

State of Michigan
64B Judicial District Court
Montcalm County

Jason Evans
Magistrate & Court
Administrator

HONORABLE ADAM J. EGGLESTON
DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

Brandon Olejnik
Magistrate

Dear Judge Michelle Rick,

First, we wanted to thank you for your communication regarding innovative work in rural communities. This type of collaboration, where courts learn about other programs that uphold the integrity of the legal system while best serving local communities only benefits the people we serve.

A quick synopsis of Montcalm County will be the backdrop for the program that Judge Eggleston and the 64B District Court is currently implementing. Montcalm County is located in Western Michigan, with the county seat located in Stanton, MI. The population of the county is currently around 66,614 and is comprised of many close-knit communities and hardworking people.

Interestingly, one source reports that approximately 13% of Montcalm County residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher and the county holds a high school drop out rate of approximately 11%. The question then becomes, what does the educational make-up of the rural community of Montcalm have to do with innovative work within the court system?

Judge Eggleston, in partnership with Montcalm Community College and the 64B District Court Probation Department have implemented a new program known as the ACE (Academics Changes Everything).

- ACE is a partnership between the Montcalm County 64B District Court and Montcalm Community College that seeks to utilize education as a foundational building block for individuals placed under the court's supervision.
- ACE provides educational opportunities to identified individuals who can attend Montcalm Community College as part of their probationary terms.
- As an MCC alumna, 64B District Court Judge Adam Eggleston believes strongly in the power of education to change and positively impact an individual's life.
- Not only does the ACE Program provide individuals the opportunity for further education, but it also promotes building healthy social relationships with other students, staff, and instructors.
- Foundationally, the program is designed to empower individuals to realize the impact of furthering their education through a community college such as MCC. It is asking participants to think about and utilize their talents and aspirations in pursuing a career that can use those talents for the benefit of the individual and community.
- Though every individual in life will face difficulties, by participating in the ACE Program, these individuals are afforded an opportunity to take a challenging time and potentially walk away with an education.

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- Everything in life appears to come and/or go. Things like careers, finances and relationships are not guaranteed in life, but an education is something that can never be taken away from an individual.
- The ACE Program supports the college's Mission of "Transforming Lives Through Quality Education."

Though this program is new and developing day by day, both the court and college have able to witness individuals truly succeed. We have individuals pursuing business, culinary arts, and a number of other programs. Moreover, we have other organizations, such as Michigan Works, we will be incorporating into the program to assist with several the services they offer.

We are unsure if this is the type of program you are looking for but wanted to provide you the information if it happens to be.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Brandon Olejnik
Magistrate/Deputy Admin.