



# news

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## **Largest-yet class to graduate from JeffCo Recovery Court** *Graduates developed restorative justice projects*

GOLDEN, Colo. – The two-year-old Jefferson County Recovery Court marks a milestone Friday, Aug. 12, when three participants are scheduled to graduate from the program, its largest graduation yet.

Four classes have graduated from the Recovery Court, which essentially is a Drug Court similar to adult drug courts found in about 20 other counties around the state, but with the addition of a restorative justice component. Participants must complete an 18-month intensive-treatment program which includes probation supervision, in-court review hearings, substantial judicial oversight and full accountability by the Recovery Court participant.

Unlike many other drug court programs, however, the Jefferson County Recovery Court requires each participant to create a restorative justice program as part of his or her treatment plan. Participants design and carry out community-service projects intended to repair some of the harm they have caused through their drug use and previous criminal behavior.

“This is not only more meaningful to the client than standard community service, we also see some great new project ideas with every client,” said 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Judge Tamara S. Russell, the Recovery Court’s presiding judge. “We strongly believe it contributes greatly to a

drug court's general goals of reducing drug use and recidivism, reuniting families, making communities safer and providing lower-cost and more effective alternatives to incarceration.”

Court-approved projects created by the participants scheduled to graduate Friday are: creation of a menu and assistance with food preparation plans and service at the Denver Rescue Mission; organization of a food-donation program involving a Honey Baked Ham store to benefit local shelters; and volunteer work at the Aspen Center for Women.

The graduation hearing is scheduled to begin at 12:00 p.m. in Courtroom 5C at the Jefferson County Combined Courts, 100 Jefferson County Parkway.

The Jefferson County Recovery Court is one of more than 60 problem-solving courts operating in 17 of Colorado's 22 judicial districts. Colorado's problem-solving courts include adult and juvenile drug courts, family/dependency and neglect drug courts, DUI courts, adult and juvenile mental health courts, a veteran trauma court, and truancy courts.

**Editors note:** Interviews with a graduate may be scheduled upon request. For details, please contact Jennifer Kawakami at 303-271-6324.