



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William T. Stachowski

Stachowski Announces State Grant for Cheektowaga Drug Court

WILLIAM T. STACHOWSKI October 9, 2009

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STACHOWSKI ANNOUNCES STATE GRANT FOR CHEEKTOWAGA DRUG COURT

\$25,000 will allow Court to remain in operation

For the last twelve years, the Town of Cheektowaga has used a valuable tool in their court that has literally saved thousands of individuals from a life of drug addiction and crime: drug court. One of the Judges that initiated the Drug Court was Tom Kolbert, who today accepted a check for \$25,000 from NYS Senator Bill Stachowski.

"Judge Kolbert and the late Judge Ron Kmiolek took this initiative back when it wasn't fashionable to send people with drug problems for treatment" Stachowski said. "Since then, countless people with drug problems have avoided hard prison time by utilizing a program of treatment and supervision, allowing them to get their lives back on track. The judges, attorneys and community health organizations collaborate to coordinate treatment and ensure offenders stay on track. It's saving taxpayers money as well, since these people aren't sent to jail, where the cost of their care and treatment is much more."

"Many of the defendants that come to drug court are dignified people who have lost control of their character and their lives" Judge Kolbert explained. "These are not the violent offenders or repeat offenders. They may be your neighbor or a member of your family. They deserve a second chance, and the drug court gives that to them."

The \$25,000 state grant will be used to continue the operation of the drug court, which includes staff training and the purchase and processing of drug toxicology kits.

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In operation since 1997, Cheektowaga's Drug Court has enrolled over 2,270 defendants and boasts a 68% success rate. Of these graduates, nearly 98% remain crime free. The National

Drug Court Institute has reported that the existence of New York drug courts saves in prison-related expenses by diverting nonviolent drug offenders into drug court instead of incarceration. Since its conception in 1997, approximately 1,500 Cheektowaga drug court defendants remain crime free, saving new York's taxpayers over \$21 million.