



Lake County  
Court of Common Pleas  
*Juvenile Division*

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Judge Michael L. DeLeone

**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, July 29th, 2025

**Lake County Juvenile Court Announces Detention Garden Program Wins Fair Ribbons**

Juvenile Court partners with the Lake County Master Gardeners Association to have a Garden Program in the Juvenile Detention Center. The Garden Program is one of many programs that aims to support rehabilitation while holding juveniles accountable for their offenses. The Garden Program usually begins in April to prep the garden. Consistent gardening starts in May and occurs weekly through the beginning of September. Every Tuesday, volunteers from the Master Gardeners Association come to work side by side with the juveniles in the garden. The group is credited as a Life Skills Class to ensure juveniles can get academic credit for the work. Gardening tasks include but are not limited to weeding, planting, and harvesting. Education is also provided regarding the plants, their life process, and benefits of planting your own garden.

Most of the produce picked from the Detention Center Garden is used as part of healthy daily meals for the juveniles incarcerated. Also, the surplus is donated to the Salvation Army. In 2024 the Juvenile Court Detention Center grew over 482 pounds of produce.

Six vegetables were entered into the 2025 Lake County Fair. Juvenile Court is excited to announce that five of those vegetables earned a First Place Ribbon and one finished with a Third Place Ribbon.

Garlic	First Place
Green Beans (Sybaris)	First Place
Swiss Chard	First Place
Scallions	First Place
Thyme	First Place
Green beans (Top Crop)	Third Place

“We are very fortunate to have a partnership with the Lake County Master Gardeners” shared Judge Michael DeLeone. “We offer a surplus of education and treatment

opportunities to our juveniles who are incarcerated. However, the life lesson of learning to grow your own produce is as valuable as anything we offer. More importantly, the success of being recognized is tremendous validation for our juveniles teaching them that hard work and planning leads to success. This is an integral lesson for rehabilitation.”

