



Looking Forward to FY 2009-10

Justice Initiatives is considering many exciting projects for 2009-10. Among these projects are: Sponsoring Town Hall meetings to educate the public about the court system in an effort to build community trust and confidence in the judiciary; and, hosting seminars between the bench and media to address common public misperceptions of the courts.

Justice Initiatives has provided a \$5,000.00 grant to expand free wireless Internet access throughout the courthouse for attorneys and litigants. This enhancement will be implemented in FY 2009-2010.

The Board of Directors is also considering advocating for enhanced access to criminal history data for judges, prosecutors, other court officials and members of the public, and an interactive on-line calendar system with electronic notification for attorneys to monitor scheduling developments.

The Courts and The Media Seminar

The 26th Judicial District held its first annual *The Courts and The Media Seminar*, which was sponsored by Justice Initiatives. The purpose of the seminar is to bring members of the local broadcast and print media together with judges and court officials to meet face to face and to exchange information that may help foster stronger relationships between the two entities.

The program included a presentation on the structure of the North Carolina judicial system and was designed to give members of the media a basic overview of the various courts, agencies, and officials that make up the system. An additional presentation included an overview of media procedures with regards to covering the courts and highlights from the local rules regarding media coverage.

After the formal presentation, an informal question and answer session took place among the attendees. The exchange of information included topics such as judges' thoughts on allowing cameras in courtrooms, the bond process, how the media reports on certain types of cases, as well as possible ideas for more positive stories about the programs and activities offered by the courts.

Diversity Training

The fourth seminar in a series of Strengthening Community Relationships Diversity Training was presented to court staff, court officials and judges on October 19, 2009. Speakers from the Middle Eastern Council presented basic and good-to-know cultural information and differences regarding the local Middle Eastern population that will help members of the court provide better service in their daily interactions with this community.

Justice Initiatives matched funds received by the Trial Court Administrator's Office from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Foundation through its Front Porch Grants program. The program is an effort to build informal social capital within our community. The goal is to increase trust and expand social connections and informal networks in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Justice Initiatives Releases 2008-09 Annual Report

On December 7, 2009, the Board of Directors of Justice Initiatives released its 2008-09 Annual Report. Notably, over the course of the fiscal year, Justice Initiatives provided \$31,218 in grant monies, an 85 percent increase over the previous year. To view a copy of the annual report, please visit Justice Initiative's homepage.