

Kowalski, Christine

From: Kowalski, Christine
Sent: Friday, October 4, 2024 3:30 PM
To: Larson, John; Baumgartner, Kristin; Johnson, Brenda; Bourguignon, Gail
Cc: McLaughlin, Beth; Deschamps, Dusty; Vannatta, Shane; Marks, Jason; Halligan, Leslie; Matt Jennings; Greenwell, Robert; Forcella, Hailey
Subject: Youth Court Participation in Drug Court

Good Afternoon Judge Larson and Kristin,

I am writing to notify you both that Youth Court will not be participating in Drug Court at this time. That participation includes staffing, hearings and any subsequent Drug Court hearings. Youth Court will supervise all the youth separately under the conditions of their Court Orders. I have already informed the other Judges and Beth McLaughlin about this decision but I wanted to make sure that I also informed you directly.

I know that you are aware of the dysfunctional dynamic of the Drug Court team and due to that dynamic I do not believe that it is a safe environment for Youth Court to participate in at this time, nor am I presently comfortable supporting any of the kids participating in Drug Court. I have tried to share my views about the dynamic over the last six months but in my opinion it has not been an open environment for me to share any views that are contrary to yours, Judge Larson. I am saddened it has come to this at this time, but in my opinion I need to advocate for the emotional, social, and mental health safety of myself, my staff and most importantly the kids we supervise. I hope that it can resolve itself in the future, but I believe in order to do that we all need outside mediation to come in and assist us to audit our program and help in a more healthy way to communicate as a team.

If anyone has questions, please feel free to email me.

Thanks,

Christine Kowalski
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
Missoula Youth Court

“We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... We are in charge of our attitudes!”

-Charles Swindoll