



Yolo County Collaborative Courts Newsletter

Mental Health & Addiction Intervention Court

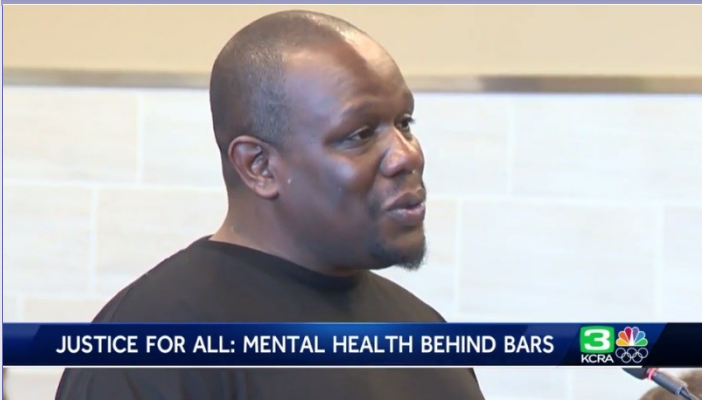
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Welcome!

Welcome! This quarterly newsletter is an effort to keep community stakeholders up to date on all of the happenings in the Collaborative Courts. The newsletter highlights program updates and changes as well as current and past Mental Health Court (MHC) and Addiction Intervention Court (AIC) participants stories. We hope you enjoy hearing about all the exciting things taking place in the Collaborative Courts!

KCRA3 Returns to Yolo



In April KCRA3 came to interview the MHC team for a piece they were doing on Mental Illness. The staff at KCRA 3 were so impressed with what the Collaborative Court Team is doing they asked to come back in September to do a piece about criminal justice reform. MHC participant Rayshawn Taylor bravely shared his story and Collaborative Court Team members Jonathan Raven from the DA's Office and Kris-

ti Abbott from HHS detailed how the criminal justice system and mental health system can work together for better outcomes. Here is the link to the video: <https://www.kcra.com/article/yolo-county-mental-health-court/28968903>



Annual MHC BBQ

On July 16th, 2019 the MHC team held it's annual BBQ. Attendants participated in a game of kickball—clients vs. program staff, which the clients won handily with a 15-8 score. Chief Deputy Public Defender Allison Zuvela did her best to keep the MHC team in the game. Each time she launched a kick into the outfield, both of her shoes would fly off towards the pitcher's mound, which brought a big smile and laugh to both teams. After everyone had a chance to eat, members of the Mental Health



Court team surprised the group by handing out awards acknowledging and celebrating the progress that each participant had made since enrolling in the program. Several participants received awards recognizing their efforts at “setting boundaries,” separating themselves from people who served as bad influences in their lives. Others received awards for “making healthy life choices” such as staying clean and sober and engaging in treatment. By holding events like a barbecue for program participants and graduates, the Mental Health Court team hopes to foster a sense of community among Mental Health Court clients and the county employees that they work with. Abbott commented,

“the annual MHC BBQ gives us the opportunity to spend quality time with the participants. We get out of the courtroom and get to connect with them in a whole other way. We hope to show the participants how much each one of the court team members is invested in them as people and how much we care about their success.”



HHSA attends the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals Conference

Kristi Abbott—Clinical Supervisor of the Collaborative Court Team, attended the 29th annual ATAP conference in August. The Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) was founded in 1992 as a non-profit organization comprised of law enforcement, prosecutors, mental health professionals, corporate security experts, probation and parole personnel and others involved in the area of threat and violence risk assessment. The purpose of ATAP is to afford its members a professional and educational environment to exchange ideas and strategies. This year’s conference reiterated the fact that people with mental illness are not more violent than the general population, as has been portrayed in the aftermath of recent mass shootings. Helping to reduce the stigma of mental illness by educating professionals and the public of this fact and about the behavioral cues associated with risk of violence is an important goal of the organization.



Recovery Happens



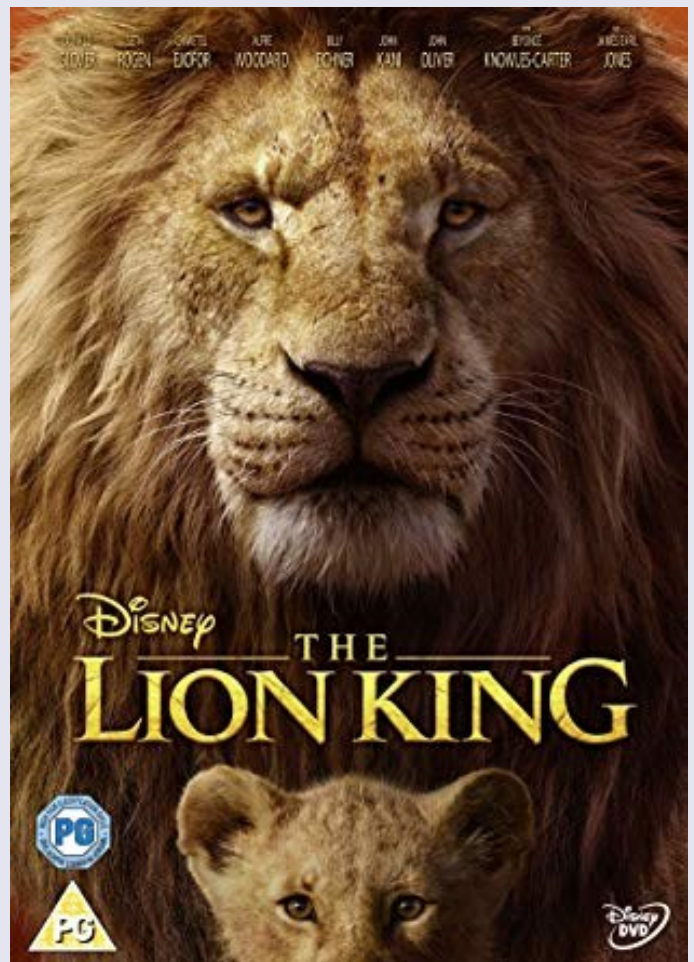
September is National Recovery Month and to celebrate, the AIC case manager took a group of AIC participants to Recovery Happens at the State Capital. This event emphasizes that individuals in recovery and their support systems can be change agents in our communities. It is critical that people experiencing substance use disorders receive the support they need. The reality is that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people do recover!

Wellness Outings



In August the participants went bowling. At this outing we learned that one of our participants is very good at bowling—scored a 260! He told the team that he used to be on a bowling league and that bowling has always been something that made him happy. The wellness outings accomplish many things, but one of those things is allowing the team to learn more about the participants and how to support their overall wellness. The team will be supporting this participant to join a bowling league and reincorporate

In September the participants went to see *The Lion King*. Given the popularity of the original animated version most of the participants were familiar with the film and excited to see the CGI version. Going to a discounted movie was one of the first wellness outings we did and since doing so, participants now regularly go to the movies with each other on their own; which is exactly what we hope to see as a result of these outings!



Graduations

We had 2 graduations in the Collaborative Courts this quarter! One from AIC and one from MHC. Both graduates have selected to share their stories.

Steven Sardenga July 23rd, 2019

In February 2016, Steven Sardenga's sister allowed him to move in with her due to his difficulty maintaining a stable living situation. His sister reported that Sardenga would spend his days at Cache Creek Casino and that she believed he was using methamphetamine which resulted in her kicking him out of her home in September 2016. On October 24, 2016, Sardenga's sister reported the theft of her work laptop computer from her apartment to the Winters Police Department. Sardenga was later charged with petty theft and identity theft after using the work laptop to transfer money to his personal account from his sister's place of employment, where she worked as a bookkeeper. Sardenga joined AIC three months later in January of 2017. Sardenga's journey through AIC was inspiring. Once accepted into the program he took advantage of every opportunity and support and never looked back! He graduated the program in the minimum amount of time possible (18 months) and was a great role model for his fellow participants. Mr. Sardenga explained his escalation to drug addiction: "A few years ago, I thought it would be exciting to try drugs. I wanted to have fun and experience anything that would get me high. I started with marijuana and gradually stepped it up through pills, powders, free basing, and all the way to shooting heroin. I did not think that I would become an addict, although in retrospect I'm not sure why because I followed the textbook ladder to drug addiction. My addiction is still with me, but every day I choose to resist the temptation of use. I want to thank the AIC staff and court officers for a program like this that gives people like me a second chance. To those in the program and about to be in the program, I would say this: remember the pain addiction causes to you and your loved ones. It's easy to forget just how dangerous drugs can be and how much damage you can do to others. Do your best to make things right,"



Judge Rosenberg embraces AIC graduate Steven Sardenga.

Graduations!

Subrina Seaton August 6th, 2019

In 2016 Subrina Seaton was arrested for robbery by the West Sacramento Police Department after stealing socks and a toothbrush from a local store. At the time, she was homeless and had an extensive criminal record dating back to when she was a juvenile. Due to Ms Seaton's Serious Mental Illness she was initially found Incompetent to Stand Trial and sent to Napa State Hospital

for competency restoration. Upon returning from the State Hospital she was referred to MHC and join the program in February 2018. In the 18 months that Ms. Seaton was in MHC, she completely changed her life around. She went from being homeless for the last 2 decades to having her own apartment, she achieved 2 years of sobriety and counting, and she has visitation with her children . In addition, she has achieved a new found insight into her mental illness and is committed to doing what she needs to do

to stay well. During her Restorative Justice component of MHC she chose to put together care packages for the homeless. The same things that she once got caught stealing when she was homeless, she was going to pass out to people in our community still experiencing homelessness. At her graduation ceremony Ms. Seaton shared her thoughts on her journey through MHC stating "Thank you for letting me know I had a mental illness. At first, I thought it was a joke. I made it and I'm proud of myself."



Chris Bulkeley—DA's Office, Jonathan Raven—DA's Office, Kristi Abbott—HHSA, Subrina Seaton, Stephen Svetich—Probation, Judge Rosenberg, Bret Bandle—Public Defender's Office.

Alumni News

Laura, a MHC Alumna who graduated earlier this year, has been named The Environmental Council of Sacramento's (ECOS) Volunteer of the Year! Laura began volunteering for the ECOS over a year ago as part of her MHC volunteer work component. She has continued to volunteer with them ever since and the recognition of her dedication to the organization is well deserved! The MHC team is very proud of Laura and all of her accomplishments!



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Consumer Corner



Meet MHC participant Darius Pottinger's new dog Phoenix! Darius began volunteering at the Yolo County Animal Shelter earlier this year. Every MHC participant is required to complete 120 hours of volunteer work during Phase III of the program. Darius, who moved into his own apartment for the first time earlier this year, wanted to adopt a dog as a companion. The MHC team worked with Darius to make sure he was ready and prepared for the responsibility of owning a dog, and eventually gave Darius the all-go! Darius met and fell in love with Phoenix while volunteering at the animal shelter. Phoenix is a 1 year old male. Phoenix is loving and kind and he and Darius are enjoying their new life together!

About Mental Health & Addiction Intervention Courts



MHC and AIC are 18 month long programs in which participants progress through four phases of treatment: Orientation and Treatment Plan Development, Early Recovery, Active Recovery, and Sustained Recovery. Participants are required to take their medication, abstain from drug and alcohol use, and make all of their appointments. Participants receive intensive case management, individual and group therapy, substance use disorder treatment, educational/vocational support, housing support and independent living skills training, and wellness outings designed to increase social skills and establish a natural support system peers.

In order to graduate participants must complete a minimum of 18 months, progress through all four phases of treatment, complete 120 volunteer hours, complete a restorative justice component, and create a wellness/aftercare plan.

MHC offers an Alumni program for graduates to stay involved in the program after graduation. The Alumni group meets monthly and Alumni are invited to the monthly wellness outings to socialize with and mentor current participants. They are also invited to graduations.

Collaborative Courts by the Numbers

1st Quarter Numbers: 7/1/19-9/30/19

Referrals

In the first quarter **29** people were referred to the Collaborative Courts. Of that number **5** were accepted into AIC and **5** into MHC which is an acceptance rate of 34%.

Enrollment

MHC averaged **15** enrolled participants and AIC averaged **15**. The capacity for each program is 15.

Exits

2 graduations, 1 terminations

Looking ahead

On track for 5 graduations in next quarter

Funding & Expansion

At the end of last quarter the Collaborative Court Team was notified that they had been selected to receive a grant from the Department of State Hospitals. This grant is focused on diverting Felony Incompetent to Stand Trial defendants into community based treatment as opposed to the criminal justice system and state hospital system. This grant will add both a clinician and a case manager to HHSA's forensic team and will serve a minimum of 8 clients over the life of the grant.

In addition, The Collaborative has also been notified that they will be receiving a grant to expand Mental Health Court. This grant will add 2 positions to HHSA's forensic team: a clinician and a peer support worker. The grant will also fund an additional Probation Officer. The grant doubles the clients served by MHC at any given time.!