



Launch of CCYJ's Girls Court Program

Kitsap County Juvenile Court, in partnership with the Center for Children & Youth Justice, launches Washington State's first therapeutic court model for girls



On June 28th, 2019, Kitsap County Juvenile Court will host its inaugural hearing for Girls Court, under the leadership of the Honorable Melissa Hemstreet. The program will provide comprehensive therapeutic, gender responsive services to approximately 1/3rd of all girls on probation in Kitsap County.

"Today is a historical day in Washington State, with the launch of the State's first therapeutic court model designed for girls," says Rachel Sottile Logvin, President and CEO of the Center for Children and Youth Justice (CCYJ). "Based on best practice research, driven by local data, and rooted in gender-responsive principles, Girls Court is the vehicle to bring research and practice together, and ensure that girls in our state's juvenile justice system receive services designed to empower them to reach their full potential."

"Girls Courts" are therapeutic court models designed to provide gender-responsive services to court-involved girls. CCYJ has researched, designed, and planned for the implementation during the past 18 months, in partnership with Kitsap county, to pilot the first Girls Court in Washington State. This 3-year pilot program will be evaluated by the Washington State Center for Court Research, and is designed to be an intervention model that can be expanded and replicated throughout the state and nationwide.

Michael Merringer, Director of Kitsap County Juvenile and Family Court services expresses enthusiasm about the new program's promise, "We are excited to work with our moderate and high risk female youth to meet their specific needs through a positive youth justice model program called Girls' Court."

Kitsap County's Girls Court program is a post-dispositional therapeutic court model which provides services to young women on probation who pose a moderate to high risk to reoffend. These services are based on the latest research, and include mental and behavioral health services, independent living services, medical care, education and job training supports, and a mentorship program. In addition to these therapeutic services, the program provides a unique, intersectional, gender-responsive casework model. The Girls Court team participates in ongoing training to ensure provided services are gender responsive, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate. Girls Court clients are served by a highly-trained, all-female team. Furthermore, through the engagement of a dedicated Girls Court judge, probation counselor, and defense attorney, each and every girl will be able to develop consistent relationships with the Girls Court staff, a critical component of the healthy development and lasting impact for court-involved youth.