

Texas

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Texas led the nation in providing Zoom licenses to more than 2,000 state judges resulting in over a million court hearings, including [Specialty Court sessions](#), being held virtually as of February 2021.

Funding for Texas' 208 known operational Specialty Courts received a tremendous boost this past legislative session. The 87th Legislature passed HB 1256, aptly referred to as the Ruben G. Reyes Act, in honor of Judge Ruben Reyes a Texas Specialty Court judge who passed in December 2020. Judge Reyes was a champion for not only Texas Specialty Courts, but problem-solving courts nationally and globally. He and the Texas Association of Specialty Courts (TASC) led the charge and fought hard for increased funding for Texas Specialty Courts. HB 1256 amends the Texas Tax Code mandating 1% of mixed beverage tax collections be deposited into the State Specialty Court Account. Prior to 2019, the only funding mechanism for the State Specialty Court Account was a \$60 court cost related to certain alcohol and drug offenses. The 86th Legislature passed SB 346, a comprehensive court cost bill, which yielded an unexpected increase in revenue to the State Specialty Court Account from a specified percentage of state criminal court costs and an allocation of local criminal court costs into a County Specialty Court Account. [\[TASC July 2021 Newsletter\]](#).

The TASC publishes a bi-monthly newsletter for distribution to its members. Click on the following links to access the [April 2021](#) and [May 2021](#) newsletters to learn more about Texas Specialty Courts. One featured project is JUSTICE FORWARD in Harris County, Texas. JUSTICE FORWARD's mission is to break the cycle of incarceration and fund essential programs for individuals in the Harris County Specialty Courts to help them become independent and productive members of the community. Click [here](#) for more information on this innovative organization.

The TASC Connection

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TASC 2021 Conference – *Updates & Deadlines*

The Texas Association of Specialty Courts will be hosting a poster board competition during the 2021 conference in Galveston. Images of team posters will be displayed on the conference application only, so teams do not have to bring their posters to the conference. This is a great opportunity for teams to work together to represent their specialty court. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will receive conference assistance for a designated team



Conference. Pictures of all poster submissions can be submitted electronically to Erin Morgan at Erin.Morgan@traviscountytx.gov. Check out TASC website for further details.

Cancellation Policy:
Full refunds will be given to those who cancel ten (10) working days prior to the training. No refunds will be processed after that time. Substitutions are permitted anytime.

Cancellation Policy:
Full refunds will be given to those who cancel ten

2021-2022 TASC Slate of Officers

Executive Committee:

*President Hon. Peter Sakai
Bexar County
President Elect Lesli R. Fitzpatrick
Williamson County
Vice President Elizabeth Cortright
Tarrant County
Secretary Erin Morgan
Travis County
Treasurer Mary Covington
Harris County*

Board of Directors:

*Region 1 Director Judge Laura A. Weiser
Travis County
Region 2 Director Kimberly Duran
Dallas County
Harris County Director Jeannette Kolarik
Harris County*

El Paso DWI Intervention and Treatment Program

Research demonstrates that families impacted by alcoholism are more likely to experience less bonding, independence, and ability to express themselves openly. Consequently, families and spouses are often impacted physically and emotionally. As a result of the damage done, it only makes sense to include as many members of the family as possible in therapy to begin the healing process and rebuild trust within the relationship.

2Love1 LLC offers services, assistance, and treatment for the alcoholic/addict and all members of the family. Often when the relationship foundation is damaged, the focus is to build a stable foundation through open and honest communication. This process builds trust. 2Love1's unique approach is to engage participants in casual, informal, and playful strategies aimed at lowering the participant's defense barrier, which is a critical component of the healing process.

Some of the strategies and therapeutic approaches include family picnics, scavenger hunts within the home, art, cooking, and couples working together on puzzles. All activities are designed to enhance emotional bonding and self-expression. Additionally, topics include nutrition, co-dependency, nurturing, parenting, anger management, domestic violence, English as a second language, couples enrichment (to include LGBQ couples), finances, and a Sesame Street program. All are designed to meet the specific needs of each family and person.

The pictures below show our providers and participants at work. If a picture is worth a thousand words, we will let these speak for themselves. (*article written by Leticia Medina, Program Coordinator*)



Mission:

The Texas Association of Specialty Court Courts (TASC) builds and strengthens Texas specialty courts through collaboration, advocacy and education.

Bi-Monthly Newsletters!!

Although we have moved to Bi-Monthly Newsletters, we still want to hear from you! Send us what your court programs are doing in this time of pandemic and decreased resources. Please send your submissions to Kimberly Duran at Kimberly.Duran@dallascounty.org



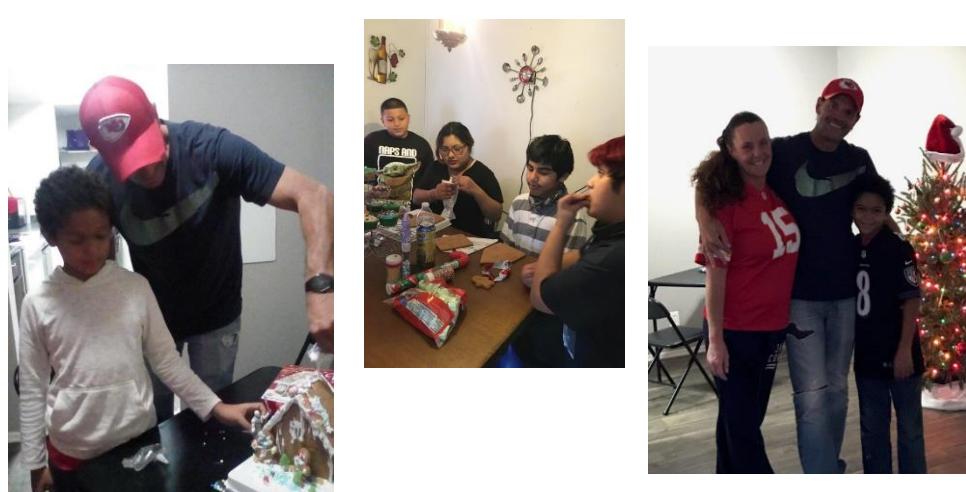
Bexar County Family Drug Court

“You don’t choose your family. They are God’s gift to you, as you are to them.” Desmond Tutu.

The Bexar County Family Drug Court is proud to be a vessel in which these five mothers chose to assist them in addressing their addictions. The most common thread with each of these women is not their addictions but the love they each have for themselves and their children. Even through a Pandemic, these mothers have persevered through many obstacles and are on the road to leading clean and sober lives. The Gift of Reunification was granted by Judge Peter Sakai to these five families over the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays. The Family Drug Court participants received Thanksgiving dinners in order to celebrate their reunification with their children. For the month of December, the reunified families received a Christmas Night package! The package included a popcorn tin, hot chocolate, marshmallows, a gingerbread house, and a Christmas movie.



We’re on the Web!
<http://www.tasctx.org>
Check us out on
Facebook!



Judicial Summit on Mental Health

The 4th Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health will be held October 14-15, 2021 at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel & Conference Center. Capacity for their in-person meeting is limited to ensure they can follow all safety protocols in place including social distancing. Those who are not able to attend the meeting in person, will have the opportunity to live-stream the event from their home or office. The Summit will include opportunities to connect with colleagues, establish new relationships, and engage in learning sessions designed to be inspiring yet practical. Participants will receive tools to help navigate the complex mental health laws.

For additional information visit <http://texasjcmh.gov/>

Paul's Testimony

"In 2009, I was accepted into the Bexar County Felony Drug Court Program. I remember asking for Drug Court in lieu of lock-down treatment, thinking I could keep using as long as I was physically free. This worked for about a nanosecond before the addiction-savvy Drug Court staff saw how ill I was and sent me to a local treatment program.

After spending ninety days in a transitional treatment facility, I moved into a sober house in May of 2010. I was as happy then – sleeping on a twin bed, waiting tables, and riding the bus – as I have ever been. I finally learned that happiness was internal, and everything else was just a bonus. I worked my way into management, and that newfound responsibility meant the world to me since when I was in my disease, I couldn't be trusted with anything!

I was in my mid-twenties and finally able to buy a car, move into my own apartment, and then, in 2010, a few months after making amends to my high school sweetheart, we went on our first real date since we were teens. In 2012, I asked her to be my wife. On November 9, 2013, I married the one that got away with family and friends I never thought would forgive me there to support us. My 12-step sponsor was my best man. It was one of the greatest days of my life.

I decided it was time to get serious about education and entered Texas Lutheran University Business School in January 2014. Next came Law School at the University of Maine from which I graduated in May of 2019, although I spent one of the three years in St. Mary's Law School in San Antonio Texas to be closer to my father, who had terminal cancer. I sat for the July 2019 Bar and then began the Maritime Law LL.M. program at the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom. In 2020 I received my degree with highest honors. During the summers between law school semesters, I went to work as an intern for the Felony Drug Court where I used to be a client, and then for the Bexar County District Attorney's Office, the office that once prosecuted me!

Today, I live a life better than I could have ever hoped for. My beautiful wife is pregnant with our first child. I am a practicing attorney, fully licensed by the State Bar of Texas. I have had the pleasure of working with lawyers in recovery in TLAP (Texas Lawyer's Assistance Program), and I hope to eventually help expand that program. I work as Assistant County Attorney for a rural county in South Texas, I have a small civil practice, and I even do some corporate work for a small start-up in San Antonio. Credit for everything I am and everything I have goes to Christ, and his servants like Judge Ernie Glenn and the Bexar County Felony Drug Court staff. I don't know what comes next in this life, but I sure am enjoying the ride. I am still happy, joyous, and free because I still do what has always worked: trust God, clean house, and help others."



Texas Association of Specialty Courts
*Attention: Amber Gregory
George J. Beto Criminal Justice Center
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, Texas 77341-2296*

Email: agregory@shsu.edu
Phone: (936)294-3916



The TASC Connection



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TASC 2022 Conference – *SAVE THE DATE*

Corpus Christi

April 11 – 13, 2022

HOST LOCATION

*Omni Corpus Christi
900 North Shoreline Blvd
Corpus Christi, TX 78401*



OVERFLOW HOTEL

*Holiday Inn Downtown Marina
707 North Shoreline Blvd*

“Average Joe” Testimony

“After a long history of addiction and criminal activity my life was going downhill; it was many years invested in a deceitful lifestyle which took me nowhere, (25 yrs. to be precise) when I finally reached a point of no return, a choice in my life to sink or swim -- I soon hit what I can identify as my personal rock bottom, the realization that my precious time that I had so long took for granted was possibly to be reflected in a small prison cell alone in life I had created for myself. I never knew there was such a position in humanity for individuals who were willing to believe in me, a team of professionals here in El Paso, Texas. When a Judge and his team asked me, "Are you ready to change? Are you ready to commit to a new life style? Are you ready to start your recovery?" All these questions seemed very easy to answer to me since in my mind there was only one answer, "Yes, I am ready! I just didn't want to go to prison! Without thinking of the commitment and changes that were soon to follow, I said, "yes! Let's do this!" My article starts like this because now the opportunity to help others join the program through, my lived experience & support from those who believed and guided me I have been given the tools and comprehension to help others like myself find a new purpose to live. I have been given the opportunity to work for the very program that helped and supported me to turn my life around. Today I am proud to say I am a Peer Recovery Support Specialist. Never had I imagined my life would turn out to become what it is today. Back in 2012, a Peer Recovery Support Specialist was just starting to become an essential part of the recovery process. Now, more and more treatment agencies are hiring peers to provide this service for their clients; including us here in El Paso with a dynamite team of professionals lead by Honorable Judge Robert S. Anchondo, and your Average Joe, (that's me!) born and raised in Chihuahua, Mexico - now with a real desire and fulfilling purpose in life.”

“Your Average Joe” -Jose Montoya
Peer Recovery Support Specialist
MSRF Board President
MRT Certified Instructor

Legislative Win for Specialty Courts

Texas Association of Specialty Courts applauds continued efforts of the Texas Legislature to provide increased, sustainable funding for specialty courts. For the second consecutive session, Legislators overwhelming supported the enactment of two statutes that should prove impactful for increased, sustainable revenue for both State and Local Specialty Court Accounts:

In the 86th Legislative Session of 2019, SB 346 was enacted as a comprehensive court cost reform bill in response to Court decisions that existing court costs were unconstitutional unless expended solely for legitimate criminal justice purposes. An unexpected change, however, benefitted specialty courts through an increase in both state and local criminal court costs that provided an allocation of a specified percentage (1.0377%) of state criminal court costs into a State Specialty Court Account, as well as specified percentages (23.8% - felony & 16.26% - misdemeanor) of local criminal court costs into a County Specialty Court Account. (Articles 133.102, 134.101 & 134.102, Local Govt Code)

Previously, the only state funding mechanism dedicated solely for specialty courts was a \$60 “Court Cost Attendant to Certain Intoxication and Drug Offenses” (Repealed Article 102.0178, Code of Criminal Procedure) whereas SB 346 encompassed all categories of criminal offenses. Although the expanded criminal court cost allocations through SB 346 would provide essentially the same revenue for the State Specialty Court Account as in the past, the greatest benefit was projected revenue for County Specialty Court Accounts.

Unfortunately, though, the anticipated revenue increases from SB 346 became a casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic upon abatement of court proceedings and plummeting criminal court cost collections during the past 12 months. Historically, revenue based on collection of court costs is generally under-performing and the pandemic in 2020 merely punctuated such reality. An alternative funding mechanism no longer dependent on court cost collections would be necessary to avoid continued decline in revenue until court proceedings returned to pre-pandemic levels.

In this year's 87th Legislative Session, HB 1256, appropriately cited as the Judge Ruben G. Reyes Act in honor of the late specialty court jurist, was enacted as a bold alternative revenue mechanism not dependent on court cost collections. Instead, the bill represents a “charge-for-harm” scheme by amending Section 183.053, Tax Code, whereby 1% of mixed beverage tax collections shall be deposited into the State Specialty Court Account. HB 1256 is projected to provide \$9.8 million annually into the State Specialty Court Account in addition to a range of \$2.2-\$3 million annually from SB 346. Significantly, the revenue source from HB 1256 will rise without future legislative action due to the likely increase in alcohol consumption.

Prior to enactment of HB 1256, no less than 70% of state funding for specialty courts was discretionary allocations from the Criminal Justice Planning Account, subject to the generosity of awards from the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor. In the event of a reduction or discontinuation of existing levels of discretionary funding by the Governor, combined revenue from the non-discretionary funding mechanisms of SB 346 and HB 1256 is projected to rise to a decade high of \$11.6 million compared to \$7.4-7.9 million annually from 2019-2021. HB 1256 reduced the vulnerability of discretionary funding with the certainty of funding dedicated solely to the State Specialty Court Account.

Obviously, the Legislature clearly recognizes that specialty courts work as a proven and cost-efficient model to rescue and restore individuals and families through evidence-based practices of treatment with accountability. Our support is bi-partisan and broad-based from both conservative and progressive perspectives. And in recognizing specialty courts in such a significant way in successive sessions, the Legislature is actually acknowledging the incredible competency and dedication of each person serving a role in a specialty court. Even in the extraordinary fiscal environment of a pandemic, specialty courts were deemed an “essential service” to be sustained. Hopefully, each member of the Texas Association of Specialty Courts can take pride in knowing their personal service was truly essential for this legislation to ever become possible. May we each take a bow and do what we are called to do by making a difference.



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Tarrant County MHDp

Hot off the press. The Tarrant County Mental Health Diversion Program (MHDp) received the Judge Ruben G. Reyes Outstanding Specialty Court Team Award at The Texas Association of Specialty Court Conference in Galveston, Texas on April 21st, 2021. This award was established in 2017 and presented by the Texas Association of Specialty Courts to recognize an outstanding specialty court team who epitomizes the idea that good intentions are not good enough and reflects Judge Reyes' examples of passion and expertise. This award has such a special meaning this year, as The Honorable Ruben Reyes, a beloved former NADCP board member and longtime treatment court judge and champion, passed away on Saturday, December 12th, 2020.



The Tarrant County MHDp was started in 2003 and is a pre-trial, post-booking specialty court program for participants in the criminal justice system that have a previous mental health history. The program is judicially supervised by The Honorable Brent A. Carr and his multidisciplinary treatment team, which includes representatives from the following: Tarrant County District Attorney's office, The Clark Law Firm, Tarrant County Criminal Court Administration, Tarrant County Community Supervision and Corrections Department, My Health My Resources of Tarrant County, and several other community agencies that the program has formed strategic partnerships with. The mission of the program is to provide participants the resources and support they need to attain emotional well-being and a foundation for long-term success. Judge Brent Carr, Defense Attorney Brad Clark and Case Manager Pam Leary have been with the program since inception.

The program has a long-term track record with success as evidenced by the 691 admissions and 574 successful graduates. The program has 47 active participants and is currently on track to admit over 50 participants this fiscal year despite the barriers associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The MHDp, which has both misdemeanor and felony related offenses, has a successful completion rate of 89%, a 1-year recidivism rate of (12.02%), and a 2-year recidivism rate of (15.19%). These numbers far exceed the national averages for clients with mental health disorders that are involved in the criminal justice system.

The MHDp recently had a Program Evaluation conducted by Dr. Clete Snell as part of a grant awarded by the Judicial Commission on Mental Health (JCMH). Dr. Snell said it best: "The Tarrant County Mental Health Diversion Program was a pioneer in the mental health court movement. National resources such as the Essential Elements of a Mental Health Court and mental health court training did not exist at the time this program was created. Program recidivism statistics suggest the program has been a success from the start. The program has evolved over time to include new team members and additional treatment and auxiliary resources. However, several team members have been in place since the program's inception. This is a testament to the dedication of the team to the court's mission and goals. The MHDp has met, and in most cases, exceeded the objectives of the essential elements. The Tarrant County Mental Health Diversion Program should serve as a model for other pretrial diversion programs in the state and the nation." The program has worked with numerous other jurisdictions and programs which has stretched as far as New Zealand and the Northern Mariana Islands.

We're on the Web!
<http://www.tasctx.org>
Check us out on
Facebook!



Pictured from Left to Right: Assistant Criminal District Attorney Lucas Allan, MHDp Case Manager Pam Leary, TCAT Clinical Specialist Aaron Calvin, County Criminal Court No. 9 and MHDp Presiding Judge Brent A. Carr, MHDp Administrative Assistant Rachel Calderon, Defense Attorney Brad Clark, MHDp Program Manager Rane Wallace, and Judicial Staff Counsel and Mental Health Magistrate Judge Nelda Cacciotti.

Not Pictured: Assistant Criminal District Attorney Mary Butler, TCOOMMI Services TCAT Program Manager Sam Jones, TCAT Clinical Specialist Edward Kellough, and TCAT Clinical Specialist Rosalyn Mackey (My Health My Resources of Tarrant County, TCAT Clinical Specialist).

CMIT 8th Annual Mental Health Conference

DATE/TIME:

Oct 25 (01:00 pm) - 28, 2021 (12:00 pm)

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

Oct 09, 2021

FEE POLICY:

Early Registration - \$260.00
Late Fee - \$25

HOTEL INFORMATION: *

San Luis Resort Spa & Conference Center
5222 Seawall Boulevard
Galveston, TX 77551
409-744-1500
Single occupancy \$103/Double occupancy \$129

**OVERFLOW HOTEL INFORMATION:**

Hilton Galveston Island
5400 Seawall Blvd
Galveston, TX 77551
Phone: 409-744-5000

Texas Association of**Specialty Courts**

Attention: Amber Gregory
George J. Beto Criminal
Justice Center
Sam Houston State
University
Huntsville, Texas 77341-
2296

Email: agregory@shsu.edu

Phone: (936)294-3916



MOUD Toolkit for Treatment Courts

NADCP announced the release of their newest publication: MOUD Toolkit for Treatment Courts supported by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President.

The toolkit offers practical resources to help treatment courts implement medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) in accordance with scientific knowledge, treatment court best practices, and emerging legal precedent.

The new toolkit is intended for treatment courts implementing or preparing to implement MOUD in their program. The toolkit includes three model memoranda of understanding, two letter templates, and an informational brochure for treatment court participants and their loved ones.

<https://www.ndci.org/resource/training/medication-assisted-treatment/moud-toolkit/>

Bi-Monthly Newsletters!!



Do you have a submission for the newsletter? We want to hear from you! Send us information about your court programs, teams, staff, and/or testimonials.

Please send your submissions to Kimberly Duran at Kimberly.Duran@dallascounty.org

The TASC Connection



TASC 2021 Galveston Conference Highlights



A Note to our Conference Guests

The TASC Board of Directors and Conference Committee would like to thank all of the attendees of this year's conference for their participation and feedback. The committee reviews all feedback after each conference in an effort to provide an even better experience the following year. Acknowledging this year's obvious challenges, we wanted to put together the best in-person event we could, as we know how many of you count on the networking opportunities that are not possible in a virtual setting. We recognize that the concessions that had to be made to support social distancing and travel restrictions for some of our noteworthy presenters were not ideal, but we are hopeful and optimistic that 2022 will be back to "normal". Thank you all for your patience, comments, and most of all for trusting us with your safety by attending this year. Be assured that the Conference Committee is already hard at work planning for next year's conference in Corpus Christi. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please email Amber Gregory!

TASC 2021-2022 Board of Directors

Judge Peter Sakai: President

Shay Rustam: President Elect

Elizabeth Cortright: Vice President

Mary Covington: Treasurer

Erin Morgan: Secretary

Judge Ernie Glenn: Bexar County

Judge Hector Garza: Dallas County

Jeannette Kolarik: Harris County

Judge Laura Weiser: Region 1

Kimberly Duran: Region 2

Judge Jeff Addison: Region 3

Judge John Board: Region 4

Faustino Lopez: Region 5

Judge Paul White: Region 6

Judge Elizabeth Rainey: Region 7

Judge Larry Phillips: At Large #1

Major Lori Compton: At Large #2

Mission:

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An emergency meeting was convened by newly elected TASC President Judge Sakai to address vacancies on the Board of Directors resulting from the resignation of Lesli Fitzpatrick. Ms. Fitzpatrick tendered her resignation of her position of Vice President as well as her Slated position of President Elect on April 14, 2021, via email. Interest was expressed in the vacancy by Shay Rustam, who would then have to vacate the At Large position. Interest has been expressed in the At Large position by Judge Larry Phillips. Motion was made to accept the resignation of Lesli Fitzpatrick as President Elect by Judge Board. A motion was made to accept the resignation of Shay Rustam as At Large Director #1 by Judge Board. Motion to appoint Shay Rustam to the position of President Elect was made by Mary Covington. Motion was made to appoint Judge Larry Phillips to the position of At Large Director #1 by Judge White.

Legislative Update

The 87th Texas Legislative Regular Session ends on May 31st and your TASC Board and Legislative Committee are pleased to report on four (4) bills that, if enacted, would benefit specialty courts. Two bills provide increased, sustainable funding from a new revenue source. Another bill supports charitable organizations that are often “partners in recovery” with our programs and participants. The fourth bill assists the availability of specialty courts to citizens in rural jurisdictions that need presiding jurists.

The TASC Board invites you to contact your Legislators and voice support for these bills:

- *HB 1256* directs the Comptroller to allocate 1% of revenue collected from Mixed Beverage Taxes for deposit in a Specialty Court Fund solely for our programs, to be awarded through the Governor’s CJD grants. If passed, this bill will provide \$10 million annually in sustainable, designated funding rather than reliance on the current funding mechanism based on criminal court cost collections. Former TASC Presidents Julie Turnbull and Hank Judin, together with our current President, Judge Peter Sakai, effectively testified to the House Appropriations Committee and the bill was not only unanimously reported favorably by the Committee but also unanimously passed by the entire House of Representatives on April 27th. The bill is now awaiting committee assignment in the Senate chamber, most likely the Finance Committee.
- *SB 625* is identical to HB 1256 and has not been assigned to any committee.
- *HB 669* amends an existing statute, Article 42A.304, CCP, that authorizes Judges to permit offenders to make a donation to “a charitable organization engaged primarily in performing charitable functions in the community” instead of requiring the Defendant to work a specified number of community service hours. This Bill is pending in the House Corrections Committee awaiting a hearing.
- *HB 976* authorizes the appointment of a CCL Judge or Magistrate of a District Court to preside over a multi-county Regional Specialty Court. This bill was passed by the House on April 9th and has been assigned to the Senate Jurisprudence Committee awaiting a hearing date.

Please be a source of valuable information to your Legislators about the merits of specialty courts and how these bills will further our mutual goals of saving lives and reducing recidivism.

National Drug Court Month

National Drug Court Month is coming up in May. To assist you with planning your events, NADCP has prepared a field kit with resources offering proven strategies for reaching the right audience in the best ways. Please send us photos of how your court programs celebrate!

You can find NADCP’s toolkit for Drug Court Month below!

<https://www.nadcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/NDCM-Toolkit-2021-4-6.pdf>

2021 Conference Poster Winners



1st Place: Jefferson County
Family Treatment Drug
Court



2nd Place: Dallas County
DIVERT Court



3rd Place: Midland
County Drug Court

TASC New Hall-of-Fame

On April 7, 2021, the TASC Board of Directors voted to establish the Texas Association of Specialty Courts Hall of Fame to honor those involved in Specialty Courts who have provided invaluable and unmatched contributions to the field. The Hall of Fame was announced at this year's conference as was the first inductee, Judge Ruben Reyes. Judge Ruben Reyes passed away on December 12, 2020, following a valiant battle with COVID-19. His loss is mourned nationwide, from Lubbock County where he presided over the Lubbock County Drug Court, to programs across the country that benefitted from his mentorship and guidance. He championed the cause of treatment courts and embodied what it meant to be a true ambassador of a cause. The TASC Board could identify no other more fit to be the inaugural inductee, and we were honored to host members of Judge Reyes's family at the President's Awards Breakfast this year in order to announce the honor. Judge Reyes will be missed, but never forgotten. We will all continue to carry the torch for him.



2021 TASC Conference Award Recipients

TASC is proud to announce the following recipients of this year's TASC Conference Awards. Please join us in congratulating the following well-deserved individuals for their hard work in the specialty court field! We will also be recognizing their accomplishment during next year's conference in Corpus Christi.

Judge John C. Creuzot Award for Judicial Vision and Leadership
"For Courage, Vision and Conviction in the Justice System"



Judge Peter Sakai
Bexar County
Family Drug Treatment Court

The Joel Bennett Recovery Award:
"For Outstanding Commitment to Helping Those in the Recovery Community"



RaDonna Clark
McLennan County
Drug/DWI Court

Mary Covington Outstanding Specialty Court Team Member Award:
"Demonstrating Passion for the Specialty Court Team, Client and Recovery"



Amy Montero
Dallas County
Felony DWI Court

Judge Ruben G. Reyes Outstanding Specialty Court Team Award:
"For Effective Teamwork & Utilizing Best Practice Standards to Save Souls"
Tarrant County Mental Health Diversion Program



The Judge Rusty Ladd Scholarship Award:
"For Charity, Courage, Heart and Hope"
Candace Ligon
Midland County Drug Court

2020 TASC Conference Award Recipients

Judge John C. Creuzot Award for Judicial Vision and Leadership

"For Courage, Vision and Conviction in the Justice System"

Judge Robert Anchondo

El Paso County DWI Court



The Joel Bennett Recovery Award:

"For Outstanding Commitment to Helping Those in the Recovery Community"

Javier Rene Soto

Williamson County Drug DWI Court



Mary Covington Outstanding Specialty Court Team Member Award:

"Demonstrating Passion for the Specialty Court Team, Client and Recovery"

Sylvia Araiza

Dallas County DIVERT Court



Judge Ruben G. Reyes Outstanding Specialty Court Team Award:

"For Effective Teamwork & Utilizing Best Practice Standards to Save Souls"

Bexar County Felony Drug Court

The Judge Rusty Ladd Scholarship Award:

"For Charity, Courage, Heart and Hope"

Brad Clark

Tarrant County Mental Health Diversion Program

Texas Association of Specialty Courts

*Attention: Amber Gregory
George J. Beto Criminal
Justice Center
Sam Houston State
University
Huntsville, Texas 77341-
2296*

Email: agregory@shsu.edu
Phone: (936)294-3916



Bexar County Early Childhood Court Media Coverage

Great News from Bexar County getting Fox News coverage of their Early Childhood Court Graduation Ceremony. See link below for the story!

“Although the ceremony was entirely by zoom, it was powerful and impactful by the emotions and words brought out by all speakers. Although we live in tough times and a world full of fear and anxiety, never forget the impact that you make on the people and children that you touch every day. I am full of immense pride and profound gratitude for the hard work and dedication of the best staff focused on the most vulnerable. May God Bless all of you and Keep you Safe and Secure.” Judge Peter Sakai.

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fnews4sanantonio.com%2Fnews%2Flocal%2Fimade-a-commitment-parents-overcoming-troubled-pasts-reunited-with-their-children&data=04%7C01%7CKimberly.Duran%40dallascounty.org%7Cf548424d3f8648f562e508d90c211cdb%7C51adcfad72f1479cb28f52412e04014b%7C0%7C0%7C637554158627764499%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&data=bC8M78hLyQH0%2FhLtczR5gtCwJ5I%2BXoY5dm43xozC3ss%3D&reserved=0>

We're on the Web!

<http://www.tasctx.org>

**Check us out on
Facebook!**