

The General Sessions Music City Community Court, Division VIII (8) was founded by Judge Rachel L. Bell in 2012. Since its inception, the court has piloted several community initiatives focused on preventive and diversionary justice focused on the concept, that “Justice does not stop at the courthouse steps” and charged to do all it can to help break the playground to prison pipeline and restore/ rehabilitate lives.



## DIVERSIONARY JUSTICE (to rehabilitate and restore offenders)

- Judge Bell in partnership with the Metropolitan Sheriff's office speaks to inmates in the women and men pods at the Correctional Development Center (CDC) during the *Healing Journeys* and *New Avenues* classes providing uplifting messages focused on putting mistakes behind you and starting a new life with a new mindset upon re-entry back into society.
- Saturday Dockets were created by Judge Bell to provide access to justice **right on the spot every** 4-6 weeks in various locations around Nashville, Davidson County.

- The **Community Service Work** projects provide access to justice so that after offenders are complete with the work, they are given credit immediately and do not have to come back to court on a return docket to show proof of compliance with an agreed order or guilty under-advisement plea.
- The **Expungement Clinic** and **Indigency Dockets** assist offenders with the ability to file a motion on the spot to be heard by the court. If declared indigent court cost and fines are waived providing the



ability to proceed with filing out expungement applications to clear a criminal record of cases that were dismissed with or without cost.



## PREVENTIVE JUSTICE (to break down the playground to prison pipeline)

- **R.E.A.C.H.**

- 6 week summer literacy program offered to MNPS rising 1<sup>st</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> graders



**REACH**

Reaching. Every. Aspiring. Child's. Horizon

- **FUTURE**

- Internships offered to MNPS for rising 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders during school break internships (fall and spring breaks 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders, summer breaks 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders)



**FUTURE**  
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

- **Alive at 25**

- Offered to MNPS 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to discuss road rules and the reality of being involved in the court system. The students learn about the wide range of sentences that can be imposed for traffic infractions, careless behaviors, and the civil liability of at-fault auto crashes. \*\* In 2016, Judge Bell was trained and certified to teach driver safety training programs.



## General Sessions Music City Community Partners-

- G.S. Probation Department
- G.S. Traffic School Education Department
- G.S. Division VIII, Staff
- Criminal Court Clerk's Office
- District Attorney's Office
- TN Bar Association- YLD Division
- Attorney Amber Floyd, Pro Bono Attorney Volunteer Coordinator
- Metropolitan Nashville Beautification Commission
- Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, North Precinct
- Metropolitan Nashville Sherriff's Office
- Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
- TN Faith and Justice Alliance, a project of the TN Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission
- Napier Looby Bar Association
- Lawyers Association for Women, Diversity Committee

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## Updates & Timeline-

- **2012**

- General Sessions Court, Division VIII, under Judge Bell's leadership launched its first community court preventive justice program allowing MNPS students to intern during their school breaks.

- **2013**
  - Judge Bell adopted a portion of Clarksville Highway (41A) to launch the first Saturday one stop community service return docket for offenders and community partners.
  
- **2014**
  - Continues building on the initiatives already set in place
  
- **2015**
  - Judge Bell launched the annual North Nashville- Community Day Saturday-Expungement Clinic at New Covenant Christian Church (DOC).
  
- **2016**
  - Judge Bell named the Division VIII- Community court, the General Sessions Music City Community Court, Division VIII.
  
  - Partnership formed with the TN Faith & Justice Alliance, a project of the TN Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission.
  
  - Saturday, Pro-Se Indigency Dockets launched every 4-6 weeks.
  
  - Summer, MNPS-6 Week FUTURE Internship Program launched for 5<sup>th</sup>-12 grade students.
  
  - Summer, MNPS- 6 Week R.E.A.C.H. (Reaching Every Aspiring Child's Horizon) Program launched for rising 1<sup>st</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> graders.
  
  - Judge Bell receives training and certification with the National Safety Council to teach driver safety training programs.
  
  - Alive @ 25 classes offered to MNPS 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to discuss road rules and the reality of being involved in the court system. The students learn about the wide range of sentences that can be imposed for traffic infractions, careless behaviors, and the civil liability of at-fault auto crashes.

For more information and to learn more about the preventive and diversionary justice programs with Judge Rachel L. Bell and the General Sessions Music City Community Court, Division VIII, please feel free to contact Judge Bell at 615-862-8341 or [rachelbell@jjs.nashville.org](mailto:rachelbell@jjs.nashville.org), or visit our website, <http://gscourt.nashville.gov/about-us/judges/division-viii-judge-rachel-l-bell/>