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## **MENTAL HEALTH COURT MAKING LASTING IMPACT ON COMMUNITY**

Whitfield County, Ga – On Thursday, July 27, Superior Court Judge Scott Minter presided over the Conasauga Mental Health Court (MHC) graduation where friends, family, and members of the community gathered to celebrate Brant Williams and Brian Brindle. The ceremony was held in the Whitfield County Courthouse, and signified their readiness to be thriving members of the community.

MHC first assembled in July 2018 and gave defendants, with a diagnosed mental illness, a path to voluntarily address their illness with the goals of becoming accountable for their own mental health, reduce negative interactions with the criminal justice system, and achieve life stability. With a team of over ten professionals, each graduate leaves the program with the tools they need for continued success and sobriety.

“We’re here to celebrate your achievement,” said MHC Coordinator, Angie Anderson. “But we also want to thank you for inspiring us, and for showing us that nothing is impossible no matter what life throws at you.” The program lasts 18 to 24 months and consists of five phases. As participants advance throughout their treatment plan, they become engaged in self-wellness needs by participating in counseling, addiction treatment, and medication management. “I love MHC because it presents an opportunity for us within the system to do things differently.” Anderson added.

A final requirement of a graduate, is to read a letter to the MHC team describing their time in the program. “I struggled in the beginning with trusting the [MHC] team,” read Brindle. “When I learned that they were there to help me, everything changed – MHC helped me obtain independent housing, and taught me how to budget my money.” Williams reflected on his first day of the program, “I was overwhelmed with anxiety, I didn’t know who I was, where I was going, and was running from where I’d been.” Williams completed the program after 19 months. “Life for me these days is better than ever. I am at peace with myself, my past, and am hopeful for the future.”

“You made the decision to turn your lives around by surrendering yourselves to this program,” said Judge Minter. “And I am very proud of all you have accomplished.”

For more information on the Conasauga Mental Health Court please visit:  
<https://www.whitfieldcountyga.com/sc/mhcourt.htm>