

Employee Spotlight: Jessica Snell



Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

My name is Jessica Snell and I'm a Grand Rapids native. I have been with the Friend of the Court for what will be eight years next month. I started as a Client Service Representative, answering anywhere from 30 to 80 calls a day, and it was in that role that I discovered my passion for helping clients and found the path that led me to the position I'm in today.

During my time on this team, I have also worked as an Accounting Clerk, in the Payment Processing Department (PPD), and have served as a backup for several

other departments. In addition, I serve on several Kent County committees, including the Friend of the Court Event Committee, Military Outreach Team (MOT), ERACCE Team, the 17th Circuit Frontline Communication Committee, and the Employee Recognition Workgroup.

When I'm not advocating for clients at the Friend of the Court, I'm the proud MiMi of two beautiful granddaughters, who are truly my heart and soul in human form. I'm also one of the top-booked female comedians in Grand Rapids, MI. I've been performing stand-up comedy for the past nine years and have had the opportunity to perform in comedy festivals as well as headline and be featured in shows throughout the region. I appear in two feature films that are available on Amazon Prime and I am the creator of a comedy show called Sinners Sunday. Comedy has taught me the importance of connecting with people, listening, and finding common ground - skills that have also made me a better advocate for the clients I serve.

What is your position at Kent County, and what individuals/customers do you work with?

I am a Clerk III with the Resources for Parents Program. I work directly with all Friend of the Court clients, whether they are the payer, payee, or guardian - I'm here to help.

I work with parents who are experiencing barriers that make it difficult to meet their child support obligations or become financially stable. Those barriers can...

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include unemployment, transportation issues, housing instability, criminal backgrounds, physical or mental health concerns, or other life challenges. I also work with clients who are not receiving their payments and need answers, guidance, or additional resources.

My goal is to connect clients with resources, community partners, and opportunities that help them move toward long-term success - not just with their Friend of the Court case, but in their everyday lives.

What are two or three things that staff should know about your role?

1. My role is much more than answering questions about child support. I work closely with clients to identify barriers and connect them with community resources that can improve their overall stability.
2. Building relationships with community organizations is a huge part of what I do. Strong partnerships allow us to provide more meaningful support and create better outcomes for our clients navigating their cases.
3. Education is one of my biggest passions. Whether it's through

workshops, outreach events, informational materials, or one-on-one conversations, I enjoy helping clients better understand the Friend of the Court process, so they feel more confident navigating their cases.

What is the most rewarding part of your job? What is the most challenging?

The most rewarding part of my job is seeing someone leave with hope after coming in feeling overwhelmed. Sometimes, all a person needs is someone to listen, explain things in a way they understand, and connect them with the right resources. Watching clients gain confidence and begin making progress toward their goals is incredibly rewarding. I've always enjoyed helping people, solving problems, and finding creative ways to connect individuals with the information and resources they need. I believe that knowledge empowers people, and I love finding opportunities to make complicated processes easier to understand.

The most challenging part of my job is knowing that some barriers, problems, or issues can't be solved overnight. Many clients are dealing with multiple challenges at once, and meaningful change takes time. Even when I can't immediately fix a situation, I try to make sure every client leaves knowing someone genuinely cared and pointed them in the right direction. It can also be challenging when a client wants immediate results for a situation that requires time, patience, or action from multiple agencies.

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Do you have any interesting or fun stories about your work that you would want to share?

One of my favorite moments is when clients come into the office expecting a stressful experience and leave saying, "That wasn't nearly as scary as I thought it would be." Friend of the Court can sometimes feel intimidating, so helping change that perception is something I really enjoy.

I've also had the opportunity to help create educational events like the FOC Academy, "How to Read Your Court Order," and other outreach initiatives that give clients a chance to ask questions in a relaxed environment. Seeing those events grow and hearing clients say they finally understand their court order and how to navigate the system reminds me why education is so important.

Is there anything else you want to say or talk about?

If there's one thing I'd like people to know about my role, it's that I'm here to help. I may not always be able to provide the answer or outcome someone was hoping for, but I will always do my best to explain the process, offer resources, and help people understand their options.

I believe that when I meet people where they are, treat them with respect, and provide them with knowledge, I can make a real difference in their lives. My goal is to make the Friend of the Court feel less intimidating and more approachable by helping clients understand the process, empowering them with information, and reminding them that they're not alone.

