STATE OF ILLINOIS
CIRCUIT COURT
22ND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
McHENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS

November 4, 2026

For Immediate Release

Contact: James (Dan) Wallis
Trial Court Administrator
Phone (815) 334-4385
Email: courtadmin@22ndcircuit.il.gov

22nd Circuit Problem-Solving Courts Highlighted at Statewide Conference

WOODSTOCK, IL – The 22nd Judicial Circuit of McHenry County's experience and success with Problem-Solving Courts were highlighted at this year's Annual Illinois Association of Problem-Solving Courts Conference, held October 21–23, 2026, in Peoria. The two-and-a-half-day conference brought together approximately 500 professionals from across Illinois who work in and around Problem-Solving Courts. The conference focused on understanding human behavior, supporting recovery, sharing successful practices, and learning from people doing this work throughout the state.

McHenry County had a strong presence during the final day of the conference. Each year, one of the final sessions features graduates from Problem-Solving Courts across Illinois. These graduates talk openly about their experiences, including what worked, what did not work, and what made the difference in their recovery. It is consistently one of the most impactful sessions of the conference. This year, for the first time in the history of the conference, the graduate panel included a DUI Court graduate. That graduate was from McHenry County.

Speaking in front of a room of approximately 500 people is no small task, but she handled it extremely well. She spoke openly about her relationship with alcohol, what had become "normal" in her family, and how her experience in DUI Court changed her life. While participating in DUI Court, she was also working toward becoming a Certified Recovery Support Specialist. She did that while managing all the normal requirements of the program, including random drug testing, probation appointments, clinical appointments, treatment, sober-support meetings, court appearances, and everything else that comes with being a participant in a Problem-Solving Court.

Today, she continues to maintain her recovery and works as a Certified Recovery Support Specialist in McHenry County. With the right motivation, support, accountability, and structure, someone can get healthy, find meaningful employment, and then turn around and help someone else do the same thing.

McHenry County was also featured during the final plenary session when Tom Faber, Employment Specialist with the McHenry County Office of Special Projects, presented with Dr. Kenneth Robinson, President and Founder of Correctional Counseling, Inc. and co-creator of Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT).

Tom spoke about the importance of employment, and the role work can play in recovery. His message was simple: work provides more than a paycheck. It provides purpose, structure, responsibility, and a reason to keep moving forward. He also talked about the relationships he has built with participants and with employers throughout McHenry County. Those relationships have opened doors for people who may not otherwise have been given an opportunity. Tom's presentation helped frame employment as part of the treatment and recovery process, rather than something that happens after treatment is complete.

The Mental Health Court, Drug Court, and DUI Court do much more than address the legal problem that brought someone into the justice system. The work is about people. It is about identifying what brought them here, holding them accountable, giving them the tools and support to make changes, and then expecting them to do the work. None of this happens in isolation.

The success of the Problem-Solving Courts is the result of the continued support and partnership of the judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, treatment providers, Court Administration, McHenry County Board, McHenry County Mental Health Board, employers, and community partners. Together, we are working on something bigger than a legal problem. Together, we are addressing more than the case before the court; we are helping people make changes that can last well beyond it. "It is a privilege to work alongside the clients of the Specialty Courts," said Kelly Scimeca, Director of the Office of Special Projects. "Our team is dedicated to supporting McHenry County residents as they work toward brighter futures and strive to live their best lives."

Anyone interested in seeing that work firsthand is welcome to observe a Problem-Solving Court session. Court is held in Courtroom 104 at the Michael J. Sullivan Judicial Center beginning at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, along with other specially scheduled court dates.

For additional information about the Problem-Solving Courts Program or the 22nd Judicial Circuit of McHenry County, please contact:

Dan Wallis
Trial Court Administrator
22nd Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois
(815) 334-4385