



CHOICES COUNSELING

March 25, 2019

To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Oregon's Specialty Courts and ask that you fully fund the Oregon Judicial Department in its efforts to financially support these programs.

By way of a little background, the Drug Courts, as well as other Specialty Courts, offer opportunities for weekly court review and offender accountability. We seek to intervene quickly when problems occur. We also provide acknowledgments and rewards for positive behaviors and probation compliance. In addition to reducing substance abuse and criminal conduct, our ongoing goals include providing opportunities for offenders to address and alleviate symptoms of addiction, mental illness, and criminal thinking.

Many people have had experiences with the court system – whether it is to challenge a parking ticket, end their marriage or file a lawsuit after a car accident. My experiences involve the criminal justice system and the Clatsop County Drug Court – but are somewhat unique.

I have been a defendant, a Probationer, a Drug Court Participant, I have been revoked and sent to prison. I have been on Post-Prison supervision, a second-time Drug Court Participant and a graduate. From there, I studied to become a therapist and now provide all levels of treatment to current participants in the Clatsop County Drug Court Program.

Here is my story: Alcohol and other drugs played a major role in my life. I used them to cope with trauma, and an inability to address personal responsibilities which were in a deep demand for structure and guidance. Eventually, my alcohol and other drug use resulted in the development of antisocial beliefs, attitudes and companionships, allowing me to continue my own ability to minimize, rationalize and hold onto a stance as a victim in my own choices. These choices resulted in several arrests and eventually being placed into the care and custody of the Oregon Department of Corrections (prison) for a second time on August 25, 2011. After completing a 16-month sentence, I was released with the opportunity to attend the Clatsop County Drug Court Program a second time.

It was clear the modality and direction of resources had taken a significant shift from my previous participation in Drug Court. This was evidenced by how the team took a different approach with accountability and in providing resources. Rather than taking the position I held opposition to for over a decade, the team presented themselves as helpers rather than authoritarians. As I presented with

willingness and less of an attitude of indifference, my prior contempt changed into holding a relationship of understanding. My fear of honesty and accountability transitioned to development

20 Basin Street, Suite #110
Astoria, OR 97103

Phone (503) 325-4499
Fax (503) 325-2860



CHOICES COUNSELING

of integrity and application of principles that I hold to this very day. These principles allow me to work with our current drug court participants with empathy and compassion.

In my humble beginnings I took advantage of many resources such as housing, bus passes, and clothing vouchers. For some, these things are little and somewhat insignificant items. For me, it allowed me to focus on placing my every effort into my recovery and following the conditions and guidelines of the program. The small tokens of appreciations, gift certificates and incentives continued to motivate me and stay on the path rather than chase immediate gratifications which repeatedly lead to incomprehensible demoralization. As time progressed and my confidence grew, so did my self-esteem. My abstinence took on a whole new meaning when I was further along in the program and I found myself in a position which allowed me to provide the same support I needed when I was new to the program by my peers.

The moment when I was able to provide another addict struggling with sound direction from my own personal experience, I realized what I wanted in life. This change in my life's direction took on a whole new meaning and demand for structure and guidance which I found endlessly from my probation officer, legal counsel and several other members of the drug court team. I was supported in the development of educational goals, seeking employment and letters of reference allowing me the opportunity to become employed within a career setting that nurtured my professional development to the career I love today. It's an honor to say that with the support and guidance of every team member from the drug court program I was able to complete the drug court program with no violations and a perfect attendance.

Our program allowed me to engage in special programs, educational components, and be granted access to community services I had otherwise overlooked. As a benefit from this, I was allowed several opportunities to pursue a career in the behavioral healthcare industry with the intention to give back to the community I gravely took from while in my active addiction. After meeting the requirements for certification as a drug and alcohol counselor it was within a few short years I was given the chance to give back to the very same program that gave me a fresh start. Every day I am rewarded with the opportunity to share my experience, strength and hope with individuals I share a common thread with and identify their personal truth to the barriers they face as they overcome their own struggles in addiction. For some it just means being that one person who listens as they process their inability to overcome their environment, or it might mean providing the brief moment of clarity that is overlooked by clouded judgment, but most always is it being the non-judgmental person who has the ability to guide them to resources otherwise not considered or allowed had they not entered the Drug Court Program.

As an alumnus of our program; coming up on 8 years of recovery from active addiction, it is easy to understand how at the beginning many are ungrateful for the structure and guidance that is later on learned to be appreciated. As a team member of the program I see the importance and the value of the resources we might never discuss with our clients.



CHOICES COUNSELING

As I have shared, we rely upon a team approach for court engagement, treatment, supervision and community support. We rely on our community partners for assistance in developing safe and sober housing resources, evaluating participants for educational and employment opportunities. We cannot do this important work alone. Drug Court changed everything for me. Please continue our efforts to keep Oregon's Specialty Courts fully supported and funded. These programs work – all of us benefit. Thank you for your support. If you have questions or would like to speak to me about my experiences with the Clatsop County Drug Court Program, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Clark "CAM" Miner, CADC I, QMHA-C

Domestic Violence Interventionist
Alcohol & Drug Counselor
Choices Counseling
20 Basin Street, Suite 110
Astoria, Oregon. 97103
503-325-4499 – office
503-440-4468 – Cell
Cam.miner@choicescounsel.net

Dear Kind Family Resource Lady -
Thank you very much for your help
with my divorce. I felt scared and
confused when I came in and you
helped me so much. I could not
afford to hire a lawyer, but I
could pay the fee you charged.
Thank you for offering this service
to our community. BEST TO YOU,
KW

KW
740 HARRISON AVE.
ASTORIA OR 97103



Clatsop Circuit Court
Family Resource Center
PO BOX 835
ASTORIA OR 97103

To Whom It May Concern,

Had it not been for the assistance provided by the Clatsop County Family Resource Center, I would not have been able to find my way through the legal process of divorce.

I am a 50 year old resident of Clatsop County and can not afford an attorney.

Clatsop County Family Resource Center has provided assistance free of charge twice to me in divorce proceedings, and as of today they are further assisting me in a name change related to my recent divorce.



Rich Inaba
3/22/19

To Whom it may concern:

The Harbor is a domestic violence & sexual assault advocacy center. We rely on the vital services provided by the family resource center to advocate for the safety of members of our community. The importance of the FRC's role cannot be overstated! We are so grateful for our partnership, & could not do this work without their necessary assistance.

Please feel free to contact me for additional information if needed.

Sincerely,

Jessica Klein

The Harbor Advocate

(503) 325-5735

801 Commercial St.

Astoria, OR 97103

Cindee S. Matyas
Circuit Court Judge



**CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON
FOR THE COUNTY OF CLATSOP**

Clatsop County Courthouse
749 Commercial
PO Box 835
Astoria, OR 97103

March 26, 2019

RE: SB 5513, Oregon Judicial Department's Budget

Dear Senator Winters, Representative Piluso and others:

I am writing to ask that you do everything possible to fully fund the Oregon Judicial Department. I have been a Circuit Court Judge in Clatsop County since 2007. We are a small court with three judges. Every day we see the range of reasons why people come to court – whether they are taking care of a speeding ticket, suing over a property dispute, dissolving a marriage, adopting a child, providing services to the estate of a loved one, fighting to keep their children or having been charged with or are the victim of a crime.

I am sure that every judge in Oregon can think of everyday stories of people being helped by the courts. We help in so many ways ranging from providing help with “do-it-yourself” divorce forms to those seeking protective orders. We help people get their driver’s licenses back by setting them up on payment plans or allowing them to do community service in lieu of fines. We help them resolve their small claims by providing a forum for mediation where both parties participate in a structured environment with a trained mediator to explore options for settlement. We monitor guardianships and conservatorships and hold people accountable when they are responsible for loved ones or other people in their care. We provide opportunities for families to reunite when they have been separated due to parental neglect or harm. We provide language and access services for all participants and jurors – giving them a full opportunity to utilize the court’s services.

I am particularly proud of the accomplishments we have achieved in the Specialty Court arena. Treatment Courts, Drug Courts and other Specialty Court Programs allow individuals with “high risk” and “high needs” an opportunity to be successful prior to adjudication or while on probation by utilizing court involvement, enhanced supervision and accountability with a focus on treatment and building personal responsibility and community support. In some instances, successful participants may see their charges reduced or dismissed. In other instances, participants avoid lengthy incarceration while successfully engaging in treatment programs designed for life-long success.

I have two “case studies” to share.



Ms. Jane Doe

I first met Ms. Doe when she was sentenced for a drug charge. As part of a plea negotiation, instead of jail, she was ordered to participate in the Clatsop County Treatment Court. Ms. Doe was a victim of domestic violence. Her abuser was in prison. She lost most of her teeth after the last assault. She was unemployed, living in a windowless trailer, hopeless and angry. It took a long time for Ms. Doe to trust that the court and treatment team were actually on her side. This was something the court system had never been for her. Every week, she would be acknowledged for showing up and making changes toward her sobriety and stability. With the help of the Treatment Court, Ms. Doe found a reliable, sober support network. She successfully completed a treatment program. We celebrated days, weeks and months of her sobriety. She was able to get full dentures and her smile opened many doors. She became employed and was able to move into an apartment of her own. She was able to clear all of the past obstacles and obtained her Oregon Driver's License. She completely disconnected all ties with her abuser. She graduated from our program and to this day, she remains a contributing member of the community.

Mr. John Doe

Mr. Doe is a retired gentleman with a chronic mental illness. He previously had been committed to the Oregon State Hospital. About five years ago, at a time when he was unsure if he was taking his medication, Mr. Doe decided to go to a local club for karaoke night. He was manic. After leaving the club, he decided to go to a house in his neighborhood and take a bath. He thought it would be best to go in through a window. He made some noise and woke up the residents. He realized that they would probably call the police, so he decided to wait in the bathtub until they arrived. The occupants of the house were, understandably, very frightened. Mr. Doe was very cooperative with the police and knew many by name because of his prior exemplary standing in the community.

Mr. Doe said later that he did not recognize he was doing anything wrong or unusual. Ultimately, felony charges were brought against him.

To avoid a prison sentence, Mr. Doe entered a plea of "Guilty" to Burglary in the First Degree and was given a probation sentence. While on probation, Mr. Doe was referred to the Clatsop County Treatment Court. He graduated from the program 14 months later. Like Ms. Doe, these were some of his accomplishments while in Treatment Court: he met regularly with his supervising officer and treatment providers; he found stability with the proper medication; he obtained needed dental work; he obtained independent housing and purchased a car.

After graduation, Mr. Doe was able to earn the early termination of his probation and, to this day, continues to go the extra mile for other Treatment Court participants. He regularly brings up to date information on community opportunities for medical and dental resources, transportation, housing and community support. He is also always on

the lookout and shares information on free community meals, free pro-social activities and resources.

Several months ago, Mr. Doe was hired by our local mental health agency to be a paid “Peer Support Specialist.” He enjoys helping others and speaking to community members and groups about his experiences – hoping to improve the experience and understanding of others.

Ms. Doe and Mr. Doe completed a combined total of 109 hours of community service as a way to give back to the community and receive credit against their outstanding court fees. If you ask Ms. Doe or Mr. Doe about their experiences, I believe each would say that their lives are much better in every way than it was five years ago and that they are glad for their opportunity to work with the court system.

This is just a small glimpse of the many positive stories seen daily in the courts throughout Oregon. These programs work because of experienced court staff and coordinators, dedicated judges and trial court administrators plus local support from community partners. We also need the support of our friends in the legislature to recognize and financially support the positive contributions the court system provides for all Oregonians.

If you have any questions or if I can provide additional information to you, I hope you will contact me. I can be reached through my Judicial Assistant, Darla, at #503-325-8555.

Sincerely,

Cindee S. Matyas
Circuit Court Judge

March 21, 2019

The Honorable Jackie Winters
The Honorable Carla Piluso
Co-chairs, Public Safety Subcommittee

Sent by e-mail only: (to jwmps.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Re: SB 5513, Oregon Judicial Department budget

Dear Senator Winters and Representative Piluso:


I am writing to ask that you fully fund the Oregon Judicial Department (SB 5513).

Many people understand the role of the court in the criminal justice system, but I wanted to add some information on how it has affected me.

I live in Astoria, Oregon. In March of 2017, I was having personal difficulties, and my son Lazar was placed in foster care. I was afraid of what would happen to Lazar and to me. My involvement with Clatsop County Circuit Court turned out to be a positive experience. Judge Brownhill and the court staff treated me with respect. They held me accountable, but they also helped me understand what I needed to do and how to do it. I appreciate the way I was treated by the court and the help I received. I am proud to say that I'm now raising Lazar on my own, and our relationship is closer than ever.

I would like you to fully fund the Oregon Judicial Department so the courts can continue to help families like mine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa Chambers", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Chambers

March 21, 2019

The Honorable Jackie Winters
The Honorable Carla Piluso
Co-chairs, Public Safety Subcommittee

Sent by e-mail only: (to jwmps.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Re: SB 5513, Oregon Judicial Department budget

Dear Senator Winters and Representative Piluso:

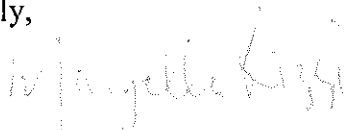
I am writing to ask that you fully fund the Oregon Judicial Department (SB 5513).

Many people understand the role of the court in the criminal justice system, but I wanted to add some information on how it has affected me.

I am a graduate of Clatsop County Family Treatment Court. It is a structured program helping parents set goals until they can manage everyday life. It kept me accountable. It helped me get the counseling that I needed for my past issues so that I could move forward. The Family Treatment Court team is there to support parents and help them to figure out what is needed for each individual person. The support groups in the courthouse are very helpful to not only talk about what's going on but also what a parent may be struggling with. It helps support others in the program. It is not an easy program but it is something that is needed. The support provided is unexplainable. Everyone deserves a chance. Judge Brownhill and her staff help parents successfully get to where they need to be. Family Treatment Court changed my life. I am a single parent of three boys, a student at Clatsop Community College, and I also work part-time. Some days are better than others but I know if I needed the support I can call anyone from Family Treatment Court and they would be there for me. I wouldn't change my experience at Family Treatment Court for anything.

I would like you to fully fund the Oregon Judicial Department so the court can continue to help families like mine.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Rizzi