



# The Court Reporter

## [A Message From Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio](#)

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) has become an integral part of the manner in which this Juvenile Court approaches juvenile justice. What I appreciate about the Casey Foundation's mission is that it continues to provide new methods, new templates for Juvenile Courts to examine and embrace. The JDAI model has worked well at our Court and we will continue to employ its practices.

That is why I was gratified to see the Casey Foundation cite the work the Court is doing as it begins to move toward diversionary programming and dispositions for youth charged with lesser offenses. But while recognition is appreciated, I am more interested in results, and I am certain our Court staff and our community partners share that objective.

It is quite obvious that the CASA/GAL program and the family of Kimberly Denholm share the same objective of bringing a little joy into the lives of the kids who are represented in Court by our CASA volunteers. The Christmas in July event is a wonderful extension of the Toy Shop and I commend the CASA Program, Dr. David Denholm and the volunteers for making it a success while preparing the kids for the new school year with essential items. I would also like to commend the two young ladies who are part of a Girl Scout Troop for their dedication to this event, and for proving that the spirit of giving is alive year-round.

*Linda Tucci Teodosio*



Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio

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## [Juvenile Court Probation Practices Noted in Foundation Report](#)

The Annie E. Casey Foundation recently released a comprehensive white paper report that was distributed nationally on the growing trend Juvenile Courts have adopted of shifting more cases toward diversionary programming and easing the reliance on traditional probationary practices.

The Casey Foundation is a private philanthropic organization that has championed progressive solutions to issues facing the juvenile justice system. One of its principal causes is the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) which encourages courts to seek other methods to hold youth accountable without the need for placement outside of the home or in a detention facility. The Summit County Juvenile Court implemented the JDAI philosophies and practices in 2010 and has been an avid practitioner of the many facets of the JDAI model.

Diversionary programming is a central theme of the shift away from court dockets and extended stays on a probationary caseload once a youth has completed his or her dispositional orders. In the report issued by the Casey Foundation, the Summit County Juvenile Court twice was cited for its commitment to and implementation of more diversionary programming.

Under the heading of "Promising Diversionary Practices," the report listed the Court along with others located in California, Georgia, Oregon, and Tennessee, as "already pursuing changes consistent with this new approach, with encouraging results."

The paragraph noting Summit County, entitled "Giving Law Enforcement an Alternative to Arrest in the Community," stated that, "In Summit County, Ohio, local police and sheriff's departments have referred 600 to 800 youth to police-led programs in each of the past four years. This represents at least 20 percent of all Summit County delinquency cases each year." This is a product of the collaboration between the Court and some law enforcement departments who have increased referrals to their Court-supported diversion units.

The report also outlined and recognized five Courts nationally that were "trailblazers in probation transformation."

It stated that, "Summit County has reduced the number of youth placed on probation for misdemeanor offenses from 152 in 2014 to just 29 in 2017, a drop of 81 percent. Instead of probation for these youth, Summit County imposes individualized and limited dispositions involving referral for treatment, referral for assessment, community service, restitution, essay writing or – in some cases – no further action."

"While I am pleased that our efforts are being recognized, we also know that our efforts are a work in progress," said Judge Linda Teodosio. "I think it reflects well on our Court staff for accepting and embracing this shift of emphasis so effectively. We'll continue to employ evidence-based practices to these particular cases while assuring that public safety will not be compromised."



Shown above is the cover of the white paper report produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

## [CASA/GAL Program Celebrates "Christmas in July"](#)

Caring doesn't need a calendar.

On July 17<sup>th</sup>, the members of the Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) department conducted a first-time event designed to help kids who are represented by their volunteers.

The event was called "Christmas in July" and it is based on the annual Toy Shop that is held at the Court every December. The key similarities between the two occasions were, a) The Kimberly S. Denholm Charities provided the primary financial support and; b) volunteers had the opportunity to select items to give to the kids on their caseload.

The key differences between Christmas in July and the Toy Shop were, a) the majority of the items were geared to back-to-school necessities and practical needs such as backpacks and; b) it was 89 degrees outside.

There was one other obvious similarity between the two events: the opportunity to make a child's life a little easier, which appealed to Dr. Edward Denholm. Dr. Denholm was married to Kimberly Denholm, a CASA volunteer until she passed away, and he created the charitable foundation in her memory. The foundation is the primary benefactor of the Toy Shop.

CASA Program Director Beth Cardina conceived the idea of replicating the Toy Shop concept for a summertime event and broached the possibility with Dr. Denholm.

"He couldn't have been more supportive," said Cardina. "He and his family have always been there for the CASA program, and this is just another example of that."

The event also got some unexpected and welcomed assistance from two young ladies. Girl Scout members Shelby Gupta and Sarah Stover of Troop #1347 earned their Silver Award by gathering donations. The girls were compelled to take on this project after Sarah observed her mother, Paula Avritt Stover, being sworn in as a CASA volunteer. She was inspired by her mother's efforts, and also wanted to make a difference. Sarah and Shelby, under the direction of Troop Leader Michelle Gupta, each spent 50 hours collecting monetary donations and making handmade fleece blankets to donate to the program. They also collected items such as blankets, pillows, clothes, socks, toiletries, coloring books, school supplies, and 48 drawstring bags.



Girl Scouts Shelby Gupta, left, and Sarah Stover hold two of the fleece blankets they made and donated to the Christmas in July event.

"To see those girls embrace what the program is doing for the youth we serve was a gratifying moment," Cardina said.