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## **Camden Vicinage to Hold Drug Court Graduation Ceremony**

The Camden Vicinage will celebrate the graduation of 22 drug court participants at a ceremony on Tuesday, June 28.

The ceremony will be held at 2 p.m. in Courtroom 63 at the Hall of Justice, 101 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Camden.

“The drug court program restores lives and reunite families. The graduates and our drug court staff are to be commended for their hard work and commitment to this program,” said Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz.

Criminal Division Presiding Judge Edward J. McBride Jr., who leads the vicinage’s drug court team, will preside over the ceremony. Carol Venditto, retired statewide drug court manager and motivational speaker, will give the keynote address. Venditto has worked in the criminal justice system for more than 30 years and served as New Jersey’s first statewide drug court manager from 2002 to 2014.

The drug court program is a highly specialized team process within the existing Superior Court structure that relies upon a collaborative relationship between criminal justice officials and drug treatment professionals to assist non-violent drug offenders in rehabilitation. Drug court programs are rigorous, requiring completion of four phases during five years of intensive drug and alcohol treatment and testing.

The graduates have successfully met all the requirements of the program.

As of May, a total of 370 participants have graduated from the vicinage’s drug court program, which began in 1996. Along with the Essex Vicinage, it was the first voluntary drug court program in New Jersey. Drug court has since become mandatory across the state.

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