



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **JUDGE KATARINA COOK LAUNCHES FAMILY RECOVERY COURT PROGRAM**

**Akron, Ohio, June 23, 2020** – When Judge Katarina Cook took the oath of office on January 5, 2017, she vowed to create a family recovery court that would address the needs of families appearing before the Court that are affected by the opioid epidemic. Not only has she kept that promise, she has expanded upon it. The Summit County Domestic Relations Court Family Recovery Court Program (‘FRC’), started in November 2019, is a new specialty-docket for cases involving parents struggling with substance abuse and mental health challenges. FRC provides parents a support framework when dealing with the effects of chemical dependency and/or mental health issues. The program is designed to assist participants with the treatment and supportive services

necessary to reunite them with their children and make co-parenting possible. FRC is comprised of a treatment team staffed by a Program Manager, treatment providers and community partners. All levels of care will be available through the process, including residential, intensive outpatient treatment, and aftercare. The program, which is voluntary, will require a commitment of at least twelve (12) months. Currently, Cuyahoga County is the only other domestic relations court in Ohio offering a similar program. "I am thrilled to begin this program with the support of our community partners. In my nearly three years at the Court I have witnessed first-hand the devastating impact that the substance abuse and mental health crisis is having on families and I am eager to be part of the solution," said Judge Cook.

The Family Recovery Court Program continued throughout the limitations imposed by the current pandemic. "They say 'necessity is the mother of invention.' Our participants couldn't physically come to court, so we held Zoom meetings, and checked up on their progress with their treatment providers and the other parent. I'm pleased to say that our participants kept in contact with the Court because they now have hope of a regular visitation schedule with their children in a more normal setting", Judge Cook stated.

The program sessions are held twice a month on Wednesdays, scheduling one family in Judge Cook's Courtroom at a time.

For more detailed information on the program and its community partners, contact Thomas McLaughlin, Judge Cook's Bailiff at 330-643-2357 or email [FamilyRecoveryCourt@dr-court.org](mailto:FamilyRecoveryCourt@dr-court.org) .