

# MENTAL HEALTH COURT

Newsletter; Volume 1, Issue 4



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE JUDGE

by Judge Jennifer Alcorta Waters

The end of the summer is bittersweet. For those of us with kids, it marks the end of vacations, beach trips and pool parties and the start of a new school year, filled with apprehension at the unknown and the anticipatory excitement of novel experiences.

Last week, we celebrated four exceptional Mental Health Court graduates, each of whom worked very hard to succeed in our program. It was a gift to be able to witness their growth and transformation throughout their time in Mental Health Court. I am confident that each of our graduates will continue to be successful and will go far in the future. We are so proud of all of them and we wish them the best!

I also want to thank all of the distinguished guests that joined us on Zoom and in person to celebrate the graduates.

As our graduates embark on new adventures, our State Attorney, Vicki Nichols, is also starting a new adventure. Retirement. When she reads this, hopefully, Vicki will be curled up in her famous blanket, enjoying crisp, cool evenings (while we are still sweltering in the Florida heat). Vicki has been an integral part of our program for many years, and it is with great sadness that we say Goodbye. Vicki has always been a calming presence throughout Mental Health Court, advocating for the State, but recognizing the importance of therapeutic treatment for our clients. We wish her well in retirement. Vicki – you will be missed!



# MEET THE TEAM



**JUDGE JENNIFER WATERS**  
PRESIDING JUDGE



**KATIE ALONZO**  
PUBLIC DEFENDER



**NITA DENTON**  
STATE ATTORNEY



**MICHELLE DERRICO**  
PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE



**YURI PARRAGA**  
COURT CASE MANAGER



**ELISA SNYDER**  
MARTIN COUNTY JAIL

**LAURA BUZZELL**  
PEER SPECIALIST

**CAROL HARPER**  
CLERK

**SHARYN KRIM**  
PROJECT LIFT

**DONALD SELBY**  
DOVES NEST MENTAL  
HEALTH HOUSE

**CHARRISE VAN BIESEN**  
SEFBHN

**KRISTIN TRENHAM, ARNP**  
NURSE PRACTITIONER

**DEE SIEVERT**  
JUDICIAL ASSISTANT

**MAKEDA JAMES**  
FORENSIC SPECIALIST

**CASSANDRA GORDON**  
APD

**AMANDA BUSBIN**  
SEFBHN

**DR. EFRAIN ACOSTA-LEON**  
PSYCHIATRIST

**CARMEN SLOANE**  
PROBATION

**HUGH DOVE**  
DOVES NEST

**JULYNE VIAU**  
CORAL SHORES

**SKYLAR PRINCE**  
FACT TEAM

# GRADUATION!



# FAREWELL TO VICKI



Vicki was born into a military family, where her father served for 34 years. As a child she lived in 10 different states, Japan and Germany 3 times. She graduated from Auburn University in 1985 and Stanford Law School in 1989. Her pride and joy, Alex, was born 6 days after her Stanford graduation. In 1998, as a single mother, she took the bar exam and followed her dream of being a prosecutor. She has been at the Office of the State Attorney since 1998. She switched from felony cases, to the juvenile and specialty courts in 2014. Since that time, she has learned the source of where some adult felons come from: juveniles who are out of control in a broken system, and who may be dealing with mental health and substance abuse issues. Vicki has also seen that some less serious crimes can be prevented by providing services to the mentally ill. Vicki concluded her role as a prosecutor by admitting that Mental Health Court had grown on her and she believes it can truly help some defendants. Vicki is most proud of her work in protecting victim's rights and helping them navigate the criminal justice system. Vicki will truly be missed, nevertheless, we all wish her the absolute best. Enjoy retirement! And thank you for everything.

## THANK YOU!

Martin County Mental Health Court would not be able to provide individuals with mental illnesses in the criminal justice system the opportunity to engage in the necessary treatment and services that allow positive changes that in turn, allow them to achieve a higher quality of life without the continuous support that we receive from community stakeholders. Thus, we would like to thank the following for attending and supporting our graduates on August 5th, 2021:

- Commissioner Ed Ciampi
- Judge Kathleen Roberts
- Diamond Litty
- Michelle Miller
- Joseph Cracchiola
- Arresting officer, Chris Ruediger

## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

- There are 82 participants enrolled with a total of 91 cases.
- 43 are misdemeanors, and 39 are felonies.
- 59 diversion cases; 12 probation cases; 19 conditional release cases.
- Since January of 2021, we have enrolled 32 new participants.
- We now have partnerships for employment with 3 organizations.
- 33 of the participants are currently employed.
- 64 have been approved for or receive some type of benefit or assistance.
- 13 participants have completed the program since January of 2021.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The Florida Behavioral Health Conference 2021 from August 18th until August 20th in Orlando.

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals' RISE21 conference from August 15th until August 18th in Maryland.

The 3rd session of the Community of Practice: Community Supervision, offered by the Council of State Governments' Justice Center.

Check out the Martin County Community Action Coalition on social media: [facebook.com/MartinCountyCAC](https://www.facebook.com/MartinCountyCAC)

We welcome Nita Denton (temporarily) to the Martin County Mental Health Court team!

**COME ONE LIFEBUILDERS COME ALL**  
GOLF TOURNAMENT AND CELEBRATE PAR-TEE

**THE GREATEST PARTY ON EARTH!**

**PAR-TEE**  
Friday, October 1, 2021  
6:00 pm  
\$40 per person / \$75 a couple  
Live music  
Hors d'oeuvres  
Raffles  
Live Auctions

**RAFFLE**

**THE LEGACY GOLF AND TENNIS CLUB**  
2000 CLAYTON DRIVE, PALM BEACH

**WHY HELP LIFEBUILDERS?**  
Lifebuilders has assisted 4700 Treasure Coast individuals and families by providing \$1,400,000 to meet their needs.

- ★ \$740,000 of assistance was provided in St. Lucie County.
- ★ \$267,000 of assistance was provided in Indian River County.
- ★ \$245,000 of assistance was provided in Martin County.
- ★ \$48,000 of assistance provided in Okeechobee County.

**17 cents of every dollar collected by Lifebuilders goes a "hand up" to eligible individuals.**

**GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
Sunday, October 3, 2021  
7:30 am registration  
8:30 am shotgun start  
\$125 per player / \$500 per team  
One complimentary ticket to the Par-tee  
Complimentary breakfast snack  
On course snacks and beverages  
BBQ lunch  
Prizes immediately following the tournament

**5 TICKETS FOR \$20 IS FOR \$50**

For more information or to purchase tickets  
[www.LifeBuildersFL.com](http://www.LifeBuildersFL.com)  
Lifebuilders@lifebuildersfl.com  
772-462-2381