

Teen Court Success Story 2009

The Teen Court Program works with student volunteers and first time offenders. The student I'd like to highlight now is one of our volunteers. The first night Tabitha came to Teen Court as a volunteer she was dressed all in black right down to her fingernails. She came searching for a place where she could fit in and make a difference. That first night she decided that Teen Court was where she wanted spend her time staying late enough that the Bailiff practically escorted her from the building. Tabitha became a defense attorney representing first-time youth offenders in need of a second chance with the law and with life. Immediately she connected with the offenders, relating to them at their point of need and assisting them in their move forward. Unknowingly to her, she became a role model for many teens in need of an example to follow. During that first year, Tabitha changed by throwing off her "goth" look and focusing her attention on others in need. She has impressed elected officials with her speaking abilities, brought focus to the needs of our youth in our community and touched the hearts of her fellow teens with her compassion. Simply, she is a leader by example and by deed.

Four years later, Tabitha is ready for college and was awarded a scholarship from the Southport-Oak Island Kiwanis Club for her community service through Teen Court. She will represent Brunswick County well as she moves to the next phase of her life.

Teen Court Success Story - Joe 2009

The real mission of Teen Court is to offer first time offenders a second chance at a clean record with the education and skills to not make a mistake like that again. "Joe" was one of those students that needed a second chance. He was into sports, wanted a college scholarship to play, rebelled at home and then, he "messed" with drugs. Joe thought like countless other youths that he wouldn't get caught but he did and the consequences could mean a loss of a scholarship and an ability to do his favorite thing – sports. Joe came to Teen Court so he wouldn't have to go to "real court which is scary". Joe completed his sentence and thanked us for getting his "second chance." But his most profound statement was that "it got me off drugs. I've learned not to do drugs because they hurt you, your loved ones and your life." With hard work and determination Joe can go on to accomplish his dream and he reports happily, "my parents trust me now."