

## What are Teen Court sentences like?

- ◆ You have two months to finish
- ◆ You will be required to do between 1-4 assignments
- ◆ The minimum sentence for everyone is to serve three times on other Teen Court juries
- ◆ Other parts of your sentence might be about drug and alcohol awareness, personal growth, job or education goals, restitution, family relationships, or observing the adult justice system
- ◆ Juries also have the option to assign a creative sentence
- ◆ Ask one of the coordinators if you want to see the entire sentence option list

## What happens when I finish?

Once you have finished the requirements of your sentence and turned in all your signatures and assignments, Teen Court will notify the officer who referred you that you have completed. If you have been referred from Arcata Police Diversion, your charges are dismissed once all your other requirements are complete. If you have been referred from probation, your requirements have been fulfilled.

## How can I volunteer?

Eligible volunteers:

- ◆ Are in the 8-12 grades
- ◆ Have a desire to help other youth
- ◆ Complete a group training with Teen Court, which happen in the fall and spring. Or visit our website to get started through an Orientation Video.
- ◆ If you come to Teen Court as an offender, you can continue volunteering as soon as your sentence is complete.

### Adult Mentor Attorneys

We need adult attorneys who like working with youth to volunteer as mentors. Please contact us if you are interested.

## What do participants say?

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*“I like that Teen Court gives you a sentence you can benefit from.”*

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*“I was ashamed to say to everyone that I was wrong, but it made a difference.”*

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*“Teen Court provides great experience in not only knowledge of the courtroom and how trials run, but public speaking, debate and handling real live cases with real people. It helps the defendant take his/her actions seriously and not want to commit a crime again.”*



## HUMBOLDT COUNTY



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## What is Teen Court?

Teen Court is a real court of law that first-time juvenile offenders may participate in, as an alternative to the juvenile justice system. Court is operated by youth volunteers, with an adult mentor judge and attorneys providing guidance. Juvenile Probation, Arcata Police Department Diversion and schools refer eligible teens to our program when the teen admits guilt and agrees to have a jury of other teens decide upon their sentence. Teen Court sentences are guided by restorative justice principles, with a focus on accountability, family relationships, building skills, and harm reduction. Teen Courts have succeeded in hundreds of communities across the country because they offer an important educational opportunity for young people to learn about how the justice system works, as well as their rights and responsibilities within that system.

## When and Where is Court?

- ◆ First and third Thursday of each month from 4:15-6:15 p.m.
- ◆ Humboldt County Courthouse (825 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Eureka), Second Floor
- ◆ Call Teen Court to confirm dates



## Does Teen Court decide guilt or innocence?

No. Youth who are offered Teen Court must agree that they committed the crimes they are charged with. In other words, teens must admit “guilt” before participating in Teen Court. In order for a juvenile to challenge any charges against them, they must go through the probation system.

## Is Teen Court voluntary?

Teen Court is an alternative to the regular juvenile justice system. Youth who are offered diversion can choose between Teen Court or other consequences (such as probation).

## What should I expect at court?

Arrive at court at 4:15 pm. You may have to wait before you get called in.

Court takes place in a real courtroom and is overseen by a real adult judge. Wear nice clothes that will make a good impression and always speak to the judge in a respectful voice (and call the judge “your honor”).

A trained student attorney will represent you at court, and another student attorney will represent the community and any victims. You will be expected to get up on witness stand and answer questions by both attorneys, the jury, and the judge.

After hearing the facts of the case and learning about you, the jury will go into another room and decide on your sentence.



## What is restorative justice?

Restorative justice is a different approach to accountability than the regular court system. Restorative justice includes the following elements:

- ◆ Storytelling by the offender, victim and community
- ◆ Rebuilding relationships, rather than focusing on the laws broken
- ◆ Collaboration between the offender and teen volunteers to come up with a solution and appropriate consequences
- ◆ Meeting the needs of victims and anyone harmed by the crime, with the goal of strengthening the community
- ◆ The opportunity to show remorse, take responsibility, be accountable, and participate in repairing harm
- ◆ Developing character by building skills in youth that help them leave the program a better person