



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yolo County District Attorney's Office Gives Presentation About Restorative Justice Program to Oklahoma House of Representatives

(Woodland, CA) October 23, 2020 – Yolo County District Attorney, Jeff Reisig, and Neighborhood Court Program Coordinator, Nicole Kirkaldy, gave a virtual presentation on Tuesday, October 20, 2020, about the benefits of a Neighborhood Court Program, at an Interim Study examining the issues of Restorative Justice, in front of the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

Yolo's Neighborhood Court is one of the few in the country to use restorative justice practices to resolve cases for adults facing criminal convictions. The program began as a pilot project serving first-time offenders in the City of Davis in 2013. By 2015, the program had expanded to include West Sacramento, Woodland, and other areas of Yolo County. Neighborhood Court has broadened beyond the scope of its original design and has expanded its eligibility criteria, to include some low level felony crimes and offenders who may have had previous convictions.

Neighborhood Court allows offenders the ability to resolve criminal cases outside of the traditional court process without receiving a conviction. The program relies heavily upon community volunteers, who meet with participants to discuss the harms from their conduct, in an effort to reach an appropriate resolution that addresses the underlying causes of the criminal offense.

The Yolo County District Attorney's Office is always looking for innovative ways to better serve our community. Yolo County's Neighborhood Court program is a great example of that innovation, and is an effective model for criminal justice reform. Many other counties in California have begun to develop a similar program with the help of our Neighborhood Court staff. On a national scale, many states have also requested the help of our Neighborhood Court Program. After making a trip out to California in October of 2019, to see Yolo's Neighborhood Court in action, District Attorney Jason Hicks, with the Oklahoma's Sixth Prosecutorial District, asked Reisig and Kirkaldy to present in the House of Representatives, before the House Judiciary Committee, where they shared information about the program in Yolo County.

During Tuesday's presentation, Hicks explained how he got interested in restorative justice as an alternative form of justice in Oklahoma. He thanked District Attorney Reisig for his assistance and stated that "The presentation was exactly what we needed and it went really well. The comments from legislators

and others in attendance were very positive and encouraging. The way the program was presented caused many of the people in the room to want the program yesterday.” Reisig stated that he “looks forward to seeing a Restorative Justice Neighborhood Court program implemented in Oklahoma. I am very proud of our program and was honored to share our perspective as well as what has made our program a success.” The full presentation can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/35p1tYv>

Volunteers for the program are always needed. For more information about the Neighborhood Court program, or to sign up as a volunteer, please visit <http://www.yoloda.org/nc>. You may also contact the program staff directly by e-mail at neighborhoodcourt@yolocounty.org or by phone at (530) 666-8378.

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