

Local Dentist Restores Drug Court Smiles



Dr. Hudsmith (center left) with Judge Dwyer (center right) and a group of SCDC clients who received care

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“When you are using you don’t take most things in to consideration, especially the damage you are doing to your teeth,” says SCDC graduate Elizabeth. “I never cared about my teeth as long as my smile was OK, but that started to go with use.”

For those lost in the fog of drug abuse, dental hygiene is often a casualty. Fortunately for clients within the Shelby County Drug Court, Dr. Stuart Hudsmith knows these problems well, and he’s here to help. “Certain drugs like crystal meth take a particularly heavy toll on teeth,” Hudsmith says, “drug use takes away your smile and so users are self-conscious about their smiles. They may smile with their mouths closed because you can often see the teeth and know exactly what went wrong. It’s hard to function in society that way.”

Due to a friendship with SCDCF President Jack Mayer, Dr. Hudsmith became familiar with the drug court program about 10 years ago. “Once I got to know clients in the program I realized it was a worth wild program. It started out with one or two clients, and it grew from there.” It’s a family effort at Dr. Hudsmith’s dentistry, as daughter and office manager Ashley Hudsmith works graciously with drug court staff and clients in order to schedule appointments for clients in need.

Dr. Hudsmith has helped dozens of clients through a wide range of dental issues over the years, doing so totally free of charge. Hudsmith says, “I enjoy doing it, people that haven’t smiled in years because they were too embarrassed, I get to restore that. It’s very rewarding for me. I probably get more out of it than they do.”

Elizabeth, who just recently graduated from SCDC, is happy to be a current patient of Dr. Hudsmith’s. “I had no access to dental care. Unless you want to pay out of pocket, it’s just not something you can do.”

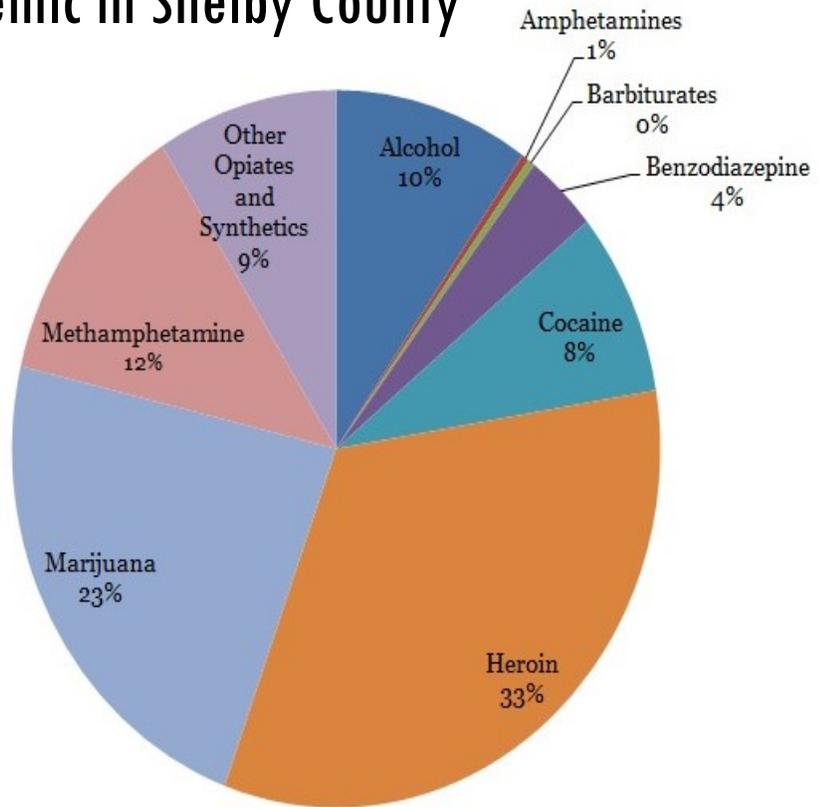
Thanks to Dr. Hudsmith, Elizabeth is getting some much needed care. “Oh my gosh, he’s amazing. I am terrified of dentists. He is the most gentle and understanding dentist. He explains everything he is going to be before he does it in a way you can understand. He really is awesome. He gave me my smile back.”

New Stats Reflect Heroin Epidemic in Shelby County

Out of 278 clients admitted to the Shelby County Drug Court from June 2015 to June 2016, over a third identified heroin as their drug of choice. This number represents a 5% increase from similar 2014 stats.

These new findings reflect the surging heroin epidemic in Shelby County, where the number of heroin related overdose deaths has climbed to 56 so far in 2016. An increase in prescription pain pill use is also widespread, as many clients often alternate between prescription opiates and heroin, depending on availability. When the two statistics are combined, heroin and prescription opiate addicts account for a staggering 42% of all SCDC clients.

SCDC Peer Recovery Specialist Bryan Owens, who is also a program graduate, has seen the change first hand. "There weren't that many heroin users ten years ago, there just weren't many IV drug users, maybe a handful in the program. The increase is part of our pain pill problem. It usually starts at home with pain pills in the medicine cabinet, then heroin next. Unfortunately, heroin is now 'in style,' especially with young people, it's back in a big way."



Saving \$helby County: Judge Dwyer Reduces Bonds to Allow Treatment, Saving Tax-Payers Close to \$45,000

Shelby County Drug Court held their 218th graduation ceremony in July, honoring 9 graduates, 4 of which were part of Judge Dwyer's bond-reduced program. If an individual can't make their bond while in jail but are in need of treatment, Judge Dwyer will often lower a bond or release a client from jail so they may enter treatment. Our clients get the help they need and Shelby County taxpayers no longer have to pay the cost of daily incarceration.

	12 Month Program per Client	18 Month Program per Client
Jail Costs	\$9,125.00	\$36,500
Drug Court Costs	\$3,650.00	\$8,212.50
Total Savings	\$5,475.00	\$28,287.50

Of the 4 graduates, 1 participant was in the 18 month program and 3 participants were in the 12 month program. With a total savings of \$44,712.50 from just 4 participants, Judge Dwyer's bond reduced program continues to save tax payer dollars and reduce the amount of non-violent drug offenders in our jails, a win-win for Shelby County.

DC Clients Recognized for Employee of the Month

Two clients were recently selected as Employee of the Month for June and July at Hooters Restaurant downtown. Left: Collins Peeples, Right: Charles Littles

