



The Court Reporter

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

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We don't work for awards. We work for results. But when those results are noticed and appreciated, it is gratifying, and it was certainly meaningful when Begun Center of Case Western Reserve recently recognized the Court.

As this Court continues to transition to more diversion services, it is encouraging to see that those efforts are noted by organizations that work closely with us. That certainly applies to the Begun Center. We share a common goal to employ methods that best serve the community and best serve the youth who become Court-involved by employing evidence-based practices that allows youth to receive services in lieu of placement out of the home. We are getting positive results. That is why I was particularly pleased when The Begun Center's Dr. Jeff Kretschmar stated in his introduction of the award that the Juvenile Court staff was deeply invested in improving the lives of the children they serve. That resonated with me, because it is so true. The devotion our staff brings to their jobs day after day is the true measure of our efforts.

I also want to commend the individuals who have committed to our first 10-week session of The Parent Project. In the nearly 16 years I have served as Juvenile Court Judge, I have seen the desperation that parents sometimes feel to alter the direction of a child who presents dangerous and challenging behaviors. The Parent Project can give them something to take back to the home. The program also gives the parent a kind of haven; a respite from the trials of raising an difficult child, to share their stories with others who understand, and to receive and lend some much-needed support. I wish them well.

Linda Tucci Teodosio



Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio



[Juvenile Court Earns Inaugural Award from Begun Center](#)

Stating that the Summit County Juvenile Court embraced the movement toward juvenile diversion before it was a widely accepted practice, the Begun Center of Case Western Reserve University selected the Court as its first recipient of the Center's Community Partnership Award.

The Begun Center was established to promote social justice and community development. The Center is driven by applying research-based methods to address and prevent violence in communities through education and training. The Center is celebrating its 20th anniversary and created the award to acknowledge the work done in those areas by an individual or organization.

Dr. Jeff Kretschmar, who has worked closely with Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio and Court staff, made the introduction of the award at a ceremony on behalf of the Begun Center in early October. He cited that the Court has been a leader in juvenile diversion efforts, opting to provide treatment to youth and their families as opposed to placement in a detention center or other out-of-home placements, and limiting or eliminating exposure to the juvenile justice system in the process.



Dr. Kretschmar acknowledges Judge Teodosio from the podium.



Judge Teodosio addresses the crowd after accepting the award on behalf of the Court.

Dr. Kretschmar lauded Judge Teodosio's leadership and vision in this area, citing the local and national recognition she has received as a voice for effective treatment of youth who become Court-involved. He also recognized the work done by Court staff.

"They are trained in trauma-informed practices, in the science of brain development, and how adverse childhood experiences can influence behavior," he said. "The Court staff speak the same language and approach their duties with the best interest of kids and families in mind."

Dr. Kretschmar alluded to three diversionary programs either devised by Judge Teodosio or introduced by her to the Court. They are:

- **The Responder Program:** as a part of the Court's Family Resource Center, one of Judge Teodosio's innovations, the Responder Program provides a mediator to oversee discussions between school administrators and parents to devise a plan of action for children who have presented behaviors that have hindered their school progress and/or could eventually lead to a child becoming Court-involved.
- **Restore Court:** this Ohio Supreme Court-certified specialty docket was the first of its kind in the State of Ohio. Youth who become Court-involved who are identified through an assessment process that they could be the victims of being trafficked are given support and services to break the cycle of behavior that brought them to the Court's attention.
- The Peace, Justice & Equality Committee's **Peace Circles:** Trained volunteers facilitate discussions between parties who have had a disagreement. Conflict resolution is the goal and meaningful dialogue between both sides, face-to-face, have proven effective in resolving the issue and fostering a better understanding between the parties.

The Court has other programs in place that are diversionary in nature, such as the Crossroads Program, the Family Reunification Through Recovery Court, and Teen Court.

Dr. Kretschmar also observed that Judge Teodosio's willingness to invite community partners and stakeholders to collaborate on many of the initiatives undertaken by the Court not only strengths the programming, but the community as a whole.

"I am deeply grateful to the Begun Center for this recognition," said Judge Teodosio. "I cannot emphasize enough the contributions the staff at the Court have made to being honored this way. This award belongs to them, and I know we will continue to do our best every day to improve on what we are doing at the Court."

[Parent Project Offers Guidance, Hope for Parents](#)

Probation Department staff members Natasha Ervin and Jimmy Oliver greeted each person who entered the room in the Summit County Juvenile Court Center the same way: with a smile and a welcoming remark. Food and other refreshments were available to them. However, this wasn't a social gathering, not really. It was a group assembling for The Parent Project, a program that assists parents who are challenged with a child or children in the home who are acting in an unruly way.



While The Parent Project is new to the Summit County Juvenile Court, it has been in existence for over 30 years. Licensed Psychologist Dr. Roger Morgan introduced The Parent Project in California and it has gained nationwide acceptance. Dr. Morgan devised a curriculum that specializes in the treatment of children and adolescents who have or present behavioral disorders.

Some of the information is research based, some of it is anecdotal from experiences of parents who volunteered information for the study, and it is all designed to foster a better understanding of why children act the way they do and how parents can address those actions in a pro-active, productive manner.

The Parent Project is offered to parents who agree to commit to 10 consecutive weeks, for up to three hours per session. There is no charge to participate in the program. The primary investments are in time and family.

"I think The Parent Project can be a turning point in a parent's relationship with a child who is giving them problems in the home," said Oliver.

Ervin and Oliver took 40 hours of training to provide guidance through the curriculum, which addresses several issues: angry outbursts, domestic unrest, gang activity, running away, substance misuse, poor school performance and truancy, suicidal threats, and video game/social media predominance. The sessions provide methods they can try in the home to hopefully rectify those behaviors if confronted by them from the actions of their child.



Natasha Ervin and Jimmy Oliver prepare to facilitate a meeting of The Parent Project, which will run for 10 consecutive weeks.

While Ervin and Oliver facilitate the meetings and move the stages of the program forward, the meetings are somewhat informal. The participants are encouraged to share their stories; they are encouraged to take an active role in advancing the curriculum by reading to the group from the text books provided, and then discuss what was read. They are also invited to share their individual stories.

Team-building and trust-building are placed at a premium with The Parent Project. It isn't an easy proposition to open up about the struggles a parent faces trying to raise an unruly child. But, The Parent Project not only equips them with ways to better approach their parenting, but it offers a kind of catharsis, a forum to express their frustrations, their successes, their needs. One of the hallmarks of The Parent Project is the support the parents receive from the instructors and their fellow participants.

It was just the second week of the 10-week commitment to the project, and it was obvious to an observer that there was already a camaraderie that was developing among the individuals who assembled for the evening session.

"Our mission in offering this program is to show them that they are not alone in this battle," said Ervin. "We want to empower them with ways they can help not only their children, but help themselves, through the techniques and the networking the program provides."

The Parent Project will be offered shortly after the current 10-week sessions are completed. Should you know of a parent who could benefit from this project, have them contact Ms. Ervin at 330-643-5332 or nervin@cpcourt.summitoh.net or Mr. Oliver at 330-643-7952 or joliver@cpcourt.summitoh.net.