On October 4th, 2011, the Center for Court Innovation held its 15th Anniversary Celebration in New York City. Over 250 people packed the Chelsea Art Museum to celebrate the Center’s work and to honor its founding director, John Feinblatt.
The featured speakers for the event were New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman. The evening’s master of ceremonies was Emmy award-winning reporter Jonathan Dienst. Among the guests were former New York State Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance Jr., dozens of judges, city commissioners, past and present staff, and scores of supporters.
In his keynote speech, Mayor Bloomberg praised John Feinblatt for helping to create the Center for Court Innovation. “Throughout his career, John has been a force for challenging conventional wisdom and disrupting the status quo. That is the defining spirit of the Center for Court Innovation.”

The mayor also highlighted a number of Center initiatives, including the Harlem Parole Reentry Court, Queens Engagement Strategies for Teens, and Bronx Community Solutions. “Reducing recidivism is one of the toughest things to do in criminal justice, but it is probably the most important and has the greatest impact on crime rates. Everybody wins when it happens, our streets are safer, taxpayers spend less money on jail, and people put their talents to more productive uses. And I think it’s fair to say that no one has been as effective at finding new ways to reduce recidivism than the Center for Court Innovation.”
Chief Judge Lippman noted that the Center has helped the New York Court System defy conventional wisdom by demonstrating that “it is possible to reduce both crime and incarceration.” He added: “There are many reasons why New York has been able to achieve these remarkable results. Certainly, the Center for Court Innovation, with its support of thoughtful innovation and well-crafted and well-evaluated alternatives to incarceration, has been part of this story.”
In presenting John Feinblatt with his award, Center for Court Innovation Director Greg Berman (pictured here with Manhattan DA Cy Vance, Jr.) said, “The number one lesson that I ever learned from John is that rhetoric is ultimately meaningless and that, at the end of the day, action trumps talk... It’s John’s commitment to making things happen in the real world that has given us the Midtown Community Court, that has given us the Center for Court Innovation, that has given us a reformed juvenile justice system in New York City, that has given us success in the national fight against illegal guns.”
Feinblatt, who leads many of the Bloomberg administration’s anti-crime initiatives, said that mayor has encouraged him to bring the creative spirit from the Center for Court Innovation to his work for the city. The mayor “doesn’t just ask ‘how can we do it better?’ but ‘why do we do it that way in the first place?’ I think that’s the same spirit that has animated the Center for Court Innovation — its willingness to challenge orthodoxy,” Feinblatt said.
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As a long time partner of Midtown and Times Square Ink, The Action Environmental Group proudly supports the efforts of The Center for Court Innovation in working to reform our community. Congratulations on your 15th anniversary!
The Fund for the City of New York celebrates 15 years of the Center for Court Innovation’s pioneering approaches to achieving justice and salutes John Feinblatt, who set the Center on its course, changing courts in New York, the U.S. and around the world.
We proudly support the Center for Court Innovation and congratulate this year’s honoree, John Feinblatt.

— Jim Heinze, CPA, Partner, and the partners of J.H. Cohn

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