



KELLER J. BLACKBURN
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ATHENS, Ohio – September 18, 2018 marked the third (3rd) graduation for the Keller J. Blackburn Vivitrol Program.

Director of the Vivitrol Program, Reuben Kittle began the graduation ceremony by talking about the program's backstory and how the program came to be. Kittle also spoke about what he feels are key components of success, focusing in on one key point, "it's all about relationships." This sentiment was echoed by not only Kittle, but Mr. Blackburn and the graduating participants. As graduates were called to receive their certificate of completion and a program memento, a keychain reading, "you are the key to a fresh start", they shook the hand of the County Prosecutor and many hugged the program director, Reuben Kittle as they thanked him for his supporting relationship in their recovery.

As Keller Blackburn spoke on his philosophies as County Prosecutor, he concluded with this thought, "tonight 69 of you will have graduated since the program started on October 1st 2015. If instead of enrolling in this program, as an average you would have served at least one year in prison. Some of you faced forty years of prison by yourself, but on an average, if you served one year of prison, it would have cost taxpayers of Ohio over two million dollars. But instead you now have jobs, you're contributing members of society and you have your fresh start. I want to thank you for that." Blackburn believes with innovative practices like those he has implemented in the county can steer those battling addiction in a new and brighter direction and eventually help to end the cycle of new addiction.

Blackburn talks about why he'll continue to hold these ceremonies as long as his program exists, "graduation has become a time for us to reunite with those that have been successful in our program and remind them that we are still here and we see your successes and the hard work you put forth."