

# **Butler County, Missouri Drug Court Demonstrates Success in Treating Methamphetamine Offenders**

Jeanne Huffman, *Probation and Parole Officer*

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The Butler County Drug Court Program began in May 1999 in the rural community of Poplar Bluff, Missouri. The community has experienced a severe problem of drug and alcohol abuse, and especially the epidemic problem of methamphetamine abuse in recent years. The majority of cases referred to the Drug Court program are from this category.

The Butler County Drug Court Program provides an intensive out-patient treatment modality that focuses specifically on behavior and accountability. For the past three years, the cognitive-behavioral program, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT®), has been the primary therapeutic component. We have found that in changing behaviors and holding people accountable in all life areas, the clients have been better able to make the changes necessary to curtail their drug and/or alcohol use and become working tax paying, law-abiding citizens.

The following are the most recent statistics of the Butler County Drug Court Program that reflect the impact that the program has had on the clients as well as the community. To date there have been 92 admissions to the program. We have a 64.9% successful graduation rate with 48 graduates, 26 terminations, 3 discharges that were not terminations or graduates, and 15 clients who are currently enrolled in the program as of April 2005. Over 85% of the 48 graduates are working and have maintained employment. Only 6.25% of graduates have re-offended with a felony arrest while 4.15% have had a misdemeanor arrest.

Of the 26 terminations, 13 are currently in prison; 10 are on parole; one served a 6-month sentence in the County Jail; One client has been to prison for 120-day treatment and subsequently returned to the community and currently remains on probation. Among this group were three people who absconded before termination.

The goal of the Butler County Drug Court Program has been to reduce the recidivism rate, treat the substance abusers by helping them change behaviors and attitudes, and have them obtain employment to become law-abiding, tax paying citizens. The program also utilizes other social service agencies to address a whole gamut of psychological, physical and social challenges facing program clients. The program's extremely low re-arrest rates appear to demonstrate the value to the community of an effective offender treatment approach that has helped clients .

The cost per individual to complete the Butler County Drug Court Program is approximately \$5,000.00 for 12 months of treatment. To house a person in prison in Missouri today for the same amount of time (without receiving treatment) is approximately \$15,000 for 12 months. In-patient treatment for 30 days (even though that option rarely is utilized) is approximately \$13,000 per individual. Thus, the Drug Court program is cost-effective and produces success for individuals through substance abuse abstinence and becoming financially self-sufficient.