

Veterans court gets grant for monitoring

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Lake Havasu City Municipal Judge Mitchell Kalauli on Friday presides over Havasu's Veterans Court.

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Veterans Court convenes, big plans ahead

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The Lake Havasu City Veterans Court last week received a \$20,000 grant toward its use of Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM) ankle monitors.

The money was granted by the Arizona Disabled Veterans Foundation to representatives from Havasu's Disabled American Veterans (DAV) group in a June 8 ceremony in Tucson. DAV quickly gave that money to the Veterans Court, which attempts to monitor and educate veterans who have entered Havasu's criminal justice system. The court's aim is to reduce recidivism among Havasu's veteran community, and assist such veterans in leading normal, productive lives. According to DAV organizer Bud Watts, the ankle monitors can help.

"The problem the Veterans Court has is...they're a court," Watts said. "They don't have a bank account to accept donations like this. We stepped in and applied for a grant for the court. In this case, it's for SCRAM devices, specifically to monitor people for alcohol use."

The SCRAM devices cost a significant sum to operate. The high-tech ankle monitors have a tracking system and sensors to determine alcohol in the wearer's blood stream. Simply attaching a SCRAM monitor to someone in the Veterans Court program costs about \$150, according to Watts, and nine dollars per day to operate.

"It's expensive, but it works," Watts said. "With these devices we can hopefully keep veterans off alcohol and help them get on their feet."

Lake Havasu Municipal Judge Mitchell Kalauli, who presides over the Veterans Court, joined DAV representatives in Tucson for last week's grant ceremony.

“Sometimes in the court system, people are ordered to do things or participate in programs they can’t afford to do,” Kalauli said last week. “This will provide funding for those programs.”

According to Kalauli, DAV was one of the Veterans Court’s first partners when the court began four years ago.

“If we put the effort into keeping them from coming back, veterans typically make great citizens,” Kalauli said.