



Press Release

Alaska Court System, 825 W. 4th Avenue, Anchorage 99501

Contact: Desiree Sang, Anchorage Veterans Court Coordinator
907-264-0466; dsang@akcourts.us

Contact: Jennifer Fredericks, Anchorage Wellness Court Coordinator
907-264-0892; jfredericks@akcourts.us

ANCHORAGE THERAPEUTIC COURTS HOST ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY Event Commemorates “National Drug Court Month” and the theme “*Drug Courts Save*”

Anchorage, Alaska, April 29, 2015—More than fifty men and women in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction will be honored for completing intensive therapeutic court programs at a commencement ceremony on **Thursday, April 30, 2015, at 3:00 PM** in the Alaska Supreme Court Courtroom of the Anchorage Boney Courthouse, 303 K Street, 5th floor. Alaska Supreme Court Justice Joel H. Bolger will preside over the ceremony, which will include graduates of the Anchorage Wellness Felony Drug and DUI Courts, the Municipal Wellness Court, and the Veterans Court. The graduates have completed many months of court-supervised comprehensive drug and alcohol treatment, have made proven progress towards their educational and employment goals, and have satisfied many other rigorous requirements to help ensure their continued sobriety and successful reintegration into the community.

The ceremony is being held in conjunction with the 29th anniversary of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD). Nationally, April is recognized as “Alcohol Awareness Month” and May is recognized as “National Drug Court Month.” Drug courts throughout the nation are celebrating their successes with the theme “*Drug Courts Save*,” highlighting the collective impact of drug courts, DUI courts, and Veterans Courts on saving lives, reuniting families, and making communities safer. Therapeutic courts use criminal justice stakeholders (judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, law enforcement, probation, and treatment) in a cooperative approach to ensure accountability. In 2014, the Anchorage Veterans Court also started using mentors. Through the Veterans Mentoring Program, veterans volunteer to help participants navigate the court, treatment, and Veterans Affairs (VA) systems. Mentors

also work to ensure veterans receive the services they need to reach their full potential as productive members of society.

Hundreds of Alaskans have graduated successfully from therapeutic court programs since their inception in Alaska over a decade ago. Many continue to support the courts long after graduation, through groups such as the Anchorage Therapeutic Courts Alumni Group, which will present this years' Outstanding Alumni Award at the ceremony.

All current and former Therapeutic Court participants, the general public, and the media are invited to attend.

A reception hosted by Partners for Progress will immediately follow the ceremony in the first floor of the Snowden Administrative Building – 820 West 4th Avenue.

###