



CUYAHOGA COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS DIVISION OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
HON. LESLIE ANN CELEBREZZE

COURT ADMINISTRATOR
JAMES S. ZAK

JUDGES
HON. DIANE M. PALOS
HON. FRANCINE B. GOLDBERG
HON. TONYA R. JONES
HON. COLLEEN ANN REALI

Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court Receives Grant Supporting the Families First Program

Cuyahoga County, Ohio: Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court Administrative Judge Leslie Ann Celebrezze is pleased to announce the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County has awarded a \$65,000 grant to the Domestic Relations Court Families First Program.

“The Families First Program represents a collaborative effort between the Domestic Relations Court, the ADAMHS Board, and our community partners to help participants overcome substance abuse, mental health, and parenting issues,” said Judge Tonya R. Jones, who founded and has presided over the Families First Program since 2018.

The Families First Program is a voluntary intervention program that links parents who find themselves in Domestic Relations Court with treatment and supportive services necessary to assist with substance use, mental health, and parenting issues that may impact their ability to co-parent. Graduates leave with a sustainable parenting time schedule that benefits both parents and children. During the first full year of the Families First Program there were 18 participants. Today, that number has grown to 64 participants, working to address barriers to successful co-parenting.

The Families First Program was the first program of its type in the state of Ohio and has since been replicated in Summit County Domestic Relations Court.

“My work and commitment to families led me to rethink the processes of Domestic Relations Court – to develop this new concept that frames a mix of governmental, community, and individual collaboration to help families,” said Jones.

The ADAMHS Board grant provides financial support to assist participants by eliminating barriers to treatment and supportive services that are specific to the needs of each participant.

Judge Jones explained, “Linking participants to a wide range of social services, including drug treatment, transitional employment and vocational services, health care and mental health treatment is critical to the success of our participants and their ability to successfully co-parent.”

The clients serviced by the Families First Program are from all socioeconomic and educational demographics who are experiencing substance use, mental health, or co-occurring disorders. These individuals are involved in contested pre-decree, post decree, and domestic violence proceedings. For more information about the Families First Program, please contact Shila Richard at srichard@cuyahogacounty.us.