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THE TASC CONNECTION



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SUBMISSIONS

Do you have an event or news you want to share with TASC?

Submit your information using our online form:

[CLICK HERE](#)



SAVE THE DATE FOR



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALTY COURTS
 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE
MARCH 26-28, 2024
 THE OMNI FORT WORTH
 1300 HOUSTON STREET | FORT WORTH, TX

SAVE THE DATE!

Check our Upcoming Events page for information about events you may be interested in. Don't forget to share any upcoming events with us for the next newsletter!

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VETERAN RESOURCES

Veteran Intercepts in the Criminal Justice System
 National Institute of Corrections (NIC) 4-Part Webinar

Justice for Vets
 All Rise Podcast



Upcoming Events

November 9	Bexar County	12pm	Veterans Treatment Court Graduation Ceremony, @ the Alamo Post 2
November 10	Dallas County	1pm	S.T.A.C. Graduation Ceremony Frank Crowley Courts Bldg., 2 nd Floor
November 10	Deadline	SCRC	Stipend Applications to attend the 2024 TASC Training Conference are DUE
November 10	Deadline	TASC	Nomination Forms for Awards are DUE
November 10	Deadline	TASC	Applications for 2024-225 TASC Board Positions are DUE
November 13	Webinar	CSG	Systems in Crisis: Revamping the Juvenile Justice Workforce and Core Strategies for Improving Public Safety and Youth Outcomes
November 15	Virtual	TASC	Monthly Board Meeting
November 15	Webinar	CSG	Ask the Expert: Homeless Outreach Teams
November 15	Announce	SCRC	Stipend Award Announcements
November 15–17	College Station, TX	CMIT	TCA 2023 Special Populations Conference
December	Webinar	HHSC	New Resources to Support Competency Restoration Decision Making
December 1	Deadline	TASC	Call for Presenters for the 2024 TASC Conference
January 5	Deadline	TASC	Conference Registration & Room Block Opens
February 1	Deadline	SCRC	Stipend Registration for Conference
March 1	Deadline	TASC	Late Registration Opens
March 26 - 28	Fort Worth, TX	TASC	2024 TASC Annual Training Conference



TASC

Connect with Us!



BHS WINS GRANT

Grant to Amplify Recovery Support in Hidalgo County

Story Courtesy of Faustino Lopez

Behavioral Health Solutions (BHS) has been awarded a significant grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The new program, Access to Care, aims to offer Recovery Support Services to all Specialty Court Participants in Hidalgo County. "Recovery services are not just about healing individuals; they are the cornerstone of building resilient communities, providing a bridge to hope, and mending the bonds that hold us all together," says Access to Care program director Miguel A. Garza, LCDC. "Redirecting individuals from the penal system into long-term recovery isn't just a matter of second chances; it's a transformative investment in rebuilding lives, families, and communities, one person at a time."

Recognizing that recovery isn't a mere destination but a lifelong journey, BHS's recovery support services are uniquely designed to work alongside the justice system. Participants will not only receive peer support during their time in the specialty court but will continue to be enveloped by this support system after they've successfully completed the program.

A standout feature of this initiative involves the formation of the recovery coach support team. This team consists of individuals who possess both professional training and their own lived experiences. Some team members have navigated the same journey as the participants, having successfully completed specialty court programs in Hidalgo County. This shared experience fosters a deep level of understanding and empathy, forging a connection that conventional therapy may struggle to replicate.

This grant and the subsequent expansion of services fill a significant gap in the Hidalgo County judicial system. With the addition of these recovery support services, the Hidalgo County Specialty Courts can now offer more than just legal intervention; they can provide a continuum of care that extends beyond the courtroom, ensuring that participants are given the best possible chance at a productive and healthy life.

30th VTC Grad. Event



Hidalgo County VTC

Celebrates Its 30th Graduation Ceremony

Story Courtesy of Faustino Lopez

The Hidalgo County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) commemorated its 30th Graduation Ceremony on September 13, 2023, in the chambers of the 430th District Court, at the direction of Judge Israel Ramon, Jr.

The VTC was established to provide comprehensive treatment and intensive rehabilitative supervision to veterans who have become entangled in the justice system. This initiative underscores the belief that many justice-involved veterans can benefit from a focused and therapeutic environment and that their specific needs can often be addressed more effectively through specialized court programs rather than traditional punitive measures.

The commencement of the graduation ceremony was distinguished by the presentation of colors, elegantly conducted by the Marine Corps League - R.G.V. Detachment. Their display served as a fitting tribute to the graduates' dedication and service, reinforcing the community's commitment to supporting its veterans through every phase of their lives.

Captain Cheryl Hole, U.S.N.R., served as the keynote speaker and had the honor of presenting the graduates. Captain Hole's remarks echoed the importance of reintegrating our veterans into society with dignity and respect and the necessary support mechanisms to ensure their continued success in civilian life. She emphasized society's dual responsibility – both to honor the sacrifices made by veterans and to offer them every possible support in their hour of need.

As the VTC continues to evolve and expand its reach, its success stories serve as a testament to the importance of community involvement, understanding, and, most importantly, compassion.

The ceremony was a heartfelt reminder of the power of second chances and the enduring spirit of service. With every graduation, Hidalgo County reiterates its unwavering support for its veterans, ensuring they have the tools, resources, and community backing to face and overcome any challenges that come their way.

Rising From the Ashes

The Inspiring Journey of L. Alexis Villarreal

Story Courtesy of Miguel Garza

When you first meet L. Alexis Villarreal, her striking poise and resilience might make you wonder about the roads she has traveled. For Alexis, life has been a series of battles, relentless in its tests. But every step of the way, her indomitable spirit turned setbacks into lessons, paving the path for an inspirational transformation journey.

Five years ago, Alexis found herself entwined in the challenges of the Youthful Offender Program. Though that chapter ended without the desired outcome, it marked the onset of a new beginning. Sentenced to The Hidalgo County Substance Abuse Treatment Facility (SATF) from October 2020 to June 2021, Alexis faced intense hurdles. Yet, even amidst such a daunting environment, a spark of determination ignited within her.

"The real challenge," Alexis recounts, "was the Re-Entry Court Program." It's not hard to imagine her overwhelming emotions - reuniting with family and catching up with the world she had missed out on, all while securing a job in just a month. The regime was rigorous, with regular visits to probation officers, court progress reports, counseling sessions, and the ever-looming possibility of random drug tests.

Yet, during these very moments of pressure, Alexis's perspective shifted. Instead of perceiving the Re-Entry Court Program as merely punitive, she saw it as her gateway to a new dawn. "It wasn't just a program. It was an opportunity, my only chance to start afresh," she recalls.

With a renewed mindset, Alexis embarked on a self-reflective journey. She took time to internalize lessons, set her goals, and rebuild her life's foundation. The discipline and accountability the Re-Entry Court Program instilled in her didn't just change her trajectory; they also ignited her passion.

Fast forward to today, and Alexis's dedication is palpable. She now stands as a beacon of hope in her role as a Recovery Support Peer Specialist for Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas. With close to four years of personal recovery experience under her belt, she is a shining testimony of the power of resilience and transformation. She is a tireless advocate for a stigma-free atmosphere and an ardent supporter of those battling substance use disorders.

For Alexis, the past isn't a shadow but a badge of honor, a testament to her strength. Her journey serves as a poignant reminder that even amidst life's most challenging trials, with determination and the proper support, one can indeed turn the tides.

As Alexis often emphasizes, "It's not about where you've been, but where you're headed." And given her trajectory, the sky's the limit for this tenacious fighter.



Fundraiser News

Success for CCIF Golf Tournament!

Story Courtesy of Bryan Smith



The nonprofit Dallas County Community Corrections Improvement Foundation (CCIF) raises money to support the State registered Specialty Courts of Dallas County. The primary fundraiser for CCIF is the *Judge Robert W. Francis Specialty Courts Golf Tournament*.

More than 100 people came to Topgolf Dallas on September 27th in support of Dallas County Specialty Courts. The event featured a raffle, silent auction, and a BBQ buffet.

Thanks to the generosity of the attendees and the 14 sponsors, the event raised almost \$10,000 to support specialty court programs.

CALL FOR PRESENTERS

2024 TASC Conference ♦ Deadline: December 1st @ 5pm

[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT](#)

TASC is seeking proposals for sessions/workshops that present best practices in service delivery; collaboration and justice programming that enhance outcomes for participants in specialty courts, including adult, juvenile, and family drug courts; DWI Courts; mental health courts; veterans treatment courts. TASC strongly encourages proposals for sessions that present research findings and their impact on practice, feature data analysis, and highlight evidence-based practice implementation.

TASC is especially interested in:

- Trauma Informed Care (Adult and Juvenile)
 - Family Engagement
- Sanctions, Incentives and Therapeutic Justice
- Importance of Data Collection and Continuous Quality Improvement (Adult and Juvenile)
- Adult Best Practice Standards and How to Apply the Standards to All Court Types
 - Recovery Capital and Best Practices Supporting Using Recovery Coaches
 - Comprehensive Treatment Planning (Adult and Juvenile)