

Court Information Release



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District Court Honors Graduates of Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Re-entry Program and New Veterans Treatment Court

CHICAGO, Ill. – Today the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois honored five graduates of the James B. Moran Second C.H.A.N.C.E. (Court Help and Assistance Network for Community Entry) Program and six veterans who successfully completed the terms of their diversion agreement in the court’s new Veterans Treatment Court in a ceremony.

“We are incredibly proud of the commitment of this class of Second C.H.A.N.C.E. graduates. Through hard work, they’ve made remarkable strides toward living healthy, productive, and law-abiding lives,” said Chief Judge Rubén Castillo and member of the Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Team.

“We commend this first group of successful participants of our Veterans Treatment Court who have demonstrated accountability and commitment in completing their treatment goals. We are grateful to the John Marshall Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic for adding to the judicial process a support services component that is helping local veterans who honorably served our country,” said Magistrate Judge Susan E. Cox who heads the court’s Veterans Treatment Court and is also a member of the Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Team.

Mike Strautmanis, Vice President for Civic Engagement for the Obama Foundation, delivered the keynote address.

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 drug treatment specialists 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 federal supervision. Each participant is given the opportunity to speak about current challenges, to share experiences and to receive feedback from other participants and from program 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 reduction of federal supervision.

The Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Program is now in its seventh year. Chief Judge Rubén Castillo, District Judge Sara L. Ellis, Magistrate Judge Susan E. Cox, and Magistrate Judge Sidney I. Schenkier all serve on the Second C.H.A.N.C.E. Team.

Established in October 2016, the Veterans Treatment Court is aimed at assisting veterans charged with federal misdemeanors in addressing underlying behaviors and illnesses that may benefit from treatment. In collaboration with the John Marshall Law School Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic, the court established a program under which veterans who were honorably discharged and have been charged with a federal misdemeanor offense may enter into a diversion agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office. With assistance from the John Marshall Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic, charged veterans enter and complete programs focusing on PTSD, anger management, mental health, drug and alcohol addiction. Participating veterans meet with Magistrate Judge Susan E. Cox, who presides over the Veterans Treatment Court, on a monthly basis to review their progress. Those who successfully complete treatment and commit no new offenses will not be prosecuted.

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Above: Chief Judge Castillo presents a certificate to Second C.H.A.N.C.E. graduate, Oscar Armando DeLeon.



Above: Joe Butler of the John Marshall Law School Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic presents a certificate to Juan Morales, graduate of the Veterans Treatment Court.