

Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court

2013 Annual Report

Teen Court works to create a change in youth behavior, provides an opportunity for youth to restore her/his image in the community while repairing his/her relationship between themselves and the victim, facilitates the strengthening of family resiliency, and offers ways youth can gain academic and 21st century life skills for future success. Through the restorative justice process the offender is encouraged to recognize the human relationship they have to the victim and their impact their actions had on everyone involved. It views the situation as a teachable moment for the offender and research illustrates it can be the most powerful model for young people.



**BUFFALO/PEPIN COUNTY
TEEN COURT**



Developing Effective Teen Court Panelists

In May 2013 Teen Court Coordinators Marie Ritscher, Annie Lisowski and AmeriCorps*VISTA Dana Erickson, with the assistance of 16 veteran teen court jurors, trained 23 new youth panelists. Panelist training, instructed in part by Judge Duvall, focused on principles of restorative justice, developing meaningful and authentic sanctions for teen offenders, and a discussion with current Teen Court panelists. Each new panelist was matched and is mentored by an experienced panel member. The intent of the mentoring relationship is to help provide guidance to new panelists to be prepared for their first case.

Expanding Referrals to Reach More Youth

Since April 2012 the Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court has had 39 cases. Of those, 19 have been direct referrals from Schools, Law Enforcement, and Department of Human Services. As a result 49% of Teen Court cases have been received through direct referrals. Direct referrals from law enforcement and schools allow more youth to benefit from Teen Court and differs from a traditional referral in that the youth offender will not first meet with a Juvenile Court Judge or Juvenile Justice Social Worker before being referred to Teen Court. It is Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court's goal to promote, educate, and reach out to all potential, invested referral agents to create a change in youth behavior by providing opportunities to build resiliency and reduce recidivism through authentic, meaningful sanctions while helping youth gain academic and life skills.

Building Youth Leadership Through Teen Court

Teen Court Coordinators will be offering mini trainings throughout the upcoming year to further educate panelists on pertinent Teen Court topics. Trainings will focus on the mentor and mentee relationship between current Teen Court panelists, the benefits of incorporating workforce readiness components for both youth offenders and panel members, and the impact on Teen Court from the continual concern of bullying in schools. After a mini training one Teen Court panelist expressed "One thought that I differentiated was that teen court is not just about justice-it's about bringing community members together."

Congratulations 2013 Graduates! Thank you for your hard work and dedication to Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court:

<u>Alma</u>	<u>Cochrane-Fountain City</u>	<u>Durand</u>	<u>Gilmanton</u>	<u>Mondovi</u>	<u>Pepin</u>
Lara Bacon	Paige Bunkowski	Andrew Hurlburt	Devon Bauer	Lena Lambrigtsen	Madeline Bergmann
Mariah Julson	Hunter Kamrowski	Skylar Kitchner	Courtney Bork	Gabriel Rothbauer	Taylor Hogue
Allison Reinhardt	Robert Lupton	Ashley Biesterveld	Josh Hallock	Jade Seipel	Brody Olson
Kyle Ritscher	Paul Scharlau	Katie Lipke	Michelle Lisowski	Brandon Vetterkind	
		Jonathan Seipel			

Meet the Panelists

Name: Linnea Zintman

School: Cochrane-Fountain City

Grade: 11

Future Plans: Attend school for a pre-law program and become a Lawyer or Judge

Likes Best About Teen Court: "Presiding over a number of different cases"

Name: Charlie Raethke

School: Pepin

Grade: 12

Future Plans: Attend a 4-year college to pursue a degree in Sports Management

Likes Best About Teen Court: "Meeting new people and making a difference in the lives of others"

Strengthening Student Leaders for the 21st Century Workforce

Sanctions in relation to workforce readiness such as: develop a professional resume, complete a job shadow, develop a "10-year plan" timeline, create a list of careers one can achieve with varying degrees of education, and career exploration were developed and implemented for youth offenders. Buffalo/Pepin Teen Court's sanction for a youth offender to complete a professional resume resulted in the offender taking the first steps to secure first time employment. In addition, students interested in becoming a Teen Court panelist must complete an application, submit a resume and cover letter, and conduct an interview with senior panelists. This process allows youth to develop skills for career success through intentional workforce readiness experiences that include education and reflection.

Preparing for the Future

According to the 2011 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 24% of high school students reported being bullied at school and 17% were bullied electronically. In addition, 36% of males and 54% of females believed harassment and bullying were a problem at their school. Buffalo/Pepin Teen Court is expected to see a rise in bullying cases through the direct referral process. Due to this increase, a section including a fact sheet on bullying was incorporated into the panelist handbook to ensure Teen Court panelists are educated and better prepared. It is because peer education is one of the strongest resources for discouraging youth from engaging in harmful behaviors and helping students focus on positive action that Teen Court is being utilized for bullying cases. Restorative justice seeks to repair harm to the victim while restoring the power imbalance caused by bullying.

Communicating the Value of Teen Court

Students enrolled in a digital media class at Durand High School recorded video footage during the May 2013 Teen Court New Panelist Training. The footage will be incorporated into an informational marketing tool in the forms of a public service announcement and a documentary to promote Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court.

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Thank You!

Thank you to 2013 funders. The financial support of these business and organizations make Buffalo/Pepin Teen Court programming possible: Alliance Bank of Mondovi, Alma Area School, Alma Knights of Columbus, Alma Veterinary Clinic SC, Bauer Built, Bauer's Auto Service, Bauth Insurance Agency, Chippewa Valley Dental Clinic, Ltd, Durand High School, Gilmanton High School, Heike Reality, Jackson A Keller, DDS, Marten Transport, Masons-Of-Wisconsin-149, Mondovi School District, Nelson Lions Club, Nelson Telephone Coop., Pepin Area Community Club, Pepin Area School District, Pepin Hill Evangelical Free Church, Pepin Lions Club, RBO Business Services Inc., Richardson Electric, Riverland Energy, Riverland Communications Inc., Security Financial Bank, Ye Old Schoolhouse Shoppe.

Meet the Panelists

Name: Cori Prom

School: Durand

Grade: 10

Future Plans: Go to college, or join the Military

Likes Best About Teen Court: "Meeting new people and expanding my abilities"

Name: Brett Plagenz

School: Mondovi

Grade: 11

Future Plans: Attend a 4-year college, then attend medical school to become an anesthesiologist

Likes Best About Teen Court: "Helping people from our counties, and meeting people from other schools"

