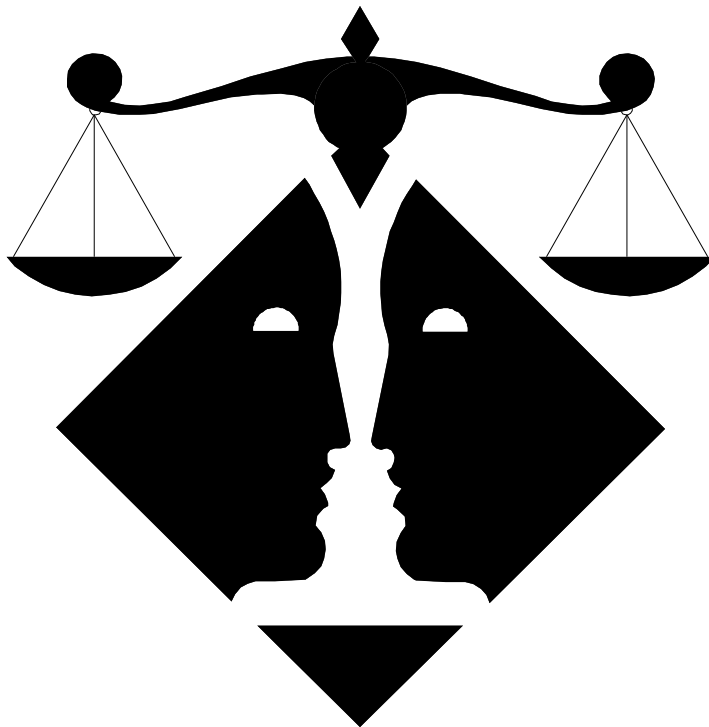


Become a Teen Court Volunteer!

Collier County Teen Court
Collier County Courthouse
3315 Tamiami Trail East
Suite 506
Naples, Florida 34112
Tel: (239) 252-2756 Fax: (239) 774-9654
Email: cfritsch@ca.cjis20.org



Welcome to Teen Court!

Imagine walking into a courtroom where the Defendant, the Attorneys, the Court Clerk, the Bailiff, and the Jurors are all under the age of 19. Is this a Mock Trial? No, this is Teen Court also known as Youth Court or Peer Court.

Florida's first Teen Court was implemented in 1988 in Sarasota County. The program serves as a community-based alternative to the traditional juvenile court system and works in conjunction with the offices of the State Attorney, Court Administration, Department of Juvenile Justice and law enforcement agencies. The volunteer contribution made by local judges, attorneys and teens provides a cost effective early intervention program that saves our community thousands of dollars annually.

Teen Court is based upon the philosophy that a youthful violator is less likely to re-offend when a peer jury decides punishment. It is hoped that Teen Court will interrupt developing patterns of criminal behavior by promoting a feeling of self-esteem, motivation for self-improvement and development of a healthy attitude toward authority. For the offender as well as the non-offender who serves on the jury, Teen Court challenges youth to perform at their highest level of ability and places a high priority on educating young people regarding the responsibilities of an individual, family member, and citizen. All participants are introduced to the positive benefits of community service, public speaking and positive role models.

Your interest and involvement in Teen Court is appreciated and needed. The Orientation Training Session should give you some insight into this unique program. **We welcome mature and responsible volunteers who want to make a difference in their community.** While it is absolutely necessary that you follow the rules of Teen Court, it is also very important that you enjoy helping others and working cooperatively to accomplish the goals of Teen court.

Thank you for your interest in Teen Court. If you should have any questions at any time please do not hesitate to call the Teen Court office at 239-252-2756. We look forward to your participation.

Teen Court Guidelines:

Age Requirement:

- Mature and responsible 9th - 12th graders

Day and Time:

- Wednesday Evenings (See calendar online for dates)
 - Jurors **BY 5:30 PM**
 - Bailiffs & Clerks **BY 4:30 PM**
 - Attorneys **BY 4:30 PM**

Location:

- Collier County Courthouse
3315 Tamiami Trail East Suite 506
Building L, Court Rooms 4A , 4B & 4C/D
Naples, Florida 34112

Volunteering:

- You may volunteer as often as you like, however, somewhat of a commitment is appreciated. Please let the Teen Court Coordinator know in advance if you are unable to attend the sessions.
- The Teen Court Volunteer Agreement/Release Form can be found on our website at: www.ca.cjis20.org . The Teen Court Volunteer Agreement/Release form includes the **Teen Court Dress Code**. **This form MUST be signed by you and your parent/guardian**. This confirms that you and your parent understand and agree to abide by the Teen Court Rules and Dress Code. **Credit will not be given or participation allowed if the Teen Court Rules and Dress Code are not followed**. The courthouse is a place of serious business. It is important to be professional and conservative with your actions and dress.
This form can either be emailed to the coordinator or turned in prior to participation as a volunteer. Volunteers cannot take on the following roles without prior turning in their applications. (**exception:** you may be on the jury for two evenings without turning in your application. After that the form is required to participate).
- All members are required to participate in a training, and/or observation, and/or shadowing program, as instructed by the Teen Court Coordinator, before assuming any of the roles in the Teen Court Proceeding.

Juror

- A volunteer who wishes to participate as a Juror may do so without prior training, observation, or shadowing, however, the volunteer must obtain and read the **Teen Court Juror Training Manual**.

Clerk or Bailiff:

- You must observe one complete Teen Court session (evening) before you are able to volunteer as a bailiff or clerk.

Teen Attorney:

- You must participate as a juror a minimum of two times and must "shadow" with an active attorney once for the prosecution and once for the defense.
- You will then proceed with Phase II, in which you must prepare and present and opening, questioning, and closing on your own.
- After all of the above is completed you can advance to become an attorney.

*Please note that Teen Attorneys need to arrive at the Collier County Courthouse **BY 4:30 p.m.** This is when the **pre-hearing reviews take place**. Teen Attorneys need to be dressed appropriately. **** Please note the Dress Code. Attorneys MAY NOT WEAR JEANS OF ANY KIND.***

How Does Teen Court Work?

Teenagers get the opportunity to be attorneys, clerks, bailiffs, or jurors. The jurors get to decide the sentence for a juvenile who has admitted guilt to breaking a law or committing a school rule violation. These are real cases where an arrest has been made, and the charges have progressed through normal channels from the Juvenile Clerk's Office to the Department of Juvenile Justice. Cases are screened for any prior arrest history and when appropriate, referred to Teen Court. Teen Court assigns responsibility to student volunteers and relies on their serious involvement and judgment in handling the sentencing for the referrals. All participants benefit from exposure to: legal education, community service, public speaking opportunities, and adult and peer role models.

To begin the Teen Court Hearing:

The bailiff calls the courtroom to order as the judge, or an adult attorney, enters the courtroom. The clerk reads the charge to the court. The teen attorneys, both

prosecution and defense, make opening statements. The judge then calls the defendant to the stand and swears him/her to tell the truth. The teen attorneys obtain a fair and appropriate sentence by asking the defendant questions relating to the charge. The jury listens carefully to the facts. After each side makes a closing argument, the judge dismisses the jury to determine the sentence of the defendant.

Sentencing:

Each offender signs a contract to perform the following:

- 8-70 hours of Community Service
- 1 - 3 Jury Duties
- Drug Testing
- Restitution/Investigative Fees (must be ordered prior to Teen Court by the Court)
- Any additional assignment by the jury, such as an essay, or a workbook related to the offense.
- Teen Court Diversion Education Class or other comparable counseling.

Additional Information:

If the defendant successfully completes the sanctions, then the defendant will not have a conviction record.

If the defendant does not complete the sanctions, the case, in most instances, is referred into the traditional juvenile justice system, and may result in a record of a conviction of the charge.

OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The importance of honoring the Oath of Confidentiality cannot be overstated. The business appearing in any court is a personal matter. All aspects of a Teen Court session should be considered confidential. Failure to respect this Oath can result in dismissal from participation in the program.

Definition of Confidentiality:

classified, concealed, hidden, not for publication, not to be communicated, not to be disclosed, not to be quoted, not to be spoken of, privacy, protected, restricted,

revealed in confidence, secrecy, secret, spoken in confidence, told in confidence, top-secret, unmentionable, unrevealed

It is **required** that "The Oath of Confidentiality", stated below, is to be taken at the beginning of each Teen Court session by **everyone** in attendance:

"I solemnly swear or affirm that I will not divulge, either by words or signs, any information about actual cases which comes to my knowledge in the course of a Teen Court session, and that I will keep secret all said proceedings, which may be held in my presence."

"Further, I understand that if I break confidentiality by telling anyone else the names of Teen Court Defendants or specific details of the case, which may identify that juvenile, I will no longer be able to serve as a Teen Court Participant."

Please note: All events and dialogue that occur in the Teen Court Courtroom are to **remain confidential**. This mirrors Juvenile Court; the defendants are guaranteed confidentiality. WE are requested to uphold this standard in all Teen Court Proceedings. If we discuss the events with persons who are not present, we will do a great disservice to American jurisprudence **as well as eliminating ourselves from future Teen Court participation**. Each of us will be held accountable in fulfilling this oath, not only to the respondents, but also to the integrity of the Teen Court proceedings.

You may feel free to discuss what you learn about the law through your involvement with Teen Court and you may also share your personal experiences in the program with friends and/or family. **HOWEVER, YOU MAY NOT DISCUSS THE INDIVIDUAL CASE OR DEFENDANT.**

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES FOR TEEN COURT VOLUNTEERS

Teen Court Membership is a privilege, not a right. That privilege can be lost if you fail to act in a responsible manner, honor confidentiality or violate the law. As a Teen Court member, you are expected to serve as a role model for your peers at all times, even when you are not at a Teen Court Session: therefore, you must maintain

high standards of conduct and encourage other members to do the same. You should be temperate and dignified and refrain from all illegal and morally reprehensible conduct. Because of your position, even minor violations of law may then to lessen public confidence in the entire Teen Court Program. Since Teen Court is designed to promote law-abiding behavior, your behavior must be consistent with that purpose.

Listed below are a number of Rules of Conduct, which you must follow if you wish to participate in the program. If you fail to follow these rules or are suspected of not following the rules, you shall be given an opportunity to explain your actions to a panel of your peers who will determine whether you have failed to uphold the behavioral standards and rules of conduct of the program. You may be subject to disciplinary action by the panel, including suspension or even removal from the Teen Court Program.

TEEN COURT CODE OF CONDUCT

- You must maintain the confidentiality of the Teen Court Program. Do not discuss your personal opinion of the charge or the outcome of the case with parents, defendants, or other jurors once the case is over.
- You are a role model and are being observed by others. The credibility of Teen Court depends on you accepting responsibility for the role in which you have chosen to be involved. All participants have important roles and make the program successful.
- Be willing to talk with former defendants when you see them both inside and outside the courtroom. Your interest can impact their involvement.
- You are required to follow the **Teen Court Dress Code**. You must dress appropriately when participating in a court session.
- You must not engage in illegal conduct or any conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.
- You must not knowingly use perjured or false testimony or statements; you are expected to tell the truth at all times.
- You must reveal any false statements, testimony or other evidence used or any other fraud perpetrated in any Teen Court proceeding.
- You must participate free of bias or prejudice toward any other person's age, race, gender, religion, national origin, or disability.
- You must be respectful to the Teen Court volunteers, staff, offenders and their families. Refrain from smart or negative comments.

- You must appear promptly and prepared for all Teen Court training sessions and proceedings. If you have to cancel your participation, you must let the Teen Court Coordinator know as soon as is reasonably possible so that a replacement may be found for you.
- Always enter the courtroom where the cases are presented in an orderly fashion. Jurors should enter single file and move to the end of the rows and take their seats. Sit still without turning or talking. Attorneys should sit quietly and wait for the case to begin.
- No one is allowed behind the "Judges Bench" as the area is reserved for the judge. **You should also not be in the front area of the courtroom (past the bar) unless you are working on a case as counsel, clerk, or bailiff.**
- Do not sit on furniture or place your feet on furniture. If you move any furniture, be responsible and place it back where you found it.
- You must perform your role as effectively and competently as possible.
- Be willing to work as a team. This is not an individual endeavor for anyone.
- You must not engage in undignified or discourteous conduct during the court session.
- You must not ask any question that is intended to harass or degrade any of the witnesses.
- You must not let any outside influences, such as other volunteers, parents, fellow students or your own self-interest affect your actions and decisions on how to proceed during a court session.
- As a defense attorney, unless an offender otherwise directs, you must not reveal a confidence or secret of the offender or use such confidence or secret against the offender during the court session.
- As a prosecuting attorney or a defense attorney, you must not knowingly fail to disclose or exchange evidence which you are required by the Teen Court training to reveal to opposing counsel.
- As a prosecuting attorney, you must not communicate with the offender or the offender's family in the case (except during cross-examination).
- Teen Court volunteer serving as either a defender or prosecutor must not reveal any information about the case being prepared for the court to anyone, including jurors and other participants.
- **You must notify the Program Coordinator immediately if you are arrested, convicted of a crime or suspended from school.**
- You must report to the Teen Court staff if you feel that another volunteer or participant has failed to follow the Rules of Conduct.

- You must cooperate with the staff, any disciplinary committee or review panel in the investigation of allegations involving a violation of these Rules of Conduct.

Disciplinary Procedures:

In the event that the Teen Court staff is made aware of a possible violation of the Code of Conduct by one of its youth volunteers, an investigation in the situation will be conducted by program staff. The volunteer suspected of violation will be contacted and asked to explain his/her side of the story. The volunteer will be required to appear before a specially convened Disciplinary Panel comprised of youth volunteers who will determine whether a violation has been committed. If the volunteer is found to be in violation, the Disciplinary Panel will be authorized to determine the appropriate consequence(s), including but not limited to: reflective essay(s), suspension from the program for a determined period of time or program expulsion.

DRESS CODE

All participants need to dress as professionally as possible. Please use good judgment and remember.....court is not a social event. The courtroom is a very formal and serious place. It is very important that there be an atmosphere of respect in the courtroom. The appearance and the demeanor of the staff helps set this tone.

FACTS:

- *The first impression made of the jury has an effect on the verdict rendered.*
- *Both a good attitude and a neat appearance contribute positively to that impression.*
- *A general rule of thumb: DRESS BUSINESS CASSUAL.*

TEEN COURT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE PARTICIPATION FROM THOSE WHO DO NOT ABIDE BY THE DRESS CODE.

Male Volunteers: The Court demands respect. Please be neat, and clean, and respectable. Dress slacks, khakis, jeans (acceptable only if neat and clean- no holes, or fraying and or baggy). A polo shirt or button-down dress shirt, which must

be tucked in and slacks belted at the waist. **NO SHORTS, NO HATS, ATHLETIC CLOTHING OR BAGGY ATTIRE.** Court is a place of business. Your dress should reflect a conservative, respectful dress. It is important to be professional with your actions and your dress attire.

Female Volunteers: The Court demands respect. Please be neat, and clean, and respectable. Dress slacks, khakis, skirts, dresses, or blouses. No low cut blouses, short tops or short skirts. **NO SHORTS OR CAPRIS.** Dress jeans (acceptable only if neat and clean- no holes, fraying and or baggy). Please be conscious of tight fitting clothing. Court is a place of business. Your dress should reflect a conservative, respectful dress. It is important to be professional with your actions and your dress attire.

ACCEPTABLE ATTIRE FOR MALE:

Be neat, clean, and respectable. Dress slacks, khakis, jeans only if neat and clean- no holes or fraying- not baggy. Polo-type shirt or button down dress shirt, tie/jacket optional. Shirts must be tucked in and pants belted at the waist. Avoid wearing shirts, sweaters, or "hoodies" with large brand logos or prominent writing on them. **NO SHORTS, NO HATS, ATHLETIC CLOTHING OR BAGGY ATTIRE.**

ACCEPTABLE ATTIRE FOR FEMALE:

Be neat, clean, and respectable. Dress slacks, khakis, skirts, and dresses. No midriff should be exposed. Jeans will be allowed **ONLY** if they are dress jeans without holes or fraying or are not baggy. **NO TANK TOPS, NO SHORTS, CAPRIS, AND NO SHORT SKIRTS.**

JURY DUTY

As a juror in Teen Court you will have the opportunity to participate in a very important part of our democracy. Jury Duty is a privilege and a serious responsibility. You are required to base your verdict upon the evidence as you hear it in court and upon the law as per the judge's instruction. You are obligated to perform honestly and conscientiously, without fear or favor.

Types of Cases You Will Hear:

Teen Court will conduct cases related to misdemeanor up to 3rd degree felony offenses, and school rule violations. Offenders have admitted guilt to the

charges; therefore, the "trial" is for the purpose of hearing the facts and assessing a fair consequence.

Qualifications of Jurors:

Jurors are required to abide by the Teen Court Rules and Dress Code.

Rules of Conduct to be followed by the Jury:

1. Follow the dress code:
2. No gum chewing.
3. No cell phones on.
4. No texting.
5. Report at the proper date and time.
6. Abide by the Oath of Confidentiality.
7. Acknowledge if you know the defendant prior to his/her hearing.
8. Listen to every question and answer.
9. Do not discuss the case with anyone after leaving the courtroom.
10. Control your emotions (laughing, facial expressions, etc.)
11. Be courteous and respectful to all participants.
12. Do not display anger or lose your temper.
13. Be attentive and businesslike.
14. Speak loudly and clearly.
15. Refrain from unnecessary talking.
16. No profane or obscene language or illustrations.

Conduct in the Jury Deliberation Room:

1. You may be confined in a small deliberation room. The business of the jury shall be conducted in an orderly fashion.
2. The selected foreman shall see that all jurors have an opportunity to express their opinions and should be willing to organize the discussion.
3. Discussion should be limited to the case.
4. Upon completion of the deliberation process you may visit **QUIETLY**.
5. There is to be no bragging regarding inappropriate behavior while in the jury room.

Please note, additional information can be found in the Teen Court Juror Training Manual.

TEEN ATTORNEY

The **defense attorney** is an **advocate for the client**. The client should be presented by the defense in the best possible light. While the defense attorney must zealously seek to help the client, it is important to never misrepresent the case. To prepare the case, the defense attorney should be familiar with the aggravating and mitigating circumstance regarding the charge.

The **prosecuting attorney** has the responsibility to seek justice and not simply be an advocate for the highest possible sentence. The prosecution should be familiar with both the aggravating and mitigating circumstances of the case. The prosecutor represents the State of Florida.

REMEMBER... ALWAYS STAND WHEN ADDRESSING THE JUDGE.

Defense Attorneys... instruct your defendant to stand with you while the jury exit and enters the courtroom and also during the reading of the verdict.

ALWAYS DRESS APPROPRIATELY:

Remember, you are the leaders in the courtroom. Business Dress is expected and your dress should reflect a noticeable notch above what is required of the other participants. Court demands respect. It is important to be professional with your actions and your dress. Follow the Dress Code. Exception: Attorneys **MAY NOT** wear jeans of any kind.

Please note, additional information can be found in the Teen Court Attorney Training Manual.

TEEN CLERK

The clerk is responsible for recording the business of the court proceedings. **The clerk should be familiar with the docket and verdict forms prior to the beginning of the case presentations.** The clerk makes sure that all the appropriate papers are in each defendant's file. The clerk hands the judge the appropriate forms. When instructed to do so by the judge, the clerk stands and reads the case style and charge on the docket in a strong, clear voice. The clerk also reads the verdict to the courtroom when the jury returns. He or she then records the sentence on the docket.

Please note, additional information can be found in the Teen Court Clerk Manual.

TEEN BAILIFF

The bailiff is an officer of the court who guards judges and jurors and has charge of Teen Court Defendant while they are in the courtroom. In Teen Court, the teen bailiff is responsible for escorting the defendant and family into the courtroom, announcing the judge, and assisting the judge during the hearing.

The bailiff shall stay with the jury during deliberation, however, **the bailiff may not make any comments regarding the decision of the case.** The bailiff's main purpose of staying in the deliberation room is to assist the Foreperson in keeping order during the process.

Please note, additional information can be found in the Teen Court Bailiff Training Manual.

VOLUNTEER CREDIT

Volunteering with Teen Court will give you the satisfaction of helping other youth and their families bring an end to a difficult time that has resulted from an offense committed by a juvenile. Community service is something we do to improve ourselves, improve the place we live, and provide a positive way for the family to move beyond the delinquency. All participants benefit from their involvement with this program.

There are additional benefits that can come to you as well:

1. **Class or course credit:** We are pleased to document your time contribution as long as your participation has been responsible and mature. Teen Court is able to give you a computer print out of your hours upon request. Elective credit for high school graduation needs to be documented on a form from your school. Extra class credit should be documented on a form from your teacher. You are responsible for providing this form to the Teen Court Coordinator for signature.
2. **Letter of Recommendation:** for college applications or job applications can be obtained from the adults you work with as long as we know your involvement has been responsible.
3. **Scholarships and college applications:** Several scholarships/grant applications require the applicant to complete a certain number of community

service hours in order to qualify for the scholarship/grant applications require the applicant to complete certain number of community service hours in order to qualify for the scholarship/grant. Volunteer hours with the Teen Court program constitute as applicable community service hours for scholarships/grant applications.

You are responsible for signing in at the beginning of each Teen Court session. If you leave before the Teen Court session is over, you are responsible to sign out. Failure to sign in will result in no documentation of your community service hours. Failure to sign out will result in forfeiture of community service hours for the entire evening.