

Capital Area Teen Court

RESILIENCE THROUGH RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



Thank you for reading our latest edition of Capital Area Teen Court's newsletter!

We're proud to provide opportunities for young people to learn, grow, and make better choices for the future. As a non-profit diversion court program, we offer youth a second chance to take responsibility for their actions in a supportive, restorative environment.

We believe in the power of second chances, and through our various initiatives, we're helping young people make a positive impact not only on their own lives but in their communities as well.

Teen Court is a unique opportunity for our clients to face their peers in a courtroom setting. Instead of traditional sentencing, defendants are judged and sentenced by fellow teenagers, who understand the challenges and pressures of growing up. This model allows teens to take responsibility for their actions while learning valuable lessons in empathy, accountability, and the legal system.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Welcome!

Recent happenings

Volunteer Spotlight

Community Service
Spotlight

Lew's Corner

Get Involved &
Upcoming Court Dates

Summer at Teen Court



International Student Ambassadors

This summer, a group of international students came from Algeria and the Caribbean's to learn about Juvenile and Restorative Justice in North Carolina and the United States. Our youth volunteers and these student ambassadors were able to make connections and are still staying in contact with each other!

Wake County Sheriff's Office Adventure Camp

At a camp for 6th-8th graders with an interest in the legal system, Teen Court youth volunteers performed a mock court night for the camp attendees, where they acted as Jury Members and deliberated to reach a unanimous sentence!

Along with acting as Jury Members, students also toured the jail, visited with School Resource Officers and K-9 units, had a meet and greet with the Sheriff, and so much more!



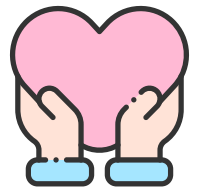
Volunteer Spotlight

We want to shine a spotlight on a youth volunteer who makes a positive impact in our community. This month, we're excited to introduce Elizabeth Shen!



Meet Elizabeth:

Elizabeth is a Junior at Green Hope High School and has been volunteering with Capital Area Teen Court for over two years! A fun fact about Elizabeth is that her parents' go-to response when they argue is "You should be a lawyer!"



Here's what Elizabeth has to say about her experience:

Teen court began for me as a way of exploring my passion in law, and testing the waters to see if being a lawyer might be for me in the future. However, why I started and why I continue are vastly different. I will never forget my first case, which introduced to me the reality that I am not so different from my clients who sit across the table from me. In each client I talk with, I see bits of myself. It is not unusual for my client meetings to end in many tears and hugs.

Elizabeth's advice for new volunteers:

Often, other youth attorneys will ask how to build such rapport with clients in such short amounts of time. My honest advice is to genuinely care. Teen Court has not only solidified my goal of becoming a lawyer, it's taught me what kind I want to be: compassionate. And for that, I am forever grateful.



Thanks, Elizabeth!

Community Service Site Spotlight

SEEDS

In this section, we highlight one of our fantastic community service sites where our clients contribute their time and energy. We work with 11 sites around the county, and this month, we're spotlighting SEEDS, a two-acre garden and kitchen classroom that's in the heart of Durham!



Interested in this organization?
Want to learn more about how
you can help?

Contact Erin Holden!

Phone: (919) 683-1197

Email: Erin.Holden@SEEDSnc.org

Founded in 1994, SEEDS develops the capacity of youth people to respect life, the earth, and each other through growing, cooking, and sharing food.

Volunteers spend time weeding, planting, watering, and mulching the garden. They will also clean, sort, and organize the kitchen inside.



Lew's Corner

Break your Direct Examination into “Digestible Bits.”

If you’ve volunteered with us before, you’ve likely met one of our judges, Lewis Cohn.

As a retired attorney, Lew serves as a judge at almost every Teen Court night. In “Lew’s Corner,” he will share some insight, wisdom, and helpful pointers!

The most common shortcoming in most direct examination of a client is an overarching question, such as: “Tell us everything that happened.” Most clients are reluctant witnesses. Studies of jury conduct find that most jurors can only absorb information provided in small, “digestible” bits—an open-ended question seeking “everything” from a witness risks providing a story that is incomplete and disjointed, and which, simultaneously, loses the jury’s attention and interest.



It is easier if you present your witness with smaller questions, eliciting critical facts while permitting the jury to easily grasp the information provided. **Consider the following direct examination in a shoplifting case:**

Defense Attorney Questions	Client Answers
Where were you on October 23rd, 2024?	Green's Department Store
Who were you with?	My friends, Chris and Michael
Why did the three of you go there?	Just to hang out
What items did you take without paying for them?	Some candy and other small items
What intent did you have to steal any items when you entered the store?	None
Then, why did you take these items?	My friends dared me to take them
If you were faced with the same circumstances today, what would you do?	Pay for the items

You have now established your case without “memory gymnastics” by your witness; and in a fashion that can be easily understood by the jury!

Get Involved: Volunteer Opportunities

We're always looking for enthusiastic adults and youth to join our team! If you're interested in taking on a new role, or want to learn more about other volunteer opportunities, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Visit our website
(www.capitalareateencourt.com)
or email Liz Wilson
(Elizabeth.Wilson1@wake.gov) for
more details.

Upcoming Court Dates

- September 16th
- October 7th
- October 21st
- November 4th
- November 18th
- December 2nd
- December 16th

September							October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11	12	13		5	6	7	8	9	10
14	15	16	17	18	19	20		12	13	14	15	16	17
21	22	23	24	25	26	27		19	20	21	22	23	24
28	29	30						26	27	28	29	30	31

November							December						
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31			
30													



Thank you for your continued dedication and support of Capital Area Teen Court! We truly value all our volunteers and the incredible impact you have on the lives of others. Keep up the great work!

For questions or to submit content for the next edition of the newsletter, please contact Liz Wilson (Elizabeth.Wilson1@wake.gov).

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