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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Henderson County Adult Recovery Court Celebrates First Graduation

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Henderson County's Adult Recovery Court will mark a major milestone on November 12, 2025, as it celebrates its first program graduate. The graduate will be joined by her family, fellow participants, and the dedicated team of professionals who have supported her throughout her 21-month recovery journey.

The roots of this initiative trace back to 2017, when Henderson County responded to the growing opioid crisis by forming a task force led by Commissioner William Lapsley. With the announcement of forthcoming Opioid Settlement Funds, the task force identified a Recovery Court as a top priority. Then-Board Chair Rebecca McCall, along with Judge Kimberly Gasperson-Justice, District Attorney Andrew Murray, Lead Public Defender Beth Stang, and Chief Probation Officer James Lewis, formed a committee to design a program tailored to the county's needs.

Since then, Henderson County has implemented several strategies to combat substance use disorders, including the launch of the Adult Recovery Court, all funded through the county's Strategic Behavioral Health Department using Opioid Settlement Funds.

The Adult Recovery Court is led by Daniel Conway, a Marine Corps veteran and graduate of Asheville's Veterans Recovery Court. Under his leadership, the program has seen remarkable early success. At its first anniversary in February 2025, 10 of the 12 participants were employed, one was preparing to welcome a child, and another was actively engaged in residential treatment. Participants were paying restitution and child support, completing community service, and reconnecting with their families. Some even inspired loved ones to begin their own recovery journeys. Beyond the personal transformations, the program has reduced reliance on jails, prisons, and emergency services.

"We are grateful for the funding that makes this program possible," said Henderson County Manager John Mitchell, "Henderson County is proud to be the first in North Carolina to fully fund a recovery court using Opioid Settlement Funds. The Board of Commissioners cast a bold vision years ago, and it's incredibly rewarding to see how far we've come. We're especially thankful for the leadership of Mr. Conway and others who work tirelessly to guide individuals from addiction toward brighter futures."

For more information about the Adult Recovery Court and other behavioral health initiatives, visit www.hendersoncountync.gov/behavioralhealth.

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