

AJA BENCHMARK

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Free Probation Program Changes Lives

Milt Nuzum, Marietta Municipal Court, Ohio

A 23-year-old man stopped by my office and thanked me for saving his life. A couple of years ago I had sentenced him for possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia. He had started using drugs at age 16. At 21, he was arrested. When he was found guilty, I placed him on probation, and he went into the Alcohol Chemical Treatment Series (ACTS) program.

I suspect my court is like most. We have limited resources. It takes some creativity to find help for the people we deal with daily. The money we pay for treatment can help only a small percentage of those who need it. Many have treatable problems but no insurance or ability to pay for counseling. Others cannot schedule their treatment without placing their employment in jeopardy. In my community the ACTS program is helping

solve these problems. It is offered free to the participants. It is convenient. It is turning lives around.

ACTS was the creative idea of United Pentecostal pastor Rod Carpenter in 1988. Carpenter was a chaplain with an Oklahoma sheriff's office at that time. His experience with people in the criminal justice system who were dealing with drug and alcohol problems led him to develop ACTS as an adjunct to the Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous programs available in his community. Carpenter said, "I wanted to take a cognitive approach to dealing with the problem—encourage these people to embrace a change in their thinking patterns."

Carpenter stressed that his program is not counseling. Rather, its focus is on educating individuals to

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Annual Meeting Notice

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Article V, Section 1, of the bylaws of the American Judges Association that the annual meeting will be held September 18-23 at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage, Alaska. The annual membership meeting will be held Thursday, September 22, at 8:00 a.m.

Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the American Judges Foundation will be held Monday, September 19, 2005, at 12:30 p.m. at the Hotel Captain Cook. bm

