



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

301 SECOND STREET - WOODLAND, CALIFORNIA 95695 - 530.666.8180 - FAX 530.666.8185

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 10, 2019 **Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy DA
Jonathan.raven@yolocounty.org
Bilingual Spanish Representative available
@ (530)666-8356

Mental Health Court Team Hits It Out of the Park!

(Woodland, CA) – October 10, 2019 – On Tuesday, October 8, 2019 the Stigma Stompers faced off against the Little Rascals in a barn-burner of a game, with this year’s Mental Health Court Softball Championship on the line. The Stigma Stompers, composed of the Yolo County Collaborative Court Team staff, faced a 5-run deficit against the Mental Health Court clients with one inning left. The team is comprised of members from the District Attorney, Public Defender, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) and Probation. An impending defeat looked all but certain with All-Stars Stephen Svetich (Probation) and Kristi Abbott (HHS) out of the lineup due to illness. However, the team rallied behind a balanced offense and stalwart defense to come out with a gritty 11-10 victory. Chief Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Raven sealed the comeback with the winning catch after one of the Little Rascals’ strongest batters hit it deep into the outfield.

“I don’t care if we win or lose, I’m just glad that we’re out here having a great time,” one Mental Health Court client remarked.

“I was pretty surprised that the clients didn’t win because we have been practicing every Friday for this game,” Collaborative Court Team member Jessie Tessler said with a smile.

The softball game capped off a strong week for the program, which included news that the county would receive \$747,280 in funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance over the next three years to support the expansion of Mental Health Court. The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration grant will double the program’s capacity, from a maximum of 15 participants to 30. Funds will support hiring staff to provide services to these additional clients. The Health and Human Services Agency will hire one Clinician, and the Probation Department will hire a Probation Officer to supervise participants.

This grant proposal was prepared through a collaborative effort by the Yolo County Criminal Justice Grant Writing Team and existing Mental Health Court program staff. The Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) will match the grant funds with an additional \$200,000 to help fund the full cost of the new positions.

In addition, the Collaborative Court Team, which staffs both the Mental Health Court and Addiction Intervention Court programs, was selected to receive Yolo County's SPIRIT Award in the category of Teamwork. The annual SPIRIT Awards recognize outstanding work performed by county staff. The Board of Supervisors will present the award to the Collaborative Court Team at the next Board meeting meeting on October 22nd at 9 am.

The MHC program staff build connections with participants through regular engagement, and provide a supportive environment to promote continued participation in treatment. Once per year, the staff host a barbecue in the summer and a holiday party in the winter for program participants. These events help build bonds between staff and the participants outside of the traditional treatment and court settings. Tuesday's softball game was the latest example of these efforts, and both teams eagerly await a rematch. These events are coordinated by the team members from the Health and Human Services Agency.

"I had a great time playing in the game and even scored a run. I am very proud of the work that the Mental Health Court Team is doing. The team helps participants learn how to recognize and manage their behavioral health issues so that they can thrive in the community. With the upcoming expansion, the team will be able to help even more individuals," Chief Deputy Public Defender Allison Zuvela explained.

"Our Collaborative Court Team is doing fantastic work to address mental health and addiction issues in Yolo County. We're all very excited to start expanding the program," District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated.

For more information, please visit <https://yoloda.org/community-outreach-programs/mental-health-court/>

###