



NEWS RELEASE

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OAKLAND CIRCUIT COURT PROJECT “ADOPTION PERMANENCY STUDY” RECEIVES JUSTICE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Oakland County, MI (June 20, 2011) – The Oakland County Circuit Court Family Division has been selected to receive this year’s “Justice Achievement Award” from the National Association for Court Management (NACM). The award recognizes outstanding achievement and meritorious projects that enhance the administration of justice. The Court is being honored for spearheading “The Adoption Permanency Project and Study” that has resulted in removing barriers to and expediting adoption permanency for children in foster care.

The award ceremony will be held on Tuesday, July 12, 2011, in Las Vegas, Nevada, in conjunction with NACM’s annual conference. The Justice Achievement award application was co-authored by William P. Bartlam, Manager of Judicial Support in the Circuit Court, and Lauran F. Howard, Chief of Juvenile and Adoption Services. Mr. Bartlam will receive the award on behalf of the Court.

The Adoption Permanency Project was a multi-year collaboration among the Circuit Court Family Division, the Michigan Department of Human Services, private adoption agencies, and representatives from the CASA program of the Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County, the Foster Care Review Board, and the lawyer-guardian ad litem appointed for children.

Circuit Judge Martha D. Anderson served as Permanency Docket judge for the first eighteen months of the project, and Chief Probate Judge Linda S. Hallmark succeeded Judge Anderson in October 2009 as Permanency Docket Judge. With staff support from adoptions unit supervisor Palmer Sesti and adoptions caseworkers Gabrielle Osooli and Julie Berz, and with technical

support from the court's data technology unit led by Christine Bujak, the court's permanency judges and team achieved adoption permanency – finalized adoptions – for significant numbers of children. To do this, they employed multiple strategies, some of which had never before been tested for their effectiveness. The lessons learned from this study of 349 children's progress to adoption are of value not only to the Circuit Court, but can be replicated by courts in many jurisdictions.

In addition to the award ceremony, "The Adoption Permanency Project and Study" will be featured in the Court-2-Court Showcase presented by NACM in Las Vegas on July 13 from 10:00A until noon. Mr. Bartlam will be on hand to answer questions and provide information about Oakland County's successful adoption program to other jurisdictions.

To learn more about "The Adoption Permanency Project and Study," the Court recommends contacting Mr. Bartlam at bartlamb@oakgov.com

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