judge Wharton presides over the Wood County Adult Drug Court and the Family Treatment Court. Dallas Reynolds and Amy Bain are the Adult Drug Court Coordinators and Sherri Christman is the Family Treatment Court Case Coordinator. “We have a strong team here in Wood County,” Judge Wharton said.

Family treatment courts are designed to return children to a safer home environment and achieve permanency faster and more effectively than traditional methods. Family treatment courts serve individuals with substance use disorder who are also involved in child abuse and neglect cases. The Supreme Court provides oversight, technical assistance, and training. A State Family Treatment Court Advisory Committee and the Supreme Court Division of Probation Services set criteria for eligibility and participation.

The West Virginia court system continues to add treatment courts throughout the state and to support and celebrate graduates who complete such specialty court programs. The goal of treatment courts is to help participants overcome substance use disorder and mental illness, thus improving the quality of life for them and their families.

##