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Crossroads Girls Mental Health Court receives national award

Crossroads Girls Mental Health Court program has been selected as the recipient of the 2016 National Criminal Justice Association Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award for the Western Region. Awards will be presented during the 2016 NCJA National Forum on Criminal Justice, which will take place August 7-9 in Philadelphia.

Crossroads Girls Mental Health Court was established in January 2009 as the direct outgrowth of the Bexar County Juvenile Justice & Mental Health Task Force. Its mission was to identify and effectively and expeditiously serve adolescent females involved with the juvenile justice system. This innovative specialty court program is presided over by Judge Laura Parker in the 386th Juvenile District Court:

“We are pleased with the recognition by the National Criminal Justice Association of our Crossroads Girls Mental Health Court program. This is a prestigious award and we are honored to receive it,” Judge Parker said. “The impetus for establishing this diversion program was to address the mental health needs of junior high aged girls before they become extensively involved in the juvenile system. By focusing on the root causes contributing to delinquency, this court can positively impact these girls’ lives and derail any future involvement in the criminal justice system.”

Crossroads girls voluntarily enter the program with a supportive adult who agrees to be an active participant in the process. While the Judge retains primary responsibility for monitoring compliance and administering incentives and sanctions during a court docket held twice a month, these decisions are informed by input from the participants, as well as the treatment team, consisting of Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department and District Attorney’s Office staff, defense attorneys, a home-based treatment provider and other service agencies. Crossroads has worked to help females ranging in age from 12-17 years of age. This is an intensive program designed to engage and connect participants to the services they need through a constructive relationship with the Court.

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