



# Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

## News

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### Juvenile Drug Court Celebrates 80<sup>th</sup> Graduate

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PARKERSBURG, W.Va. – The Juvenile Drug Court that serves Pleasants, Ritchie, Wirt and Wood Counties celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> graduate at a ceremony held Wednesday at the Wood County Courthouse.

Because they are juveniles, the names of the graduates are not public, but that does not diminish their accomplishments.

“We are really proud of the kids. The kids are the ones who do the work,” said Family Court Judge C. Darren Tallman, who has presided over the Juvenile Drug Court since it began operating in November 2010.

The Juvenile Drug Court also depends on volunteers and, especially, the work of the probation officers who serve as Drug Court Coordinators. The current coordinator is Jessica Trippett. Her predecessor, Judy Stephens, was the coordinator for eight years.

The Juvenile Drug Court has continued to operate through the COVID pandemic, with as many activities and meetings being held online as possible. Judge Tallman meets virtually with the 15 youths currently in the program instead of in person.

“It’s been a challenge for all in the program to adjust to the current restrictions, but we believe we have to continue to provide a strong program for these at risk youth. Unfortunately our substance abuse problem still exists. And we have to continue to address it,” Judge Tallman said.

The West Virginia Juvenile Drug Court Program is a cooperative effort of the juvenile justice, social services, law enforcement, and education systems. The program seeks to divert non-violent juvenile offenders who have alcohol or substance abuse problems from the traditional juvenile court process to an intensive, individualized treatment process. The goal is to reduce future court involvement for these youth. West Virginia has 18 Juvenile Drug Courts covering 24 counties.

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