

# Teen Court

Making a Difference in Teens' Lives

## 7th Annual Miami-Dade County Teen Court Youth Speaking Out Against Violence Conference: Motivated And United

Miami-Dade County Teen Court hosted the 7th Annual Miami-Dade County Teen Court Youth Speaking Out Against Violence Conference: Motivated and United on May 5, 2014. The event had speakers, such as the Honorable Miami-Dade County Commissioner Audrey M. Edmonson from District 3, and workshop facilitators, like City of Opa-Locka Commissioner Dottie Johnson. Workshops covered topics surrounding violence, and issues that contribute to violence, the future of youth, and documented the voices of participants as they expressed their concerns. More than 300 students attended the conference from various Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

The conference benefited students by exposing them to decision-making choices such as how to be good citizens, making changes in peaceful ways, and advocating for their community. Other workshops included topic on Bullying, Dating & Love Relationships, Civic Responsi-



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### Miami-Dade County Teen Court

Miami-Dade County Teen Court (MDCTC) is an alternative sanctioning program for first-time youthful offenders who agree to allow their peers to determine sentencing instead of the juvenile justice system. Through youth participation, the program helps decrease juvenile delinquency by interrupting the beginning stages of criminal behavior. Unlike any other diversion program in Miami-Dade County, Teen Court serves a range of youth within its peer sanctioning process such as teens needing a second chance and youth looking for opportunities to serve their community.

### How to Qualify for Teen Court

- ☛ Youth must be under the age of 18 at the time of the commission of the offense
- ☛ Must NOT have a prior record of a criminal (misdemeanor or felony) offense
- ☛ The State Attorney's Office or another designated approving agency must first refer the youth for consideration
- ☛ The juvenile must admit his/her guilt
- ☛ The juvenile and parent/guardian must sign a "Waiver of Speedy Trial" form

### Teen Court Locations

Monday–Thursday, evenings beginning at 5:00 p.m. (except holidays)

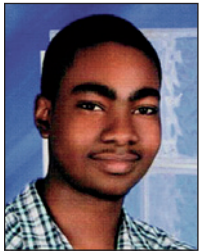
- **Richard Gerstein Justice Building**  
(1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Monday of every month)  
1351 NW 12th Street, Miami, FL - Courtroom 1-5
- **Black Precinct & Courthouse Museum**  
(4th Monday of every month)  
480 NW 11th Street, Miami, FL 33136
- **South Dade Government Center (Tuesdays)**  
10710 SW 211 Street, Miami, FL - Courtroom 2-2
- **North Dade Justice Center (Wednesdays)**  
15555 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, FL - 2nd Floor
- **Hialeah City Hall**  
(2nd, 3rd and 4th Thursday of every month)  
501 Palm Ave., Hialeah, FL (Commission Chamber)

# TEENS REPORT

Teen Stories & Editorials

## Torrance Williams Senior, Terra Environmental Research Institute (North Court)

The Teen Court program has been one of the most effective extracurricular activities I have ever done in my life. It has provided me with an inside look into the real world of the juvenile justice system and has made me very grateful for all the things I have been given in life. The program has helped improve my public speaking skills, my professional work style,



work ethic, and my team-working skills as well.

In addition to Teen Court, I am also a part of a young male etiquette class in which we often give each other advice about different challenges that young black men face on a daily basis. With the knowledge I have acquired in Teen Court, I am able to reference the program and offer advice to the other males using examples of the consequences various participants receive for their actions. Teen Court has expanded my view of the world, challenged my personal skills and strengths, and expanded my view of my future.

## Sarah VanRoy 5 year Teen Court volunteer (South Dade Court)

Miami-Dade County Teen Court was first introduced to me when I was only 12 years old. Little did I know that the next five years of volunteering would have such a great impact in my life. On the first day that I visited Teen Court, I was unsure of what



to expect; however, when I stepped foot inside the courtroom, I was immediately intrigued by being able to be a real attorney for real defendants. Not only

does Teen Court offer 2nd chances to teens who commit crimes, it also benefits all of its volunteers as well. Teen Court has improved my life in many ways; it has helped me become more comfortable when speaking in front of large groups of people, and it has also helped in becoming a critical thinker. Teen court always keeps me alert and constantly keeps me thinking of "what's next?" Apart from these great qualities that I have gained by volunteering at Teen Court, the most important part of the program is that I am able to help kids get back on the right track in their lives. I am very thankful for this program and I hope to be part of it for many years to come.

## YOUTH INTERN PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (YIPI) Employs Teens with Local Businesses in Targeted Urban Areas (TUAs)

Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT)'s Teen Court program matched several teens from Miami-Dade County Teen Court with local small businesses to help address the growing unemployment rate among the county's teen population.

MDEAT's Youth Intern Partnership Initiative (YIPI) is a six-week job program for teens who volunteer with Miami-Dade County Teen Court. Twenty teen court volunteers were paired with local small businesses throughout Miami-Dade County to work part-time over the course of the summer. The teens became Miami-Dade County employees and earned the prevailing minimum wage rate as well as invaluable work experience and money management skills. The teens recently participated in an employability skills training and orientation.



According to a recent study by Choudhry, Marelli, & Signorelli, young people have been worst affected by the country's latest economic crisis, resulting in increased need for better school-to-work transitional institutions. The report focused on reducing the risk of persistent and structural long-term unemployment, among this population to address the issue.

"I am excited and believe the Miami Dade Economic Advocacy Trust Summer Internship Program will benefit students and the Miami-Dade

community by investing in young people and providing them with a sense of economic ownership and responsibility to the community, in which they live", states MDEAT's YAC Chair, Treska Rodgers. "This program will also help them compete on a national and international level, to develop skills in areas such as: marketing and financial analysis, sales and distribution models, anticipated cash flows, pricing and business models, thereby harnessing successful future business leaders of tomorrow."



## Speaking Out Against Violence Conference

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bility, Youth Advocacy, Youth Entrepreneurship, and Violence in Schools.

The keynote speaker this year was the Honorable Judge Orlando A. Prescott, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida. Judge Prescott serves as the Administrative Judge of the Juvenile Division and was a long-time Teen Court judge volunteer. In his own words, "Once again, Teen Court gave the community a chance to communicate with youth, and presented them an opportunity to grow and develop. This dialogue is important for the development of our youth and for the community to maintain contact with our youth."

## teen stat

According to a 2011 report from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Alcohol Consumption by Youth in Florida continues to increase.

Underage drinking is widespread in Florida. Approximately 708,000 underage customers in Florida drink each year. In 2009, Florida students in grades 9-12 reported: 4

- 23.3% had their first drink of alcohol, other than a few sips, before age 13.
- 40.5% had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more occasion in the past 30 days.
- 21.1% had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row (binge drinking) in the past 30 days.
- 4.9% had at least one drink of alcohol on school property in the past 30 days

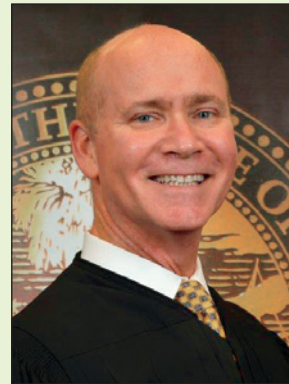
## teen law fact

According to the National Institutes of Health. "Underage Drinking." The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), Kids and teens who get involved with alcohol at a young age are 7 times more likely to be involved in an alcohol-related crash in their lives.

## volunteer corner

### Teen Court Judge Volunteer, Judge William "Bill" Altfield

One of Miami-Dade County's Teen Court most dedicated volunteer judges is Judge William "Bill" Altfield. He was appointed to the County Court bench in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in 2011 and has been a member of the Florida Bar since 1987. He is currently assigned to the Criminal Division at the Richard E. Gerstein Building where he has been a volunteer Judge for Teen Court for almost three years.



Judge William "Bill" Altfield

"Just as peer pressure can be negative, with Teen Court, positive peer pressure and parental involvement are key to the program's success!" Judge Altfield continues, "I am thrilled to be a part of such a worthy component of our judicial system. It allows us to invest in our kids and helps to keep our communities safer and promotes future success of our children."

Judge Altfield began his legal career in 1987 after he became an Assistant State Attorney in Miami-Dade County. Judge Altfield was the Chairperson for a Florida Bar Grievance Committee and served on the Florida Bar's Unlicensed Practice of Law Committee. Judge Altfield, as a life-long resident of Miami-Dade County, has devoted his entire legal career to serving this community as a prosecutor and now as a County Court Judge.

In addition to Teen Court, Judge Altfield, has also volunteered in many aspects of our community. He founded and is a current board member of the Miami Acting Company wherein he also directs and performs in various community theater productions. And, he is proud to be a recently appointed board member with Casa Valentina wherein he volunteers his time to assist those young persons who are transitioning out of foster care.

Judge Altfield has been married to Sharon Altfield, a Miami-Dade County public school teacher since 1991. They have two children, Sydney and Rachel and they belong to Young Israel of Kendall Congregation.

Miami-Dade County Teen Court is excited that Judge Altfield continues to volunteer.

## Volunteering for Teen Court

### Youth Opportunities

Become a youth volunteer; teens can participate as a defense or prosecuting attorney, juror, clerk, and/or a bailiff. It is a beneficial hands-on experience showing the reality of what happens in a courtroom. This volunteer program is magnificent for teens who are interested in careers associated with the judicial system.

### Adult Opportunities

Guide our youth by becoming a volunteer and impact their future and our community in a positive manner. Adults can volunteer as court monitors. If proper requirements are met, an adult with a legal background may volunteer as a judge. This rewarding volunteer experience will make a difference in the life of a youth and set an example for them to follow.

**For more information on volunteering, please contact LaVerne R. Carlile Dean at 305-622-2592 or email her at LAV@miamidade.gov.**

*Teen Court is a Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) Program.*

**MDEAT Mission:** *To ensure the equitable participation of Blacks in Miami-Dade County's economic growth through advocacy and monitoring of economic conditions and economic development initiatives in Miami-Dade County.*

# Teen Court

NEWS

### Miami-Dade County Teen Court

111 NW 1 Street, Suite 2032

Miami, FL 33128

Main Office: 305-375-5661

North Office: 305-622-2592

<http://www.miamidade.gov/economicadvocacytrust>

### STAFF

John E. Dixon Jr., *MDEAT Executive Director*

LaVerne Carlile Dean, *Teen Court Administrator*

Joseph Aleandre, *Juvenile Services Specialist*

Juan Aspajo, *Juvenile Services Specialist*

Shirley Sieger, *Juvenile Services Specialist*

Ralph McCloud, *Student Court Coordinator*

Zachary Rinkins, *Youth Entrepreneurship Program Manager*

Dr. Ichaji N. Robertson, *Clinical Psychologist*

Melba C. Gasque, *Marketing Administrator*

Araceli Acosta, *Office Support Specialist, Lead Worker*

Bernadette Artistide, *Office Support Specialist*

*Special thanks for photos provided by Melba C. Gasque and Frank J. Tarrau.*

