



The Court Reporter

A Message From Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio

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From the moment the Detention Center received its initial accreditation from the American Correctional Association (ACA) in 2015, it wasn't a matter of planning ahead for the application for re-accreditation this year. Instead, it has been the mission of this Court, and particularly the staff of the Detention Center, to maintain the standards the ACA has put in place and to make those standards and our own policies and procedures, work for the benefit of the staff and the youth who are housed in the Detention Center. I think we have done that, and while the audit and the accreditation process wasn't a formality, I believe the Court has remained consistent in applying those standards and best practices for the past three years, and I believe that was recognized and appreciated by the ACA in its final report approving our re-accreditation application. My congratulations to our staff.

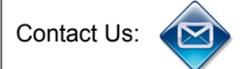
I'd also like to congratulate the organizers of our Summit for Kids activity this year, the "Just Us" photo booth. Working with the Peace, Justice, and Equality Committee, the photo booth was an unqualified success, and the other activities offered to our visitors seemed just as popular.

Finally, I was just as saddened as everyone else at the Court when I learned of the passing of Julia Slocum, Court staff member and daughter of our own Magistrate Kathy Bertsch. Julia certainly made a positive impression on everyone who met her here and outside of the Court. I join the entire Court in sending my deepest condolences to Kathy and her family.

Linda Tucci Teodosio



Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio



Juvenile Court Center Earns Re-accreditation

Summit County Juvenile Court Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio has announced that the Juvenile Court's Detention Center received re-accreditation from the American Correctional Association (ACA) after undergoing a thorough examination by ACA auditors last March. Representatives from the Court were notified of the re-accreditation after a final overview of audit findings at the ACA Summer Conference in Minneapolis.

The ACA requires that applicants comply with a specific set of 420 best practices and promising practices standards to achieve re-accreditation, the same examination the Detention Center received when it first achieved accreditation in 2015. There were 28 mandatory items the Court had to pass otherwise it would have automatically failed the audit, which lasted three days to cover the checklist of requirements. The Court passed all the mandatory items and achieved an overall rating of 99.7%, near perfection. The lone item not approved by the ACA was that there were not bathroom facilities within each individual living quarters on the housing unit, however, facility staff are on the units at all times the youth are confined to allow the youth access to the facilities as they need them.

In the report, ACA auditors often used the term "impressive" to describe operations and programming employed daily in the Detention Center. The auditors added that there were methods implemented in the Detention Center that were unique in both concept and effectiveness, pointing to, for instance, the Therapy Room where youth can go to calm themselves. They receive counsel by social workers and sensory therapy. The commission, during the panel hearing, congratulated the Court on its progressive approach and leadership.

The ACA reviewed the Court's compliance in the areas of safety, security, physical plants, food service, staff development and training, and other detention facility operations. It also reviewed the Court's policies and procedures for the Detention Center.

Receiving the award of re-accreditation from the ACA is an indication the Detention Center meets the standard of excellence set by the leading corrections organization in the nation.

"The re-accreditation is a testament to the good work done by our staff in the Detention Center," said Judge Teodosio. "It is validation that innovative approach we are taking in the Detention Center has a viable benefit not only to the youth in the Detention Center, but to the Summit County community."



Detention Superintendent Melissa Gerney holds the reaccreditation certificate. To her right is Special Projects Coordinator Lisa DiSabato-Moore and Court Administrator Bob Bickett is to her left.

Juvenile Court Summit for Kids Activity Proves Popular

An estimated 15,000 people turned out for the 9th annual Summit for Kids Family Expo on August 18th at the John S. Knight Center in downtown Akron. Quite a few of them stopped by the Bridgestone Room where the Summit County Juvenile Court and the Peace, Justice, and Equality Committee was The Summit County Juvenile Court and the Peace, Justice & Equality (PJ&E) Committee will held its family-friendly project.

The "Just Us Peace Stop" drew long lines all day. It included a reading corner where youth will be able to sit down, have a book read to them, and they can leave with a book. There will also be a photo booth and a Virtual Reality corner. Youth will also have the opportunity to make a "self-portrait" for the Equali-Tree, a Summit for Kids project from three years ago that still stands in the main lobby of the William J. Kannel Juvenile Court Center.



Families gathered to take part in several activities at the PJ&E Committee's Just Us Peace Stop.



Long lines formed at the Just Us Peace Stop photo booth.

The "Just Us Peace Stop" is part of the PJ&E movement, a community-wide initiative designed to promote greater understanding and communication among the community's youth, their parents and law enforcement. The desired results are reducing the amount of youth of color who become involved in the juvenile justice system and creating safer neighborhoods in the process. The PJ&E Committee is working to facilitate that communication through the use of Peace Circles, where the parties can meet to engage in meaningful dialogue.

"This project is latest of the many activities that we hope will enhance awareness of the Peace, Justice and Equality message," said Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio. "It's an opportunity for families to do something fun together while, at the same time, contributing to the PJ&E movement."

In Memoriam

She wasn't here at the Court very long. She didn't need to be. Julia Slocum still managed to touch the lives of so many people while she was.

There is no gentle way around the obvious: Julia faced many serious physical challenges in her life. Often times, her body would betray her in different ways. But it couldn't reach her heart.

Her mother, Magistrate Kathy Bertsch, knew that. As Julia grew through her teenage years, Kathy sought ways to mainstream Julia, to introduce her to a workplace, where others were doing the same thing, to give normalcy and productivity to her life. To succeed. That is when Kathy Bertsch approached Judge Teodosio about the possibility of Julia working in the Clerk's Office. Judge Teodosio eagerly welcomed the idea. The staff of the Clerk's Office eagerly welcomed Julia.

Julia couldn't really engage in conventional conversation, but she knew how to communicate. Sometimes a smile can speak volumes.

At age 21, her body finally out-fought her will. But what a battle she waged. Now, though, the battle is done. But not the memory of her; not to those who knew her, not to those who saw her, not to those who drew inspiration from her determination. That lives on, as it should.

Rest well, Julia. Rest easy.