



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Friend of the Court Opens the Responsible Parent Program Center

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Friend of the Court (FOC) is pleased to announce the opening of the Responsible Parent Program (RPP) Center, located on the second floor at 82 Ionia Avenue NW, Grand Rapids. This new center makes it easier for participants in the program to meet with their case manager, see updated job postings, and apply for jobs on-line.

Launched in 2016, RPP has established partnerships with over 30 agencies and employers to assist those who are having difficulties paying their court-ordered child support. Once in the program, a FOC case manager will meet with the participant to identify any barriers the person may be facing, make appropriate referrals for job placements and searches, determine whether a case qualifies for a support review to ensure the current order is based on ability to pay, and provide information about parenting time issues and services.

The goal of the RPP is to place 75% of those who complete the program into jobs. The RPP started in 2016 with ten partner agencies and employers and has grown to 34 current partners. In its first two years, 53% of those accepted into the program reported employment following their initial appointment with the case manager; 41% met their court-ordered obligation and 67.5% made some payment. “These are cases where little to no payment was being made. Our primary goal is to make sure the children of Kent County are receiving court-ordered support,” said Friend of the Court Director Dan Fojtik. “We are here to help anyone who is sincerely interested in improving their financial position and getting their FOC case back on track.”

To qualify for the program, a participant must have a FOC case, no gainful employment, be able to work, have no pending child support related felony warrant, and be interested in participating. Enforcement actions such as show-cause hearings, bench warrants, and license suspensions will be deferred while the participant is in the program. The RPP Center has three designated computer terminals where payers can search for jobs, and the Center holds drop-in times when no appointment is needed on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons.

Anyone who is interested in this special 90-day program may contact the FOC for more information at (616) 632-6888. Case managers are also available to meet in person without an appointment at Michigan Works, Urban Family Ministries, Strong Fathers, Hispanic Center, and Guiding Light Mission; call (616) 632-6825 for days and times.

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