

TEEN COURT SUCCESS STORY – ADULT VOLUNTEER 2009

When I first heard about Teen Court and then decided to participate I was somewhat skeptical about how effective and legitimate a program it really was. That doubt disappeared when I helped monitor the jury deliberations in the very first case that I observed. After more than ten minutes of discussing how many hours of community service the defendant should be recommended to the judge it was obvious to me that the student jurors took their responsibilities quite seriously.

In the seven years since that first court session I have been attending Teen Court on a monthly basis as an advisor to both the defense attorneys and the prosecuting attorneys. To say that I have gotten hooked on working with the students in Teen Court would definitely be an understatement. There is no benefit to me professionally (I'm retired) or financially (I do this "pro bono") but there is a tremendous benefit to me personally. To see the students grow, mature and gain confidence as they participate in Teen Court on a regular basis is well worth the time I spend working with them. From preparing and delivering opening and closing statements to conducting direct and cross examination and to thinking quickly during the court proceedings, I see the students develop skills that will positively affect their future regardless of what career path they choose. In addition, the opportunity to interact with the students after the conclusion of each court session has been the start of some friendships that do not end once the student has graduated from high school. I feel good when I know that I have helped one of the Teen Court students even if it is only in a very small way.

In retirement I was looking for some community activity that would challenge my mind and touch my heart. Teen Court has done that for me.

John Kelso