

Best Practice Court Matters

An update on the latest events of Best Practice Courts of Virginia
Court Improvement Program

Volume 6, Issue 2

Office of the Executive Secretary, Supreme Court of
Virginia

Summer 2008

Special Edition!

****The 71st Annual NCJFCJ Conference is coming to Virginia****

July 27-30, 2008



The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges will host its 71st Annual Conference in Norfolk, July 27-30, 2008. As of this writing, 430 participants, including 131 Virginians, have registered to attend. A total of 41 educational sessions will be offered on various topics relating to juvenile and family law. Of these sessions, 17 were coordinated by representatives from Virginia.

First Lady of Virginia, Anne B. Holton will deliver the keynote address for this conference. She will discuss her efforts to fundamentally change how human services are being delivered to children and families in Virginia. She will also focus upon the necessity for teens in foster care, who are among the most at-risk young people in our society, to enter adulthood connected to stable adult relationships and ongoing educational opportunities and the initiatives Virginia has pursued to support these principles



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programmatically and financially.

Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine will introduce the First Lady and will provide an Executive Branch perspective on this work.

A number of Best Practice Courts provided guidance to NCJFCJ on the development of programs that were either originally developed for local mini-grant programs or as part of their team's ongoing support for the community.

PROGRAMS INITIALLY DEVELOPED FOR LOCAL MINI-GRANT EVENTS

Dr. Suzanne Starling, Medical Director for the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters Child Abuse Program initially presented at Hampton's Best Practice Court Mini-Grant program in September 2007. She will reprise her presentation on forensic medical evaluations of child abuse and neglect for a breakout session at the national conference. This presentation addresses complex injuries often seen in abuse and neglect cases and offers examples of information that

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PIECING FAMILIES BACK TOGETHER

COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING JUNE 4-5, 2008

The Court Improvement Program (CIP) Advisory Committee met at the Virginia Crossings Resort on June 5, 2008. The group of attendees consisted of 16 J&DR District Court Judges, 2 J&DR Clerks, representatives from the Virginia Department of Social Services and local departments of social services, attorneys who represent DSS and parents and Guardians Ad Litem for children, a representative from Voices for Virginia's Children, and the statewide CASA Coordinator for Virginia.

The meeting included updates on the efforts of CIP and the Best Practice Courts over the past two years, a review of the ICPC Report that was submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in June, an update by the First Lady of Virginia, Anne

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Elizabeth Kellas

can be shared with the court to assist in the disposition of these cases.

The **Campbell/Bedford** Best Practice Court Event in 2007 focused on teens in foster care.

John Tuell, Director of the Child Welfare-Juvenile Justice Systems Integration Initiative at the Child Welfare League of America in Arlington presented on meeting the needs of dually adjudicated youth. His presentation looked at the connection between child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency and a variety of associated negative outcomes for this population. This program was so well received by local attendees that Mr. Tuell has been asked to present at the NCJFCJ Conference in July.

Kelly Bober, Executive Director for the Child Advocacy Center in Winchester, will present on what judges should know about interviews with children in child maltreatment cases. She originally presented on this topic at the **Charlottesville/Culpeper/Louisa** Best Practice Court Event in September 2007. Ms. Bober will co-present with Dr. Todd Christensen, Associate Chief Clinical Officer for Children and Youth in Washington, D.C.

SESSIONS DEVELOPED BY BEST PRACTICE COURTS FOR NCJFCJ CONFERENCE

Lead Judges Frank Somerville and Elizabeth Kellas from **Culpeper** and **Winchester/**

Frederick Best Practice Courts will present on the connection between school attendance/performance and teen risky behaviors. They will look at the impact that regular school attendance and performance can have on high school graduation rates.

Judge Jay Dugger from the **Hampton** Best Practice Court will co-present with representatives from the Hampton and Virginia Department of Social Services on improving Systems of Care through detention reform.

This presentation will share perspectives from a crisis intervention worker who was involved in the delinquency system, overcame many obstacles and is now a strong player in Hampton's ongoing reform efforts.



Frank Somerville

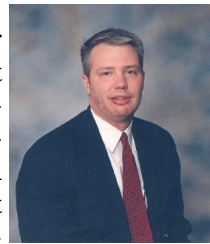
Judge Ashley Tunner, Lead Judge for the **Richmond Millennium** Team, will co-present with

Paul McWhinney, former director of Richmond DSS, and Judge Ernestine Gray, Past President of NCJFCJ, on "Placing Teens with Families: Preventing and Reducing Reliance on Congregate Care."

This session will focus on the *Richmond Approach* which is a new initiative that focuses on moving children from group placements to residential

settings, and will serve as a follow-up to the First Lady's keynote address.

VIRGINIA'S BEST PRACTICE COURT PROGRAM TO BE HIGHLIGHTED AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE



Jay Dugger

Lelia Hopper, Director of the Virginia Court Improvement Program, and Judge Ellen White from **Campbell** J&DR District Court will co-present with Judge Douglas Johnson from Omaha, Nebraska.

This will be a practical session for judges from across the country on how to lead efforts in their communities, which engage local stakeholders in initiatives to improve outcomes for children in foster care.

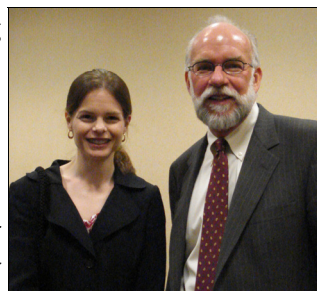


Ellen White

Ms. Hopper will discuss the history of Virginia's

Best Practice Court Program and will highlight some of the program's major accomplishments over the last 6 years. Judge White will share the experience of Campbell's Children First Core Group and will

offer guidance on judicial leadership and the difficult task of balancing duties as a judge both on the bench and in the community.



Judge Ashley Tunner and Paul McWhinney will present on the Richmond Approach Initiative underway in their City's Juvenile Court.

Judge Johnson, who delivered the keynote address at Virginia's 2003

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Statewide Best Practice Court Conference, will discuss the efforts underway in Nebraska to develop a statewide program that focuses on best practices. He has played an integral role in this process and is an exceptional example of judicial leadership.

CULTIVATING HEALTHY OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES USING ADR: RESEARCH, APPLICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Geetha Ravindra, Dispute Resolution Consultant, formerly Director of Dispute Resolution Services in the Office of the Executive Secretary, will co-present with Dr. Robert Emery, Director of the Center for Children, Families and the Law at the University of Virginia on the use of mediation to benefit children and families.

Using a form of mediation in family court matters has become a common practice over the last decade, and this session will discuss the results of research that has been conducted on the efficacy of using alternative dispute resolution and how it can best be applied.

ADDITIONAL VIRGINIA PROGRAMS

A number of Virginia sessions were developed exclusively for this conference. These programs include:

- “Uniform” Good Behavior: Managing the Family Law

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Holton, and the Special Advisor on Children’s Services Reform for Virginia, Ray Ratke, on the efforts of *For Keeps* and the Council on Reform (CORE), and an update on improvements that are being made to the court’s automation system.

A major focus of the meeting was on the future direction of CIP. In order to allow for detailed discussions, breakout sessions were in-



Chris Gravley, Wendy Hughes and Rhonda Gardner from the JDR Team in the Department of Judicial Services, presented on advances made to the court’s automation system at the CIP Advisory Committee Meeting.



CIP Advisory Committee Chairman, Judge David Schell, Fairfax, speaks to Buta Biberaj, Esq., Loudoun, Katherine Froyd, Director, Fairfax DFS and Judge Philip Wallace, Bedford, before the morning session got underway.

cluded to give attendees the opportunity to share ideas in a more intimate setting. Topics for the breakout sessions included; future training initiatives, reworking the CIP strategic plans and the ICPC report. The suggestions offered by attendees during this session were incorporated into the grant reports filed by CIP with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in June.

The Advisory Committee offered thoughtful, detailed guidance on future initiatives

to be funded with the training grant. Activities being planned for the next biennium include:

- Regional training events for Parents’ Counsel. These events will be held in six locations across the state during October. GALs for Children and Court Appointed Counsel who are qualified on the juvenile list will all be invited to participate.
- Regional meetings for JDR Judges with the First Lady of Virginia. These events are being scheduled in the fall and will be offered all over the Commonwealth.
- In lieu of a Statewide Best Practice Court Conference in 2008, the Court Improvement Program is working on the logistics for a smaller meeting with a group of new courts who will make up the Best Practice Court Class of 2008. CIP hopes to bring as many as 11 new courts on board and will be extending invitations later

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Now Available!
 The Court Improvement Program has developed a database of speakers who have presented in Virginia to assist courts with developing local events.
 The next time your team is planning a training event, call CIP first to receive a list of speakers with expertise on your selected topic. We can provide you with contact information and suggestions for materials
jwiggins@courts.state.va.us

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BEST PRACTICE COURTS OF VIRGINIA

Alexandria	Louisa	Staunton/Augusta
Bedford	Loudoun	Tazewell
Campbell	Newport News	Virginia Beach
Charlottesville/Albemarle	Norfolk	Warren
Culpeper	Prince William	Waynesboro
Fairfax	Pulaski	Williamsburg/James City
Fredericksburg	Richmond	Winchester/Frederick
Henrico	Roanoke Co./Salem	Wise/Norton
Hampton	Stafford	

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- Issues of Military Families—organized by Judge Deborah Bryan from **Virginia Beach**
- Immigration Issues Which Arise in Custody and Visitation Cases—organized by Judge Gayl Carr from **Fairfax**
 - In School, the Right School, Finish School—by Andrew Block, Legal Director, from JustChildren in **Charlottesville**
 - Responding to Facts, Not Fear: A Community Response to Gangs—organized by Judge Teena Grodner from **Fairfax**
 - Tales of JDAI: The Norfolk Story—organized by Judge Jerrauld Jones from **Norfolk**

The Virginia Host Committee of JDR judges has committed many hours to the development of programs and activities for their fellow judges from across the United States during this Conference. We look forward to seeing many of you in Norfolk! ✧

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Gayl Carr

this summer.

- Fifth Statewide Best Practice Court Conference. This program will be offered in the fall of 2009. Existing teams will be invited to join the

**National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
 Child Abuse and Neglect Institute
 June 8-12, 2008**



Angela Roberts

The Court Improvement Program funded the attendance of three Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judges at the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute in Reno, Nevada. This four-day training is open to judges from across the country and focuses on preparing judges to respond to difficult issues that arise in court during child abuse and neglect cases.



Jacqueline Waymack



Michael Garrett

Judge Angela Roberts from Richmond, Judge Michael Garrett from Amherst and Judge Jacqueline Waymack from Hopewell attended this event. The Court Improvement Program has already reserved 5 spaces for judges to attend this institute in 2009 and will be contacting judges this winter to inquire about their interest in attending. ✧

2008 CIP Calendar of Events

July 27-30—NCJFCJ Conference, Norfolk, VA

Fall—Regional Meetings of J&DR Judges with the First Lady of Virginia

September 29—Wise Best Practice Court Event

October—Regional Parents' Attorney Training Events

October 29—Charlottesville/Albemarle Best Practice Court Event

November—Class of 2008 Best Practice Court Conference (new courts only)

November 15—Adoption Saturday Celebrations, Statewide

Class of 2008 teams for this event.

- Mini-grants for local Best Practice Court events will be offered again during the next biennium. ✧