

Best Practice Court Matters

An update on the latest events of Best Practice Courts of Virginia

Volume 5, Issue 1

Court Improvement Program
Office of the Executive Secretary, Supreme Court of Virginia

Winter 2007

IT'S A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION.

FOURTH STATEWIDE BEST PRACTICE COURTS CONFERENCE—2006

4th Statewide Best Practice Courts Conference Williamsburg, Virginia November 28-29, 2006

The 4th Statewide Best Practice Courts Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza at Fort Magruder in Williamsburg on November 28-29, 2006.

This program was attended by 26 local teams made up of 165 participants. Membership on these teams included a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judge, a representative from the J&DR Clerk's Office, a DSS Representative, local DSS Counsel, a Guardian Ad Litem and for the first time, a representative from the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) office.

Also attending were executive branch agency officials with related responsibilities, including the Commissioner of Social Services, Anthony Conyers, Executive Director of the CSA Office, Kim McGaughey, and State CASA Coordinator, Melissa O'Neill.

Two new teams were added to

the program this year. Loudoun J&DR District Court and Norfolk J&DR District Court made up the Class of 2006.

The conference highlighted local initiatives of the Best Practice Courts. Teams were given the opportunity to share their ideas and to assist other courts in implementing these best practices in their own communities. The conference opened with a slideshow of pictures from the local Best Practice Court events held in 2006.

Hon. David Peterson of Fredericksburg introduced the keynote speaker, Judge James W. Payne. Judge Payne served for 20 years as a Juvenile Court Judge in Marion County, Indiana. In 2005, he was appointed by Governor Mitch Daniels to serve as Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services. The keynote address was entitled "Meeting the Challenge of Keeping the Vehicle Moving". It focused on the efforts

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2007 Best Practice Courts Mini-Grants

In 2006, the Court Improvement Program provided Best Practice Court Teams with mini-grants which were used to support training events for local stakeholders. These grants were used by 21 of the 24 Best Practice Court teams resulting in 13 events that reached over 1,000 participants.

Given the success of this program, CIP has decided to extend this offer to the Best Practice Courts again in 2007. Each court will be given the option to spend their grant individually or to combine funds and develop a program

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Sue Badeau, Judge James Payne, Judge David Peterson and Rhonda Gardner



Nancy Young, Ruth Stone and Judge Nolan Dawkins talk before their panel presentation on Substance Use Disorders.

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- BEST PRACTICE COURTS MINI-GRANTS (CONTINUED)

SCENES FROM THE 2006 BEST PRACTICE COURTS CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 28-29, 2006



“Achieving Reunification: Pathways to Permanency” - Judge Jay Dugger, Christy Smith and Wanda Rogers



“Methamphetamines: The Impact on the Foster Care System” - Kathleen Jenkins



“CHINS/Delinquent\$: The Children Who Do Not Fit the Mold” - Judge Frank Somerville



“Meeting the Educational Needs of Children Involved with the Courts”
Andrew Block



Left: Each attendee was given a tote bag which displayed the CIP logo seen on page 3 as a thank you for their dedication to the Best Practice Courts program.



The Wise/Norton Best Practice Court Team



“Inspiring Leadership for Permanency “ - Judge James Payne, Wanda Rogers and Judge Stephen Rideout

Right: First Lady Anne Holton speaks with Sue Badeau and a former youth from foster care.



Left: “Eliminating Barriers to permanent Families— Adoption Saturday Celebrations”



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of local child welfare agencies and the local stakeholders in moving child dependency cases along at an acceptable pace.



Improving Court Practice For Children and Families

After Judge Payne's presentation, participants chose one of four breakout sessions to attend. These sessions focused on the initiatives of local courts. Topics for these sessions included:

- Achieving Reunification: Pathways to Permanency
- Eliminating Barriers to Permanent Families—Adoption Saturday Celebrations
- Preparing Children in Care for Adulthood: Independent Living
- CHIN\$/Delinquent\$: The Children Who Do Not Fit the Mold

Each of these sessions was led by a panel of representatives from local teams who have helped to implement these initiatives in their community.

After lunch, four additional breakout sessions were offered:

- Utilizing CASA to Facilitate Permanency Planning
- Meeting the Educational Needs of Children Involved with the Courts
- Methamphetamines: The Impact on the Foster Care System
- Automating for Permanency: Technology Resource Fair.

Following the breakout sessions, attendees reconvened for a presentation by Sue Badeau, Child Welfare Policy Consultant with the National Resource Center on Permanency Planning and Foster Care in Philadelphia, PA. Ms. Badeau is the adoptive

parent of 20 children and has 26 years of experience in the child welfare field. She addressed the question: "Who Wouldn't Want a Permanent Home? Teens in Foster Care". She offered perspectives from former foster care youth and defined permanence in the words of a child. This session concluded with a panel of three former foster care youth who gave the participants an honest and emotional glance into their lives in foster care and since they have aged out of the system.

The First Lady of Virginia, Anne Holton, wrapped up the conference's first day with a presentation on her new foster care initiative, "For Keeps". On the website for this project, she says, "My goal as Virginia's First Lady is to help ensure that all of Virginia's young people have permanent, stable family connections and the community support to sustain them."



www.forkeepsvirginia.org

Day two of the conference began with a presentation by Nancy K. Young, Director of Children and Family Futures, a California-based research and policy institute, whose purpose is to improve outcomes for children and families affected by substance use disorders. Dr. Young also serves as Director for the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.



Nancy K. Young, Director of Children and Family Futures

Her presentation entitled: "Responding to Families with Substance Use Disorders: The Clocks for Dependent Children Before the Courts" focused on the various timelines facing courts and agencies

when dealing with a family troubled by substance use.

Following the opening session, attendees divided into groups by professional designation. Each group was given a list of discussion questions and was provided with the opportunity to discuss candidly the experiences and challenges they face in their field.

Judge Payne wrapped up the morning session with a presentation on "Inspiring Leadership for Permanency". Judge Payne along with a panel which included Hon. Stephen W. Rideout, Retired Judge from Alexandria J&DR Court, and Wanda Rogers, Deputy Director for Hampton Department of Social Services, provided an overview of the topics which were covered in the professional designation meetings.

After lunch, participants separated into team meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to provide the individual groups with time to plan future activities for the Best Practice Court and identify necessary resources for these initiatives. The groups were given discussion questions asked to identify at least three activities they planned to implement in their locality.

The conference concluded with presentations by select Best Practice Courts. Presenters included the Class of 2006 teams, Loudoun and Norfolk. Additional reports were given by Henrico, Winchester/Frederick, Warren, Louisa, Roanoke/Salem and Wise/Norton.

Judge Stephen Rideout provided the closing remarks for the conference and asked the participants to remember that "It's a journey, not a destination".

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BEST PRACTICE COURTS OF VIRGINIA

Alexandria	Louisa	Staunton/Augusta
Bedford	Loudoun	Tazewell
Campbell	Newport News	Virginia Beach
Charlottesville/Albemarle	Norfolk	Warren
Culpeper	Prince William	Waynesboro
Fairfax	Pulaski	Williamsburg/James City
Fredericksburg	Richmond	Winchester/Frederick
Henrico	Roanoke Co./Salem	Wise/Norton
Hampton	Stafford	

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 with another Best Practice Court Team.

The money provided through the mini-grants must be used to support an event which is planned by an interdisciplinary group, to involve, at

a minimum, representatives of the court, local bar and local department of social services. Additionally, the event must focus on improving the ability of the community to respond to child maltreatment and the placement of children in foster care and to the enhance-

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INSTITUTE

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) will again be sponsoring the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute in Reno, Nevada. The program will take place June 3-7, 2007.

This year, Virginia has been given the opportunity to send five J&DR District Court judges. Best Practice Court Judges were given the first opportunity to go, and positions filled up in less than a week.

Attendees will include these J&DR Judges:

- Elizabeth Wills from Wise
- Elizabeth Kellas from Winchester
- Avelina Jacob from Loudoun
- Sharon Will from Henrico
- Gerald Daltan from Stafford

We look forward to hearing from these judges about their experiences at this event.

CIP staff is available to help by identifying speaker resources, distributing invitations, preparing notebooks, and attending the planned event as desired by the local team and as staff is available.

In the Fall 2006 edition of *Best Practice Court Matters*, the 2006 programs were described. This information may be used as a resource when planning an event for your locality.

CLASS OF 2006 BEST PRACTICE COURTS

Two new courts have joined the Best Practice Courts Program bringing the total number of teams to 26. The Best Practice Court Teams handle nearly 54% of the foster care cases in Virginia. Judge Stephen Rideout has been meeting with these new teams to help implement their programs.

Judge Avelina Jacob (pictured right) is serving as the Lead Judge for the Loudoun J&DR District Court Team. Judge William Williams (pictured below) is serving as Lead Judge for the Norfolk J&DR District Court Team.



On October 30, 2006, teams from these courts joined representatives from four existing Best Practice Courts Teams who had new lead judges in 2006 for an orientation session at the Supreme Court of Virginia. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the teams to the Best Practice Courts Program and to prepare them for the Statewide Conference in November.

2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **March 8** — Child Dependency Mediation follow-up meeting in Richmond.
- **March 19-24** — Title IV-E Review
- **May 3** — CIP Court Technology Training
- **June 3-7** — Child Abuse and Neglect Institute in Reno, Nevada

BEST PRACTICE COURT LOCAL EVENTS

- **May 21** — Winchester/Frederick
- **June 27** — Richmond (tentative)
- **October 19** — Pulaski
- **October** — Bedford/Campbell (tentative)