

## What are Teen Court assignments like?

- ◆ You have two months to finish
- ◆ You will be required to do between 1-4 assignments
- ◆ The minimum restorative assignment for everyone is to serve three times on other Teen Court juries
- ◆ Other parts of your restorative plan might be about drug and alcohol awareness, personal growth, job or education goals, restitution, family relationships, or a creative assignment

## What Else?

- ◆ We have a carpool option from the B&GCR Teen Center and Eureka High School
- ◆ You automatically become a member of the Boys & Girls Club
- ◆ Teen Center has monthly Family Dinner Nights

## What happens when I finish?

Once you have finished the requirements of your restorative plan and turned in all your signatures and assignments, Teen Court will notify the official 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. If referred from school, you have avoided suspension, expulsion or law enforcement citation.

## How can I volunteer?

Eligible volunteers:

- ◆ Be in the 8th-12th 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 a participant, you can continue volunteering as soon as your restorative plan 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?

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

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

*“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 participant take their actions seriously and not want to commit a crime again.”*

# HUMBOLDT COUNTY



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# What is Teen Court?

**Teen Court** is an innovative diversion program for first-time juvenile offenses. It is a real court that is run entirely by teen volunteers. We organize around youth empowerment and restorative justice. We have two court processes. The Eureka courthouse hearings have teens serving in the roles of jury, attorney, clerk and judge, with an adult mentor judge and attorneys providing guidance.

We also hold **Jury Councils**, which involve a handful of teens who sit and listen to the case and come up with a restorative plan along with the client. In Jury Councils there are no student attorneys or judges, just a jury of peers.

In both processes, the teen jury focuses on coming up with a restorative plan that will help the participant to repair harms and learn from their mistake. These courts are designed to empower youth, promote accountability, provide access to youth resources, and model peer leadership. 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 and put civics into practice.

Teen Court is a collaborative program involving the Humboldt County Probation Department, the Humboldt County Superior Court, local police departments and schools, and other community service entities.



## Leadership

Teen Court also offers a **leadership** program for those who want to volunteer on a weekly basis. Leaders work on court improvements, recruiting and training new volunteers, receive advanced training, make presentations in the community and go on field trips

## When and Where is Court?

- ◆ First and third Thursday of each month from 4:15-6:00 p.m. (sometimes ends at 5:45)
- ◆ Humboldt County Courthouse (825 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Eureka), Second Floor
- ◆ Jury Councils are held at Teen Court Office on a Tuesday or Wednesday
- ◆ Call Teen Court to confirm dates

## 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 a participant expect at court?

Arrive at the courthouse 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 student or adult mentor judge. Wear nice, respectful clothes and please call the judge “your honor”).

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

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



## 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 one who committed an offense, victim and community
- ◆ Rebuilding relationships, rather than focusing on the laws broken
- ◆ Collaboration between the participant 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 with better resources