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## **Camden Vicinage to Celebrate Arbor Day with Tree Planting Ceremony**

The Camden Vicinage will hold a tree planting ceremony in celebration of Arbor Day on Friday, April 28 at 10 a.m. in the courtyard of the Hall of Justice, 101 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Camden, announced Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz.

The theme of this year's event, which is open to the public, is *Roots in the Community*. The ceremony will include the planting and dedication of two red maples in honor of the vicinage's drug court graduates and participants.

"Maple trees are thought to symbolize the wisdom of balance and promise, which represent two of the many strengths gained by our drug court graduates. We are proud of the achievements our drug court graduates have realized, and want others to gain inspiration from them," Judge Silverman Katz said.

Anticipated keynote speakers will include AJ Solomon, co-founder of Victory Bay Recovery Center, and drug court graduate Ike S. The speakers will share stories about how strong roots in the community helped them to achieve and maintain sobriety. Judge Silverman Katz will give the opening remarks.

Gov. Chris Christie recognized Solomon during his State of the State address. In February, Solomon, a former heroin user, opened a recovery center in Camden County to provide care and support for addicts while allowing them to stay close to their families.

Ike S. graduated from Camden's drug court program in 2005 and has been clean for more than 14 years. He is active in 12 step programs and sponsors others in recovery. An honors graduate of Rutgers University, he is a published technical writer and holds a U.S. patent for design work. He is pursuing a master's degree in welding engineering through Ohio State University.

The Camden Vicinage drug court program is the largest in the state, serving more than 600 participants. The program requires the completion of four phases during five years of intensive drug and alcohol treatment and testing. Graduates must meet all the requirements of the program, including maintaining one year of full-time employment and continuous sobriety, earning a GED or high school diploma, and establishing a regular payment history of all court fines.

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