

STATE OF NEW YORK

Seventh Judicial District  
Supervising Judge  
Family Court



Ontario County Courts  
Supreme  
County  
Family

CRAIG J. DORAN  
JUDGE

December 2010

Re: "THE STATE OF FAMILY COURT IN THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT"

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to share with you the December 2010 edition of "The State of Family Court in the Seventh Judicial District." You have received this report because you care about justice for children and families in the eight counties we serve; so, please take time out of your busy schedule to read this report. I'm confident you will be inspired by the extraordinary effort put forth by the judges and staff who work in our Family Courts! As I enter my fifth year as the Supervising Judge of the Family Courts, I am more confident than ever, because these fine men and women pour their hearts and souls into their work, that we will continue to meet the challenges ahead and improve the justice we provide to children and families of Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne and Yates counties.

To all of those who support the work done in our Family Courts, you have my most sincere thanks. In particular, I am most grateful to Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, Appellate Division Presiding Justice Henry Scudder, Chief Administrative Judge Ann Pfau, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Michael Cocomma and Administrative Judge of the Seventh Judicial District Thomas VanStrydonck for their unwavering support of Family Court! Also, many thanks to my counsel, Cynthia Constantino, for her assistance in preparing this report.

To all of those who read these pages, thank you so much for all you have done and will do for the children and families within the Seventh Judicial District! If you have any questions or comments about anything in the report, please feel free to contact me via e-mail or telephone.

Very truly yours,

*Craig J. Doran*

Supervising Judge



*State of New York, Unified Court System  
Seventh Judicial District - Cayuga,  
Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca,  
Steuben, Wayne, & Yates Counties.*

## **THE STATE OF FAMILY COURT IN THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

**December 2010**

**Hon. Thomas M. Van Strydonck  
Administrative Judge of the  
Seventh Judicial District**

**Hon Craig J. Doran  
Supervising Judge of the  
Family Courts of the  
Seventh Judicial District**

## Family Court's Mission

Family Court has *exclusive original jurisdiction* over proceedings (non-jury) involving Juvenile Delinquency, Support, Paternity, Permanent Termination of Parental Rights, Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS), Family Offenses (domestic violence), Child Abuse and Neglect. Adoptions and Guardianships (Person only) are shared jurisdictionally with Surrogates Court. Family Court has additional jurisdiction in proceedings involving Foster Care, Child Custody & Visitation issues, and domestic relations issues referred from Supreme Court.

The mission of the Unified Court System is *to promote the rule of law and to serve the public by providing just and timely resolutions of all matters before the courts*. In order to effectuate both an efficient and effective judiciary, the Family Courts in the Seventh Judicial District have embarked on a number of new initiatives or innovations in 2009 and 2010, either alone or in concert, with the Unified Court system.

## User-Friendly

The Seventh Judicial District Family Court website was designed and launched in 2008, and its use is on the rise. This site was specifically designed to assist families by providing easy access to general information, directions, contact information, and forms required in Family Court proceedings. The site has proven particularly successful in assisting *pro se* litigants, who constitute a large portion of Family Court's caseload, and who navigate the Family Court system without the assistance of counsel. The site can be accessed at <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/7jd/courts/family/>.

"Do It Yourself" (DIY) public access computer terminals are now available in nearly every County in the District. Using these computers, or any computer terminal, parties can complete papers electronically, often without assistance of court staff.

## New Filings

Family Court continues to be one of the busiest courts in the Unified Court System.

In 2009 alone, a total of **over 55,000** cases were filed in Family Courts in the Seventh Judicial District. During the same year, **nearly 53,000** cases were resolved.

## Eight Counties

**Cayuga County Family Court** is located at 157 Genesee Street, in Auburn, New York. The Chief Clerk is **Laura Serafino**, and the contact number for the Court is (315) 255-4306. This Court is served by 2 multi-bench Judges, **Honorable Thomas G.**

**Leone**, and **Honorable Mark H. Fandrich**; a Judicial Hearing Officer, **Robert A. Contiguglia**; and Support Magistrate, **George J. Shamon**. There are 4 Court assistants, and 3 Senior Office Assistants. One Resource Coordinator manages Family and Felony Treatment Courts. Cayuga County saw a minor decrease in filings and dispositions for the year 2009.

**Livingston County Family Court** is located at 2 Court Street, Geneseo, New York. The Chief Clerk of the Court is **Robert M. Lewis**, and the telephone number is (585) 243-7070. This Court is served by 2 multi-bench judges, **Honorable Robert B. Wiggins**, and **Honorable Dennis S. Cohen**; 2 Senior Court Office Assistants; and 3 Court Assistants. **Michael Allen** is the Support Magistrate. Livingston County continues to experience an increase in Family Court filings, with the percentage of filings up a striking 31.24 percent from 2000 to 2009. This growth in filings represents a long term trend in Livingston County Family Court, and such is expected to continue in light of the projected growth of Livingston County and its proximity to major transportation avenues.

**Monroe County Family Court** is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors of the Hall of Justice, 1 Civic Center Plaza, Rochester New York. The Chief Clerk of Monroe County Family Court is **Ronald W. Pawelczak**, and the telephone number for the Court is (585) 428-5429. Monroe County Family Court processed over 26,844 filings in 2009. Child Support operations, including the Clerk's office (support), Support Magistrate program, and satellite Monroe County Child Support Enforcement Unit, are located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. In addition, three new courtrooms were constructed and opened in September, 2010. Two of these new courtrooms are being used for custody and visitation matters. Judicial Operations, which include the Clerk's office (judicial), 6 Judges, the Domestic Violence Intensive Intervention Court, Court Attorney Referees, and the Children's Center, are located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The Court has a staff of 6 judicial and 84 non-judicial employees (including personal appointments).

Monroe County's Family Court Judges for 2009 were **Honorable Patricia E. Gallaher**, **Honorable Joan S. Kohout**, **Honorable Joseph G. Nesser**, **Honorable John J. Rivoli**, and **Honorable Dandrea L. Ruhlmann**. The Support Magistrates were **Margaret M. Boldt**, **Diana M. Irizarry**, **Linda Lohner-Pilato**, **Deborah K. Owlett**, and **Michael G. Rao**. Judicial Hearing Officers for Domestic Violence Court in 2009 were **Sidney T. Farber**, **Charles T. Maloy**, **Glenn R. Morton**, and **Maurice E. Strobridge**. Court Attorney Referees are **Julie Anne Gordon** and **Thomas Polito**. In 2010, Monroe County Family Court law clerks were designated Court Attorney Referees to hear and determine ex parte requests for Orders of Protection in Domestic Violence Court.

**Ontario County Family Court** is located in the Ontario County Courthouse, Canandaigua, New York. The telephone number is (585) 396-4272, and the Chief Clerk is **Barbara Abbott**. This Court has 3 multi-bench Judges, **Honorable Craig J.**

**Doran, Honorable William F. Kocher, and Honorable Frederick G. Reed;** 4 Court Assistants; 2 Senior Court Assistants; 2 Senior Court Office Assistants; and a shared Resource Coordinator for the Ontario County Juvenile Treatment Court. The Support Magistrate is **John Costello**. Ontario County Family Court had a total of 5074 filings in 2009, slightly down from 5415 in 2008. There were 5654 cases disposed of in 2009.

**Seneca County Family Court** is located at 48 West Williams Street, Waterloo, New York. The telephone number is (315) 539-4917, and the Chief Clerk is **Conchetta Brown**. In Seneca County, the Family Court team consists of multi-bench Judge **Honorable Dennis F. Bender**, a Court Assistant; 3 Senior Court Office Assistants; and a Resource Coordinator for Drug Court. The Support Magistrate is **George Shamon**. Seneca County saw a small decrease in overall filings in 2009, except for Family Offense filings, which doubled.

**Steuben County Family Court** is located at 3 East Pulteney Square, Bath New York. The Chief Clerk is **Pamela Gardner**, and the telephone number is (607) 664-2136. In Steuben County, there are 3 multi-bench Judges, **Honorable Peter C. Bradstreet, Honorable Joseph W. Latham, and Honorable Marianne Furfure**; 1 full-time Support Magistrate, **David M. Crosby**; 1 visiting Support Magistrate, **Michael Allen**; 2 part-time Judicial Hearing Officers, **Timothy K. Mattison and Gerald J. Alonzo**; 4 Court Assistants; 6 Senior Court Office Assistants; and a Drug Court Resource Coordinator. 2009 saw an increase in Family Court filings in Steuben County, with 7216 cases filed, and 6818 cases resolved.

**Wayne County Family Court** is located at 54 Broad Street, Lyons, New York, and the telephone number is (315) 946-5420. **Lorraine Fodera** is the Chief Clerk. Wayne Family Court has 3 multi-bench Judges, **Honorable Dennis M. Kehoe, Honorable John B. Nesbitt, and Honorable Daniel G. Barrett**; and 8 full-time court employees, consisting of 5 Court Assistants and 3 Senior Court Office Assistants. The Support Magistrate is **Deborah Gerber Farber**. Wayne County had 5357 new Family Court matters filed in 2009, with 5106 dispositions.

**Yates County Family Court** is located in the Yates County Office Building, Penn Yan, New York. The telephone number is (315) 536-5127, and the Chief Clerk in 2009 and 2010 was **Roxanne R. Lynn**. The new Chief Clerk is **Robert Peelle**. The Yates County Family Court consists of multi-bench Judge **Honorable Patrick Falvey**, 1 Senior Court Office Assistant 70% of which is shared with Surrogate's Court; and 1 Court Assistant, 40% which is shared with Surrogate's Court and Supreme & County Court/Commissioner of Jurors. The Support Magistrate is **Deborah K. Owlett**. Yates County had total filings in 2009 of 1111, which is a slight decrease from 2008.

## Support Magistrates

The Seventh Judicial District is served by eleven Family Court Support Magistrates. In 2009, the Support Magistrates serving the District were **Margaret M. Boldt, Diana M. Irizarry, Deborah K. Owlett, Linda Lohner Pilato, Michael G. Rao, Michael Allen, John Aman, John Costello, David Crosby, Deborah Farber** and **George Shamon**. Support Magistrates have jurisdiction over paternity, child support, and child support-related issues. Magistrates have proven effective in easing the burden the volume of these types of matters place on Family Court Judges, and allowing parties the opportunity to have their matters heard more quickly than if placed on a Judge's calendar.

During 2009 and 2010, thousands of matters were assigned to Magistrates across the District. The increased use of Support Magistrates has significantly reduced the number of cases assigned to Family Court Judges, and has had a positive impact upon both the speed and efficiency in which support and paternity matters are able to be resolved in the Seventh Judicial District.

## Court Attorney Referees

In Monroe County, Court Attorney/Referees hear and decide cases involving custody and visitation. In addition, in 2010, Court Attorney Referees were appointed to hear cases concerning Domestic Violence.

In 2009, the two Monroe County Family Court referees, **Julie Anne Gordon, Esq.** and **Thomas W. Polito, Esq.** were assigned a total of nearly **5,800** custody and visitation matters, and disposed of approximately **5,300**. The use of referees in Monroe County Family Court has effectively reduced the number of custody/visitation matters placed onto Monroe County's Family Court Judges' dockets, and has also reduced the number of court appearances required of parties, as well as the time frame in which these matters are generally concluded.

- ***Domestic Violence Court Initiative***

In February 2010, Court Attorney Referees were appointed to determine and grant ex-parte requests for Orders of Protection in Monroe County Family Court, as well as to issue final Orders of protection in matters where a Respondent has defaulted. Formal training of the newly-appointed referees took place during March of 2010. Referees **Vincent Arcarese, Jeanne Arnold, Cynthia Constantino, John Gallagher, Henry Jones, Galo Proano, and Christine Redfield** have heard a total of nearly 1700 cases since beginning their assignment in April 2010. This number of filings represents a significant increase in filings for this Court from past years.

## **Seventh District Stakeholder/Collaborative/Advisory Groups**

### **Seventh Judicial District Family Court Advisory Group**

The **Seventh Judicial District Family Court Advisory Group**, established and chaired by the **Honorable Craig Doran**, continues to study and consider issues raised by those who regularly work in Family Court. This highly effective and motivated group meets twice yearly, and works to develop best practices for district-wide implementation. Members of this committee include Family Court Judges, Chief Clerks, public defenders, county attorneys, law guardians, and private attorneys. The 2009/2010 members of this Group are :

**Hon. Craig Doran**, Supervising Judge of the Family Courts of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

**Hon. W. Patrick Falvey**, Yates County Multi-Bench Judge

**Hon. Dennis Bender**, Seneca County Family Court

**Hon. John Rivoli**, Monroe County Family Court

**Tamara Guglin, Esq.**, Monroe County, Assistant Public Defender

**Mary Aufleger**, Monroe County Family Court, Court Improvement

**Wendy Gould, Esq.**, Private Attorney/Assigned Counsel

**Paul Bleakley, Esq.**, Private Attorney/Assigned Counsel

**Michael Morrissey**, Principal Administrative Assistant

**Barbara Abbott**, Family Court Clerk, Ontario County

**Conchetta Brown**, Family Court Clerk, Seneca County

**Roxanne Lynn**, Family Court Clerk, Yates County

**Laura Serafino**, Family Court Clerk, Cayuga County

**Robert Lewis**, Family Court Clerk, Livingston County

**Loreen Nash**, Family Court Clerk, Monroe County

**Pamela Gardner**, Family Court Clerk, Steuben County

**Lorraine Fodera**, Family Court Clerk, Wayne County

**Deborah Owlett**, Support Magistrate

**Cynthia Constantino, Esq.**, Law Clerk

**David VanVarick**, Monroe County, First Deputy County Attorney

#### *Advisory Group Subcommittees:*

1. The **Training Sub-Committee (“Power Users”)**, was formed with the goal of facilitating UCMS and mandated Family Court procedures training District-wide, with educational programs that are equally accessible to all courts. Designated “Power Users”, trainers are Family Court employees from each County nominated by the Chief Clerks. These individuals provide training both to new and current UCMS users. The Power Users committee has developed and conducts extensive training sessions throughout the District on the use of UCMS, as well as other Family Court procedures, to ensure that all users throughout the District are fully able to utilize the programs available.

District Training Opportunities:

A. A District training was held in 2009 for the Support Magistrates which covered the Support Calculation module in UCMS. This was an initiative of the Family Court advisory group led by **Judge Doran**. **Deborah Gerber Farber**, Wayne Family Court Support Magistrate, facilitated the training, together with **Mark Howell**, Court Assistant in Monroe Family Court.

B. During the Spring of 2009, **Lorraine Fodera**, Wayne Family Court Chief Clerk, **Dottie O'Neill-Marble**, Integrated Domestic Violence Initiative (IDVI) Coordinator, a representative of the Victim's Resource Center, and a representative from the District Attorney's office, presented Domestic Violence training to eight local police departments. The one-hour training was repeated twice daily for the entire week to allow most officers to attend. The IDVI concept of coordinating Domestic Violence cases in Family, County, Town and Village courts was explained. The officers were provided with up to date Family Court law on Domestic Violence, and the new expanded access to Orders of Protection for persons in an intimate relationship. The training highlighted the psychology of Domestic Violence, as well as evidentiary requirements of Family Offense crimes. Over the course of the week, 46 officers received this training. With minor modifications, the training was repeated two more times for all full-time court security personnel in the Wayne County Hall of Justice.

C. In 2010, in light of the issues often faced by counter staff in accepting filings and interfacing directly with pro se litigants, the Advisory Group proposed a training session for Family Court counter staff, where most parties file papers without the assistance of counsel. **Loreen Nash**, Monroe County Family Court, is chairing a committee aimed at addressing staff's frequent questions, and drafting best practices for common counter questions and issues. It is anticipated that best practice guidelines will be completed and distributed in early 2011.

2. The "**Forms Committee**" was established by the Advisory Group in an effort to draft Family Court forms which are accurate and efficient for District-wide use. This group continues to revise and distribute user-friendly, common language forms under the direction of **Chief Clerk Robert Lewis** ( Livingston County).

3. A Seventh Judicial District Advisory Group subcommittee, chaired by the **Honorable John Rivoli**, was also established to draft best practice guidelines to be utilized to engage children in the permanency hearing court process. Guidelines were distributed District-wide in 2009.

4. In 2010, the Advisory Committee formed a **PINS subcommittee** to review and potentially improve upon PINS practices throughout the District. This group is chaired by the **Honorable Dennis Kehoe**, and its members include Judges, school representatives, Court Clerks, and Probation.

5. Chaired by Monroe County Family Court **Chief Clerk Ron Pawelczak**, the **Records Access Committee** was formed in January 2009 to develop a District-wide protocol for accessing Family Court records, reports, medical records, exhibits, and other court-related documents by litigants and their attorneys. The protocol addresses access, duplication, and distribution of court records consistent with privacy laws, Family Court laws, and Court Rules, and was finalized and distributed in early 2009.

### **Enhanced Court Practices Child Welfare Collaborative Efforts:**

The **Monroe County Enhanced Court Practices Child Welfare Collaborative** is headed by **Hon. Dandrea Ruhlmann**, Monroe County Family Court Judge. Monroe County Family Court is one of 22 counties in the State participating in a project to enhance court practices in child welfare. Through collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP) Monroe will receive support, resources and technical assistance to implement the statewide expansion and enhancement of best court practice initiatives developed and learned from the NCJFCJ's Victims Act Model Courts Project.

The project focus is on the commitment of the Court and the local child welfare community, to improve court practices and ultimate outcomes for children and families in child welfare proceedings. A multi-disciplinary stakeholders group and subcommittees engage in a process of strategic goal setting and work toward the achievement of identified goals to improve outcomes for children and families.

The child welfare collaborative has established several subcommittees to focus on specific issues, including Court review, behavioral health, relative resource, temporary assistance and services, Babies Can't Wait ~Teens Won't Wait, Adolescent/Enhanced Permanency Hearing/ Crossover Youth, Adoption, and Education.

- ***Seventh District Children Attending Permanency Hearing Guidelines.*** The Enhanced Court Practices Child Welfare Collaborative, Children in Court subcommittee, chaired by **Hon. John Rivoli**, produced the Seventh Judicial District Suggested Guidelines, a resource encouraging judicial leadership to engage youth to be a more integral part of the court process by participating in an age-appropriate discussion and meaningful permanency hearing.
- ***Seventh District Adolescent Permanency Hearing Checklist*** developed as a resource to assist Judges in ensuring that permanency planning issues in the courtroom and beyond are prioritized. The checklist highlights an array of permanency planning areas to discuss with the youth, case worker, the attorney for the child, and others.

This committee also provided a ***Supervised Visitation Needs Assessment***

- **Survey, Youth in Care Survey (Monroe)**, designed to receive youth input on their permanency hearing experience.

In addition, the committee created a **Court Orientation Personalized Youth Court Booklet** provided to youth in care. This booklet is designed to empower youth by keeping a record of important individuals' contact information, court dates and notes.

**The Four- County Child Welfare Coalition, including Ontario, Wayne, Seneca, and Yates Counties**, was Chaired by **Hon. Craig J. Doran**. This group, formed in 2010, is a CIP/Court-led multi-disciplinary group formed to address child welfare concerns, improve court practice and outcomes for children and families in counties outside of Monroe County. Members of this committee are: **Holly Adams, Esq.** (Ontario County Law Department), **Alexandra Burkett, Esq.** (Attorney for the Child and assigned counsel), **Scott LaVigne** (Director of Seneca County Mental Health), **Eileen Tiberio** (Ontario County DHS), **Charles Schillaci** (Seneca County DHS), **Nancy Gates** (Yates County DHS), **Josh McCrossen** (Wayne County DHS), **Mary Auflegler** (Court Improvement), **Ellen Wayne** (Catholic Charities, Finger Lakes), and **Tim Sullivan** (Catholic Charities, Wayne County). The group identified the need to increase supervised visitation options, as a priority. In an effort to understand their county's needs, each Department of Social Services submitted a supervised visitation cost analysis and the number of children/families utilizing the service. Secondly, the group developed a needs assessment survey which was distributed to all four counties. Judges, attorneys, caseworkers and service providers received the survey; 94 surveys went out with a 44% return rate.

Embarking on the next step of the mission a Four County Child Welfare Coalition Symposium was held on October 28, 2010. The October 28th meeting offered an opportunity to strengthen communication, raise awareness and provide a forum with Judiciary, Attorneys, Department of Social Services, and Mental Health providers for open and honest discussion about how we will collectively look at the child welfare and court process to better serve the needs of children and families.

The meeting agenda provided effective and appropriate use of mental health evaluations and assessments, and court ordered investigations and evaluations. Keynote speakers included Ontario County Commissioner of Social Services and Seneca County Mental Health Director each followed by round table discussion and action items.

## **Monroe County Family Court Planning Group**

The **Monroe County Family Court Planning Group** is an active committee chaired in 2009 and 2010 by the **Honorable John J. Rivoli**. Honorable Judge Gail Donofrio will take over chairing this committee in January 2011. Members of this group are: **Vincent Arcarese, Esq.** (Monroe County Family Court), **Mary Auflegler** (Court Improvement Project), **Jennifer Baer** (Monroe County Family Treatment Court),

**June Castellano, Esq.** (private attorney), **Cynthia Constantino, Esq.** (Monroe County Family Court), **Daniel DeLaus, Esq.** (Monroe County Law Department), **Carol Eisenman, Esq.** (Department of Family Assistance), **Tamara Guglin, Esq.** (Public Defender), **Honorable Joan Kohout** (Monroe County Family Court), **Honorable Gail Donofrio** (Monroe County Family Court), **Cindy Lewis** (Department of Family Assistance), **Timothy Lexvold, Esq.** (Monroe County Law Department), **Loreen Nash** (Monroe County Family Court), **Ronald Pawelczak** (Chief Clerk, Monroe County Family Court), **Gilbert Perez, Esq.** (Private attorney, law guardian), **David VanVarick, Esq.** (Monroe County Law Department), **Stephen Weisbeck, Esq.** (Law Guardian), **Kristen Splain** (Monroe County Conflict Defenders Office), **Margaret Boldt** (Monroe County Support Magistrate), **Dr. Kate Ceruli**, and **Eileen Calderelli**.

This committee meets monthly to discuss issues which impact upon Monroe County Family Court, and to design and implement programs and procedures to enhance the efficiency of the Court. This group encourages and fosters collaboration and teamwork between the many agencies involved in Family Court matters.

### **Juvenile Delinquency Stakeholders Group**

The **Juvenile Delinquency Stakeholders Group** was also formed in 2008, and was co-chaired by the **Hon. Dandrea L. Ruhlmann** and the **Hon. Joseph G. Nesser** in 2009 and 2010. The purpose of this group is to address any issues that arise in the Family Court's specialized Juvenile Delinquency Part. Group membership includes representatives from the Court, Legal Aid, panel law guardians, transport, security, and other agencies, as required.

### **Additional Seventh District Stakeholder/Collaborative/Advisory Groups:**

- ◆ **Steuben County Family Court Partnership Stakeholders**
- ◆ **Integrated Domestic Violence Court Collaborative**
- ◆ **Attendance Court Committee**
- ◆ **Permanency NOW**
- ◆ **Child Welfare/Legal System Intersection Sub Committee**
- ◆ **Parent to Parent Steering Group**
- ◆ **Safe Haven Advisory Council**
- ◆ **Fostering Recovery Advisory Group**
- ◆ **Children's Center Advisory Council**

## Incorporating/Implementing New Legislation

When new laws are implemented which affect the Family Court, in the Seventh Judicial District we are committed to working diligently to transition from legislation to practice as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. The district is well-served by its dedicated and hard working staff in incorporating these changes in an effective and efficient manner.

In January 2009, a significant change was enacted to Family Court Act Section 651, which requires a “Records Check” prior to issuing a temporary, permanent, or successive order where one month has passed since the previous order. Specifically, Chapter 595 requires that prior to issuing temporary, permanent, or successive orders of custody or visitation, courts must check The Domestic Violence Registry, the Family Court “Universal Case Management System” ( for child protective decisions and orders as well as Family Court warrants), and the Sex Offender Registry. The court must notify the attorneys, self-represented parties, and attorneys for children of the results of the review. The implementation of this new requirement went into effect on Jan 23, 2009.

### **ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MEASURES ENACTED IN 2010**

**1. Electronic and facsimile transmission of orders of protection for service [Laws of 2010, ch. 261]:** This measure amends Family Court Act §153-b and Domestic Relations Law §§240(3-a), 252 to permit orders of protection, temporary orders of protection and “any associated papers that may be served simultaneously” in Family Court and Supreme Court matrimonial proceedings to be transmitted to peace or police officers electronically or by facsimile so that they can provide “expedited service.”  
**Effective: July 30, 2010.**

**2. Strangulation [Laws of 2010, ch. 405]:** This measure amends the Penal Law, the Criminal Procedure law and the Family Court Act to create new crimes of strangulation and to include the new crimes in the list of family offenses for which criminal and Family Courts exercise concurrent jurisdiction. **Effective: November 11, 2010.**

**3. Orders of Protection: Non-contemporaneous events [Laws of 2010, ch. 341]:** Overruling a line of appellate cases, this measure amends the Family Court Act and Domestic Relations Law to provide that an order of protection cannot be denied simply because the events alleged are not “relatively contemporaneous” with the application.  
**Effective: August 13, 2010**

## Family Court Initiatives & Highlights

The Seventh Judicial District Family Courts work closely with the federally-funded **Child Welfare Court Improvement Project**, (CIP) and our liason, **Mary Aufleger**. which was established to support Family Courts' mandate to promote the safety, permanence, and well-being of abused and neglected children. CIP works with Family Court to promote innovation in court practices and operations, and its areas of specific concern include supporting judicial leadership, collaborating with interdependent systems, educating the bench, bar and court managers, enhancing decision-making with data, promoting the use of alternative dispute resolution, and resourcing the court-appointed special advocates (CASA) programs. Together with the support of CIP, and under the direction of Judge Doran, the Seventh Judicial District has implemented, continued and expanded several new initiatives, including the following:

### District Wide Initiatives:

#### ***Babies Can't Wait ~ Teens Won't Wait Series***

Chaired by **Judge Dandrea Ruhlmann**, this series offers court- based educational training presented to raise awareness, promote professional development, and identify community resources to a multi-disciplinary audience. Topics address best practices, healthy development, well-being, and improved permanency outcomes for children of all ages, as well as promoting family stability. This initiative maintains and strengthens a court generated multi-systemic collaboration. Monthly presentations are held live in Monroe County Family Court, and available to all NYS courts live, via streaming video through the internet, using video technology. Regularly participating Family Courts include Livingston, Ontario, Wayne, Steuben, Genesee, Orleans and Erie County Courts. In addition, the training series is available throughout the state for individuals using court computers via court-net. Both the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project and Monroe Family Court Babies Can't Wait~Teens Won't Wait web sites provide the training on video with accompanying handouts. Cumulatively, approximately 430 attorneys attended the 2009 series and received continuing legal education credits.

#### 2009 Babies Can't Wait~Teens Won't Wait Training Series:

<b>January 8</b>	<b>Detention Reform</b>
<b>February 5</b>	<b>New Options with Relative Placements and Article 10 Dispositions</b>
<b>March 12</b>	<b>Gang 101 Recognizing and addressing gang activity with Youth</b>
<b>April 9</b>	<b>Mentally ill but guilty: Dilemmas in the disposition of psychiatrically ill Juveniles engaging in criminal behavior</b>
<b>May 14</b>	<b>Neurodevelopment, judgment and adolescents.</b>

**October 8**      **Trauma Informed Decisions in Child Welfare**  
**November 10**   **Kinship Care: Policy and Legislative Activity**  
**December 10**   **Court Ordered Post Termination Visitation**

**2010/2011 Babies Can't Wait~Teens Won't Wait Training Series:**

**November 10**   **Overview of the Interstate Compact**  
**January 13**     **Legal Framework For Education In NYS**  
**February 10**   **Adolescent Mental Health Concerns**  
**March 10**      **Legal Update**  
**April 14**       **Permanency and Stability and its Biological Effects**  
**May 12**        **Effectively Engaging and Understanding Teen Parents and  
the Services available to Support this Population**

***UCMS Permanency Training***

Permanency Module Training was delivered to the Seventh District court clerks and staff in January, 2009. The training covered the importance of data collection in achieving permanency, and included discussion and demonstrations including the Freed Child Permanency Video and Real Time UCMS demonstration, as well as discussion on legal aspects, and the relevance of AFSA. Helpful forms were also distributed.

In addition to the training, NY State Initiative, Seventh District Adoption Panel Reviews took place in May and October 2009. A collaborative effort with OCFS, DHS and CWCIP these are held twice a year to examine all freed children and youth placed out of the home. Review panels are in place in all counties of the Seventh District to identify and follow up on system gaps and barriers precluding freed children from being adopted in a timely manner. All youth are reviewed with an APPLA goal, and the focus is on identifying an adult and visiting resource, fostering lifelong connection to a family, perfecting independent living skills, capitalizing on available education opportunities, and defining career goals.

***Adoption Exchange Program***

This program, which ended in 2009, was held *five* times a year. The program involved regional OCFS and DHS agencies supporting recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families in the 7<sup>m</sup> Judicial District. NY Western Region profiled freed children to Western counties, as well as introduced perspective adoptive families and adoption gaps and barriers.

## ***National Adoption Day***

### 2009 Celebrations:

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 National Adoption Day events in Ontario, Monroe, and Steuben Family Courts took place. In Monroe County, the Adoption Stakeholders group, co-chaired by **Judges Gail Donofrio** and **Dandrea Ruhlmann** organizes Annual National Adoption Day and National Foster Care Month events. The stakeholders group addresses the needs of participating families, agencies and public relations for the events. At the 2009 National Adoption Day, Monroe County Family Court finalized 19 adoptions. The ceremony highlighted adopting older youth, and an adoptive mother and her 18 year old daughter spoke, as well as sibling brothers. All media types covered the event, and featured pieces on their video news hours and in print.

In Ontario County, the Adoption Day celebration was co-chaired by **Brenda Breese**, Ontario County Family Court, **Vicki Waterman** and **Barbara Garmen, Sr.** Caseworkers, Ontario County Department of Social Services. The Hon. Craig Doran provided opening remarks and presided over the adoptions. A social hour was held following the ceremony.

### 2010 Celebrations:

**Ontario County Family Court** will celebrate National Adoption Day on Friday, November 19, 2010 at 2:00 P.M. The ceremony will begin with opening remarks by **Judge Doran**, **Judge Reed**, and Ontario County DSS representatives. The highlight of the ceremony will be the adoption finalization by **Judge Kocher** of 2 brothers who have been in foster care after placement with the Ontario County Department of Social Services. Refreshments will be served after the ceremony during which a slide show presentation will be displayed depicting Ontario County foster children and foster parents and explaining the foster parent/adoption process.

**Wayne County** plans an information display each year throughout the month of November. Information is available from various adoption agencies, including procedures on how to get started with an adoption. Promotional items are also provided. The table is located in the main lobby where customer service windows are located, easily accessible to the public.

**Monroe County** will be celebrating National Adoption Day on November 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM at the Hall of Justice. Five Family Court Judges will preside over the finalization of 8 adoptive families with a **total of 9 children adopted ages 21 months through 14 years**. The celebration takes place in a large courtroom, and generally 100-150 people attend. Speakers at the celebration will include an adoptive parent and child, the Mayor's office, the DHS Commissioner, as well as the Administrative and Supervising Judges. The Emcee for the event is a local newscaster, and print and TV resource tables will be set up with information on recruitment and adoption process.

Following the ceremony, refreshments including cake, cookies and drinks will be served.

It is anticipated that a formal celebration of National Adoption Day will take place each year in each county in the Seventh Judicial District.



photos from National Adoption Day Monroe County, 2010, printed with permission of Denise Champagne, The Daily Record.

### ***Court Orientation Program***

On July 8, 2009 Monroe Family Court and CWCIP held its second Orientation program, chaired by **Hon. Joseph Nesser**. The program is offered every six months for children placed out of their home due to a neglect proceeding . The Court held another Orientation on October 20, 2010. Children and foster parents/caregivers are invited to attend an orientation program held in a courtroom. The program provides information about the basic permanency hearing court process and professionals speak about their roles and responsibilities for the child's safety, well-being and permanency.

The court orientation program is a voluntary, age appropriately designed program providing children and youth placed out of their home due to an Article 10 proceeding, a venue to better understand the Permanency Hearing court process and what to expect when appearing in court.

Monroe Family Court is committed to offering meaningful support for children and youth concerning their judicial involvement, regardless of whether they are appearing in court or not. The orientation program strives to inform children and their foster parents/care givers about the Permanency Hearing process, and what they can expect. The Court is sensitive to the difficulties and trauma the child is experiencing, and anticipates that preparing a child for the Permanency Hearing prior to his or her

appearance will make the court experience less intimidating, and a more thoughtful process. The goal of the orientation program is for the children to hear about the basic court process and the roles of legal professionals responsible for their safety, well-being and permanency. Enhancing their understanding of the process and environment should be an empowering experience, and will assist both the children and the foster families in coping with the court system.

### ***Monroe Family Court Crossover Youth Practice Model Pilot:***

In March 2010, Monroe County was selected to participate in the launch of a Crossover Youth Practice Model designed to enhance practices to meet the high needs of youth who are involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Not surprising, research demonstrates that a youth's history of maltreatment increases the likelihood of his/her delinquency.

The Georgetown University Public Policy Institute's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) and Casey Family Programs have joined together to launch a practice model that strengthens how the juvenile justice and child welfare systems serve crossover youth. The partnership builds upon the work of the 2008-2009 Certificate Program - Breakthrough Series Collaborative in which seven initial jurisdictions were engaged in testing innovative practices to better serve the needs of these young persons and their families. Monroe County is one of only eleven jurisdictions that have been chosen nationwide to participate in enhancing practices for crossover youth by rolling out the Practice Model.

A main component of the Practice Model is establishing a Guiding Coalition made up of key leaders and community partners dedicated to improving outcomes for crossover youth. The Guiding Coalition will refocus the efforts of Monroe County's existing collaborative with the goal of promoting best practices. A multi-disciplinary Implementation Team consisting of the Court, CIP, probation, and the Department of Social Services is responsible for the planning, implementation, identification of crossover youth, data collection, and providing services and treatment for the youth and family.

### ***Monroe Family Court Creating Cultures of Trauma Informed Care Pilot***

Community Connections, a provider of mental health, substance abuse and trauma services in Washington, DC, has developed a trauma-informed services model, Creating Cultures of Trauma Informed Care (CCTIC). The CCTIC training and consultation pilot launched a joint initiative with Monroe County Family Court, the JADE Program, a SAMSHA funded jail diversion program for women with co-occurring disorders and Monroe County ACCESS, a SAMSHA funded children system of care grant. In June 2010, the pilot was launched in four sites: 1. Monroe County Family

Court; 2. Rochester City School District Elementary, School 3; 3. A children's mental health provider; and 4. JADE program.

Violence and trauma is often at the center of a youth's juvenile justice involvement, school problems, mental health challenges and substance use. It is imperative that a comprehensive, community-wide approach is taken to treating trauma that often goes unrecognized. The CIP ECPCW committee includes a 12 member court team which attended a 2 day training pilot kick off for the four sites. The court team is working on a system/programmatic self-assessment and planning protocol.

### ***Enhanced Permanency Hearing (EPH)***

This initiative was originally piloted in Monroe Family Court with **Judge Dandrea Ruhlmann** striving to increase youth participation in court hearings. Monroe Family Court is now out of the pilot stage, and is well into the second year, with approximately 30 EPH referrals. Steuben County Family Court began its EPH pilot in **Judge Peter Bradstreet's** court in March 2009.

Prior to the permanency hearing, a freed youth is invited to participate in a youth-centered discussion about his or her individual permanency goal, transitional plan, successes and barriers. The EPH includes the judge, attorneys, caseworker and important people identified by the youth to sit around a courtroom table in a supportive and respectful environment to assist the youth in achieving key outcomes for permanency and a successful life .

The goal of this program is to empower youth by inviting them to engage in meaningful decision making and goal setting at their permanency hearing, and to establish a supportive environment of respect emphasizing the importance of youth input. Prior to leaving foster care, youth will achieve key outcomes enhancing their permanency, safety, transition into adulthood and opportunity for lifetime success.

EPH's mission is that every youth in foster care or leaving the child welfare system will have a family or connection to a significant adult in the community, educational/career opportunities, and life skills to support adult empowerment.

EPH is a voluntary program promoting a youth-centered team approach to discuss permanency and transitional planning. The youth, judge, professionals and identified important individuals to the youth sit around a courtroom table in a less formal setting. The discussion is centered on the permanency plan, placement, achieving age appropriate personal proficiencies and goals. The youth-centered EPH is designed to

support and encourage young people in care to develop skills, and guidance on addressing difficulties in their lives and obtaining the goals they set for themselves.

Many positive outcomes for youth in care will be enhanced by this practice, including identifying a family or adult connections, positive emotional and behavioral outcomes, and motivation to become responsible adults capable of making good decisions.

### ***Fostering Recovery***

This program is the result of a Children's Bureau four year funded Regional Partnership Grant, involving the University of Rochester, Monroe County DHS and CWCIP-Monroe Family Court. It is an evidence-based initiative designed to address the complex needs of families dealing with chemical dependency, parenting children from birth through age 2, and involved with child protective services. The pilot is in phase two, accepting family referrals to the program. Program interventions provide the parent and child an opportunity to:

1. Participate in the multiple evidenced-based relational interventions designed to decrease the time until permanency.
2. Reduce out of home placement
3. Enhance parent child relationship
4. Increase the cognitive development of young children in the child welfare system.
5. Parent success in chemical dependency treatment.

### ***Pediatric Resident Rotation in Family Court***

Monroe Family Court and CWCIP partner with the University of Rochester Medical Center Pediatric Links to the Community (PLC) program to offer a court based professional development rotation. In the PLC program Pediatric and Medical Residents participate in community based rotations, where residents have the opportunity to learn, teach and be involved with community agencies.

The court-medical partnership offers residents a one day rotation in Family Court. Their schedule integrates observing in Domestic Violence Family Court, Article 10-A proceedings, Family Treatment Court (FTC), Juvenile Drug Court (JDC), Custody/Visitation, and PINS and JD proceedings. The Resident also has an option to spend time in the Family Court Children's Center.

The partnership now includes the psychiatric department and its interns. In addition to the court visit the partnership integrated judges presenting at Strong Hospital's PLC noontime conferences and grand rounds. This community partnership provides both medical professionals and the judiciary a venue outside of their professional environments, to raise awareness and hear about concrete issues related to the stories of families involved in both systems.

### ***Safe Haven Initiative***

Office on Violence against Women (OVW) grant funding a supervised visitation collaborative (CWCIP, DHS, ABW, SPCC, and Family Court) in Monroe County to increase availability for supervised visitation and exchange programs for abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and custody cases. The program ended in September 2010, and successfully provided court referral supervised visitation service for an additional 95 families.

### ***Parent to Parent***

In support of PIP strategies, the evidence based Parent to Parent pilot in Monroe and Ontario counties is a strength-based initiative enlisting actions that will enhance how the child welfare system, community and court can offer better support for strength-based family focused practice, and provide safe and successful permanency outcomes. The two year pilot funding ended in July 2009; the steering committee is in the process of compiling an evidence-based protocol and procedural manual for NYS counties interested in duplicating the program.

### ***Custody & Visitation Mediation***

Monroe and Ontario County Family Courts piloted an expedited custody/visitation mediation program in 2008, where cases were pre-selected (based on certain criteria) to be invited to attend mediation prior to the court appearance. If parties were able to reach an agreement, an order was made without the necessity of the parties appearing in court. A primary goal of this pilot was to decrease the amount of time required to obtain a custody order, and to potentially reduce the number of court appearances required of parties. This pilot was completed in Monroe and Ontario Counties at the end of 2008.

In Ontario County, the pilot was successful in effectively reducing the number of days which transpired from the date of filing of a Petition to its final disposition, as opposed to matters which were not part of the program.

In Monroe County, based on a number of factors unique to a urban environment, it was necessary to make modifications to the original program design. Under the initial program design, the failure to appear rate for the initial consult was 61% making it an ineffective use of resources. Using the same screening criteria to identify appropriate cases, petitions are flagged that might benefit from mediation, the parties are summoned to court and at the first appearance, the Court Attorney Referee advises them they have been identified as potential participants for this program and they are asked to meet with the mediator immediately. The mediator is available in the courtroom and if the parties agree, they leave the courtroom and work with the mediator that day. If a consent agreement is reached, the parties return to the courtroom and put the agreement on the record. If additional time is needed, the parties return to the courtroom and an adjourned date is granted for mediation. If it appears mediation will not resolve the issues, the parties return to the courtroom and an adjourned date is given for further proceedings before the Court Attorney Referee.

The new procedure in Monroe County is successful for those cases where the parties actually appear for court and then work with the mediator. Of the cases that did appear, 74% resulted in a mediated agreement, a very high rate of success.

The mediation pilot program has now been expanded to all counties in the Seventh Judicial District with all, except Monroe following the same basic procedure. An updated statistical report was presented at the June 2010 Family Court Advisory Committee meeting.

Yates, Livingston and Seneca Counties also participate in Custody and Visitation programs and the programs have been successful in resolving many cases. Referrals to mediation take place prior to appearance, whenever appropriate, or from court proceedings.

Wayne Family Court continues to participate in the Mediation program developed by the Family Court Advisory Group under the direction of Judge Doran. The majority of cases that go through the mediation process are settled without ever having to come to court. The parties are encouraged to work together for the benefit of their children. If any further issues develop, they can return to mediation after filing a new petition.

## ***Ongoing Improvements in Technology and Automation***

The use of automation is critical to both the successful operation of Family Court and its operational efficiency. Family Courts throughout New York State currently use the Universal Case Management System (UCMS) as a statewide database. Monroe County Family Court was one of the first Family Courts to pilot imaging of court documents. A limited number of case types are currently scanned into the database with the image being available to other court parts or, in some cases where external access is authorized, an outside agency like the Child Support Enforcement Unit. This pilot continued in 2009, with Steuben, Livingston, Wayne, Seneca, Cayuga & Yates Counties all scanning documents into UCMS to provide better document access and storage. Although each County requires significant resources to scan the voluminous documents into the system, it is understood that the value of the instant availability of scanned documents far exceeds the efforts required to digitally capture the materials. The long term goal is to have totally imaged files and eliminate the storage of paper files, improve operational efficiency, and reduce storage and paper costs.

All petitions, Orders, divorce decrees, acknowledgments of paternity, and answers are scanned into the Universal Case Management System (UCMS) in Wayne Family Court. Scanning will be expanded to the contents of the entire file in the near future. In Seneca County, all case file materials are being scanned into UCMS. In Livingston County, Petitions and Orders are scanned. Although all counties acknowledge the significant staff resources required to scan the large volume of

paperwork inherent in court operations, it is also understood that the availability of scanned documents has an operational value that outweighs the efforts required to digitally capture the file materials.

The use of video-conferencing equipment for court hearings, as well as training programs and meetings has also increased throughout the District. This tool provides litigants with an opportunity to attend court hearings without the need to travel, and provides staff the opportunity to attend meetings or training programs without leaving the courthouse, thereby reducing travel costs and lost work hours for such travel. Telephonic conferencing is also utilized extensively in child support and paternity cases where prisoners are in the custody of Department of Corrections as an effort to save money in the transport of state prisoners.

Over the past several years, considerable efforts have been made to improve the Court's response in child welfare cases. The passage of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) placed strict performance measures on states to comply with both

language and specific time frames for permanency hearings. Failure to perform, as required by this Act, can have a significant fiscal implication for states with a possible loss of their federal foster care funding.

Every effort, both human and technical, has been made to ensure maximum compliance with this federal statute. The UCMS program was modified in 2008 to include a special Permanency tab for tracking of these cases.

In an effort to enhance the flow of information between Family Court and other County agencies (namely: Monroe County Probation Department, Monroe Public Defender's Office and the Monroe County Conflict Defender's Office) electronic transmission of information between agencies was implemented in 2009 . This electronic flow of information has sped the delivery of court/agency information between agencies, enhanced agency response times and improved the overall communication between agencies.

In Steuben County, an e-filing pilot program began in early 2010. Seneca County launched a similar e-filing program in early 2010. In 2009, a public computer was placed in the Steuben Courthouse so that parties are able to complete and file support and paternity Petitions more efficiently.

## **Family Court Partners**

The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) continue to play an integral role in managing the Family Court child welfare caseload. The CASA program is also presented on our Family Treatment Court Team, with all FTC cases being assigned a CASA.

In an effort to meet the needs of children and families within the District, Family Courts across the District also work collaboratively with:

- Centers for Dispute Settlement
- Departments of Social Services
- Support Collection Units
- Probation Departments

Legal Aide  
Mental Health Departments  
parent education agencies  
substance abuse agencies, and  
Sheriff's Departments

## **Highlights from the District:**

In Monroe County, Family Court is partnering with the Rochester City School District in implementing a "School Attendance Partnership" pilot program. Three city schools—Dr. Freddie Thomas High School, Jefferson High School and East High School—are involved in this project, aimed at assisting schools with the issue of truancy. The schools are working in collaboration with probation and the Court in this endeavor with the primary goal of improving attendance of youth with significant truancy. Although in its early stages, the program has shown success in improving school and family communication and school attendance.

In October, 2010, Monroe County opened three new Custody/Visitation Courtrooms and agency offices on the second floor of the Hall of Justice. Two of these new courtrooms house the custody and visitation parts of Monroe County Family Court, and provide much needed courtroom and agency office space as well as two conference rooms. A ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the new space is planned for December 14, 2010.

The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) continue to play an integral role in The District's child welfare caseload. In 2009, CASA was assigned by Family Court judges to over 116 cases. The CASA program is also represented on our Family Treatment Court team with all FTC cases being assigned a CASA.

In the area of juvenile delinquency, Monroe County Family Court judges and administration continue to play an integral role in the County's Detention Reform Initiative, designed to reduce the number of juveniles being placed in both detention and long term placement through the development of Alternatives to Detention and a Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI). Additionally, both judges and administration continue to play an active role on the County's Juvenile Justice Committee which meets monthly to address concerns, share information, and develop initiatives on juvenile justice related issues.

The Monroe County Family Court Domestic Violence Intensive Intervention Court continues to hold partnership meetings with community stakeholder agencies in an effort to enhance communications between agencies and the court . The Court has continued its long and successful partnership with the University of Rochester- Department of Psychiatry . In 2009, the University of Rochester- Department of Psychiatry, opened a Court-Based Mental Health Faculty Practice to assist individuals seeking orders of protection in the Domestic Violence Court who voluntarily sought mental health services. The need for a court based initiative resulted from research conducted in previous years, by Dr. Catherine Cerulli during a National Institute of Mental Health Study which revealed high levels of depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder(PTSD), and suicidality amongst victims of domestic violence.

The Monroe County Family Court 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Children's Center, operated by the University of Rochester-Department of Psychiatry, served 3164 children and families in 2009. This state of the art Center provides a safe haven for children to play or learn while their parents are in court so as not to compromise either the emotional well being of the children or the efficient operations of the Court. The center provides playtime, books, snacks along with referrals and outreach for services under the supervision of a Center teacher and a Project Director.

The Family and Juvenile Treatment Courts continue to apply the drug court model to Neglect, Juvenile Delinquency and PINS cases before the Court. The Family Treatment Court, under the direction of the Hon. John J. Rivoli had 36 active participants with 5 graduates in 2009. 19 children were returned from Foster Care to their parent or never removed as a result of their parent's participation in Family Treatment Court.

The Teen Treatment Court, under the direction of the Hon. Patricia E. Gallaher, had 30 active participants and 2 graduates for 2009.

Monroe County Family Court utilizes the Center for Dispute Settlement for mediation of Custody/Visitation and PINS cases. In 2009, the Custody/Visitation Mediation program had 364 referrals producing a total of 173 agreements. The PINS Mediation program had 237 referrals producing 111 agreements.

Monroe County Family Court applied for and was awarded a grant of nearly \$300,000 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to provide mentoring and support services to youth. This grant was written by **Jennifer Baer**, and the award date was September 17, 2010.

In Livingston County, the Treatment Court has been engaged in a pilot program regarding admissions criteria. As part of the pilot, individuals involved in custody and visitation and support matters can be considered as participants as well as the traditional participants - respondents in abuse and neglect proceedings. The treatment team has accepted the enrollment of these additional parties to determine if individuals with substance abuse issues from cases other than neglect/abuse could benefit from participation in treatment court. The Court celebrated the graduation of a participant who is believed to be the first in the State - an enrollee who entered and successfully completed a Family Treatment Court program while a litigant in a custody proceeding. There are currently two custody proceeding participants enrolled in the Treatment Court, along with the traditional participants referred from neglect matters.

Livingston County has also implemented the Integrated Domestic Violence Initiative (IDVI), with the goal of enhancing informed judicial decision-making and promoting preferred procedures in the area of domestic violence. Although the program is in its early stages in Livingston County, the initial impact has been the facilitation of information-sharing between Family Court and local courts relative to the issuance and terms of Temporary and Permanent Orders of Protection.

For most of 2009, Wayne Family Court was short-staffed. The workload was kept current by the generosity of Ontario and Seneca Family Courts, who sent many experienced employees to help at the Court. With the retirement of 3 additional Court employees in 2010, Wayne Family Court lost over 90 years of experience between 2009 and 2010. However, the Court has welcomed 3 new employees and hopes to hire a fourth.

Wayne Family Court continues to partner with the Finger Lakes Community College, accepting criminal justice students in their final semester of college to work as court interns. The interns gain valuable insight into how the court system works, and the Clerk's office gains an extra employee. It has been a positive experience for all.

Wayne Family Dependency Treatment Court had two participants in 2009. Both graduated in 2010.

Wayne County **Judge Dennis Kehoe** is the chair of the Seventh Judicial District Family Court Advisory Group PINS subcommittee created in 2010. Judge Kehoe works along with School Administrators, DSS case workers, Judges, Attorneys, Court Personnel and Chief Clerks to address the issues unique to PINS cases and to potentially improve upon PINS practices throughout the District.

In the spring of 2010, Wayne Family Court began scanning all documents into UCMS. These are the first steps towards creating a paperless court, and eliminating the need for storage of paper files and improving operational efficiency.

Wayne County Courts continue to support a book give away project. Each child that comes to the Hall of Justice is invited to take home a book to keep. It is a self-supporting project that accepts donations and redeems empty soda cans for cash to purchase more books.

Yates County also has a Family Treatment Court as well as a Juvenile Treatment Court. The Court has installed Wi-Fi in the courthouse, providing those who come into Court with internet access.

Ontario County Family Court also partners with both Finger Lakes Community College and Keuka College by accepting criminal justice students as court interns. The interns gain valuable insight and experience, and also provide assistance to the Court.

Also in Ontario County, which has been scanning all Family Court records into UCMS since January 2007, the court was recently been granted permission to become a "paperless" court. The electronic record was declared the official court record in this County. This allows destruction of the paper copies and significantly reduces the amount of storage space required at both the Court House and in its archives. In addition, this allows other courts in the state to have instant access to information, and the ability to print off signed Court Orders, increasing the Court's efficiency significantly.

***Family Courts in the Seventh Judicial District are committed to the delivery of efficient and effective justice to the community. In addition, the District is determined to continue its innovation and excellence, and strives to provide excellent customer service to the families it serves. As Family Court filings continue to increase into the future, the Seventh Judicial District, under the supervision of the Honorable Thomas M. Van Strydonck and Honorable Craig J. Doran, will continue to strive to provide efficient, innovative and appropriate services to its children and families.***