



U.S. District Court Eastern District of Missouri

GROUNDBREAKING CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM LAUNCHED IN ST. LOUIS IN 2023

“All speakers were incredible and gave unique insight to every aspect of the judicial system, ...hearing from Cathy Kuhlmeier was so immersive.”—Hometowns Student

The Supreme Court and My Hometown program, a nationwide initiative, engages high school students in a unique and personalized way over the course of a semester in an intensive study of the processes and substantive issues of cases decided by the Supreme Court of the United States. A distinguishing feature of this program is that students focus on a Supreme Court case that originated in their hometown and local court.

The St. Louis program, the first offering of Hometowns, explored both the constitutional questions and procedural history of *Hazelwood v.*

Kuhlmeier (1988)—a landmark student First Amendment case, immersing students in an analysis of the facts, trials, and appeals that led to the Supreme Court decision. The program was planned and coordinated by Nicole Maffei, Director of Civics Education for the **Supreme Court Historical Society**, and Rachel Marshall, Public Education and Community Outreach Coordinator for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Twenty-two St. Louis area high school students from 12 high schools in Missouri and Illinois were selected as the inaugural class of scholars. They gathered at the Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse on July 25, 2023 to participate in a full day orientation. This included an introduction

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Our Mission: To serve the public, bench, and bar in an effective, fair, and impartial manner.

Serving the Citizenry of the United States by

- > Providing justice
- > Educating attorneys
- > Informing the public
- > Supervising & rehabilitating offenders
- > Using resources wisely

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to the federal courts, a visit to the **Judicial Learning Center** and its *Tinker v. Des Moines* exhibit, courtroom observation and debrief with Chief U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Clark, and a law school style session on the First Amendment by Lisa Hoppenjans, Associate Professor of Practice and the Director of the **First Amendment Clinic** at Washington University School of Law. During lunch scholars met their volunteer legal mentors, who were local attorneys and members of the St. Louis Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

Over the course of 10 after school sessions during the fall semester, the students engaged in an immersive federal court program that took them on a journey through the *Hazelwood* case. The students were aided by the attorney mentors throughout their learning experience as well as by federal judges and court staff, law professors, and historical eyewitnesses.

During the first few sessions, the students analyzed evidence from both parties involved in the district court trial for *Kuhlmeier v. Hazelwood School District* (E.D. Mo. 1985). They had

the opportunity to meet with plaintiff Cathy Kuhlmeier and hear her firsthand account of the case. The students also learned key case details from Tony Rothert of the **ACLU of Missouri**, attorneys

Mary Kate Mullen and Eli Sullivan of Husch Blackwell, and Steve Holtshouser— a former law clerk to Judge Nangle and current Husch Blackwell partner. The guest speakers' expertise and information established a firm foundation of knowledge for the students to build upon throughout the program. Applying their learning, each student group hypothesized how they might have ruled if they had been the district court judge.

In the next session, Eighth Circuit Clerk of Court Michael Gans provided insights into the appellate

process using details from the *Kuhlmeier* case. The processes he shared helped St. Louis University School of Law professors Chris Rollins and Marcia Goldsmith guide the students through "Briefing a Case" using the Eighth Circuit's *Kuhlmeier v. Hazelwood* (Eighth Cir. 1986) opinion. One student remarked, "I learned how to write a Student Case Brief like a real law student! I felt so engaged and now I have a system to fully and comprehensively analyze a case!"

With the moot court experience on the horizon,



the Hometowns students and their mentors began to prepare for their own oral argument. There were several sessions designed to strengthen their understanding of why the Supreme Court grants certiorari and how to apply precedent from previous First Amendment cases. The incredible mentor team worked with the Hometowns students to help them develop their best arguments to present during their allotted argument time. Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Shirley A. Padmore Mensah served as the Chief Justice of the moot court. She expertly prepared and guided the student justices through the process of questioning and proposing hypothetical situations for consideration during oral argument. One student exclaimed, "It was so cool to hear Madame Chief Justice and may it please the Court..." After hearing arguments, the student supreme court broke from history and sided with the respondents, explaining that they believed Kuhlmeier's student attorneys had made a more compelling case for Spectrum to be considered a public forum.



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Students overwhelmingly enjoyed their court experience! One student shared, in their session evaluation, *“We got a very insightful, hands on experience with the Supreme Court case process. It truly helped me to understand the work that goes into these cases and how the actual trial itself works.”* Former Supreme Court law clerk and local attorney Robert Haar provided the students with feedback from their moot court and shared his own experience of writing one of the appellate briefs and being in the Supreme Court courtroom when *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* was heard in 1987. Supreme Court Advocate John Elwood spoke with the students via Zoom about what it's like to argue before the Court. He also shared how he prepares for each case and answered numerous insightful questions from the students. For homework, students listened to oral arguments and reviewed Justice White's majority opinion.

During the final “new learning” session, Cathy Kuhlmeier, Gene Policinski of **Freedom Forum**, and a local high school journalism advisor shared their perspectives on the current state of freedom of speech in student journalism. They also discussed the New Voices legislation that 17 states have adopted, along with numerous other individual schools and districts that have also taken steps to protect the free speech rights of their student journalists. The Hometowns students had the opportunity to ask questions and delve into the impact the Supreme Court's Hazelwood decision had on student press rights.

The learning culminated in a capstone project—an installation in the Judicial Learning Center at the T. F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse. Students worked in small teams to apply their learning and create



one of five panels that will complement the existing *Tinker v. Des Moines* exhibit. Eighth Circuit Library Assistant Molly Rach taught the students about graphic design and helped create the exhibit format to ensure cohesion. Each panel will center

on a key topic of the *Hazelwood* case: context and student journalism, district court trial, Eighth Circuit appeal, final



appeal to the Supreme Court, and impact of the decision. Each student applied their learning and knowledge from the program to their panel. The legal mentors and Eighth Circuit Library staff provided feedback and helpful suggestions to the students throughout the development process. The students presented their designs to Chief U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Clark, U.S. District Judge Sarah E. Pitlyk, U.S. Magistrate Judge Stephen R. Welby, Eighth Circuit Clerk of Court Michael Gans, and numerous other distinguished guests during a celebration of the program. The official unveiling in the Judicial Learning Center will happen in early 2024.

When students were asked about their time participating in the program, all said they would recommend Hometowns to friends and classmates, *“Absolutely. It is such an amazing experience that I was able to be a part of. I am from a town with about ~150 people per class, and I want to show them that inner city programs are achievable for them... Many students, especially in rural areas, believe the court system is so out of reach and warps their perception on the system as a whole. It is necessary for students to learn this information, and it was such a privilege to learn it in the building it happens in.”*

All of the students said they would love to come back and serve as mentors for future Hometowns programs. Many students wished the program had been a bit longer with one student sharing, *“I think the reason that I wish I had more time is because I wish I never had to give up the chance to keep learning like I have.”* When asked to share their key learning, students replied, *“Better understanding of the specifics and nuances of the Supreme Court processes. I learned a lot about legal jargon, too.”* and *“I think I gained a very important inside perspective on our court system and also learned a lot about how a case moves through the courts and makes it to the Supreme Court. I also discovered many different jobs in the judicial branch.”*

The Honorable Noelle C. Collins Appointed to National Post



U.S. Magistrate Judge Noelle C. Collins was appointed to the Executive Committee of the American Bar Association’s (ABA) **National Conference of Federal Trial Judges (NCFTJ)**. Her appointment is through August 2026 (renewable).

The mission of the NCFTJ is to meet the needs of the federal judiciary and to offer opportunities for interaction among federal trial judges through educational, networking and social programs. NCFTJ acts as the voice of the federal judiciary in the ABA’s Judicial Division on a wide variety of issues affecting the federal court.

Meeting with In-State Peers



Judges from the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri and the Supreme Court of Missouri met at the Christopher S. Bond U.S. Courthouse in Jefferson City to discuss federal-state relations and topics of mutual interest; including civics, education, and judicial security.

The Hon. Rodney W. Sippel Works Beyond the District

Senior U.S. District Judge Rodney W. Sippel, who did his undergraduate studies at the University of Tulsa, presided over ~25 sentencing hearings in the Eastern and Northern Districts of Oklahoma. Also, he and Missouri Supreme Court Chief Justice Mary R. Russell spoke to the Missouri School of Journalism’s advanced reporting class on issues related to the judiciary and covering cases.

The Honorable Abbie Crites-Leoni Recognized for Achievement



U.S. Magistrate Judge Abbie Crites-Leoni was chosen by the **Zonta Club of Cape Girardeau** as its **2023 Woman of Achievement** for her dedication and commitment to the region. Zonta is an international service organization of business and profes-

sional women working to empower women through service and advocacy at the local, state and international level. She was chosen for her actions as a U.S. Magistrate Judge, Assistant U.S. Attorney, president of the Southeast Missouri State University Alumni Association Board of Directors, and president of the Rotary Club of Cape Girardeau—among many other things.

Judicial Conference of the United States Committees

Senior U.S. District Judge Rodney W. Sippel, Committee on the Judicial Branch, Chair.



This committee addresses problems affecting the judiciary as an institution and affecting the status of federal judicial officers.

Recently, this committee met with U.S. Senators Whitehouse (D RI) and Kennedy (R LA) the chair and ranking member of the Federal Courts, Oversight, Agency Action, and Federal Rights Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee.

U.S. District Judge Henry E. Autrey, Committee on Codes of Conduct.



This committee provides advice, training, and other information on the application of the Code of Conduct for United States Judges and other judicial branch codes of conduct and Titles III and VI of the Ethics Reform Act of 1989, as amended; to implement statutory provisions relating to deferral of capital gains tax on certain ethics-based divestitures of property by judicial officers; and to recommend policies concerning matters of judicial ethics.

Introducing our new Clerk of Court

Nathan M. Graves has been appointed Clerk of Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, the position that manages the operational and administrative functions of the Court. Mr. Graves was chosen because of his extensive experience in court administration and management and for his strong leadership skills.



Prior to this position, Mr. Graves was the Court Administrator for six years of the 22nd Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri. In that position, he was the appointing authority for over 300 employees and oversaw the fiscal, personnel, budget, IT, and other administrative functions of numerous Court departments. Before he was the circuit's Court Administrator, Mr. Graves was the Assistant Superintendent of its Family Court and the Program and Activity coordinators for the Family Court's Juvenile Division.

Mr. Graves earned a Master in Public Policy Administration from the University of Missouri, St. Louis and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from Truman State University. He is a graduate of the National Center for State Courts' Certified Court Manager program and was a faculty member with the program.

- excerpted from an Eastern District of Missouri press release on 01.05.2024

District Court Statistics

Civil. For the 12-month period ending September 2023, more than 1,800 civil cases were filed in the Eastern District of Missouri, a ~13% increase from the 12-month period ending September 2022. The most common types of civil filings were prisoner petitions, civil right claims, tort actions, contracts, and social security appeals.

Criminal. For the 12-month period ending September 2023, a criminal case was opened against 992 defendants, the 13th largest incoming caseload in the federal judiciary. During this same time period, the Court disposed the case of more than 1,035 defendants, resulting in a 3% decrease in the pending criminal defendant caseload. Almost one-half (49%) of defendants were charged with at least one firearms & explosives offense as the most serious offense, once again the largest number in the federal judiciary and 163 more than the next jurisdiction (Texas Southern, 327).

Finances. The Eastern District collected \$12.2 million in restitution, civil garnishments & refunds and paid out \$12.6 million to victims and creditors.

Juror Utilization & Satisfaction. The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts has defined the efficient utilization of jurors (i.e., not wasting citizens time or paying unneeded jurors) as a "Not Selected, Serving or Challenged Rate" (NSSC) of 30% or less. For the 12-month period ending September 2023; 1,020 people appeared for jury service in the Eastern District, and the district's NSSC Rate was ~25%, the 18th best in the federal judiciary.

In the Eastern District's most recent exit survey of jurors; nine-tenths of respondents rated their jury service experience favorably, with four-fifths or more rating each of the various components of service as excellent or good—even though almost one-half reported one or more barriers to service; such as the need to rearrange work schedule, lost income or child/primary care-giver.

Federal Practice Committee's Town Hall Series

The Eastern District of Missouri's Federal Practice Committee's (FPC) mission is to assist the Court in improving its service to the bar and the public. To accomplish this, the FPC—among other things:

- serves as a communications conduit between bench, bar, and public;
- recommends improvements to operating procedures in coordination with the Court;
- reviews proposed and suggests possible local rule changes;
- studies strategic issues referred by the Court;
- assists the Court and Federal Practice Memorial Trust with CLE development.

The FPC is comprised of 13 members representing the Court's Criminal Justice Act, Pro Bono & Mediator panels; the Eastern District's U.S. Attorney's & Federal Public Defender offices; the Federal Practice Memorial Trust; the Federal Bar Association, and (civil & criminal practice) attorneys at-large.

The FPC's Town Hall Series solicited input from the bar on the strengths and weaknesses of Court processes, holding sessions in each of the three court divisions. Findings were presented at the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference. Suggestions and observations from the attorneys who were, among other things:

Sealing rule

- ◇ can be onerous—discourages filing
- ◇ more motion practice to contest sealing
- ◇ varies in how applied by judge

Summary judgment motions

- ◇ Statement of Material Facts
 - * local rule to improve process
 - * meeting to confer on statement

- * oral argument on statement
- * tie to jury instructions

Removals

- ◇ timelines in multi-litigant case
- ◇ lengthy pending times

Time-in-court in civil cases

- ◇ Rule 16 Conference:
 - * better in-person
 - * promotes dialog between attorneys
- ◇ no in-court proceedings between Rule 16 Conference and trial
 - * liberal Granting of Oral Arguments
 - * reinstitute (some) informals
 - * time-in-court for young attorneys

Alternative Dispute Resolution

- ◇ not all cases are suitable for mediation
 - * mandatory for some judges
- ◇ good faith negotiations w/o a mediator

Criminal proceedings

- ◇ hearings reset on short-notice difficult for defendants & families
- ◇ continuances needed due to travel to visit distant clients
- ◇ reinstitute informals
- ◇ informal meeting with Court to explain how plea agreement reached
- ◇ input when a portion of the Sentencing Memorandum is in dispute

Collegiality & culture

- ◇ culture/practice is more “big city”
- ◇ lack of interaction decreases civility
- ◇ judges should proactively bring attorneys to courthouse for events
- ◇ local counsel advantages/requirement

- excerpted from a presentation by G.J. Linhares (former Clerk of Court) and J.E. Hoekel & B.A. Smith (FPC members)

Ceremonies & People

New citizens took the 'Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America' during regular, twice-weekly ceremonies at the T. F. Eagleton U.S. Court-house. In addition, four special ceremonies were held during the second half of 2023. {see below} From July to December, 35 ceremonies were held naturalizing 1,525 people. For the full year, 85 ceremonies were held for 3,391 citizens.

NATURALIZATIONS



Independence Day Ceremony at the Gateway Arch National Park—U.S. District Judge Catherine D. Perry, presiding



Independence Day Ceremony at Arena Park, Cape Girardeau—U.S. District Judge Stephen N. Limbaugh, Jr. presiding



Constitution Day Ceremony at Busch Stadium—U.S. Circuit Judge Duane Benton, presiding



Veterans Day Ceremony at the Gateway Arch National Park—U.S. District Judge Matthew T. Schelp, presiding



NATURALIZATIONS

Bill of Rights Day Student Art & Essay Contest

Bill of Rights Day on December 15 commemorates the day in 1791 when the Constitution's first 10 Amendments were ratified. This fall, district courts in the Seventh and Eighth Circuits co-hosted the Fourth Annual Bill of Rights Day Student Contest. Students in grades 5-12 submitted essays and art projects that proposed a new amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Almost 700 students participated, submitting nearly 600 entries. In the live educational webinar—"The Bill or Rights and You", three federal judges spoke about their work and its relation to the Bill of Rights. They then took questions from the audience. Over 200 people joined the webinar, including at least two classroom watch parties. Student Contest winners were announced during the webinar. Additionally, two teachers' names whose class participated in the contest were drawn at random, winning a pizza party for their class.



2023 was another busy and successful year. Several thousand people visited the courthouse as part of a tour, field trip, or topical program. During the second half of the year, 76 events were held for 1,695 people. For the entire year, there were 146 events for 3,951 people. A transportation grant covering bus costs was awarded to 23 groups.

A typical Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse tour or field trip includes the Judicial Learning Center, an Eastern District courtroom observation, a visit to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, and one or more guest speakers. Notable 2023 field trips include:

- Shortest bus ride. Lift For Life Academy High School, only 1.5 miles away from the courthouse, visited for field trips in February and November.
- Longest bus ride. McDonald County High School, more than 300 miles away, visited for a field trip in October.

Many field trip include career exploration for students interested in legal and law enforcement careers. This summer and fall, career programs were held for:

- Seventh graders from Saint Louis Public Schools
- Seventh graders from Riverview Gardens School District
- High-school aged youth through STL Youth Jobs and the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Inc.
- Rockwood School District's Partners in Education
- Southern Illinois University–Carbondale, Organization of Paralegal Students
- North and South Technical High Schools, St. Louis County

Courthouse Tours & Career Programs



Belleville West H.S. students



Belleville West H.S. students



STL Youth Jobs program



Riverview Gardens program



Riverview Gardens

Fourth Annual Federal Justice Fellowship – Southeast Division

Four students completed the rigorous requirements of the 4-week Federal Justice Fellowship summer program held in Cape Girardeau. The program included courtroom observations, legal writing instruction and practice, and a final presentation on a Supreme Court decision. The program was enhanced by the participation by federal- and state-court judges, law clerks, Pretrial Services Officers, Probation Officers, Assistant U.S. Attorneys and Federal Public Defenders, Clerk’s Office staff, reentry court team members, federal law enforcement agents, and private attorneys who spoke with the 2023 Fellows about their unique roles in the justice system. Several alumni returned for a reunion luncheon to meet the newest participants, report on their current pursuits, and answer questions about law school. *{pictured}* At the conclusion of the program, retired U.S. District Judge Stephen N. Limbaugh, Sr. congratulated the Fellows on their completion of the program and encouraged them to have faith in the wisdom behind our nation’s Constitution. To date, nineteen Fellows have completed the program.



BSA Merit Badge Events

Summer workshops for the **Citizenship in the Nation Merit Badge** were held in St. Louis and Cape Girardeau. This was the first merit badge program in Cape since 2019. The Scouts toured the federal courthouse and visited either The Gateway Arch in St. Louis or Common Pleas Court-house in Cape. They also observed courtroom proceedings; joined mini-classes on the Constitution; and interacted with judges, attorneys, and U.S. Marshals. Senior U.S. District Judge Rodney W. Sippel met Scouts in St. Louis, while Senior U.S. District Judge Stephen N. Limbaugh, Jr. and U.S. Magistrate Judge Abbie Crites-Leoni met Scouts in Cape. Thirty-eight Scouts earned this badge this summer.



Lifelong Learners

The Court continues to bring back pre-pandemic favorite programs. Working with **St. Louis OASIS**, three seminars were offered for adult learners in the latter half of 2023. Local attorney Thomas Wack presented on Abraham Lincoln. Retired U.S. Magistrate Judge David D. Noce presented on the history of jury trials. And Senior U.S. District Judges Edward L. Filippine and Rodney W. Sippel presented on Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, along with former Eagleton staff members Mike Ryan and Mark Abels.

Helping Teachers Develop Professionally

St. Louis Public Schools
Teacher Professional Development Day

In August the Court presented to Saint Louis Public Schools’ social studies teachers during its professional development offerings, which are designed “To provide a highly qualified and highly effective teacher in every classroom in the Saint Louis Public Schools”. The teachers learned about the federal court’s educational resources and participated in several demonstration activities to use with their students. The program concluded with a well-received Q&A session with Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Shirley A. Padmore Mensah.

Summer Teacher Institute

The annual **Summer Teacher Institute** was held in St. Louis in July. The theme was the 50th anniversary of the landmark “right-to-counsel” case, *Gideon v. Wainwright*. Attendees met with U.S. Magistrate Judges Stephen R. Welby and Joseph S. Dueker and several attorneys and were given classroom resources to share with their students.

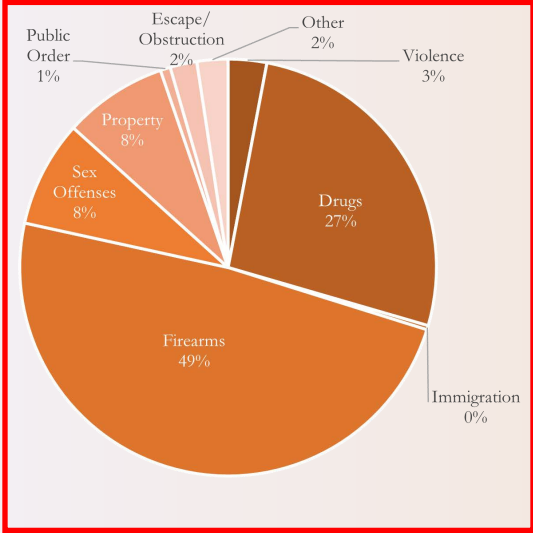
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- contributions on page by Rachel E. Marshall

PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICE

Supervision Statistics

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Pretrial Services Office investigated 1,482 new cases. Weapons offenses accounted for 47% of new cases. {graph at right} The majority of new cases fell into the following offense categories: weapons (748), drug (408), sex (127), and property (124). The number of new case activations in the Eastern District was the seventh high nationwide. Additionally, the Eastern District's was tied for the highest number of pretrial diversions (19) nationwide. In fiscal year 2023, 337 defendants were released on bond. At the end of fiscal year 2023, 363 defendants remained under pretrial supervision.



SAIL Diversion Program

The Eastern District of Missouri's **Sentencing Alternatives Improving Lives (SAIL)** program continues to demonstrate success. To date, 60 defendants have participated in the program, with 36 graduating. Since SAIL's inception in March 2015, the program has yielded more than \$4.8 million in savings by averting the costs of incarceration. In calendar year 2023, six participants successfully completed the program. Currently there are 10 active participants in the program, at least two of whom are on track to graduate in early 2024.



Graduate & SAIL Team

Staff Activities

- Pretrial Services Office staff participated in numerous local and national committees, groups, and trainings. These include:
- U.S. Probation Office and Pretrial Services Office Financial Investigation Team
 - Eastern District of Missouri's Heritage Committee
 - Eastern District of Missouri's In-District Leadership Development Program
 - T. F. Eagleton Courthouse Wellness Committee
 - T. F. Eagleton Courthouse Law Day Committee
 - National District Review Teams
 - American Probation and Parole Association's National Conference
 - BI Annual Training Conference

- contributions on page by Susan Hendrickson

Treatment Courts in Action

Training

In October 2023, the Eastern District’s Probation Office hosted a one-day training for the district’s diversion and re-entry courts. **All Rise** (formerly the National Association of Drug Court Professionals) delivered the training—which covered the **‘Risk & Need Quadrant Model’**, a diagnostic tool for selecting effective correctional dispositions and behavioral care plans. The training also covered how to be fidelitous to the treatment model; knowing one’s role in the treatment court; and an exercise focused on roles, responsibilities & ethical obligations.



Court Staff Attends Training

Re-Entry Court News

The Janis C. Good Mental Health Court began in 2013 and addresses the unique needs of individuals diagnosed with a serious and persistent mental illness, including those with a dual diagnosis of substance abuse and mental illness if mental illness is the primary mental health issue. In October and December 2023, five participants graduated from the program and were granted early termination from supervision.

Project Expanding Addicts’ Recovery Network (EARN) began in 2008 and is an intensive supervision program assisting high-risk offenders who are struggling with an active and lengthy drug addiction achieve sobriety. There will be a holiday season graduation in December 2023, with 3 to 4 additional participants on track to graduate next year, receiving an early termination from supervision.

Project Gang Reentry Initiative Program (GRIP) began in 2010 and is a voluntary, intensive supervision program assisting gang-involved individuals prior to or at release from incarceration improve their social, educational, and vocational abilities. Project GRIP is staffed by new, dynamic probation officers who are developing a screening procedure that will make program referrals easier, enrolling documented gang members more quickly. The goal is to increase the number of participants from the current four to 10 by the summer of 2024.

Veterans Court began in 2011 and connects veterans exiting the Bureau of Prisons or sentenced to probation with job training, employment, a mentor, and service referrals. Veterans Court and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are working on a MOU that will identify offenders who qualify for VA benefits, with the expected outcome that this will allow a more diverse pool of offenders to participate in Veterans Court.

The Supervision to Aid Reentry Court (STAR) began in 2019 and focuses on persons under supervision (in the Southeastern Division) with an elevated to intense risk of re-offending and provides participants structured steps to safely re-enter the community, establish healthy habits, and thrive. STAR Court staff are developing new approaches based on what was learned at the October 2023 training—with the goal of implementing these changes by no later than January 2024.

- contributions on page by Roxanne Jolly

PROBATION OFFICE

Happy Holidays & Season's Greetings

The Eastern District's Family Program coordinated its annual holiday party in December. The holiday party was hosted by the Electrical Connection.Org (IBEW & NECA). Participation in the holiday party fosters pro-social family relationships. This holiday season we had a record turnout—with more than 120 families, including almost 400 children. Each family took home toys, winter clothing, and a holiday meal. The gifts and food items were donated by Electrical Connection.Org and numerous faith-based community partners—which have assisted the Probation Office with this offering for nearly 15 years.



- contribution by Lisa Coldon & Clark Porter

Feeding the Needy

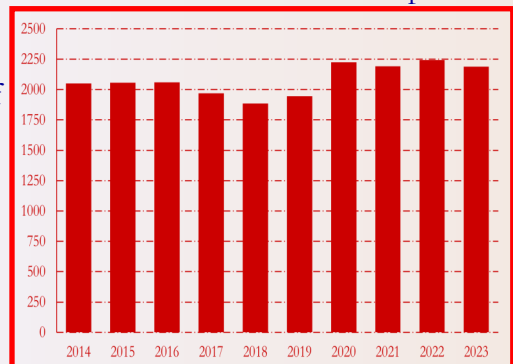
The **St. Louis Alliance for Reentry** sponsored the 'Perishable Food Drive Thru Giveaway' in July 2023. The event was held at **The SoulFisher Ministries** in St. Louis City. Staff members from the Eastern District's Probation Office the Missouri Department of Corrections' Division of Probation and Parole volunteered. The giveaway provided fresh fruits and vegetables to people currently on supervision and also to the community at large. The event was a huge success, giving away 300 boxes of food in approximately two and a half hours.



- contribution by Rebecca Bledsoe

Post-Conviction Supervision Caseload

For the 12-month period ending September 2023, the Eastern District's Probation Office received 1,094 new persons for post-conviction supervision. As of September 30, 2,188 persons remained on supervision in the Eastern District, tied for the 12th highest post-conviction supervision caseload in the nation. Most of these were convicted of a firearms (33%), drug (32%), or sex (18%) offense. The Eastern District supervises the most persons convicted of a firearms offense (713) and the third most of a sex offense (398).



PROBATION OFFICE

Special Operations Tools for Offenders Conference

The Probation Offices of the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri and the District of Kansas co-hosted the two-day ‘2023 Special Operations Tools for Officers Conference’ (SOTO) in August 2023 in St. Louis. All three districts have dedicated Search and Community Observation Teams that assist with offender management. Officers on these teams learn about new skills and tools in the areas of evidence collection, search, community observation, and first responder wellness. Additionally, attendees are given guidance for the implementation of such teams. This year’s SOTO conference was the second in the past seven years. The intent is for this to be an annual conference with a rotating location.

- contribution by Koda Hendrix



Preventing Sex Trafficking

In September, Eastern District Probation Office staff and members of state agencies in the area attended a presentation by Corporal Kimberly Davis *{pictured at right}*, Human Trafficking Coordinator of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. The presentation provided an overview of human trafficking, covered indicators of human trafficking, outlined the victim-centered approach, and stressed that multiple agencies must work together to successfully combat trafficking. Attendees were given informational resources designed for human trafficking victims and those working with them. This includes:



- **Healing Action** – For information, call (314) 833-4515. To make a referral for services, call (314) 924-9459.
- **Crisis Aid International, U.S. Refuge** – For information, call (314) 714-8229 or email cmalott@crisisaid.org
- **Missouri Coalition Against Trafficking & Exploitation** – For information, call (314) 459-2854 or visit www.mocate.org.

- contribution by Katherine Sample



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Dr. Jermaine M. Davis presented ‘Leading with an Inclusive Lens’, describing how diversity of thought leads to a more productive workplace, and good intentions may still lead to bad outcomes if we’re not mindful of each other’s differences. The Probation and Pretrial Services offices started the ‘Assistance, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Peer Mentorship Program’ to foster a sense of belonging with the ideal that by affirming each other’s identity the value of diverse experiences are upheld and the agency’s ability to achieve its mission strengthened.

- contribution by Lisa White

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Learning How to Combat Domestic Violence

The Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri sponsored the fourth annual Pro Bono Work to Empower and Represent (POWER) Act webinar, a free training offered to attorneys. St. Louis County Circuit Judge Jason D. Dodson and Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence attorneys were panelists. Attendees were taught how to better represent domestic violence survivors by covering topics such as:

- key laws and 2023 legislative updates,
- domestic violence dynamics,
- effective and responsible representation,
- common abuse tactics,
- how the legal system can become an extension of abusers’ tactics
- resources to better identify and respond to the clients needs, and
- importance of pro-bono representation.

Knowledge of the presenters was phenomenal!

The knowledge of the presenters and the webinar activities were highly rated by the attendees, with nine-tenths indicating that as a result of the training they can more effectively respond to the needs of domestic violence survivors.

This was a very thorough review of not only the law but also the psycho-social dynamics present in cases of domestic violence, with a valuable discussion of the impact of trauma on the victim.

Motion for Kids

Motion For Kids is sponsored and organized by the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis (BAMAL) and the St. Louis Bar Foundation. These organizations collect gifts and hold an annual holiday party for children in the foster care system or whose lives have come in contact with the criminal justice system. This year Motion for Kids was held at Harris-Stowe State University’s Emerson Performance Center. and almost 1,900 children benefitted from the program. Pretrial Services Officer Tiffany Corley organized the Motion for Kids gift drive for the T. F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse. *- contribution by Tiffany Corley*



photos courtesy of BAMSL

Suicide Prevention Month

During Suicide Prevention Awareness Month—a dedicated time to address this difficult topic, the Eastern District’s Wellness Committee hosted a walk to support and remember those affected by suicide. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available! Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org to reach the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. *- contribution by Monica Mannino*



Staff Walk

District Court Information

The Honorable
Stephen R. Clark
Chief Judge

Nathan M. Graves
Clerk of Court

Susan E. Hendrickson
Chief U.S. Pretrial
Services Officer

Kim S. Bramlett
Chief U.S. Probation
Officer

Eastern District
Court Locations

Thomas F. Eagleton
U.S. Courthouse
111 South 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63102
314-244-7900

Rush Hudson
Limbaugh, Sr.
U.S. Courthouse
555 Independence St
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
573-331-8800

Hannibal Federal Bldg
801 Broadway
Hannibal, MO 63401