

Area drug court paying it forward

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The Dubuque/Delaware County Drug Court program was saved by an outpouring of community support, and now participants would like to return the favor.

Drug court participants will host a chili dinner Oct. 27, with all proceeds going to the People in Need program, a program of Dubuque Area Congregations United.

"I think it shows a real sense of gratitude on their part," said Tim Duggan, who works with Dubuque Archdiocese Catholic Charities on the program. "They want to pay it forward."

The drug court is an intensive, specialized program to help habitual, nonviolent drug offenders through community-based treatment options and close judicial supervision. The program ran out of state funding this summer, but Catholic Charities was able to raise \$45,000 to keep the court going.

Duggan said supporters are working to get state legislators to consider renewed funding, given the cost-effective success of drug courts versus incarceration.

"I've seen this program change lives," Duggan said. "It's really encouraging."

To show their gratitude to the Dubuque community, those in the program decided to help another worthy cause.

"One (drug court member) said we're really lucky the community is supporting us," Duggan said. "They thought the dinner was a great idea."

The group agreed on fundraising for PIN, a program that provides emergency assistance for rent, utility bills and other essentials for low-income residents of the Dubuque area.

Alan Garfield, head of PIN, said the program's funds can run thin during the colder months.

"The people at drug court know what it's like to be in a tough spot," he said.