

BRIDGE

Spring 2011

WORDS FROM JUDGE JO ANN FERDINAND:

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Welcome to the first edition of The BTC Bridge, a newsletter designed to introduce you to the many unique and exciting things happening in our Court. As the Presiding Judge, I am proud of the amazing and important work done by the staff, and am delighted to be part of a program that gives people a chance to end the devastating effects of alcohol and substance abuse. Drug Courts like ours are the result of a collaborative effort between courts, prosecutors, defense attorneys, treatment providers, and community agencies. We provide a form of judicial intervention that seeks to reduce crime committed by drug-addicted offenders by ending the cycle of drug use, crime, and incarceration. Pending criminal charges often provide addicts with the incentive to get into substance abuse treatment and the motivation to remain there so that treatment providers can teach them the tools necessary for recovery. We provide individuals with the framework for living a new and better life without drugs. We show them how to set goals and achieve them. We recognize that each individual has unique needs, and are committed to providing the proper services for all populations. As you read this newsletter, I am convinced that you will see the staff's dedication and unceasing efforts to offer hope for a better future to all of our participants.

WORDS FROM PROJECT DIRECTOR JOSEPH MADONIA:

In honor of drug court month I would like to welcome you to the first edition of "The BTC Bridge", a bi-annual newsletter brought to you by the staff of the Brooklyn Treatment Court. I am so proud and thankful to all of the staff members who dedicated their time and effort to make this newsletter possible.

The BTC Bridge has been created to provide our participants, both past and present, with information, important resources, services, and sober activities that are currently available in their communities. In addition, it provides current BTC program information – including upcoming events and new and exciting initiatives – to treatment providers and drug court professionals nationally. Future editions will focus on health issues, new and emerging best practices, upcoming and current research in the field of addiction and trauma, and much, much more.

I hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter as much as the staff and I have enjoyed creating it.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Regards,
Joseph Madonia, LCSW-R, CASAC



RESOURCES

Lourdes Cartagena

1. If you have **Medicaid**, you can receive a free cell phone by calling 800-safelink.
2. **Legal Action Center:** 212-243-1313 or 800-223-4044. A private, non-profit law firm specializing in legal issues and policy related to HIV/AIDS, drugs and alcohol abuse, and criminal justice.
3. **NYS Hopeline:** 877-8-HOPENY (846-7369). Offers help and hope 24 hours a day for alcoholism, drug abuse, and problem gambling.
4. **Alcoholics Anonymous:** 800-923-8722.
5. **Find Food Assistance:** Access Food Program Locator or contact Mabis Chase, Community Programs Associate, at 212-566-7855, extension 8038.
Food Stamps Information: Patrick Curtin, Benefits Access Program Assistant can be reached at 212-566-7855.
6. **Call the toll-free Hunger Hotlines:** For NYC: 866-888-8777; For Upstate NY: 866-526-2978.
7. **Lifenet:** 800-543-3638 (to look for a program in a particular area).
8. **Call Safe Horizon** at 800-621-HOPE (4673) – They'll assist you if you need help making a safety plan or finding a shelter, and/or if you've been injured and want the abuser arrested.
9. **US Department of Immigration:** 718-943-8632.
10. **NYC Domestic Violence Hotline:** 800-621-4673.
11. **NYS Crime Victims Board:** 800-247-8035.
12. **NYS Child Abuse Hotline:** 800-342-3720.
13. **For offender information,** call the NY Vine Services: 888-846-3469.

HIGHLIGHT ON VETERAN NEWS

Vasilios Kovoros

The Brooklyn Treatment Court of the Kings County Supreme Court recently opened a Veterans Track to accommodate the veteran participants in drug court. Similar to other Brooklyn Treatment Court participants, the veterans have frequent court appearances (two Fridays per month are allocated) along with case management and drug testing.

Brooklyn Treatment Court has partnered with the Veterans Administration (VA) to provide services to the veterans. Modeled after the Veteran's Court in Buffalo, Brooklyn Treatment Court has implemented a veteran's mentor program that recruits veteran volunteers to become members of the court team. The veteran mentors are essential to the veteran participant's recovery and program success. Veteran mentors are paired with a veteran participant and offer help with adjusting back to civilian life, support, and advocacy. The veterans at Brooklyn Treatment Court receive the services needed to reach their full

potential as productive members of society.

On April 27th, 2011, the first Veteran Advisory Committee was held in the Kings County Supreme Court to identify additional community stakeholders interested in joining the committee, discuss veteran specific community based services the court may be able to utilize, and create a strategic plan of action to assist in early identification of veterans in need.

The Brooklyn Treatment Court, in collaboration with other agencies, presented an innovative conference entitled: "A Pledge to Healing: A Multi-System Approach to Treating Chemically Dependent Veterans." The conference was held at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and hosted over four hundred attendees, including substance abuse and mental health treatment professionals, drug court staff, attorneys, students, and other criminal justice professionals.

Health and Wellness

Valerie Failing

Did you know that according to the World Health Organization, every six seconds someone dies from tobacco use? If you are ready to stop smoking, here is how you can get started:



S = Set a quit date.

T = Tell family, friends, and coworkers that you plan to quit smoking.

A = Anticipate and plan for the challenges you'll face while quitting.

R = Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car, and work.

T = Talk to your doctor about getting help to quit.



Dial 311 or go to nyc.gov to get a free patch & nicotine gum

Stop smoking today and you could have enough money for a down payment on a house!

Cost of smoking calculation formula: (Average number of cigarettes smoked each day/20) x (Cost for a 20-cigarette pack) x 365 x (Total number of years the person has smoked or intends to smoke).

BOUNCING BACK TO LIFE

Leroy West-Spicer

Center Willis Reed and Point Guard Walt "Clyde" Frazier?

I feel the importance of building self-esteem with our young males and females of color. I wanted to highlight the positive outcome in society that sometimes goes unnoticed because of all the negatives that are being focused on. We have our heroes like Ms. Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat on the bus, and now President Barack Obama.

I feel that sports are a very important part of one's recovery, an outlet where people can engage in positive social activities. Sports also offer lessons we can translate to our everyday lives, such as conflict resolution, trust, and enhanced communication skills.

Every year during March Madness we hear the stories of real people our youth can relate to. One such example is John Wall, who was the number one pick in the 2010 NBA Draft. Think about how

interested people were about Connecticut Women's Basketball, the team that broke the record for the most wins in a row in college basketball. Think about how the City was back in the day when most New York City kids were staying home to play for the Johnnies (St. John's University). I developed this team because I wanted to make recovery fun for all, while at the same time participants learned the key elements to a healthy lifestyle while in their recovery process.

I believe the lessons we learn from being a part of a sports team teach us how to become better people in the long run. From my experience, a great deal of the successful people I know have played a team sport. Sports allow strangers a common place to meet, share ideas, and make connections.



Brooklyn Treatment Court (BTC) created the Renaissance Basketball Team in the summer of 2008. We wanted to honor the Harlem Renaissance, the first black

professional basketball team that was established by Robert Douglas in 1923. In their three decades of existence, they were the first black basketball team to win a championship, and had an overall record of 2,588-529.

In 1927, the Harlem Globetrotters developed and were considered the Clown Princes of basketball. Since then, basketball has come a long way and has become the inner city game of choice. Remember the New York Knicks, and how in 1970 and 1973 they won the NBA Championship with players like

STAFF SPOTLIGHT — LEROY WEST-SPICER

Susan Sturges



If you ask the staff at Brooklyn Treatment Court (BTC) about Leroy West-Spicer they will likely tell you about his admirable work ethic, his unwavering commitment to his clients, his profound dedication to BTC. Most of all they will tell you about his love for basketball. It only takes a brief conversation with

Leroy before it becomes clear that his "love" for basketball is much more than that, it is a passion that has helped shape his life and continues to guide his future.

Leroy is an athlete and played basketball all his life. He excelled during his high school years, became an All American player and was recruited to play college basketball. At 6 feet 2 inches, it is no surprise that Leroy West-Spicer is a ballplayer, but

when you take a closer look you begin to see that it is not Leroy's height, but his heart that has made him successful. Fourteen years ago, Leroy traded in the basketball court for a whole different kind of Court. He joined BTC as a Case Manager and has dedicated his life to helping others. Leroy believes in giving people the opportunity to make positive changes in their lives. Everyday at BTC, Leroy provides his clients with the support and encouragement they need to overcome their struggles and achieve their goals. Focusing on their strengths, Leroy motivates his clients towards success. Very similar to the way a Coach manages his team, Leroy manages his caseload. It is this inherent coaching ability that makes Leroy so popular not only with his clients but all the clients at BTC and what drove him to create the BTC Renaissance Basketball Team.

Leroy saw an opportunity where he could help those in recovery outside the walls of the courthouse and created the BTC Renaissance Basketball Team in 2008. As head coach, Leroy dedicates

his free-time to developing a successful team full of well rounded players. On the court, Leroy not only teaches his players about the sport of basketball, but about teamwork and other valuable life lessons that will help them through the recovery process.

Whether it's on the basketball court or at BTC, Leroy always puts his heart into everything he does. Leroy is an inspirational person who in addition to being an athlete, coach and case manager is also a student seeking higher education. Leroy continues to grow and develop his skills and talents so he can continue to give back even more. He believes in setting the example for his clients and others by living a life of integrity and Leroy West-Spicer is doing exactly that. Leroy is an example and an inspiration to us all.



ALUMNI VOICES

Herbert Hardwick

The Brooklyn Treatment Court (BTC) Alumni Advisory Committee is comprised of BTC graduates who voluntarily meet on a regular basis to provide continuing support and encouragement, while at the same time having an opportunity to network with each-other. In addition, the committee offers suggestions and support to the BTC staff in an effort to enhance the multitude of services being provided through the Brooklyn Treatment Court initiative.



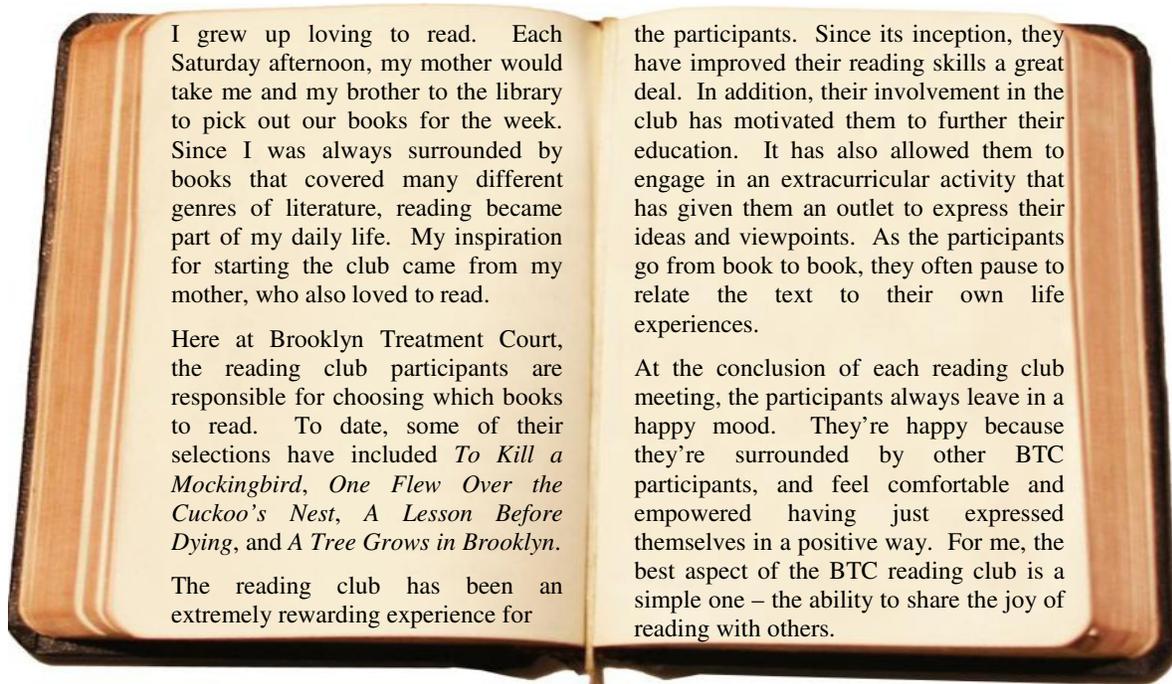
Judge Jo Ann Ferdinand (Center) with Several Alumni

Alumni visit court, and attend graduation ceremonies and special events while speaking with new participants.

They act as role models of resilience, determination and successful change to the BTC participants, the community, and supporting agencies.

BTC READING CLUB

Margarita Fournier



I grew up loving to read. Each Saturday afternoon, my mother would take me and my brother to the library to pick out our books for the week. Since I was always surrounded by books that covered many different genres of literature, reading became part of my daily life. My inspiration for starting the club came from my mother, who also loved to read.

Here at Brooklyn Treatment Court, the reading club participants are responsible for choosing which books to read. To date, some of their selections have included *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *A Lesson Before Dying*, and *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*.

The reading club has been an extremely rewarding experience for

the participants. Since its inception, they have improved their reading skills a great deal. In addition, their involvement in the club has motivated them to further their education. It has also allowed them to engage in an extracurricular activity that has given them an outlet to express their ideas and viewpoints. As the participants go from book to book, they often pause to relate the text to their own life experiences.

At the conclusion of each reading club meeting, the participants always leave in a happy mood. They're happy because they're surrounded by other BTC participants, and feel comfortable and empowered having just expressed themselves in a positive way. For me, the best aspect of the BTC reading club is a simple one – the ability to share the joy of reading with others.

MORAL RECONATION THERAPY

Julia Zuniga



Participants at their MRT Completion Ceremony with Judge Jo Ann Ferdinand and BTC Case Managers/MRT Facilitators

Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) was adopted by Brooklyn Treatment Court in April of 2003. MRT is a series of group sessions designed to assist clients with making positive decisions and judgments by developing moral reasoning in each individual. Each session consists of steps that focus on encouraging participants to re-evaluate their negative behaviors and increase life purpose, while reducing antisocial thinking and improving the chances of successfully completing their treatment mandate.

MRT groups are conducted by BTC staff members on Wednesdays from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, Thursdays from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, and Fridays from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

VOCATIONAL/EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Mayra Young



BTC's Computer Room with
Mural by Participants



The Brooklyn Treatment Court's Vocational/Educational Department (Voc/Ed Dept.) is actively working with participants to ensure that they get the most out of their treatment by exposing them to numerous opportunities in the educational, job seeking, and employment sectors.

Since June 2010, the Voc/Ed Dept. has escorted 75 participants to the Brooklyn Public Library to obtain their library cards and learn about the free services offered. Participants happily attend the library tours, as well as Resume and Interview Skills workshops every month. Since obtaining their library cards, many participants have sought further services on their own that otherwise would not be available had they not obtained a library card.

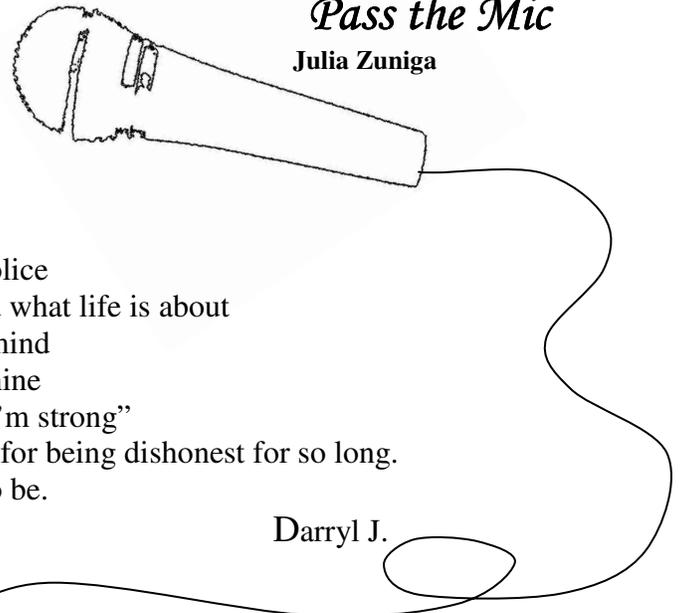
The Voc/Ed Dept. is also very unique since it maintains an onsite computer room that is specifically utilized for the educational

curriculum of PLATO. Participants who are not familiar with how to use computers can utilize the program three times a week in order to understand the basic usage of a computer. In addition, participants receive education, including GED practice, target subjects, and life skills. Furthermore, for clients who are phasing out of the program, the Voc/Ed Dept. has scheduled a Basic Banking Seminar. The Seminar goes over information regarding opening and maintaining a bank account, as well as managing money.

With our Monthly Calendar, clients are always aware of upcoming events and job fairs that may benefit them. All of this information is also posted on our Employment and Training board located in the waiting room of our Court. Here at Brooklyn Treatment Court, our goal is to have our clients strive to be successful!

Pass the Mic

Julia Zuniga



BTC Drug Free

That's the way I want to be.
No catching cases running from the police
BTC straightened me out help realized what life is about
Before BTC there was a cloud in my mind
Treatment gave me a glow so now I shine
I look at myself now and say "Wow, I'm strong"
I hope my family and God forgive me for being dishonest for so long.
BTC drug free that's the way I want to be.

Darryl J.

*Through the years Brooklyn Treatment Court had the honor of coming across very talented participants. **Pass The Mic** will allow clients the opportunity to share their talents by expressing themselves in a fun and healthy way through **Poetry, Sculpting, Drawing, etc.** Participants will take this moment to give a little of themselves and present their journey through recovery to the world.*

WHAT BTC MEANS TO THE STAFF



Brooklyn Treatment Court represents an opportunity for individuals to live and enjoy life rather than just existing and trying to survive. BTC means hope, hard work, commitment, serenity and an opportunity for success. – Joseph Madonia, Project Director

BTC is a place of opportunity for staff as well as participants. At BTC, staff can utilize their strengths and talents to help improve the lives of others as well as develop their ideas into programming that will not only positively impact the future of BTC participants but the

future of all Drug Courts. – Susan Sturges, Clinical Director

Long ago, BTC acknowledged that there was a problem with substance abuse in the community and they provided assistance not only to our community by making it safer to walk the streets, but to individuals and families involved. – Alisha Corridon, Resource Coordinator

The transformation made by the participants makes working here worthwhile. - Herbert Hardwick, Resource Coordinator

BTC offers an opportunity to change while recovering all at the same time. - Cindy Zayas, Lab Technician

I simply watch miracles happen regularly. I see broken lives mended, I see women with children become mothers, I see men with children become fathers, and I see the unemployable become employed. - Francisco Colon, Intake Coordinator

Brooklyn Treatment Court is an organization that is innovative and welcomes new and creative concepts. – Vasilius Kovoros, Case Manager

Brooklyn Treatment Court is an empowering opportunity for those who need that extra push to succeed. Valerie Failing, Case Manager

“Educating substance-abusing offenders about the hazards of substance abuse.” This says that they are willing to allow BTC to help them on the road to recovery. - Shama Greenidge, Case Manager

They work hard to serve people who otherwise would not have been given a chance or opportunity to find a new way of life. – Raquel Colon, Resource Coordinator

Working with the innovators of Specialty Courts continuously challenges me to try new approaches in working with the clients I serve. -Ramon Guzman, Senior Case Manager

BTC gives people who are fighting with addiction an opportunity to turn their lives around. - Mido Mary Wu, Office Manager

BTC provides people positive voices to hear that they have not heard before in their lives. - Leroy West-Spicer, Case Manager

To me, BTC stands for Beginning To Conquer - Lourdes Cartagena, Case Manager

Throughout the years, I have witnessed many people create goals for themselves and transform their lives to benefit them and their families. – Julia Zuniga, Case Technician

The Brooklyn Treatment Court stands as a model for how to swing the pendulum the other way, not just in the interest of rehabilitation for rehabilitation's sake, but for the sake of introducing solutions to the seemingly insurmountable (and intertwined) problems of substance abuse and mass incarceration. - Adam Sylvia, Case Manager

It is an honor to work with colleagues who are dedicated to their clients and who demonstrate patience, tolerance, and tenacity daily. - Jessica Abolafia- Brooklyn Law School, Legal Intern

ACROSS

- 5. The current President of the United States
- 6. First All-Black Basketball Team to win a Championship
- 7. Center for the NBA Champion NY Knicks in 1973
- 10. NBA team in Los Angeles
- 12. Name of BTC Project Director Joe ____
- 13. Clown Princes of basketball who formed in 1927
- 14. Who is the Judge of the Brooklyn Treatment Court?
- 17. Clinical Director at BTC ____ Sturges
- 18. First Black Quarterback to win Superbowl, Doug ____
- 19. Who developed the BTC Basketball Team?

DOWN

- 1. Big East Team from Queens (nickname)
- 2. Number 1 pick in the 2010 NBA Draft John ____
- 3. This school holds the record for most wins in a row in College Basketball
- 4. A day that all client s work towards
- 6. Civil Rights heroine __ Parks
- 8. Robert ____ established an all-black pro basketball team in 1923
- 9. Nickname for the College Basketball Tournament
- 11. One of the Amateur basketball teams in Harlem in 1923
- 15. Point Guard for the NY Knicks last Championship team ____
- 16. Which NBA team has the most championship wins?

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Answers can be found in the article on Page 3

by Leroy West-Spicer



By: William Sydney Miller



Calendar of Events

- June 3 – Synthetic Drugs: An Emerging Trend Training
- ACCESS Orientation (Off-Site) - Tuesdays and Thursdays
Location and Time: Manhattan - 8:30A.M./Brooklyn - 9:30A.M.

July	August	September
5 & 7	2 & 4	1 & 6
14 & 16	9 & 11	8 & 13
21 & 23	16 & 18	20 & 22
28 & 30	23, 25 and 30	27 & 29

- Year Up (Off-Site) – Open House: Every Tuesdays
Location and Time: Manhattan - 3:30 P.M. and 5:30 P.M.
- Plato Basic Life Skills (On-Site) – Tuesdays from 10 A.M. – 12 P.M.
Wednesday & Thursday 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.

July	August	September
1 & 2	2, 3 & 4	1, 6, 7 & 8
7, 8 & 9	9, 10 & 11	13, 14 & 15
14, 15 & 16	16, 17 & 18	20, 21 & 22
21, 22 & 23	23, 24 & 25	27, 28 & 29
28, 29 & 30	30 & 31	

- Moral Reconciliation Therapy Groups –
Wednesdays and Thursdays 3:00 – 4:00 P.M.
Fridays 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

BTC Newsletter Committee

Lourdes Cartagena
Valerie Failing
Margarita Fournier
Herbert Hardwick

Vasilios Kovoros
Joseph Madonia
Susan Sturges
Leroy West-Spicer

Mido Mary Wu
Mayra Young
Julia Zuniga

B R O O K L Y N
T R E A T M E N T
C O U R T