

# Teen Court

Summer 2010 • Issue 4

Making a Difference in Teens' Lives

## Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust formerly Metro-Miami Action Plan Trust Continues to be an Advocate for Youth

**M**etro-Miami Action Plan Trust now has a new name, Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) which evolved from a critical need to address and reduce disparities existing in Black and underserved communities of Miami-Dade County. Community leaders and citizens recognized that a community polarized on an economic basis could not prosper nor effectively contribute to the welfare of the community as a whole.

It is through this synergy of Advocacy with insight and direction from its Trust Board; federal, state and local officials; the school board; local colleges and universities; the media; along with a community eagerly wanting and needing a process to address disparities, will succeed and flourish as MDEAT heads into the future.

Teen Court programs will continue its four day court schedule, and expanding in the Miami-Dade Public School System, where it is known as "Student Court". Teen Court will continue to provide psychological services to participants and families, in addition to having prevention events throughout the year.

In the coming year, MDEAT will continue to provide our community with the best initiatives and advocacy efforts through its Youth Development, Housing, and Economic Development Action Committee meetings.

To attend a monthly Action Committee Meeting or for more information, please visit [www.miamidade.gov](http://www.miamidade.gov) or call 305-372-7600.



## Miami-Dade County Teen Court



Miami-Dade County Teen Court (M-DCTC) 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



*"Attorney Training 2009 at Saint Thomas University."*

## Getting Involved with Teen Court—Events Calendar

Look Out for the following Events:

### Early Summer 2010

#### Teen Summits

Various municipalities around the County will meet to discuss curfew issues, and youth on youth violence in order to obtain recommended actions. The recommended actions will be compiled and integrated into a white paper that will be presented to the elected officials and policy makers of Miami-Dade County later this year.

### Late Summer 2010

#### Attorney Training Seminar

Local youth will have a chance to go through Youth Attorney Trainings. Teen Court will partner with St. Thomas University School of Law to bring you this Youth Attorney Training opportunity. The training will cover law terminology, courtroom decorum, and a courtroom mock trial. We look forward to this summer's attorney trainings. For additional information on Youth Attorney Trainings, please contact LaVerne Carlile at 305-622-2592 or email her at [lav@miamidade.gov](mailto:lav@miamidade.gov).



### Fall 2010

#### Youth Health Fair

This event will focus on addressing and providing solutions to Child Obesity as outlined in the recent health agenda set by First Lady Michelle Obama – Let's Move Campaign! The ultimate goal is to host an annual event with stake holders to create a long lasting campaign promoting healthy lifestyles among the children and youth of Miami-Dade County. It is an inclusive event with individuals from Miami-Dade County; University of Miami; professionals from the health industry; Miami-Dade County Public Schools; targeted youth and adult; vitamin, water, and health companies; federal, state, and local entities; physical fitness professionals; volunteers and involvement from the general public.

## Thailand Ministry Of Justice Visit Teen Court

Teen Court welcomed the Thailand Delegation on Juvenile Justice to view its' peer-jury trial process held at the Richard E. Gerstein Courthouse, in Downtown Miami. This effort was provided to the Thailand officials as a result of collaboration between M-DCTC and Miami-Dade's Juvenile Services Department (JSD). The groups'

interest involved identifying and adopting a best practice model that can serve as intervention for reducing juvenile arrests in their country.

On November 4th, 2009, another delegation from Thailand came to Miami to observe our Teen Court process at the North Dade Justice Center. On this night, we had one shoplifting case on the docket with Kayla Terrero and Lumumba Flennoy serving as prosecuting attorneys, Aubrey Steiger and Gina Rossman serving as defense attorneys, Joseph Aleandre serving judge, and Shaneika Iretes serving as clerk and bailiff.



Members of the delegation were comprised of lawyers, judges, psychologists, and psychiatrists from Thailand; among them was Justice of the Court of Appeal Region IV, Apiradee Phoprom. She was very impressed and praised the staff for doing an excellent job, and that MDEAT is doing a great job in the community.



## Psychological Services Offered By Teen Court Helps Build Self-Esteem And Productive Family Relationships

In most cases there is a reason why students act out in school and sometimes find themselves involved in criminal activity. As a part of the referral process, MDEAT provides psychological services to Teen Court participants and their families. Youth can be referred for these services during the intake evaluation and/or following the court hearing process.



**Dr. Pamela Green**

The goal of the psychological services unit is to intervene as soon as possible in order to prevent further involvement in the justice system, improve school performance, reduce acting-out behavior thereby increasing the youth's potential for success.

The Teen Court psychologist provides professional psychological services including: Individual Therapy, Family Counseling, Parenting Skills and Psychological Evaluations. Psychological Evaluations will be conducted to determine a client's current level of cognitive and emotional functioning. Through an analysis of the youth's strengths and weaknesses, appropriate educational and treatment plans are developed. Parenting Skills and Family therapy are provided to increase parenting skills and enhance appropriate family functioning where needed.

This all takes place in a private and confidential setting. "We have found that this service helps restore the students' confidence and provides the support and recommendations needed for the family to return to a normal state of functioning," states Youth Action Committee Chairman Rev. Dr. Walter T. Richardson.

This resource has proven to help students get back on the right track in school, and increase their positive involvement within the family structure.

## Teen Stat

**In 2008, there were 3,966 Juvenile Curfew violations in Miami-Dade County.**

## Teen Law Fact

**The Juvenile Curfew Ordinance makes it unlawful for any person under 17 years to linger, stay, congregate, move about, wander, or stroll in any public place in Miami-Dade County, either on foot or in a vehicle during curfew hours. The curfew hours are from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. from Sunday night to Friday morning.**

## volunteer corner

### Lumumba A. Flennory, Teen Court Volunteer

This year, one of our star volunteers has excelled beyond our expectations. Lumumba A. Flennory was raised in Liberty City and is a senior at Miami Jackson High School. His father died when he was ten years old. He started watching TV shows like Law and Order and CSI Miami, and was motivated to become a lawyer.

In 2008, he joined Teen Court, where he participates as a prosecuting attorney. Many well-known judges and attorneys that have influenced his decision to pursue a career in criminal justice have mentored him. He volunteers his services for Teen Court cases at three locations in Miami: Central, North, and South Court. Lumumba has become a very active person in his school and in our community. "The Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust Board is very proud of him, especially after hearing that he was offered a full 4-year scholarship to Princeton University," states MDEAT chairperson Robert Holland.

Lumumba states, "There are five people that have made a major impact in my life, of course my dad, my auntie, my uncle, Ms. Heather Richards, Miami Jackson Senior High School teacher, and Mr. Frank Tarrau, one of the Teen Court staff members. Thank you for your support and encouragement." He closes by saying, "There is one quote I live by, 'Only God Can Judge Me'."



## 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 at 305-622-2592 or email her at [LAV@miamidade.gov](mailto:LAV@miamidade.gov).**

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

**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.*



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

