



Contact: Chrisie Yabu, chrisie@kps3.com, 775-686-7437
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Judge Lori A. Dumas Honored by the NCJFCJ For Significant Work in Sex Trafficking

Judge Dumas is first recipient of the NCJFCJ Innovator of the Year Award

(Reno, Nev.) – The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) announces the first-ever recipient of the NCJFCJ Justice Innovation Awards *Innovator of the Year* to the Honorable Judge Lori A. Dumas, Philadelphia family court judge and presiding judge of the WRAP Court: *Working to Restore Adolescents' Power*.

The *Innovator of the Year Award* honors an NCJFCJ member who innovatively rethinks, reimagines, and redefines justice for children and families, thus advancing the NCJFCJ's vision – a society in which every family and child has access to fair, equal and timely justice.

WRAP is an innovative, new court program of the First Judicial District Family Court Division that seeks to provide alternatives to criminalization for minor victims of sex trafficking by providing specialized trauma-informed treatment to victims in the least restrictive and most holistic environment.

Children who have been arrested and identified as victims of sexual trafficking are offered an opportunity to participate in WRAP through a pre-trial diversion program. The goal of the team, and the program, is to work collaboratively with the child to promote treatment, healing and restoration, and ensure the safety of the child victim in the least restrictive setting possible. Rather than adjudicating these children delinquent for crimes that directly result from their sexual exploitation, the WRAP program diverts the child from the adjudicatory system into the child welfare system, empowering them to heal and move away from their trauma.

The historic 99-0 U.S. Senate vote to approve the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act expands law enforcement tools to target sex traffickers and creates a new fund to help victims. This decision will help reinforce the importance of domestic child sex trafficking, and raise better awareness for Judge Dumas' work with the WRAP project.

"Judge Dumas sits at the table face-to-face with each child, speaking directly to her and building trust," said Philadelphia assistant district attorney Carlos Vega and the person that nominated Dumas for the award. "She goes beyond the call of duty to build relationships of mutual respect and accountability with these girls. She is truly an innovative jurist."

All juveniles who have been identified as victims of human trafficking and receive services through WRAP have their cases addressed by a multidisciplinary team including Judge Dumas, a prosecutor, defense counsel and treatment providers.

“It has been a privilege to bear witness to the love and steely commitment of Judge Dumas to make better the lives of our most vulnerable girls,” said Malika Saada Saar, executive director of the national human rights organization, Rights4Girls. “She is advancing a new and innovative approach to child victims of trafficking in Philadelphia to provide services and help – and move the city away from the approach of criminalizing girls who have been subject to serial, commercial rape. Her efforts, and the spirit she brings to those efforts, set a national example.”

Components of the WRAP program include: Diversion of delinquent petitions of all but the most serious felonies through reporting consent decree on new arrests; Early expungement of delinquent records after program completion; Community-based services from providers with experience in trauma-based treatments for victims of human sexual trafficking; A team approach to problem solving including frequent informal conversations with the child; Dependent (child welfare) services provided as opposed to delinquent system treatment whenever possible; and an approach where children receive treatment in the least restrictive setting available.

“Judge Dumas has a reputation for being a tough, no-nonsense but fair judge,” said Ebony D. Wortham, Esq., assistant district attorney, director of truancy prevention for the Philadelphia district attorney's office. “This work, which I believe she was born to do, has stretched her beyond the traditional judicial role. While ensuring that this population is held accountable, she often provides a shoulder to cry on, a hug at the perfect time, words of affirmation, and even forgiveness and grace to help counteract the devastating impact of human trafficking.”

“Judge Dumas has been incredibly creative, open to hearing new ideas and very receptive to our work as victim service providers,” said Jamie Manirakiza, director of anti-trafficking and social services at The Salvation Army. “She has been mindful of the challenges victims face as we seek to provide services for a very traumatized population.”

Judge Dumas will be presented the *Innovator of the Year* award at NCJFCJ's [78th Annual Conference](#) in Austin on July 28.

Founded in 1937, the Reno, Nev.-based National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, is the nation's oldest judicial membership organization and focused on improving the effectiveness of our nation's juvenile and family courts. A leader in continuing education opportunities, research, and policy development in the field of juvenile and family justice, the 2,000-member organization is unique in providing practice-based resources to jurisdictions and communities nationwide.

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