



# Buffalo/Pepin Teen Court 2015 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 the 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.



## New Panelist Training

On April 1, 2015 the Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court held a panelist training at the Buffalo County Courthouse in Alma. Panelists serve as peer 'judges' who hold juvenile first-time offenders accountable for their actions by issuing fair and innovative sanctions. Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court Coordinators, with the help of six current panelists, trained twenty new panelists. Throughout the training panelists were able to apply what they learned by working through different scenarios they are

likely to face in Teen Court. The youth worked together through a mock trial and practiced determining appropriate sanctions. The panel members were given the opportunity to observe an actual court case with Judge Duvall. The Judge spoke with panelists about questioning techniques, why people commit crimes, and factors to consider in deliberation to develop deciding meaningful and authentic sanctions for youth offenders.

## Video Mini Trainings

Dana Erickson, Buffalo/Pepin County Co-Coordinator, developed a series of video mini trainings on the topics of Restorative Justice, Roles During a Teen Court Case, Practice in Questioning, and The Referral Process. The video mini trainings were created to increase access and educate Teen Court panelists online. One issue coordinators were experiencing was panelist attendance at face-to-face mini trainings due to conflicts with school commitments. Video mini trainings were designed in order to address that concern, and allow panelists to view the trainings at their convenience. In addition to ease of access for panelists to gain more information, or review before a case, video mini trainings were developed to be available for stakeholders and other Teen Court Programs to view. The Video Mini Trainings are posted on the Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court Resource Hub at [fyi.uwex.edu/teencourthub](http://fyi.uwex.edu/teencourthub).



Congratulations 2015 Graduates! Thank you for your dedication to Buffalo/Pepin Teen Court:

**Alma**

Bryce Anibas  
Bailey Jo Fagerland  
Bailey Lehnartz  
Morgyn Steinke

**Cochrane-Fountain City**

Amber Cafferty  
Carley Hilt  
Taylor Thoeny  
Linnea Zintman

**New Panelist Interviews**

Students who are interested in becoming a Teen Court panelist must submit an application, have an adult complete a reference form, and go through an interview process. Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court has senior panelists conduct the interview of all new panelist candidates and evaluate candidates strengths. This opportunity provides the seniors a leadership experience, and also starts the mentoring process. Veteran panelists coach new panelists and develop relationships to help them become more comfortable with Teen Court hearings. In addition, experienced panel members address fears of incoming panelists. This is a great opportunity for Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court to strengthen youth-adult partnerships and allows for current panel members to have a voice in the program to build a truly collaborative program between panelists and coordinators.



*“As a Teen Court Panelist I learned that there is more to a person than their mistakes- we all make mistakes. I can also take away from this experience the knowledge that you have to keep an open mind listening to others. The story may be different than what you expected.”*

*- Graduating Teen Court Panelist*

**Durand**

Sarah Abramson  
Nicole Berger  
Morganne Gruber  
Tyler McRoberts

**Mondovi**

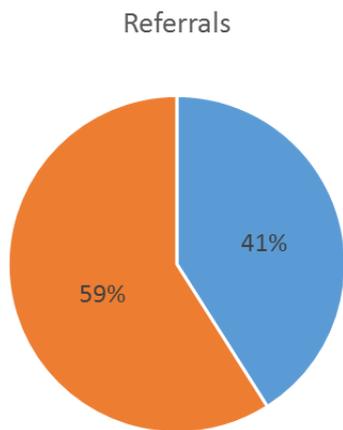
Brett Plagenz  
Nash Weiss

**Pepin**

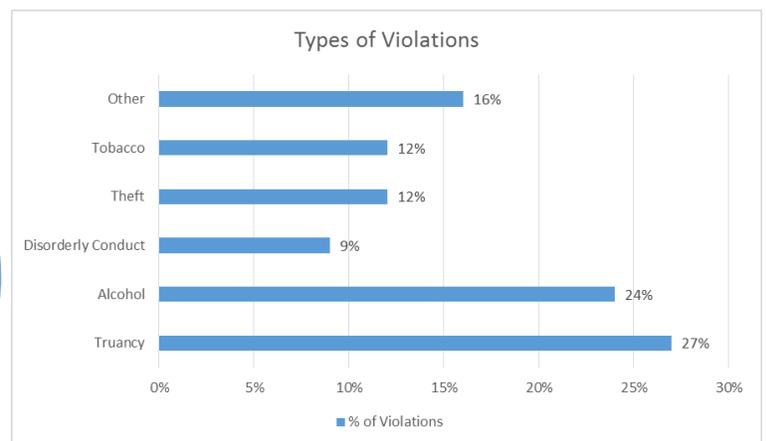
Jordan Bergmann  
Madi Hogue  
Emily Kircher  
Nice Murray  
Jackie Olson  
Ben Peterson

**Referrals by the Numbers**

In April 2012, Marie Ritscher, Pepin County 4-H Youth Development Agent, Annie Lisowski, Buffalo County 4-H Youth Development Educator, and Dana Erickson, Buffalo County AmeriCorps Vista, Youth and Families At-Risk Educator accepted leadership for Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court. Under their leadership during the past three years, Buffalo/Pepin Teen Court has held 66 cases. Within those cases, data indicates:



■ Circuit Court ■ Direct Referrals



Direct Referrals:			
Schools	Law Enforcement	Human Services	Returned– Not Eligible
54%	36%	10%	20%