

King County Drug Diversion Court
A Graduation and Celebration

Perseverance, persistence and patience. Those are the three qualities that Judge Wesley Saint Clair cited in reference to the 20 King County Drug Diversion Court graduates who stood before him, four being THS participants. He was speaking not only to the graduates, but also to a courtroom filled with supporters at the King County Drug Diversion Court Graduation and 15th Anniversary Celebration on November 18, 2009.

The King County Drug Diversion Court was implemented in August of 1994, and since then 1,432 people have successfully completed the program (703 since 2005). Drug Diversion Court is unique in that it depends upon a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere where a judge and team of court officers and staff work to break the cycle of drug abuse and criminal behavior. In addition, Drug Court works with the whole person, as each of the participants often faces a multitude of issues such as homelessness and health problems. The goals of Drug Court include reducing substance use and related criminal activity; enhancing community safety; and integrating substance abuse treatment with criminal justice case processing. Completing Drug Court can take months for some, and years for others.

The success of Drug Court participants relies on partnerships between the criminal justice system and the drug treatment community. On November 18th THS branch managers and counselors were on hand to witness four of their participants graduate. Among the THS graduates was William, who remarked as he accepted his certificate, "I never finished anything before in my life, so I didn't think I'd make it here." He said that in Drug Court he was no longer looked at as a throwaway person, but rather he was looked at with hope.

More information: www.kingcounty.gov/courts/DrugCourt.aspx