

Diversion and Deflection Series: Harm Reduction

On March 15th, 2023, approximately 40 members of the Lake County community convened at Round Lake Beach Civic Center to discuss diversion and deflection programs available to individuals suffering from substance use disorder. Chelsea Laliberte-Barnes, a social worker with an independent practice and founder of Live4Lali, spoke to attendees on the subject of Harm Reduction: The Importance of A Holistic Approach to Substance Use Disorder. Laliberte-Barnes gave practical, every day examples of how we all engage in harm reduction and implored members of the audience to apply this same principle to tackling substance use.

With rising overdose deaths due to opioids, Laliberte-Barnes asserted that the time is now to broaden our methods for responding to addictions --- there are lives depending on it. Providing presentations about diversion and deflection programs in Lake County were: Round Lake Beach Police Chief Wayne Wilde, discussing A Way Out; Bruce Johnson, executive director of NICASA Behavioral Health Services; Dr. Mary Roberson, Founder and Director of Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization (Nirco); and Valerie Johansen of the Lake County Health Department. The final speaker, Assistant State's Attorney Michael Ori, explained the programs which provide support for individuals who have already come into the judicial system but wish to address their addictions. A passionate advocate for individuals experiencing any form of behavioral health challenge, Ori implored the audience to shift their thinking on drug court, suggesting that these should not be the drug court, but their compassionate approach should be the standard. The audience was comprised of law enforcement, social service organizations, employees of the criminal justice system, and community members. Lively debate regarding were able to engage in dialogue and share differing opinions regarding best approaches. State's Attorney Rinehart opened and closed the event by focusing on collaboration and a unifying commitment to treat substance abuse disorder as a health issue and not something that can be handled by jails and courts.

These deflection and diversion workshops are intended to garner community engagement, expose gaps in service delivery, and generate solutions through cross-disciplinary collaboration. This program was a spin-off of a diversion and deflection summit held in December of 2022 that was sponsored by the State's Attorney's Office, the Lake County Sheriff's Department, the Lake County Opioid Initiative, and the MacArthur Foundation's Safety & Justice Challenge. The well-attended summit provided a plethora of information on a variety of topics. Realizing that attendees programs presented at the summit were only able to give a small snippet of their services, the State's Attorney's Office determined that a series of smaller sessions would allow for a deeper dive into these programs. The spin-off series will also rotate locations to facilitate involvement across a broad sector of the Lake County community.

The remaining topics for the diversion and deflection series are: mental health (scheduled for May 10th from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., with specific Waukegan site to be determined); youth and the criminal justice system; and domestic violence. These workshops on specific topics will culminate with a broader focus in December with the 2nd annual Diversion and Deflection Summit.



Quarterly CJCC Recap

We are excited to share with you the highlights of our second quarterly meeting of 2023 for the Criminal Justice Community Council (CJCC). The meeting was yet another huge success, with over 25 community members, leaders, and partners in attendance both in person and virtually.

One of the main action items from our last meeting was the need for an easily accessible list of employers willing to hire and employ past offenders. To follow up on this, we invited Tom Decker, from Chicago Green Insulation, to share his perspective as a business owner who advocates for justice and impacted people. He emphasized the benefits of hiring persons with prior convictions and shared his experience as an employer of ex-incarcerated persons.

We want to take up the charge of making this list, but we need your help! If you have the power to hire at a Lake County business or organization that is willing to employ ex-incarcerated persons, please provide us with the name and contact information of these businesses and organizations [here](#). Our team's goal is to put together a list and share it.

We also discussed the Gun Violence Prevention Initiative (GVPI), which aims to end gun violence by incorporating solutions to underserved communities through Community Violence Interruption (CVI) programs. The GVPI is a partnership between Waukegan Township and the Lake County States Attorney's Office. To learn more about this program, please visit the Lake County State's Attorney's website [here](#).

We would like to remind you that registration is open for our next meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, June 21st, 2023, from 6 PM to 8 PM. [Click here](#) to register and don't forget to bring a friend!

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to criminal justice reform in our community.



Distracted Driving Awareness Month Next Month

During 'Distracted Driving Awareness Month,' the Lake County Sheriff's Office is partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Police, and more than 200 local law enforcement agencies to step up enforcement efforts across the state. Motorists can expect to see increased patrols and traffic safety enforcement throughout April.

In Illinois, using your phone in anything other than handsfree mode is not only dangerous, it's illegal. Drop it and drive.

The Illinois distracted driving campaign is funded with federal traffic safety funds administered by IDOT.



Early Voting

Early voting for the April 4, 2023 Consolidated Election is now open county-wide! As of March 20th, you can begin early voting at more locations than the County Clerk's Office alone! Please refer to the video to locate your preferred early voting site or visit bit.ly/LC_EarlyVoting for further details!



Proud to be a part of
the Safety and
Justice Challenge.
#RethinkJails

You can help inform and engage the community about this work by forwarding this newsletter to three friends and encouraging them to [sign up here](#).

The Safety and Justice Challenge strategies at Lake County, IL are proudly led and supported by:

Lake County Sheriff's Office

Lake County State's Attorney Office

19th Judicial Circuit Court

Lake County Public Defender's Office

Nicasa Behavioral Health Services

This project was created with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as part of the Safety and Justice Challenge, which seeks to reduce over-incarceration by changing the way America thinks about and uses jails.

Lake County Sheriff