

Seven graduate from Drug Court Thursday

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"I prayed a lot the whole time I was in jail," he stated.

Wilma Spicer, the former director of Drug Court, came to the jail and talked to Brooks about getting into Drug Court.

Drug Court requires its participants to get a job, go to meetings, and stay clean.

"I can't make up for time lost," Brooks stated. "I still have a hard time looking at those people on the back row."

His mother, son and daughter were there to see him graduate from Drug Court.

Brooks said he sometimes didn't want to get up to go to work.

Drug Court has made him structure his life so that he now gets up early.

He began a new job on Monday and knew he would be on time.

"If you want to make a change, you've got to put into it," he said. "It's a big day for me."

"Three years ago, my aspiration was to get needles. Now the sky is the limit," he stated.

Brooks moved from Irvine to Lexington. He knows he can't be near the friends he had before when he was on drugs. He also says he has a personal relationship with God.

Janell Brewer, a mother who started the SPARK ministry, was supposed to be somewhere else that morning. As her luck turned out, she got to speak at another Drug Court graduation.

Brewer told the group about her

daughter's addiction.

"It is the hardest thing my family and I have gone through," she stated.

In 2016, Brewer could not find anyone to help her daughter. After that, she opened her first SPARK office in her home county of Powell.

"The last thing I wanted was an office," Brewer said.

"I'm tired of people dying," she added.

Brewer has now opened up ten SPARK offices. One of them is located across the street from the Estill County Courthouse. Persons on drug addiction seeking help or their family members may visit the office behind the church and up the steps. SPARK helps the addicts to find funding for treatment.

Brewer also mentioned Casey's Law. The law helps a family get help for their

addicted loved one. SPARK also assists families with Casey's Law.

Johnathan Gay, an attorney working for Addiction Recovery Care (ARC) gave a talk and slide presentation on that center.

ARC was started by Tim Robinson, also a lawyer, who battled alcohol addiction.

ARC has residential treatment centers as well as out-patient treatment centers. A residential center for males is in Owsley County, one of the counties in the 23rd Judicial District. Nearby outpatient clinics are in Jackson and Owsley counties.

The center provides job, life, recovery and clinical skills to their patients.

It has created 600 jobs with half of them going to graduates of the programs.

SCHOOL BOARD

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Arthur said that with some high school students attending vo-tech in Richmond that it had caused some issues this year with the two counties being on break at different times.

The calendar for the next school year gives students a full week off for spring break, fall break, and two weeks off for Christmas break.

Superintendent Saylor stressed the fact that the district is required by the state to attend 175 days of school per year. He said there has been a lot of criticism over school being called off or not being called off. He's heard that people say that it's just a money thing. Saylor said that it absolutely has nothing to do with money.

If students miss a day of school then it will be tacked on to the end of the year, because that's what the state requires. He added that when the decision is being made on whether to attend school or not that he always puts the safety of the children first.

Saylor commended two bus drivers who were caught in a dicey situation on Barnes Mountain recently. He said the first bus leaves out going to the mountain about 5:30 a.m. and at that time the roads were clear, but during the routes an unexpected snowstorm popped up and he said both drivers handled the situation professionally.

Dual credit classes have been a hot topic lately and Saylor said that they have only lost a few dual credit classes at the high school. That is mostly in part to the teacher leaving the school district.

Currently there are nine dual credit classes offered to students at the high school which is down only one class since the 2015-2016 school year.

An update on the construction projects was given to the board by Peter Fisher and Kenny Davis. Davis of Codell Construction stated that the

weather has put them behind by eight days so far, and it also causing problems with the pyritic shale at the location of the vo-tech school.

He added that they would hopefully start putting walls up sometime in April.

Peter Fisher agreed that the weather was playing a huge role in what was being accomplished at the location of the new bus garage. He said that the site had been cleared off and that hopefully the road to the site would be completed soon.



Janell Brewer spoke Thursday at the Drug Court graduation held in Estill's circuit courtroom. Brewer is the founder of the SPARK ministry, which has an office in Irvine. Brewer founded the ministry because her daughter was a drug addict.



21st District Circuit Judge Michael Dean, right, presented a certificate to Johnny Brooks Jr. on Thursday upon his graduation of Drug Court.

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MISTER BREGER By Dave Breger

"Must you ALWAYS get dramatic when you rob little Harry's piggy-bank?"

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