

# MACM MATTERS

## MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR COURT MANAGEMENT Winter 2020



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### Update from the MACM President By: Jennifer Miller, President Fourth Judicial District

Greetings MACM Members!

It is my honor to begin my term as MACM President. I appreciate all the support I have received as I begin my leadership of our amazing and talented membership.

First, a big note of thanks to Kris Cunningham and the Education Committee for organizing and holding our virtual conference sessions this year. The need for continuing education in our court is high and this committee continues to be dedicated to provide that to MACM members.

Second, please join me in welcoming our new officers to their terms and thanking them for taking on these important roles in our organization. I am excited to work with them over the next 2 years.



#### **MACM Matters**

##### **Editors:**

Dave Goeddert, Accounting Manager, Ninth Judicial District Administration  
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##### **Editor in Chief:**

Mary Dalbec, Court Administrator, Carver County

*Any MACM member may submit an article for the newsletter.  
If interested, please contact Mary Dalbec for more information.*

The following officers were elected at our Annual Business Meeting on October 1, 2020:

**First Vice President (Legislative and Outreach Committee Chair)**

***Ann Basta, Court Operations Supervisor Court Reporter Unit, Fourth Judicial District***

**Second Vice President (Education Committee Chair) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Term**

***Kris Cunningham, Court Administrator, Chisago County, Tenth Judicial District***

**Third Vice President (Membership Services Committee Chair) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Term**

***Mary Dalbec, Court Administrator, Carver County, First Judicial District***

**Treasurer**

***Maria Steele, Accounting Manager, Second Judicial District***

**Secretary**

***Katie Bloch, Court Administrator, Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Swift Counties, Eighth Judicial District***

Lastly, our role in court administration has certainly taken a unique turn in the past few months. We have all weathered an incredible amount of pressure and change, unlike anything we have experienced before. As leaders, we have been able to see our staff and our profession into uncharted territory. We have adapted to remote hearings and services. We adjusted our working environments and ensured our staff have the support to work away from the office for months and months at a time.

MACM ByLaws describe the fundamental element of our organization indicating that we are formed, “exclusively for the purpose of promoting and improving the common professional interests and working conditions of its members by providing assistance and support for the accumulation and dissemination of information, and for education relating to the advancement of court management in our respective counties, judicial districts and the State of Minnesota.”

As we move into the next year, it is important that we embrace this fundamental element of our organization. Our committees and Board of Directors will ensure we continue to support our membership as we continue to adjust and change with whatever the future has for us. We want to continue to provide valuable information and education in this time like any other.

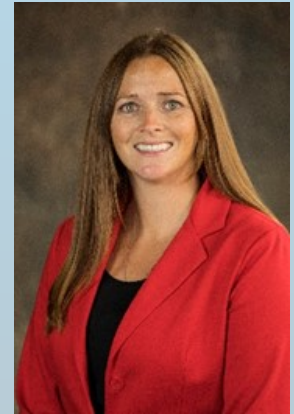
In my previous terms as Secretary, I have been honored to meet and get to know many of you through new member events, committee work, conference sessions and social events. For many of us, MACM is about that networking. In these times, that same level of connection is difficult, but I encourage all of you to continue to support each other however you can. Check-in emails, phone, Skype or Zoom calls. As President, my email box is open to all of you. Please reach out if you are in need of resources or support from other court managers. Our organization is strong and talented; the support we all need is here.

## **Membership Services Committee Update**

### **By: Mary Dalbec, Committee Chair**

### **Carver County Court Administrator**

MACM's conference this year was a little different than in years past, instead of meeting in person the conference and awards were held virtually. Even though we all missed the networking events and fun associated with getting together each fall, the virtual conference was a big success. We had record number of attendees remotely and a great turn out as we recognized five 2020 MACM Award recipients. Again, congratulations to Dr. Katheryn Cranbrook, Sheldon Clark, Jason Drabek, Marianne Setala and Kristi Maiers! The awards are a great opportunity for our association to show appreciation to our members that go above and beyond the call of duty across the state. We'll be seeking award nominations again next summer; over the next several months review the award categories and be prepared to submit a nomination for a fellow member.



**Mary Dalbec**

Throughout 2019-2020 Membership Services awarded \$4,000 in MACM scholarships to eight MACM members. Congratulations to Aaron Williamson, Kate Wilson, Nicole Korby, Teresa VanBuskirk, Matt Brockman, Lindy Scanlon, Stephanie Tonihka and Sara Beck on your MACM scholarships. During the recent board meeting we requested the renewal of the 2020-2021 scholarship fund of \$4,000 which was approved unanimously by the board. The MACM Scholarship Program is intended to promote the organization's efforts to improve judicial administration by financially supporting member's education. Scholarship nominations are requested each May and November, more information about the scholarship program can be found on our [MACM website](#).

A big thank you to Membership Services Committee members for all their hard work and support provided over the last year. Even though we faced many challenges within the branch, the committee dedicated a lot into planning and re-planning this past year. We are hopeful that in 2021 we'll be able to host our fun networking events again at our yearly conference. We're hard at work organizing the New Member/First Time Attendee Mixer which will welcome both 2020 and 2021 new members, also the vendor show, awards banquet and of course the networking suite hosted by the First District.

I hope everyone has a wonderful 2021 and really hope to see all 370+ MACM members next year, virtually would be ok but would love to see everyone in person.

## **Education Committee Update**

**By: Kris Cunningham, Committee Chair**  
**Chisago County Court Administrator**

MACM held its first virtual conference via Zoom in October and I am happy to say it was a big success. It was kicked off with a leadership address given to us by Jeff Shorba and Aaron Williamson. Followed by a terrific presentation from Judge Harris on “What Does Justice Look Like?” A conversation about Race and the Courts that everyone seemed to enjoy. A reminder that both sessions were recorded and are in Cornerstone for viewing. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the evaluation we value your input especially since this was the first time we have done something virtual. There were comments in the evaluation that the membership would like to see additional virtual sessions so the Education Committee is evaluating whether to possibly offer a session sometime in the beginning of 2021, stay tuned for more information in the coming months.

The committee continues to plan for the in person conference to be held on October 5 - 7 at the DECC and the Holiday Inn in Duluth. But just in case we cannot be in person, we are also looking for potential virtual speakers as well. I will be sending out a request for proposals for possible speakers for 2021 to all our membership sometime in December.

I want to thank the MACM Education Committee for all their hard work during these difficult times. I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday season.



**Kris Cunningham**

## **Legislative and Outreach Committee Update**

**By: Sonja Kruger, Committee Chair**  
**Court Programs Manager, Fifth Judicial District**

### **Annual Conference Charitable Outreach Exceeds Goal**

The Legislative and Outreach Committee wishes to thank everyone who made a donation to this year's charitable drive! We exceeded this year's goal of \$1,500 and raised \$1,624.97 to be divided between Recovery Alliance Duluth (RAD), the Center for Alcohol and Drug Treatment, and Life House.

Your donations will help to provide critical support to folks oftentimes involved in the criminal justice system. These organizations are the backbone of the Duluth area community and step in and up for people struggling with addiction, mental illness, and/or homelessness.

RAD is built to help individuals seeking recovery, family members that need support, and the community-at-large reduce the shame and stigma around substance use disorder. This is accomplished through peer-to-peer recovery support, community education, and advocacy.

The Center for Alcohol and Drug Treatment recognizes that substance abuse and addiction is a disease and that each person's path to recovery is different. Their programs utilize many different approaches to treatment and recovery in order to offer the most successful approach for their clients. Their main purpose is to provide chemical health, substance abuse and addiction treatment, as well as recovery services to anyone seeking help for drug, alcohol or gambling problems.



**Sonja Kruger**

Incorporated in 1991, Life House has provided homeless and street youth ages 14 to 24 years old with unconditional support, transitional housing, and a safe alternative to the streets. Life House serves approximately 900 unduplicated youth and additionally their young children annually. In 1996, Life House opened the first transitional living facility for homeless youth in Minnesota. Their mission is to reconnect homeless and street youth to their dreams.

On behalf of the Legislative and Outreach Committee, thank you again for your donations and support!

## **2020 Conference Leadership Kick-Off with Jeff Shorba and Aaron Williamson**

**By: Jeri Boetcher, HR Manager, First Judicial District**

MACM President Aaron Williamson opened the 2020 MACM Virtual Conference with a welcome and shared a quote from Mother Theresa "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples." Mr. Williamson highlighted the MACM role in court leadership as he reflected back on his professional journey and time served as MACM president.



He focused on some of the key roles MACM plays in developing and supporting court leaders through Collaboration, Courage, Coaches, Friends (thanks for sharing the group photo from last year), Support, Learning, Affirmation, Growth, Mistakes, Belonging, and Gratitude. MACM members also wish to extend a “thank you” to Mr. Williamson for the four years he served MACM as president.

State Court Administrator Jeff Shorba began with the inaugural “State Court Administrator’s Award.” This award was to be presented at the CBC, however given the pandemic environment the application process was reopened and Mr. Shorba used the MACM conference as an opportunity to present the award. Applications were received for both teams and individuals and Mr. Shorba expanded the award recipients to include two types of recognition – one individual, one team. The individual recipient is Tracy Gullerud, Tenth District Deputy District Administrator and the team recipient is the Third District Court Administrative Team and Court Operations Supervisors. Congratulations to this year’s recipients!

State Court Administrator Jeff Shorba began his address by noting that nothing could have fully prepared court leadership for 2020. This was the year everything changed. Everything is different. As leadership and court staff worked collectively justice was maintained during a public health crisis, new technologies were adopted to hear and process cases, sweeping changes were effectively managed, and the Minnesota Judicial Branch served as a national model for state court systems. The accomplishments, shared by all, are incredible.

Court leaders stepped forward and navigated the pandemic environment and the continual changes that resulted. Feedback received by the Other Side Workgroup from staff confirmed effective leadership. Access to justice continued and some new technologies and processes will be sustained into the future.

Over the years, the Judicial Branch has prepared for the future. The post pandemic will be a new future that allows for continuation of improved business processes and increased access for court users. Courts have a unique opportunity to leverage creative thinking and continue improvements.

Mr. Shorba closed with a challenge for MACM – how are we going to use what has been learned to guide us in the future? Some key questions include: How can we expand online services? What is the future of remote work? How can we best use remote hearings to increase access and efficiency?

The Post Pandemic Future will be formulated by court leaders, MACM court leaders by using what has been learned to become an even better court system. “I look forward to working with you as you write the next chapter of court history.” MACM membership extends a “thank you” to Mr. Shorba for his profound leadership of the Minnesota Judicial Branch and partnership with MACM on the continual development of court professionals.

## **2020 Conference What Does Justice Look Like? A Conversation about Race and the Courts by Judge JaPaul Harris**

**By: Gena Jones, Second Judicial District Deputy District Administrator**

As noted in the session description, young men of color are overrepresented in all aspects of the criminal justice system. With a better understanding of the issues and challenges with race and the courts we can work together to improve criminal justice outcomes. Judge Harris went on to discuss the structural realities of racism, particularly against black and brown people, analyze structural inequities present in Minnesota, and discussed tools and steps we need to take to begin to dismantle structural racism in the Minnesota court system.

Judge Harris challenged us all to reflect on the last time we talked about racism personally and professionally. Did you just talk about it or did you act on correcting the biases and perceptions of others? We watched a video about racism that indicated astounding facts about racism, such as black sounding names on resumes were 50% less likely to be called for an interview, that blacks are shown 17.7% fewer homes for sale, and that marijuana use among whites and blacks is equal yet blacks are four times more likely to be charged and incarcerated.

We were told a personal story about a time Judge Harris was driving past a police officer and knew there would be an interaction. While the interaction was peaceful that time, there was an earlier encounter where he was taken out of his car on the side of the road at gun point. Experience had taught him what to do to keep safe when encountering these types of situations.

Next we were taken through a game of real versus fake and tried to determine whether a particular scenario happened or not. Many were shocked to learn the real scenarios were those such as: the police were called on a black man wearing socks in a pool; the police were called on a group of black women for playing golf too slow; and a woman called the police on a black man for gardening. This one went as far as being charged and going to court only to be dismissed by the judge after discovering many discrepancies in the woman's story.

Racism is not just a metropolitan issue. Statewide we need to think about how we are treating individuals in our justice system. How can we do better? Racial disparities – it's only broken to the extent our society is broken. What lens are we looking through? Are we alright with how blacks are viewed? Are we okay with the numbers we see? In order to work at addressing systemic racism we need to see the structure and then change the action.

Did you know the medium income in the Twin Cities for a family of color is \$28,178/year – less than half the median white family income of \$84,459/year? That Minnesota has the second largest income inequality gap between blacks and whites in the nation? That the black poverty rate in the Twin Cities is 25.4% which is over four times the white poverty rate of 5.9%?

Where do we go from here? Take affirmative steps to move the ball forward. Educate yourself, call out racism, engage others in discussions, and create inclusive, equitable and diverse workplaces through sustained efforts. Practice self-reflection, look at yourself first, who is in your circle of trusted colleagues, call out micro-aggressions, and be an ally not a bystander. If acting as an ally sounds effortful and uncomfortable, it's because it is. It takes work.

Lastly, reflect on the mission and vision of the courts - to provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies; and that the court system will be accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well-managed.

References: Ted Talk by Baratunde Thurston – Living While Black  
Additional resources (listed below), Judge Harris pointed to Aaron's message in the Summer 2020 MACM Matters newsletter:

<https://www.ywcastpaul.org/racial-equity-challenge/>

<https://www.eddiemoorejr.com/21-day-racial-equity-challenge>

<https://debbyirving.com/21-day-challenge/>

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/labor\\_law/membership/equal\\_opportunity/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/labor_law/membership/equal_opportunity/)

<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources/>



## Annual Award Recipients for 2020

### **Distinguished Service Award – Dr. Katheryn Cranbrook Hennepin County Chief Forensic Psychologist, Fourth Judicial District**

Dr. Katheryn Cranbrook, Hennepin County Chief Forensic Psychologist in the Fourth Judicial District, received the 2020 Distinguished Service Award. The Award is given to individuals who have a record of outstanding service to the community and courts, and demonstrate leadership by improving the administration of justice and delivery of public service through the application of modern management techniques.

Dr. Cranbrook is a highly effective leader and a catalyst for change. She is a member of various committees and workgroups, and collaborates with partner agencies, to ensure that the justice system understands the importance of mental health awareness. Dr. Cranbrook's collaborative approach to developing and implementing on call, rapid turnaround evaluations of in-custody and out-of-custody misdemeanor defendants undergoing Rule 20/competence evaluations has improved the efficiency and volume of court-ordered assessments. She is regularly called upon to train counties and district courts regarding the use of Rule 20s, has coordinated trainings with the St. Peter Security Hospital, and started a successful, nationally-recognized post-doctoral fellowship program.



Dr. Katheryn Cranbrook

### **Champion of Change Award – Sheldon Clark Deputy District Administrator—Administration, Tenth Judicial District**

Sheldon Clark, Deputy District Administrator in the Tenth Judicial District, was honored as the 2020 Champion of Change. The Champion of Change fosters collaboration to promote innovation by embracing opportunities to utilize technology and other resources to increase efficiencies and productivity in the work place.

Clark immediately stepped into a new role at the start of the pandemic to lead the change that was required to ensure access to justice during an uncertain time.

His talent and leadership in process development and change management, with a focus on technology, training, and communication, has been beneficial to all judges and staff in the District. He has served in an integral role as the Tenth Judicial District transitioned to remote technologies to ensure access to court services and virtual courtroom settings during the pandemic. Clark has served on the statewide Pandemic Response Team, and is tireless in his efforts to consistently seek new opportunities to ensure the courts are able to provide access to justice.



Sheldon Clark

### **Early Career Excellence Award – Jason Drabek Hennepin County Judicial IT Supervisor II, Fourth Judicial District**

Jason Drabek, a Hennepin County Judicial IT Supervisor II in the Fourth Judicial District, was recognized with the 2020 Early Career Excellence Award. The Award recognizes a person who demonstrates achievement in the courts through obtaining a high level of knowledge in a short amount of time, is a quick learner and a valuable resource to others, is dependable and consistent while working to achieve success in a local court or for the Minnesota Judicial Branch, and demonstrates outstanding leadership by considering stakeholders when making decisions.



Jason Drabek

Drabek has demonstrated the very best qualities of early career excellence in the court with his willingness to promote collaboration and transparency in the process. He has been a leader in a number of technology initiatives that include eCheck-In and the use of remote video conferencing solutions for court hearings. Drabek also served on the statewide remote hearing technology committee, where he recommended technology solutions that add business and resource efficiencies and navigate the COVID-19 environment.

## **Pandemic Hero Award – Marianne Setala** **Anoka County Court Operations Manager, Tenth Judicial District**

Marianne Setala, Anoka County Court Operations Manager in the Tenth Judicial District, was recognized with the 2020 Pandemic Hero Award for her excellence and vigilant dedication to the court and her team during the pandemic.

Setala has patiently guided her team during this challenging time of a global pandemic, and provided them with tools and resources needed to navigate uncertainty, ensure access to court services by stakeholders and customers, and keep staff safe and healthy. Her refined understanding of the Anoka County calendar plan played a critical role in rearranging the current calendar plan to best utilize resources to efficiently and safely hear backlogged cases. Her commitment to her staff has created an office atmosphere that allowed them to feel safe during these trying times.

## **Lifetime Achievement Award – Kristine Maiers** **Freeborn County Court Operations Manager, Third Judicial District**

Kristine Maiers, Freeborn County Court Operations Manager with the Third Judicial District, received the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award. The Award recognizes an individual for his or her many contributions to the court management profession, and for years of service to the court.

Maiers is a passionate, dedicated leader whose knowledge and experience is valued and sought after. She makes collaboration a core part of her role and always keeps what is best for the entire Third Judicial District at the forefront of her work. In addition to her role as Court Operations Manager, Maiers has served on various state and district teams focused on improving the customer experience, enhancing the court's operations and financial oversight, improving the quality of data, protecting the security of court documents and records, and supporting staff training and skills development. In the words of her colleagues, Maiers sees the importance of every role someone plays within the Minnesota Judicial Branch and does all that she can to empower others to succeed.



Kristine Maiers

## FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT UPDATE

### **Tanya Derby and State Guardian ad Litem Program Receive First Judicial District Amicus Curiae Award**

**By: Brian Jones, First Judicial District Administrator**

On August 14, 2020, the First Judicial District awarded its tenth annual Amicus Curiae Award to Tanya Derby and the State Guardian ad Litem Program on August 14, 2020. The Amicus Curiae Award, meaning Friend of the Court, is an annual recognition of persons who have provided exceptional service, leadership or other contributions to assist the courts in the First Judicial District discharge their constitutional responsibility for the administration of justice.

Ms. Derby has worked on behalf of clients in juvenile, child protection and criminal court with the First Judicial District Public Defender's Office. She advocated for clients' rights first as a paralegal from 1995 to 2005, and then as an attorney from 2005 to 2020. Additionally, she volunteered on the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative - Eliminating Racial Disparities Committee from 2006 - 2020, and also as the children's attorney with the Family Dependency Treatment Court from 2010 to 2020. First District Chief Judge Kathryn Messerich noted, "Ms. Derby generously volunteered her time, legal skills and compassion while representing children in Family Dependency Treatment Court and other juvenile matters. Her advocacy insured that children's voices were always heard."

The State Guardian ad Litem Board was established by legislation in 2010 to administer a statewide, independent guardian ad litem program to advocate for the best interest of children in juvenile and family courts. The Program Administrator, who reports to the board, supervises the program managers from the ten judicial districts. Each judicial district program is configured to service the needs of the judicial district.

When the court is making decisions that will affect a child's future, the child needs an objective adult to provide independent information about the best interests of the child. While other parties in the case are concerned about the child, the guardian ad litem is the only person in the case whose sole concern is the best interests of the child.

Guardians ad Litem conduct interviews and observe children and significant people in their lives. They review social service, medical, school, psychological and criminal records and reports. They attend meetings with the other professionals involved with the children and their families.



They outline options and make written and oral recommendations in court regarding the short and long term best interests of the children. It is important to remember that it is not the guardians ad litem responsibility to make decisions about a child's future, but rather to make recommendations to the court that enable the court to make the best possible decisions.

“The First Judicial District is grateful for the guardians’ dedication to the safety and well-being of children, said Chief Judge Messerich. “All of the First District Judges know how valuable the guardian’s input is and appreciate how they serve as the child’s advocate in child protection and family law cases.”

Past recipients of the Amicus Curiae Award are: Liz Reppe, Dana McKenzie, Merlyn Meinerts, Mary Freyberg, the law firm of Lindquist & Vennum, Sharon Freiling, Karissa Richardson, Dan Beeson, Wayne Jagow, Lloyd Moosbrugger, Bob Morris, Jerome Wickert, Mary Stapleton, Chuck Brill, Manual Roman, Molly Trieschman, Fredrikson & Byron Law Firm, Bridget McCauley Nason, and Dakota County Bar Association.

## SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT UPDATE

### Retiring Deputy District Administrator – Diane Beckler

Diane Beckler retires from her Second Judicial District Deputy District Administrator position on December 1, 2020, after more than 25 years with the Minnesota Judicial Branch. Throughout her career Diane has provided tremendous leadership. Her thoughtful approach and creativity has been invaluable. Needless to say Diane’s wisdom, guidance, and innovation will be missed. Despite our loss, we are thrilled for Diane as she begins to look forward to her next chapter.

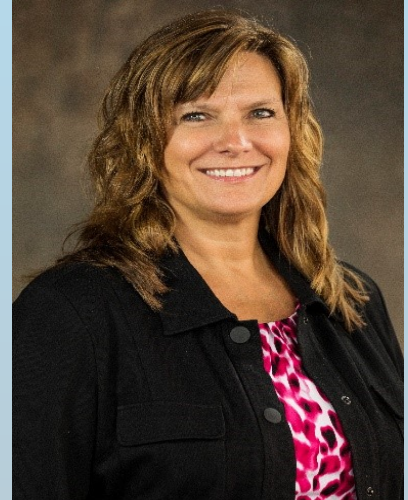


Diane Beckler



## **New Deputy District Administrator – Gena Jones**

The Second Judicial District is pleased to welcome new Deputy District Administrator, Gena Jones on November 30, 2020. Prior to her new role, Gena was a Court Administrative Manager in the Tenth Judicial District, Washington County. In Gena's 29 years with the courts she has served in various IT, project management, operational, and leadership roles in the Fourth, First, and Tenth Districts. Her time in the Minnesota Judicial Branch has been marked by diligence, resourcefulness, growth and numerous initiatives including eCourt and pandemic response/continuity of operations. Gena has also served on various local, district, and state committees. Gena is extremely talented, and will add great value to the District. In her new role, Gena will support District Administrator, Heather Kendall with overall management in the District. She will also oversee certain administration areas, including Finance, Business Process Unit, Project Management, and IT.



**Gena Jones**

## **SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT UPDATE**

### **Virtual Family Nights, a Treatment Court COVID Success Story** **By: Elizabeth Henderson, Program Coordinator, Mental Health Court**

“Successful drug recovery or alcohol recovery involves changing attitudes, acquiring knowledge, and developing skills to meet the many challenges of sobriety.”

-Dr. Dennis Daley, world renowned recovery expert

In the Sixth District, Treatment Court Coordinators continue to focus on ways to strengthen and support the recovery journey of Treatment Court participants. For several years now Coordinators have hosted an event called ‘Family Nights’ to enhance and celebrate the successes of Treatment Court participants. However, this year the COVID-19 pandemic presented some unique planning and execution challenges.

‘Family Nights’; an event that typically takes place in-person, provides a prosocial opportunity to bring people together to celebrate recovery and promote life skills development.

Participation in this event is a critical component to building fellowship and support within the Treatment Court community. In partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension Office and other local community service providers, District Coordinators launched a 'Family Night' virtual series. Instead of joining together for one night of events as they have in the past the courses took place on a virtual platform every Monday night for one hour throughout the month of August. Topics included parenting education, financial capabilities, birth control education, domestic violence and naloxone training. Even amidst the pandemic and the new virtual world 'Family Nights' was a success as the event brought together educators, support networks and participants from across the Arrowhead Region.

Visionary leadership, persevering in hard times and working for the greater good are constant themes within our Treatment Courts here in the Sixth District. These events help develop the skills for long term recovery which, in turn, reduces recidivism, restores families and strengthens our communities. Regardless of the platform, Coordinators will continue to build and create opportunities to further the successes and strengthen the roots of participants in recovery, for years to come.

## **SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT UPDATE**

### **Seventh District Centralized Document Acceptance Team By: Jessica Gadbow, DAT Supervisor**

My name is Jessica Gadbow, I have been working with the Minnesota Judicial Branch since August 2017. Prior to working for the Branch I was a Jailor at the Douglas County Jail where I supervised and booked inmates. It was quite a drastic change moving to my position at Douglas County Court Administration. When I first started I began thinking that I was never going to understand how to do this job. There is so much to know from event names to document security to how you relate certain items. After a lot of patience and help from my co-workers I mostly understood it, I say mostly because some days, I think we all can admit it, can get difficult. What surprised me most was all the changes that were consistently happening with the Branch. To be a part of the Branch you really do have to be open to change and willing to learn.

When I started we had 32 people District-Wide accepting documents out of eFS, in July 2018 we reduced the number to 20 acceptors District-Wide. In September 2019, the management team made the decision to create one centralized team.

The COVID Pandemic delayed the implementation plan of a team of six acceptors and one supervisor. Finally, on September 2, 2020 the new Centralized Document Acceptance Team was implemented. All members work remotely. The transition was seamless thanks to the professionalism of the team and their willingness to work together whether it be training a co-worker, answering questions, or providing assistance when requested. Communication has been the key to success. The DAT members: Tamra Bostick, Pamela Johnson, Cheryl Josephson, Heidi Lock, Paige Navarro, and Lynne Umlauf.

## **NINTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT UPDATE**

**By: Camille Parks, Multi-County Court Administrator**

COVID-19 has affected all aspects of our lives and work. As difficult as this is, the 9<sup>th</sup> District is working to be innovative and proactive in an effort to reduce caseload backlog. The 9<sup>th</sup> District Judicial Caseflow Committee has been working to identify unprecedented solutions to solve the unique needs of our time. One facet of the established plan is the 9<sup>th</sup> District Central Calendar. The 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District is implementing a plan to hire two Referees, two Electronic Recording Equipment Operators and two Court Operations Associates in temporary positions. The Referees will have virtual court calendars utilizing Zoom to preside over cases for the 9<sup>th</sup> District. The 9<sup>th</sup> District Central Calendar will include cases for Domestic Abuse, Harassment, Probate, Commitments, Guardianship/Conservatorships, Evictions, Default Dissolutions, Conciliation, Consumer Credit Contracts, Minor Settlements, Name Changes, Reduced Mortgage Redemptions, and Transcript Judgments.

## **TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT UPDATE**

**By: Catherine Knutson, Lisa Bonke and Rhonda Mackereth—10th Judicial District Court Operations Trainers**

For fiscal year 2018-2019 the Tenth District developed a strategic goal to create a consistent program for training and onboarding staff. The goal was defined as a district-wide approach to training court administration and judicial staff. As a result of this goal a workgroup designed a district training model that was officially launched in 2019. The model consists of two phases: Onboarding and Line of Business training.

The initial Onboarding phase provides all new employees with a consistent orientation experience and is a collaboration between Human Resources, IT, Business Process Unit (BPU), and Litigant Services. Topics covered include (but are not limited to) basic HR information, payroll, time entry, state and district policy review, MNCIS and Outlook basics, cybersecurity, overview of the self-help program, and an introduction to lines of business through a series of short videos.

The second phase of the model focuses on Line of Business specific training. The goal of the training program is to build a stronger skillset for new and current employees with training that is consistent and district-focused. The training model builds on the first level of Onboarding with designated levels of training (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced) for each line of business. The curriculum for each level of training is intended to be a guide for staff as well as a reference for supervisors.

As part of this new training model three new District Court Operations Trainers were hired to develop and implement specific Line of Business training. Catherine Knutson facilitates the District's Family, Adoption, and CHIPS training. Lisa Bonke is responsible for the District's Civil, Commitments, and Probate training. Rhonda Mackereth leads the District's Criminal, Traffic, and Juvenile Delinquency training.

These trainers develop training based on curriculum that is supported by the feedback and hard work of local 10<sup>th</sup> District Court Operation Associates, CAPs, and the training team. The trainers lead Subject Matter Expert (SME) workgroups that meet biweekly to review court processes and collaborate on curriculum development. The purpose and mission of the SME workgroup is: "To have consistency with training whenever possible, encourage getting it right the first time, and to work smarter not harder." In addition to participating in conference calls, the SME workgroup members complete assignments in which they provide input based on their knowledge and expertise. The SME workgroups are serving as invaluable resources to the new training model.

The trainers and the SME workgroups are focused on developing training curriculum based on the current needs in the District, as well as building on the levels of training the workgroup has already established. Additionally, the trainers and SME workgroups are helping to develop Standard Court Processes (SCPs). SCPs do not replace CAPs, but instead are intended to be supplemental training guides that reflect how staff are being trained on court processes. Trainers frequently coordinate with the District Business Process Unit (BPU) to ensure that all training needs are being met.

The trainers are grateful for the support and guidance of Lori O'Brien, Anoka County Court Administrator, as well as Lindsay Allgood, Abby Sylvester and Peg Zdon from Anoka County. Together, along with the District-wide workgroup, we are developing a strong program that will continue to grow and expand. For additional information, please contact the 10<sup>th</sup> District Training Team email group.

## **Huddle Up**

**By: Julie Welt, Washington County Chief Deputy Court Administrator**

Like many teams across the Judicial Branch, in Washington we have become quite fond of our morning “huddle” meetings. Some teams meet daily, some weekly, or a variation thereof. We are reading more and more about how important it is to stay connected, with family, with friends, and with our teammates. The past six months has brought many opportunities to connect remotely and we are taking advantage!

Some of the fun activities shared at huddle meetings have included weekly themes like sharing funny pictures of your pet or something fun you cooked over the weekend, Zoom Pictionary where each person draws something from the office and others guess, and a bucket list activity where each person provides the 2 top things on their bucket list to a facilitator; a list is created and everyone guesses which items are whose. It has not only been fun to share stories, pictures, and important parts of our lives with each other; it has been a way to connect, learn, and bond as a team; informal, relaxed, and open for daily updates, impromptu topics and solution-based discussions. For football fans they are our offense team huddle where we discuss our plan for the day!

The value of the huddle is far-reaching, whether it be in person or remote. We have experienced many team victories and plan to continue utilizing huddle meetings into the future. Go forth and be strategic, “huddle up!”





## **Lexie Huntington (Routt) Promoted to Family/Juvenile Supervisor in Washington County**

We are excited to announce that Lexie Huntington (Routt) has been promoted as the new Family/Juvenile Court Operations Supervisor in Washington County. Lexie has worked in the civil division here in Washington County for 5 years, working with all civil and probate matters and specializing in judgments. Lexie is a graduate of the Minnesota Judicial Branch's Development in Action program. She has represented Washington County as a district participant on change management committees, subject matter expert groups, and participated as a CAP tester for the 10th district. Lexie started her new position September 2020. Two teams comprised of 6 staff specializing in family, juvenile criminal, juvenile family, domestic abuse, and harassments report to Lexie. Congratulations to Lexie as she acclimates to her new role!



Lexie Huntington

## **Tenth Furthers Efforts to Address the Backlog By Amy Willert (Isaacson), Pine County Court Administrator**

The Tenth Administrators Group (TAG) discussed strategies to support expanded senior judge utilization and how to move forward with temporary staffing solutions. We continue to review and discuss technology solutions and upgrades to courtrooms so that we can better support remote and hybrid hearings. TAG was advised of next steps in supporting Task Manager including additional training and follow-up lab sessions.

In consultation with TAG, District Administrator Paul Patterson recently implemented several workgroups with representation from across the District. These small workgroups will be tackling strategic initiatives to help move the District forward in key areas over the next six to twelve months. The workgroup names and their chairs are as follows:

- Backlog/Temporary Staff Solutions – Kris Cunningham, Chisago County Court Administrator and Amy Willert, Pine County Court Administrator

- Organizational Structure and Leadership Support – Megan Bergman, Isanti County Court Administrator and Lori O’Brien, Anoka County Court Administrator
- Districtwide Solutions – Tracy Gullerud, Deputy District Administrator –Operations and Pat Kuka, Sherburne County Court Administrator
- Technology Solutions – Sheldon Clark, Deputy District Administrator – Administration

The Tenth is also actively working to upgrade technology in the courtrooms. Courtrooms in Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Pine and Wright County all are in the process of receiving audio and video upgrades. These upgrades will assist in the functionality of remote or “hybrid” (where some individuals are remote and others are in the courtroom) hearings. Additionally, these upgrades will make evidence presentation state of the art for when we can resume in-person operations on a regular basis. There are plans to do similar upgrades in Kanabec, Sherburne and Washington counties as well in the near future.

### **Focus on Combining Resources to Leverage Efficiencies and Provide Top-Notch Customer Service** **By Tracy Gullerud, Deputy District Administrator – Operations**

The PICK (Pine, Isanti, Chisago and Kanabec) Judges, court administrators, and Senior Judge John McBride have been working on a unified calendar and case management plan over the last year. The Case Management Plan establishes best practice policies to guide PICK courts and case litigants through an administrative process designed to effectively address judicial actions and case events. The unified calendar plan establishes a nine week judge rotation across all four counties in the PICK. This will eliminate the need for a formalized equalization plan across the assignment area and will allow for a backup Judge model to accommodate leave coverage and additional trial judge time. The proposed plans will go to the PICK bench in early November for consideration and implementation.

Michelle Cosgriff from Kanabec County and Abigail Meemken from Pine County have been working to centralize financial duties in the PICK. They have been training hard with Vicki Petry, Chisago County Operations Supervisor and have successfully completed month end processing for all four counties and many other financial duties. Michelle and Abigail are doing an amazing job and we are very lucky to have such qualified and talented professionals to complete these duties on behalf of the PICK. A special thanks goes to Vicki Petry who has also dedicated all her expertise and time to train and lead Michelle and Abigail.

In early August, Chisago and Isanti Counties centralized phones in two of the four PICK counties using Voice over IP. Pine and Kanabec Counties will join the centralized phone system in December. This initiative allows for subject matter experts to manage calls by line of business for all four counties. Individuals can also take their VOIP phones home and log into their assigned group(s) to assist callers. A great deal of planning and collaboration went into this effort. Chisago and Isanti Counties have served as a pilot while successfully rolling out Task Manager. Both counties have done a wonderful job of working out the challenges with this centralized effort and are looking forward to adding additional resources into each of the groups.