



BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2022

For more information, contact:

Cindy Mumby

Director of Governmental & Community Relations

410-340-5376

camumby@harfordcountymd.gov

Harford County Celebrates Adult Drug Court Graduates; Alternative to Incarceration Offers Path to Recovery

BEL AIR, Md., (Oct. 5, 2022) - Harford County is celebrating adult drug court graduates and inspiring others with a Graduation Tree unveiled in circuit court on September 12 in Bel Air. Drug court offers mandated treatment, counseling, and life skills training to qualified participants as an alternative to incarceration.

Opened in June 2019, the court has 18 graduates to date and is a partnership among the Harford County Department of Community Services' Office of Drug Control Policy, Maryland's Office of Problem-Solving Courts, and Harford County Circuit Court.

"Drug court gives a second chance and a path to recovery for participants who want to turn their lives around," County Executive Barry Glassman said.

The blue and gold Graduation Tree was designed by court coordinator Shaelun Jackson to resemble Lady Justice.

Brianna Knight and Joseph Severn, members of the court's first graduating cohort, first unveiled the blue tree trunk, which is printed on foam board. Participants then wrote their names on gold leaves and placed them on the tree to symbolize their growth and the growth of the drug court.

Graduates also shared their success stories with current drug court participants.

"This program gave me the resources I needed to help myself to stay accountable for my actions," Knight said. "More importantly, they believed in me. It feels right to show up for something you truly believe in and display that, if you change your mindset, this commitment has the power to actually change you."

Richard Barton, program director for Maryland's problem-solving courts, attended the ceremony.

"I am pleased to see past graduates return to support the drug court program," Barton said. "This Graduation Tree is a symbol of strength, stability and hope for the graduates, their families, and the community."

The tree will remain on an easel in front of the courtroom as an incentive for participants in the court and encourage them to follow the court's motto, "Keep Going. Keep Growing." Future graduates will add their names to the tree, honoring their recovery journey and inspiring future participants.

Judge Kevin J. Mahoney presides over Harford County Adult Drug Court.


"It was great seeing the graduates again and to see how wonderful they're all doing now," Judge Mahoney said. "The current participants can look at our graduates and know that if they can do it, you can too!"

Harford County Drug Court is open to offenders with a desire for treatment to address their substance use disorder. Participants receive weekly case management to support their recovery and are required to attend services specific to their needs. In addition to mandatory substance use disorder treatment and support groups, participants may be required to attend mental health treatment, family counseling, employment and educational services, life skills classes, and financial literacy classes.



Drug court graduation ceremony held on September 12 in Bel Air. Pictured from left: Harford County Court Coordinator Shaelun Jackson; participants Travis Warfield, Latoya Epps, Brianna Knight, Joseph Severn, and Julia Tabor; Judge Kevin J. Mahoney, and participant James Roberson.

 Like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HarfordCountyMD> | 

 Follow us on Twitter [@HarfordCountyMD](https://twitter.com/HarfordCountyMD)

###