

Reasonable efforts or unrealistic expectations

A look at Hennepin County child protection cases
Executive summary by Marna Anderson

In June 1998, the Minnesota Supreme Court opened Children in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS)¹ cases to the public for a three-year pilot project in 12 counties, including Hennepin. Prior to this, Hennepin County CHIPS cases were closed to the public, as they were in most United States jurisdictions, due to the longstanding rationale that closed courts protected the privacy of abused children.

However, many advocating for system reform believed public scrutiny could lead to improvements. As then-Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz said, "It's difficult to understand society's role in the welfare of children if we can't evaluate this huge system...Openness is a conduit through which a lot of good things can happen."² Following the pilot project, the Minnesota Supreme Court ordered that CHIPS hearings in all Minnesota courts be open to the public effective July 1, 2002.

WATCH initiated a two-year project monitoring CHIPS cases during the pilot project and released a report with findings and recommendations in 2001. In 2008, WATCH returned to juvenile court to again monitor child protection cases and make recommendations to improve how

cases are handled. Our primary focus was to:

- document how CHIPS cases move through the court system
- examine the role of the guardian *ad litem* (GAL) in CHIPS cases
- document how domestic violence is handled in CHIPS cases
- examine how the criminal, family, and juvenile courts work together when there are multiple cases involving the same family

This report is the result of courtroom monitoring, interviews with key stakeholders, and case reviews. WATCH conducted the following activities to gain a sound understanding of CHIPS cases in Hennepin County:

- Monitored approximately 435 hearings involving 129 cases between August 2008 and December 2009
- Interviewed 28 guardians *ad litem* working in Hennepin County
- Interviewed eight juvenile court judges who currently preside or previously presided over CHIPS cases
- Facilitated two focus groups involving thirteen Hennepin County child protection workers

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What's new

WATCH needs you

In order to conduct the kind of intensive monitoring and research leading to the articles featured in this newsletter, WATCH relies on the generous support of hundreds of individuals. WATCH's fiscal year ends on June 30, and we are working hard to raise \$40,000 before then to meet our budget for the year. We have heard from five loyal donors who volunteered to increase their gifts this year—THANK YOU—and are meeting with several more in the coming weeks. We hope you will join with these committed individuals in making a financial contribution before June 30.

WATCH plays a unique role in preventing and responding to violence. Volunteers and staff attend daily court, and since we are not involved in the proceedings, we can observe and document how all members of the court operate. We use our observations to identify patterns and make recommendations to improve the court's response to violence.

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¹ There are several case types under the heading of CHIPS; this report covers child protection, termination of parental rights, and voluntary placement cases.

² Chanen, David. "Child protection system's opening creates few ripples." Star Tribune [Minneapolis] 22 Mar. 1999, metro ed.: 1A.

Reasonable efforts or unrealistic expectations

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- Reviewed redacted versions of 47 child protection petitions³
- Facilitated two group meetings involving partner programs

The purpose of this report is to identify ways in which Hennepin County could provide greater support for families throughout the CHIPS process and improve the systems in which judges, social workers, and guardians *ad litem* (GALs) are operating. In addition to this report, Mary Lay Schuster, longtime WATCH monitor and professor at the University of Minnesota, compiled a companion report on the GAL program to assist in making improvements to that program. Both reports are posted on the WATCH website at www.watchmn.org.

Typical courtroom scenario (noted by WATCH monitors)

A WATCH monitor was sitting in a courtroom along with several other people waiting for an Emergency Protective Care (EPC) hearing to begin.⁴ An attorney walked in followed by two small African American children, a boy and a girl, who both appeared to be younger than 10 years old. As the girl walked into the courtroom, the monitor could see tears streaming down her face.

The children had spent the previous couple of nights at St. Joseph's Home for Children. They were attending the first hearing related to the county's child protection investigation after witnessing a domestic assault. An aunt and grandmother of the children were sitting in the gallery. At least eight court staff were also present: the judge; clerk; guardian *ad litem*; two attorneys, one for the county and one for the children; and three child protection staff—a field worker, a kinship worker, and an investigative worker. The hearing was being held on behalf of four children ranging in ages from three to 13. One of the absent children was living with the aunt, but would later be taken to a shelter, and the other had run away from home.

According to the monitoring notes, the mother and her children had been homeless and moved in with the father of one of her children to get off the streets. The petition stated that both the mother and father were chemically

dependent and the father had a criminal history of domestic violence. In this particular situation, the mother had responded to his violence by stabbing him with a knife, and the children had disclosed this at school. The mother was arrested, but the case was not investigated, and no charges were filed against her. The father was neither arrested nor charged, although the petition indicated he had kicked in the door, thrown the doorknob at the children's mother, grabbed her hair, pushed her on the floor, and was "twisting her neck." After she stabbed him, she ran out of the house and drove the children to school, telling them to go to their aunt's home afterwards.

We chose to highlight this case because it contains elements monitors saw time and again in the cases they monitored, which are:

- The family is from a *racial minority population*. A February 2010 report released by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) shows that, in spite of recent efforts to reduce racial disparities in child protection cases throughout the state, little has changed since 2005. According to the report, "African American and American Indian children were four to six times more likely to be the subjects of child protection assessments and investigations than were White children." Research further indicates children of color are more often taken from their parents, are kept away from home for longer periods of time, and are placed in a greater number of shelters or foster homes than their White counterparts.⁵
- The primary caregiver with whom the children live is *female*. According to national data, almost a third of the families in contact with child protection services are single, female-headed families.⁶ Mothers are held accountable more frequently for the welfare of their children than fathers, who are more likely to be absent or only marginally involved in their children's care.
- The primary caregiver(s) and the children live in *poverty*. National research indicates that poverty and reports to child protection for abuse and neglect are inextricably linked, something which holds true for Minnesota.⁷ This link has been attributed to increased maltreatment due

³ WATCH only has access to the public (redacted) version of child protection petitions. Much information regarding the families and the incidents of neglect or abuse is blacked out from the public documents to protect the privacy of the children.

⁴ An Emergency Protective Care or Hold hearing must be held within 72 hours of a child's removal from the home to determine in court whether the county can "hold" the child in out-of-home custody. In some cases the judge might allow the children to return home, and still find probable cause for a CHIPS case.

⁵ Minnesota Department of Human Services: Children and Family Services. Minnesota Child Welfare Disparities Report. Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2010.

⁶ Schlechter, Susan, and Jeffrey Edleson. "In the Best Interest of Women and Children: A Call for Collaboration Between Child Welfare and Domestic Violence Constituencies." Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse (1994). 2 Mar. 2010. <<http://www.cwla.org/CONFERENCES/2007teleconference071106handout3.pdf>>.

⁷ "The most common risk children experience is living in financial hardship or poverty. An analysis of census data regarding poverty rates for children in Minnesota reveals that, of all children, African American and American Indian children live in families with the highest levels of poverty: 5. Minnesota Department of Human Services: Children and Family Services. Minnesota Child Welfare Disparities Report. Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2010.

to higher levels of stress in the family,⁸ fewer resources available to assist poor families such that their difficulty or inability to provide the basic necessities to their children becomes “neglect”, and the increased scrutiny of poor families because of their involvement with mandated reporters through government-sponsored benefit programs, such as the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

- The CHIPS case was initiated because of *domestic violence*. It is estimated that in approximately 30 to 50 percent of domestic violence cases, child maltreatment is also alleged.⁹ In Minnesota, a CHIPS case can be opened for investigation if a child is present during a domestic assault in which the parent is injured, or if the child intervenes in the assault.¹⁰ In such cases, criminal charges may also be filed against the abuser, but frequently they are not. Rather than a criminal matter where charges are filed against the perpetrator, the assault then becomes a child protection case with allegations against the victim.
- The primary caregiver(s) is *chemically dependent*. Many reports of neglect to child protection are a result of parental chemical dependency. The child protection workers who participated in WATCH’s focus groups estimated that drug or alcohol abuse is present in 90% of the cases they investigate. Chemical health evaluations and random urinalysis or drug tests are standard elements of many parents’ case plans.

Women of color who are struggling with alcohol or drug addiction, living in poverty, and frequently victimized by domestic violence are over-represented in CHIPS cases. With little or no community support, in a relatively short period of time, women are expected to obtain stable housing, attend a multitude of support groups and parenting classes, and break ties with the father of their child(ren) if he is abusive. If their children have been removed from their care and they are unable to meet these standards set by child protection

within the mandated time frame, they face the possibility of permanently losing their children.

Other characteristics common to CHIPS cases include mental illness or developmental disabilities of one or both parents. In these cases appropriate community resources for families may be lacking or insufficient. It is evident from the interactions WATCH had in court, in interviews, and in focus groups that individuals working on child protection cases are concerned about families and seeking solutions to the problems they face. But the project findings show that, among other things, inconsistent communication, burdensome case plans, and inadequate funding of county and community services, make it difficult for many families to succeed.

The full WATCH report (available at www.watchmn.org) reviews the child protection cases monitored by WATCH providing information on the demographics of the children and subjects of the child protection investigations; examining how domestic violence is handled; and how case plans are used to address ongoing concerns such as mental health and chemical dependency. We include our monitors’ impressions of the courtroom environment and the role of the guardian *ad litem*. Most sections conclude with a short list of recommendations, and the full list of recommendations is also included at the end of the report on the final page.

The report also focuses on the five elements outlined in the scenario described above, recognizing that it is often social and economic inequities that lead to a child protection report and investigation. It is because of this that the focus of child protection needs to shift away from how a mother has failed her children and address the ways in which society has failed the family. This shift in thinking requires that we identify the structural changes needed to provide stability and nurturing to families. Everyone in the system should be focused on bolstering the family’s strengths and support systems with the same commitment used to investigate and assess the risk to the children.

⁸ Most national studies instead show that while greater numbers of people living in poverty are reported for child maltreatment, the actual incidence of child maltreatment among poor people is no greater than among others in the population. See for example, Shook Slack, Kristen. “The Elephant in the Room: Poverty’s Role in Child Maltreatment Risk.” California Linkages Conference. Sacramento, CA. 8 Sept. 2008.

⁹ Edleson, Jeffrey et al. Assessing Child Exposure to Adult Domestic Violence. Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse, University of Minnesota. 8 Feb. 2007: 964.

¹⁰ Minnesota Statute §626.556

National Association Of Court Monitoring Programs

The *National Association of Court Monitoring Programs* works to support the creation and expansion of court monitoring programs across the U.S. We provide training, technical assistance, networking opportunities and national organizing to organizations and individuals engaged in court monitoring activities and projects.

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Member rates start as low as \$75 for organizations and \$25 for individuals.

WATCH recommendations to improve handling of CHIPS cases in Hennepin County

- Conduct an independent investigation into the reduced number of reports of child maltreatment and the number of reports accepted for assessment and investigation.
- Ensure victims of domestic violence know of the community services available to them and their children.
- Involve a victim advocate in cases of domestic violence to give support and help with a safety plan.
- Use validated risk assessments to determine dangers to children witnesses to domestic violence and make every attempt to support victims of domestic violence to continue to care for their children at home.
- Reduce the number of services and providers required in case plans.
- Do not make domestic abuse or couple's counseling a requirement of a battered woman's case plan, but inform her of community services available.
- Improve communication and coordination between criminal, family, and juvenile courts, especially as it pertains to court orders and hearing information that is not available through the state database.
- Expedite foster care licensing process when a capable family member is available and interested in caring for the children.
- Make attempts to locate fathers early on in the child protection case so he or paternal relatives may be considered for kinship placement.
- Start hearings on time and explain reason(s) when there are delays.
- Locate more meeting spaces and make them available to waiting families, workers and attorneys.
- Explain court processes in non-legal terms to families and help them understand what to expect at each court hearing.
- Ensure that parents have the opportunity to speak with their attorneys in advance of the day they are to appear in court so they have adequate time to ask questions and make informed decisions about their case.
- Focus on health and safety of children in court. If no one offers specific information as to how the children are doing in their current placement, the judge should make a point of asking the guardian ad litem (GAL), foster parents, custodial parents, or social worker.
- Make greater attempts to have children 10 years and older present at hearings. If they cannot be present, explore remote access through use of technology.
- GALs should submit reports in writing prior to hearings and provide the judge with specific information about how the children are doing. All recommendations should be based on documented information.
- Increase recruitment and retention of GALs from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Defendant chronologies

Since 1995 WATCH has researched and published 34 defendant chronologies in its newsletter. Chronologies are case-by-case summaries of individual criminal histories that provide compelling insight into the workings of the criminal justice system. Chronologies catalogue the types of crimes committed by a defendant, provide information about the victims, and document how each case was resolved. Each chronology shows the number of times a perpetrator appeared in court, the names of court personnel involved with each case, and the consequences imposed.

Insights from WATCH's chronologies have helped create legislative change, most recently the 2009 statute that

gives police an additional 12 hours to arrest a suspect who has fled the scene of a domestic assault. Justice system personnel also utilize chronologies to review specific defendants' histories, which may include escalating levels of violence or reveal a pattern of avoiding consequences.

To view the chronologies, visit our website at www.watchmn.org. Twenty-three are available to read on-line (simply click on the name) with the rest available via e-mail upon request. Have an update on one of these defendants? Contact ddougherty@watchmn.org.

Daniel Adams
Pollyana Marie Allen
Joe Henry Bandy
Andrew Billingsley
Johnnie Bloodsaw, Jr.
Theodore Bobo, Sr.
Jason Lewis Brigham
Kenneth Carter
Nathan Daniel Clark
Audwin Duke
Gregory Michael Franson

Bruce Allen Freitag
Leonard Clifton Gallion
Anthony Lydell Goree
Larry Guidry
Aaron Daniel Huffman
Charles Edward Kennedy
Bradley Frank Matachek
Isidro Matamoros
Mariano Medina-Graciano
Emmanuel Moore
Sheliah Morton

Charles Henry Olson
Jimmie Ray Ramey
Anthony Thomas Rogers
Harry Reno Smith
Michael Jerome Toy
Thomas Warren Tucker
Kevin Eugene Waters
Allan Craig White
Anthony Thomas Woods
Shaun David Young
Scott Allen Youngmark

Guide to gaining access to your courts and court records

An open and transparent court system is one of the hallmarks of the American legal system. There are many places across the country, however, where the public is denied access to the courts. This happens when judges refuse to allow observers into proceedings, through the denial of requests for public records and calendars, or when courts charge exorbitant copying and "handling" fees to obtain records. The following examples from around the country illustrate these challenges:

- *The rule is that all members of the gallery have to be seated. One judge had maintenance take out the benches in his courtroom so court monitors could not observe his hearings. Now no one else can either.*
- *We are charged for the actual copies and for the clerk's time, which is essentially her hourly salary. There is no way our small non-profit can afford that. These are public records.*
- *For a couple of years, we were not having a problem with access to hearings. They have changed the procedures though and we now have to file a 'motion to intervene.' Every motion we have filed has been denied. We are often asked to attend proceedings by advocates and victims. The only option we have is for volunteers to go to the courthouse, sign in, and sit outside the courtroom while the hearing is in progress.*

Gaining Access to Your Courts and Court Records is the latest guidebook created by WATCH. It provides an overview of the legal basis for access to the courts as well as ideas and strategies for gaining access to public court documents and calendars. Although designed for court monitoring programs and advocates, anyone who strives for more open and transparent courts will find this guidebook useful. Visit www.watchmn.org to view the guidebook.

BECOME A WATCH VOLUNTEER

WATCH will host a training session for new volunteers on Saturday, June 5th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. WATCH volunteers gain extensive knowledge about violence against women and the court system and serve as the "eyes" and "ears" of the organization through their court monitoring. Shifts are available in downtown and suburban court locations as often as every week or just once a month. For more information or to arrange an interview, contact Anna at alight@watchmn.org or visit www.watchmn.org.

What's new

Continued from page 1

Also in this newsletter is a list of defendant chronologies WATCH has researched and written. As we were going to print, WATCH received an email from an advocate about one of these defendants. His case has been closed for 15 years, so the county no longer has his complete records. But one of the victims of his abuse is involved in a custody matter with him, and needed specific information to prepare for an upcoming hearing. The chronology, published in 1996, is providing crucial case information not currently available anywhere else that may help a victim of domestic violence still dealing with her abuser many years later.

Because of your support, we can continue to monitor the court, document how it operates, make important recommendations for improving it, and publish reports and chronologies. Your gifts make it possible for us to train volunteers and ensure someone is available to monitor priority hearings every day. Your support pays the rent, keeps our computers plugged in, and allows us to copy criminal complaints and other documents relating to the cases we monitor. We promise to put your gift to good use toward a more equitable justice system and thank you in advance for your support.

Thumbs up/thumbs down

👍 Thumbs up to Jail Records Manager Susan Anderson for bringing an important initiative at the Hennepin County jail to fruition. Thanks to her efforts, the jail announced in late March that enhancements had been made to their automated victim notification system to now include the option for the notification to be relayed in multiple languages. Now, when a victim is notified by the Jail to receive details of an offender's impending release, they may choose from among the following languages: Hmong, Oromo, Russian, Somali, or Spanish. Increasing all victims' access to defendant information is a step toward greater victim safety, and WATCH applauds this initiative.

👍 Thumbs up to Mothers on a Mission to Stop Violence and its partner organizations for successfully educating Illinois legislators about the prevalence and dangerousness of alcohol-facilitated sexual assault. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously passed legislation this year adding penalties to five classes of felony-level sex crimes when a perpetrator gives alcohol—the most commonly used intoxicant—to a minor victim before committing an assault. Previously, sex crimes could be enhanced only if the minor victim was given illegal drugs.

The guardian ad litem: the “eyes and ears” of the court

by Mary Lay Schuster and Amy Propen

In conjunction with WATCH's monitoring of child protection (CHIPS) hearings, Mary Lay Schuster and Amy Propen conducted a study of the role of the guardian ad litem in Hennepin County Juvenile Court. Mary conducted individual interviews with 28 guardians ad litem randomly chosen from the more than 250 working in Hennepin County and she and WATCH staff member Sarah Coulter also interviewed eight Juvenile Court judges about their perceptions of the guardians' role. Schuster, a WATCH volunteer and professor at the U of M, and Propen, professor at York College of Pennsylvania, previously collaborated with WATCH on our 2006 study of victim impact statements.

The guardian ad litem (GAL) in child protection (CHIPS) cases is the person appointed by the court to look out for the best interests of neglected and abused children during the course of the case and any legal proceedings. GALs begin their job as soon as an emergency protective care hearing is held, usually within 72 hours of the child being removed from the home. The GAL's job ends when the case is closed, when the family is reunified, for example, or when a child is placed for adoption or legal custody is transferred. If a child is placed in long-term foster care, however, the GAL could visit the child regularly for many years and, in fact, may be the only consistent person in that child's life.

Serving as a GAL is a demanding job, filled mostly by trained volunteers, who are appointed by the court and must communicate effectively with children and their families, social workers, public defenders, and the judges themselves. GALs come to the job with a broad spectrum of background experience; many GALs, for example, have previously worked in the education, legal, or criminal justice fields prior to their work with the juvenile court system.

Judges and GALs use a series of metaphors to explain the important connection between the GAL and the juvenile court. Both consider GALs “the eyes and ears” of the court. As one GAL explained to the children she encounters in a CHIPS case, “I see myself basically as an extra pair of eyes and ears for the court. And that I come to visit because I would like to learn about their situation, and I also do tell them that I am supposed to give the judge an opinion as to what should happen.” Extending this metaphor, one judge on the juvenile bench defined the role of the GAL as “an arm of me, more than any other party that's in the room. . . an unfiltered arm straight to me,” because the GALs “are going to be the arm of me that is going to tell me the unbiased part.”

Perhaps the GALs and judges rely so much on these metaphors because it is difficult to capture just how much

the court relies on the unique role of the GAL. Unlike the child's attorney who must argue for what the child wants, unlike the social workers who focus on the safety issues for the child and services for the family, and unlike the court who is charged with reunifying the family if at all possible, the GAL is “an impartial observer of the big picture,” as one GAL said. They can tell judges “the practical things that the kids really need,” like a membership to the YMCA for the child “who is really upset about being overweight and is getting teased about it,” as one judge described it.

Or as another judge described the GAL's contribution to a case, “The guardian is the one you need to stand up and say, ‘Wait a second. This is ridiculous. This kid needs to go to the same school, and this is going to be a transportation issue, but somebody needs to provide the transportation because it would be really disruptive and not in the best interest of the child to make them change schools just because they had to get placed in foster care.’” At the same time, GALs face the additional challenge of having to present their findings and recommendations in a manner considered by the court to be unbiased and balanced, while always keeping the best interests of the child at the forefront of their work.

To offer this unbiased big picture of the child's best interests, GALs visit with the child and the parents; observe the child interacting with family members; talk to foster parents and teachers; have access to confidential reports from therapists and physicians; and finally make oral and written recommendations to the judge on how to meet the child's best interests. If things go well, the GAL works as part of a team along with the social workers. Social workers design a case plan to address the problems the family has been having and identify services such as parenting classes and chemical dependency programs and monitor progress such as urinalysis testing for the presence of drugs and attendance at domestic abuse classes.

The GAL can refer to a parent's progress in “working” the case plan when making recommendations about the child to the court. Perhaps it is time for unsupervised visits between the parents and children, or the GAL can request that the child be given additional services such as individual therapy or tutoring at school. However, the GAL does not have to agree with the social workers on the case or the County Attorney who represents them in court and can argue against the request of the parents' attorneys, thus maintaining that independent voice in court.

Given the enormous responsibilities that GALs have to represent the best interests of the child, they face a number of procedural and personal challenges. They encour-

ter families struggling with chemical dependency issues and intergenerational domestic violence. They work with families from a variety of cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, often very different from their own. They encounter family members who are hostile to their presence in the case. GALs must create strategies to build trust with children who range from toddlers, who cannot communicate their needs, to teenagers, who may be suspicious of all those seen as keeping their families apart.

GALs must adjust to cases that they believe are pushed through the court system too quickly or take too long while "children remain in limbo." They wait outside courtrooms when hearings are delayed, and they may see the recommendations they carefully crafted in a written report to the

court become moot as last-minute negotiations take place minutes before a hearing.

Finally, the GALs often face emotional stress in working with such difficult cases, "the waking up in the middle of the night" feelings. One GAL recalled a teenager who went "on the run" and the night she learned of the run-away: "I think that I was up three or four different times that night just thinking of her. I wonder, 'Where she is?' I wonder if she is ok." Despite these complications, to the judges they work with the GALs overall seem well trained and dedicated. One judge summed the success of GALs as working "way outside what is their own safety zone emotionally," but "they just hang in there--It's really amazing."

Volunteer Notes

✓ The prosecutor in felony arraignments was very compassionate and understanding to the families and victims in the gallery. One defendant was ordered to undergo a chemical dependency evaluation and a mental health assessment, and she explained what this meant to his family after the hearing. She also took the time to later speak to the victim in another case she had handled. On both occasions, she apologized for not having more time to talk to them.

✓ At a hearing in a third and fourth degree criminal sexual conduct case, the court agreed to schedule the out-of-custody defendant's next appearance for almost a month later so that he could go on vacation with his son. This caused another delay in a case that had already been continued twice before.

✓ The clerk announced that the reason for the hearing's delay in a violation of an order for protection case was because the court and prosecutor were trying to track down the defense attorney.

✓ The judge in domestic violence court had many questions today about a defendant's prior domestic violence charges, but because they were from other counties and states, the information was inaccessible. The judge was trying to make decisions regarding bail, whether to allow contact with the victim, and other conditions of release without all the relevant information.

✓ I often monitor felony arraignment court. Judges frequently order a defendant to have *no contact* with a victim, but they don't often explain what that means. Today was a different story. The judge specified that *no contact* meant "no voicemail, no e-mail, no internet postings, no contact even if the victim initiates it, and no contact through another person."

✓ A victim of a domestic assault by strangulation was waiting in the gallery to give a victim impact statement at her boyfriend's sentencing. A deputy approached her, put her in handcuffs, and took her into custody. It turned out the victim had outstanding warrants in Anoka County for not paying a fine and failing to appear in court. The deputy brought her back into the courtroom at the start of the hearing still in handcuffs. He did take the handcuffs off for her victim impact statement, in which she said she loved the defendant and wanted him to receive help, but would remember his hands around her neck for the rest of her life. In his statement, the defendant, who was not in custody, said he was "sympathetic" to the victim and "her alcohol problem." The court stayed imposition of his sentence and he was placed on probation.

✓ New technology in order for protection hearings allows for in-custody respondents to participate in the proceedings through Interactive Television (ITV) so they do not need to be transported from the jail to the courtroom. Hopefully this will eliminate some of the delays in this court.

WATCH

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WATCH webinars

Join WATCH for one of the following web-based seminars (webinars) for in-depth, practical information on court monitoring topics. Webinars are held from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Central Standard Time.

Providing feedback to your courts Wednesday, May 26th

This workshop will assist you in determining the best avenues for providing direct feedback, information, and suggestions to criminal justice system staff. It offers concrete, practical advice and is appropriate for court monitoring program staff and volunteers as well as advocates and citizen groups.

- What should you consider when deciding whether to call or write a judge?
- How (and when) would you tactfully approach an attorney for a case with feedback?
- What are your options for providing feedback to a clerk whose behavior raises concern?

System accountability for sexual assault cases Tuesday, July 20th

An overview of the ways court monitoring can improve outcomes for sexual assault victims, including an answer to the question, "How do you monitor sexual assault cases when so few are screened in for prosecution?"

Managing court monitoring volunteers Wednesday, September 29th

This workshop provides an overview of utilizing volunteers to conduct court monitoring.

- Strategies for recruiting, training, and managing court monitor volunteers.
- Sample applications, job descriptions, and screening materials.

Visit www.watchmn.org or call 612-341-2747 for more details. Webinars are \$35 for members of the National Association of Court Monitoring Programs and \$50 for non-members.