

Great Game of Huddle Notes October 30, 2018

Angie Crews opened this morning's Huddle by introducing Marilyn Gibson, Greene County Drug Treatment Court Administrator. Having first worked at the Greene County Juvenile Office for nearly 20 years, Marilyn began working with the Greene County Drug Treatment Court back 2000, along with Commissioner Peggy Davis. She briefly spoke about the details pertaining to the program, but stressed that "You don't always need a drug charge," in order to be in the program, which is what most people assume.

The Drug Treatment Court is divided into 4 quadrants ranging from criminally minded individuals with a drug addiction, to someone who may or may not have criminal charges, yet abuses drugs, to "criminal thinkers," but not necessarily drug abusers, to an individual who may be neither criminally minded or a drug abuser, but simply found by law enforcement in such environment and found appropriate for treatment court after a screening). First and foremost, the individuals involved will have all had some type of criminal charge presented to the court, which may or may not consist of a drug charge and found appropriate for treatment court. They will all be required to obtain a RANT (Risk and Needs Triage) Assessment, which will assist in the appropriate quadrant level. The Prosecutor will look at the screening results to best determine if treatment court is appropriate and if so, what quadrant the individual qualifies for, before deciding on the appropriate charge to potentially file.

While in the program, individuals receive a number of resources consisting of social, learning and job skills, in order to help assist them through the system, as well as complete some level of community service in order to "give back." In order to eventually graduate from the program, individuals will have received their Hi-SET (GED), as well as have employment, in order to show their stability. The minimum length of treatment court is 18-months.

On Wednesday, October 24, Missouri Governor Mike Parson signed into law House Bill 2 in Springfield at the Greene County Historic Courthouse and in Clay County at James S. Rooney Justice Center in Liberty.

Passed during a special legislative session called by the Governor in September, HB 2 is legislation related to drug treatment courts. It will place all treatment courts under one regulatory umbrella and allow jurisdictions that do not have a treatment court to transfer a defendant to a jurisdiction that does. The state commission that oversees treatment courts will also be expanded by two members. The original bill was filed by Representative Kevin Austin, R-Springfield.

During a previous visit to Springfield, Governor Parson said, "The future of Missouri will depend on alternative sentencing. I'm not interested in building any more prisons as Governor of the State of Missouri. I am not. I am more interested in getting people through alternative sentencing and getting them into the workforce."

Judge Peggy Davis, a member of the Greene County Drug Courts Coordinating Commission, said, "We are thrilled Governor Parson is choosing Greene County to sign this important legislation because in this area we are seeing firsthand the real benefits of drug treatment court programs. We are making a real difference with these programs and this legislation is going to continue to help us build on those best practices and work together to achieve the best outcomes."

Next week, Governor Parson will sign into law House Bill 3, which deals with computer science, expanding course opportunities for high school students, creating a certification process for teachers, establishing a fund for any future public and private financial support, and developing curriculum standards.