



**State of Tennessee
23rd Judicial District
Recovery Court**

Press Release

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Beecham Honored by Recovery Court Association

Twenty-Third Judicial District Recovery Court Director Doug Beecham was honored this week by the Tennessee Association of Recovery Courts for his outstanding service to the profession. The association presented Beecham with the prestigious Christy Vernon Spirit Award which is voted upon by members to recognize excellence in the profession.



Twenty-Third District Circuit Judge Suzanne Lockert-Mash made the presentation at the annual meeting in Murfreesboro, attended by recovery court professionals from around the state. Judge Lockert-Mash also serves as the district's Recovery Court Judge. "Doug has made a significant impression on Recovery Courts all across the State. His innovative ideas have been embraced in the 23rd Judicial District, and have been held up as models for other courts to consider for implementation," said Lockert-Mash.

"Doug has been instrumental in building our Recovery Court from its humble beginnings 20 years ago," the Judge added. "He serves as Director of the Recovery Court and also as Vice President of the non-profit corporation that manages the finances and operation of the court. Doug oversees corporation subsidiaries that support the Recovery Court, including Second Chance Thrift Store in Dickson and the residential housing program."

Beecham has also served the state association since its inception and has served on the Board of Directors for the past decade. Beecham oversees such innovations as gender-based programs, residential housing, and the thrift store to help cover the cost of treatment for those recovering from addiction. Beecham has developed partnerships with government and non-profit agencies to provide addiction services to local citizens.

"Doug regularly travels the state to meet with other recovery courts and share his innovations. A few years ago, Doug was invited by the National Association of Drug Courts to speak at a national conference in Washington, D.C. He served on the welcoming committee of the national association's annual conference held in Nashville a few years ago, and provided support to the

national cross-country motorcycle relay to raise awareness for those fighting drug and alcohol addiction.”

Judge Lockert-Mash underscores Beecham’s understanding of the importance of the Recovery Court’s close community involvement. “Doug has involved the court in programs to help the elderly, to clear and rebuild a home for fire victims, to care for homeless animals, to feed the hungry, to assist the poor with utility bills, to find appropriate treatment for those with substance abuse or medical needs, to help recovering addicts that need dental work or eyeglasses, and to provide Christmas presents to poor children, just to name a few.”

Beecham is known for motivating and inspiring his co-workers and volunteers with his determination to see things through. His persistence over obstacles is contagious, and encourages all those around him to commit their best efforts to the job at hand. Judge Lockert-Mash says Beecham generously gives of his time and money to make the Recovery Court program work. “He never clocks out and is available for a meeting or phone call any time of the day or night. Recovery Court participants know he is just a phone call away, and can travel to them in just a few minutes if need be.”

Beecham champions recovery courts at the national, state, and local levels. He has been active in the national association, bringing attention to recovery programs across the country. He has helped steer the state recovery court association. At the local level, Beecham has been a strong advocate for his own recovery court. The 23rd Judicial District Recovery Court provides addiction recovery services to Dickson, Cheatham, Humphreys, Stewart, and Houston Counties. Judge Lockert-Mash says the program has earned the respect and admiration of government and civic leaders throughout the five-county district, “a reflection of the reputation inspired by the leadership of Doug Beecham.”

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Background

The Recovery Court promotes responsibility and accountability and teaches participants to become productive citizens in the community. Recovery Court is an alternative to incarceration and integrates drug and alcohol dependency treatment and community resources with the criminal justice system.

Recovery Court participants are involved in counseling sessions to help them recover from their drug and alcohol dependency. The goal is to give these non-violent offenders a new lease on life, with the skills to be productive, law-abiding citizens. The 23rd Judicial District Recovery Court is a collaborative link between the courts, prosecutors, public defenders, law enforcement, probation officers, treatment providers, social service agencies, and community-based non-profit organizations.

Recovery Court is an effective alternative to expensive incarceration. The court reduces crime and drug abuse by providing treatment to addicted offenders. Recovery Court requires strict accountability from participants through frequent in-person court hearings and intensive monitoring. The court requires total abstinence from illicit and illegal drugs and alcohol.

National studies point out additional benefits of Recovery Courts:

- Reduces emergency room, hospital, and medical costs
- Reduces domestic violence
- Reduces felony and misdemeanor crimes
- Promotes completion of education and/or vocational training
- Requires employment in tax-paying jobs
- Decreases use of public assistance
- Eases court, jail, and prison overcrowding and costs
- Stops criminal and other self-defeating behaviors
- Breaks the cycle of addiction
- Requires accountability and responsibility for choices and actions
- Improves family and other relationships

Circuit Court Judge Suzanne Lockert-Mash presides over the Recovery Court. Judge Lockert-Mash points out additional benefits. "Recovery Courts are the most effective justice intervention for treating drug-addicted people. Recovery Courts reduce drug use and crime while saving millions of tax dollars and restoring lives. The programs save children and reunite families."

The 23rd Judicial District Recovery Court program was established nearly twenty years ago to help addicted defendants become productive citizens in our community. Those accepted into the recovery court are sent to an in-patient treatment center. Once treatment is completed, participants live in one of the court's Sober Living Residences. Participants are required to obtain employment and are under the supervision of a probation officer and house manager. Participants are required to attend daily support group meetings and appear before the Judge every week.

Recovery Court is not easy. Successful participants must dedicate themselves to significant change. Approximately 90 percent of Recovery Court graduates remain arrest-free at least two years after graduation. The 23rd District Recovery Court saves local taxpayers about one million dollars per year by reducing the cost of trials and incarceration.

Quite simply, Recovery Court Works!

Electronic copy and Photograph are available by e-mail. Send request to KB0713@comcast.net or contact Kevin Batts at (615) 306-6229