

On Friday, April 29, 2016, the Family Court hosted the Fourteenth Family Treatment Court graduation. Five women graduated to lives without drugs and alcohol and with their children at their sides, after a rigorous year-plus of treatment, programming, and therapy to help identify the challenges to their sobriety.

After the processional of graduates into the room, Chief Judge Satterfield spoke, congratulating the graduates and saying that despite scheduling conflicts, he was there to support them and to support Magistrate Judge Gray. Judge Puig-Lugo then spoke, also congratulating the graduates, but reminding them that while this was a conclusion, it was also a beginning. And he made sure they knew that the Family Treatment Court family would be with them always. Ms. Jocelyn Gainers, Director of the Family Recovery Program, read an inspirational poem, and then Judge Gray introduced Carson Fox, CEO of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. Fox kept his remarks brief because, he said, the day was not about him but about the graduates. He told them that in searching for a word that would sum-up the day, what he came up with was 'Inspiration,' saying that the graduates were an inspiration to him, as he knew they were to others following in their footsteps in the program to their families and to all of us in attendance. He reminded them all that they were extraordinary people. Marquitta Duverney, Director of DC's Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA), told the graduates that they each had light inside them, that they were in charge of it and not to let anyone take it away from them. Marie Morilus-Black, Deputy Director of the DC Child and Family Services Agency's Office of Well-Being, acknowledged the rough road the women had travelled, but said she was confident that they could become women their children would look up to. And like Judge Puig-Lugo, she reminded the women that the support team that is the Family Treatment Court is "not going anywhere" and told them that "you've found your village." David Cook from Court Appointed Special Advocates spoke briefly and congratulated the graduates. Songstress Corisa Myers then performed *What about the Children?* a song that included the lyrics "And if not for those who loved us and who cared enough to show us, Where would we be today?"

Magistrate Judge Gray then spoke to the graduates, telling them that they were fabulous women, courageous women and reassuring them of her confidence in their ability to succeed. Family Treatment Court Coordinator Dr. Sariah Beatty then called the graduates up to the podium one by one to receive their certificate. Dr. Beatty spoke about the progress they'd made, the obstacles they'd overcome and the unique contributions each had made. The graduates were thrilled with their certificates, their awards and the bag of gifts that each were given. The ceremony was closed with another musical selection from Corisa Myers (the most appropriate 'You are the Wind Beneath My Wings') and then Dr. Beatty's final thoughts and reflections.