

# Northern Hills Drug Court

Volume 3, Issue 3

July - August 2010

## Northern Hills Drug Court Mission Statement

The Northern Hills Drug Court's mission is to increase community safety, foster healthy families, and proficiently utilize public funds. This will be accomplished by streamlining and coordinating services to felony offenders whose crimes are substantially related to the abuse or dependence upon a controlled substance with a primary consideration given to methamphetamine abuse or dependence. The Northern Hills Drug Court will increase long term abstinence by holding offenders accountable and ultimately reducing drug-related crimes.

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### Rally Roar

As thousands of riders hit the road this August for the annual motorcycle rally in Sturgis, authorities are reminding bikers and motorists to drive attentively and share the road.

*Give yourself plenty of time and expect delays.* Trying to rush in a congested area, such as the Black Hills during rally, is blending ingredients for a disaster.

*Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.* This tip is not just for during the rally, but for everyday of the year. Unfortunately, the volume of drivers under the influence increase during rally so it is imperative to be a focused and alert driver. Watch out for the other guy.

*Stay Healthy.* The Sturgis downtown area, concert venues, and other events become oppressively crowded. Carry a bottle of water and a small bottle of hand sanitizer. When finding your spot at a crowded event, be aware of the exits and avoid an area with limited access to an exit.

#### Child safety in crowds:

- Make a family plan on where to meet if you become separated.
- Stay in eye/earshot of one another
- Dress children in colorful shirts so they are easier to spot in the crowd
- Avoid clothing/accessories that display your child's name. Children are more likely to trust someone who calls them by name.

## Northern Hills Drug Court

### Just Say No Club

The Just Say No Club from the Sturgis Elementary School was invited to create posters about the dangers of drug addiction. The winning poster would be displayed in the Meade County Courthouse. From the various creative and excellent entries submitted, the drug court team selected an Olympic themed poster created by Bridger Gordon. Judge Michelle Palmer-Percy awarded the winner with his own laminated poster. Each member of the Just Say No Club was presented with a pocket Constitution from the Judge.

After the recognition ceremony, the club members were treated to a tour of the old jail (basement of the courthouse), a close-up look at a Meade County Sheriff's patrol vehicle and had the opportunity to visit with Deputy Sheriff, Stephanie Majcner. The children enjoyed visiting the booking area of the Meade County Jail and had a lot of questions for the jail staff.

*Judge Michelle Palmer-Percy—Drug Court Judge, and Kristi Ortiz—Just Say No Club advisor, present Bridger Gordon with a poster sized version of his winning entry.*





## Coordinator's Corner

Drug Courts are the single most effective approach to reduce drug use and crime, and are more cost effective than any other proven criminal justice strategy. Nationwide, 75% of Drug Court graduates remain arrest-free at least two years after leaving the program. Drug Courts produce cost savings ranging from \$4,000 to \$12,000 per client in reduced prison costs, arrests and trials, and victimization. Drug Courts ensure compliance, completion of treatment, intensive supervision, and extensive judicial interaction with each client. Drug Courts increase treatment program graduation rates specific to meth-addicted offenders by nearly 80%. Drug Courts restore families. Children of drug court participants spend significantly less time in foster care and reunification rates are 50% higher for families directly involved in Drug Court.

Locally, the Northern Hills Drug Court is currently serving fourteen participants, nine female and five male with ages ranging from nineteen to fifty-eight. Thirteen minor children maintain connections with their respective parent being served in the Drug Court Program. All participants, if not for the Drug Court Program, would be incarcerated in the South Dakota State Penitentiary.

From January 2010 through June of 2010, the Northern Hills Drug Court avoided \$147,021 in incarceration costs and \$20,832 in foster care costs. In addition, each of these participants is required to maintain fulltime employment, schooling, and/or community service. They must pay local and federal taxes, verify all income sources, and support their families to the best of their ability.

Each participant is required to complete extensive drug and alcohol treatment and pay 1/3 of all treatment costs. From January 2010 through June of 2010, participants' treatment responsibilities were \$6,071. Treatment objectives include recovery skills, relapse prevention, family education, thinking barriers, dual diagnosis, anger management, and social support. In addition, all drug court participants must attend a minimum of two AA or NA support group meetings per week, three meetings per week until obtaining an approved sponsor.

*"Drug courts are a vital, essential element of our National Drug Control Strategy. While offering incentives to stay off drugs, they hold individuals accountable and simultaneously deal with the deadly disease of addiction. America is better off because of drug courts."*

- John Walters  
Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy

## Special Thanks

**South Dakota Community Foundation and Zonta of Sturgis** for their generous donations to the Northern Hills Drug Court.

**Wal-Mart of Spearfish** for its donation of gift cards.

**Roland Loudenburg** for his valuable input and assistance to the Northern Hills Drug Court Program.

**Doug Marler and Jon Mau of Campbell County Drug Court** for sharing their knowledge and experience by presenting to our team.

**Representative Jacqueline Sly** for taking the time to visit the Northern Hills Drug Court team and observing first hand the success of our participants.

## Northern Hills Drug Court

### Web Site

[ujs.sd.gov/drugcourt.htm](http://ujs.sd.gov/drugcourt.htm)



## Northern Hills Drug Court

PO Box 939

1425 Sherman Street

Sturgis, South Dakota 57785

(605) 347-7648 phone

(605) 347-0193 fax

## TEAM MEMBERS

Judge Michelle Percy

Chris Pankratz

Bruce Hubbard

Jesse Sondreal

Ron Merwin

Mary Wood-Fossen

Mari Denker