

Court Information Release



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Contact: Julie Hodek, Public Information Officer
United States District Court for
the Northern District of Illinois
219 S. Dearborn St., #2548
Chicago, IL 60604
312-613-5204

Northern District of Illinois graduates four participants from James B. Moran Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Program

CHICAGO, Ill. - At a ceremony presided over by Chief Judge Rubén Castillo and attended by graduates, their families, the Second C.H.A.N.C.E Program team, and a number of district judges and magistrates, graduates of the Northern District of Illinois' James B. Moran Second C.H.A.N.C.E. (Court Help and Assistance Network for Community Entry) Program received certificates and a reduction in the length of their court-ordered supervised release for successful completion of the program.

"I am extraordinarily proud of the strides and accomplishments this group of graduates has made toward living law-abiding lives," said Judge Castillo.

"While this court has sentenced many to prison, the Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Program is about creating a new world -- a place for all of us, a new way of living, a new way of forgiving," he added, drawing inspiration from lyrics from the musical "West Side Story."

Dionna Griffin-Irons, Director of Diversity and Inclusion at The Second City, also addressed the graduates. Griffin-Irons is a prolific speaker, facilitator and writer who uses improvisation as a powerful tool to transform diverse audiences and communities. Griffin-Irons was previously convicted of a federal drug crime and effectively uses her voice to empower others. Griffin-Irons reflected on own her journey through incarceration and re-entry and called on graduates to remember their own journeys as they move forward with their lives.

"We have the resilience to endure, to remember our past, to remember our power, to remember our strength," said Griffin-Irons.

The James B. Moran Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Program, named after the late U.S. District Judge James B. Moran, is designed to help former inmates reintegrate into the community and live law-abiding lives after they are released from prison. The program is supported by a dedicated team comprised of district judges, magistrate judges, probation officers, attorneys from the Federal Defender Program, assistant U.S. attorneys, and a drug treatment specialist who are there to assist participants with the social, employment, and other challenges that confront individuals returning to the community from prison.

Bi-monthly court sessions address participants' progress and performance on supervision. Each participant is given the opportunity to speak about current challenges, to share experiences and to receive feedback from other participants and from court team members. In addition to the participants' original federal supervision requirements, all participants are expected to follow through with individualized goals set by the court team and to comply with the Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Program requirements. Participants receive rewards, incentives and sanctions, when necessary, to promote positive efforts and encourage a drug-free lifestyle. Individuals who successfully complete the Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Program are rewarded with a substantial reduction of federal supervision.

In April 2016, the program will enter its sixth year.

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