



PRESS RELEASE

JUDGE KATARINA COOK'S FAMILY RECOVERY COURT RECEIVES \$50,000 CIVIL JUSTICE PROGRAM GRANT FROM THE OHIO SUPREME COURT

Akron, Ohio, August 31, 2020 – Summit County Domestic Relations Court Judge Katarina Cook is pleased to announce that her Family Recovery Court (“FRC”) program has received a \$50,000 Civil Justice Program Grant from the Ohio Supreme Court.

The FRC was established by Judge Cook in November 2019, and is a voluntary maximum 2-year program that provides court-involved parents a support framework when dealing with the effects of chemical dependency and/or mental health issues.

“I am concerned that low-income and or unemployed parents typically struggle to pay \$50/hour for supervised visits and \$100 for therapeutic visits,” said Judge Cook. One of these visitation services is usually required by FRC program participants. Neither is covered by health insurance,

so this added expense often prevents the underserved population from obeying court orders. “I am so happy I found a way to help these parents in need,” Judge Cook noted.

The \$50,000 awarded to the FRC will be used primarily to pay for the services of two of its community partners: Common Ground Family Services, which provides supervised visitation, and Northern Summit Counseling, which provides therapeutic visitation. Common Ground also intends to use the funds to purchase a drug-testing device and breathalyzer unit to verify that participants are not under the influence of drugs/alcohol at the time of their supervised visit.

Chris Derry, Director of Common Ground Family Services stated:

“I am excited that SCDRC's Family Drug Court Program has been awarded this grant, which will go a long way towards cementing this important program as an innovative leader in helping families overcome the difficulties and unique barriers they face from a disease as complicated as chemical dependency and the ongoing opioid crisis in our community.”

Judge Cook and her Program Manager, Alissa Endicott, participated in the Supreme Court’s onboarding tele-conference presentation on August 27th. The program provided them with information on the procedures and reporting requirements necessary to maintain communication with the Supreme Court about the success of the FRC program to insure that it is achieving its goals. They also discussed how challenges presented by COVID-19 might impact implementation of the awardees’ services.

“We’re geared up and ready to go. I anticipate that this program will have so much potential to make a positive change in the lives of these families,” stated Judge Cook.

For more information, please contact Judge Katarina Cook at 330-643-2357.

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