



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Senator Murphy's \$5,000 helps drug court stay in session

TERRENCE MURPHY October 5, 2018

| ISSUE: **PUTNAM COUNTY, DRUG COURT, JUDGE JAMES REITZ, HEROIN & OPIOID ADDICTION TASK FORCE**



Founded in 2007 by Judge Reitz, the Putnam County Drug Court has an 87% success rate. The program is a coordinated team effort between Judge Reitz, the prosecution, defense counsel, probation department, sheriff's department, social service, and treatment professionals to break the cycle of substance abuse. It takes about two years for participants to complete the program.

Senator Terrence Murphy recently secured a \$5,000 grant to continue funding for this vitally

needed program. Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell and Carmel Town Supervisor Kenneth Schmitt, advocates who have also supported the Drug Court, were on hand to celebrate the news with Judge Reitz.

"I've sat on the Senate's Heroin and Opioid Task Force for the past three years, and I've traveled throughout the state seeing the effects of the drug crisis firsthand," said Senator Murphy. "This program should be implemented throughout New York State. You're literally giving people a second chance. What you and your staff do to put people back on track not only changes their lives, it also helps the community as well. I'm pleased we were able to get \$5,000 to help the program continue."

Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell said, "This program Judge Reitz's Drug Court represents a road back to society for people whose lives have been derailed by drug abuse. If not for this court, recidivism would soar. Thank you, Judge Reitz, Senator Murphy and Supervisor (Kenneth) Schmitt for being part of our army against heroin and drug addiction."

Judge Reitz stated, "I want to thank Senator Murphy, County Executive Odell, and Supervisor Schmitt for their support. This money will help save lives. It will help people get their lives together so they can take care of themselves and their families. This money will go a long way in providing training and education."

Senator Murphy recalled sitting in Drug Court and being moved by the story of a U.S Marine Corps veteran who has been wounded by an explosive device. He spent time in a veteran's home recovering, became hooked on oxycodone, wound up homeless, and was sentenced to eight years in the state penitentiary. "He went through Judge Reitz's two-year program, and now he's clean," Senator Murphy noted.

Judge Reitz added, "He was actually lucky he was arrested because he was at death's door. We got him turned around, and now he's helping people in similar situations. He's a great advocate for the program. He's exactly what we need in the field to help others because he knows what it's like to hit bottom."

Judge Reitz began his career in 1991 as a private general practice lawyer. He then worked as an attorney for a major law firm from 2002 to 2006. He also served as a Carmel Town Court Justice from 1996 to 2006. In 2007, he became a multi-bench judge of the Putnam County Court and an Acting Supreme Court Justice.