

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Burlington Vicinage Drug Court Holds 16th Graduation**

Burlington Vicinage will hold two drug court graduation ceremonies on Thursday, March 6 in the Olde Courthouse, 120 High St., Mt. Holly. Ceremonies will be held at 10 a.m. and at 2 p.m. to accommodate all the participants and their supporters. A total of 17 individuals will graduate and three will commence to the final phase of the program.

Superior Court Judge Susan L. Claypoole, who leads the drug court team, will preside over both programs. Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder also will speak at both events. A drug court alumnus will speak at the 10 a.m. event and an active member of Narcotics Anonymous will speak at the 2 p.m. event.

Judge Claypoole said, "Drug court offers tools to empower, educate and motivate individuals toward a successful future without substance abuse. This event celebrates the hard work and great achievement of these individuals."

The drug court program is a highly specialized team process within the existing Superior Court structure that addresses nonviolent drug-related cases. Drug courts are unique in the criminal justice environment because they build a close collaborative relationship between criminal justice and drug treatment professionals.

The program has been successful in breaking the cycle of addiction to improve the lives of individuals. It provides structure, assists participants with access to appropriate treatment and encourages them to become productive members of the community.

The Burlington Vicinage implemented drug court in 2004. Since then, it has graduated 92 participants.

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