



MISSOURI JUVENILE JUSTICE ASSOCIATION EXCELLENCE IN JUVENILE COURT PROGRAM AWARD 2019

33rd JUDICIAL CIRCUIT “Parent Education and Support Group”

One of MJJA’s many goals is to share information on new ideas and programming designed by Missouri’s juvenile and family courts which are truly beneficial to the children they serve. When MJJA created the Excellence in Juvenile Court Program Award in 1993, it did so with two purposes in mind: first, to acknowledge the outstanding work being done in juvenile and family courts throughout the state; and, second, to inspire us all to creativity and excellence. From its inception, MJJA has chosen to recognize a program only if it has risen to the level, established through a judging process, to truly merit the label “EXCELLENT”. While many good programs have been offered for consideration, one program was chosen by the Juvenile Court Program Award Committee to receive this year’s Excellence Award.

The innovative **Parent Education and Support Group (PESG)** was created in October, 2018 and serves as an evening educational, supportive, trauma-informed group for parents, grandparents, guardians and others who are raising at-risk youth involved with the juvenile justice system. PESG meets in Sikeston, Missouri, once a week and is looking to expand into northern Scott County to assist with educating and supporting more families in the community. The Parent Education Support Group consists of group discussion, group support and education, one-on-one support and education from the group facilitator, and homework which encourages the parents/guardians to apply the learned trauma-informed skills in their families. Group discussions cover a variety of trauma-informed topics, including understanding the brain of a child who has been through trauma; communication styles and skills; trauma-informed parenting skills; power struggles; attachment and parenting styles; importance of consistency and praise; reacting vs. responding; and remaining engaged in a child’s education and treatment.

Goals of the Parent Education Support Group are as follows:

- Increase understanding of trauma-informed parenting skills;
- Educate parents/guardians on trauma-informed skills and strategies that use positive reinforcement, health structure, and consistent discipline to manage their child’s behavior;
- Increase the application of the learned material and skills by the parents/guardians with their child in the home environment;
- Support parents/guardians by providing an empathetic and safe environment to share parenting experiences, successes, concerns, and struggles.

In a letter of support for PESG, the writer notes “the 33rd Circuit has always been an innovative leader in programming for the children in their area, but their current effort in providing the Parent Education Support Group Program is over and above their “normal” high standards!”

Congratulations to the 33rd Circuit for being honored as the recipient of the 2019 MISSOURI JUVENILE JUSTICE ASSOCIATION “Excellence in Juvenile Court Program Award”.