

Teen Court

Winter 2011 • Issue 5

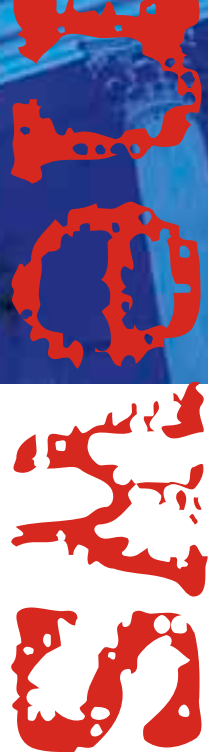
Making a Difference in Teens' Lives

Miami-Dade County Teen Court Hosts Teen Summit At Miami Gardens Youth Speaking Out Against Violence: Taking Action For Change

Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust's Miami-Dade County Teen Court (MDCTC) hosted the Teen Summit at Miami Gardens on Thursday, June 24th, 2010.

This forum was targeted at teens and created an opportunity for youth to voice their concerns and get connected with what is happening in their community. There were selected panelists that interacted with the teens. Responses from teens were recorded and are being integrated into a "White Paper." This White Paper will be presented to local government officials in an effort to advocate for teens.

This Teen Summit also assisted Teen Court in kicking off a series of other local Teen Summits that were held in North Miami, Overtown and Florida City.



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



Miami Gardens Teen Summit panelists and Mayor Shirley Gibson.

Attorney Training Seminar

Miami-Dade County Teen Court Program (MDCTC), under the administrative leadership of Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT), trained a new wave of high school lawyers, bailiffs, clerks, and jurors during the annual summer Youth Attorney Training Program. Training sessions were held on Thursday and Friday, July 29th



and 30th from 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM at St. Thomas University Law School.

Approximately 200 middle and high school students received training for courtroom trials sanctioned by the program's volunteer training guidelines. These sessions educated and

trained youth volunteers in the many facets of the judicial process. The training also increased the pool of volunteers who help operate Teen Court year-round, and provided valuable information for those interested in pursuing careers in law and/or criminal justice.

Legal experts mentored youth attorneys, jurors, and court officers in the areas of law terminology and courtroom decorum. The tools shared at the training will sharpen trainees' skills, and prepare them for their first culminating courtroom mock trial presentations. Participants also received 16 hours of community service credit for attending the classroom training sessions.

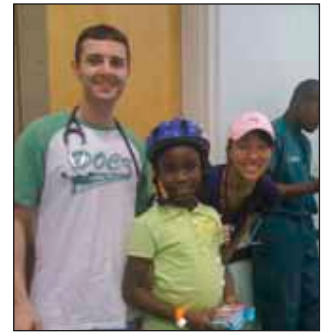


Youth Health Fair

As summer vacation ended, a Back to School Health Fair was held on Saturday, August 21, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Charles Hadley Park in Liberty City through the collaborative efforts of the Miami Police Department, University of Miami medical students, Miami Children's Hospital, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and other city and county agencies.

Kids and teens received a screening card and were able to have a variety of health screenings, including, vision, dental, hygiene, and weight screening. At the end of the screening kids received a book bag. This Youth Health Fair was designed to promote healthy habits for youth and dealt with a variety of aspects concerning youth's health.

The Teen Court staff focused upon childhood obesity, as there is concern that the rate of childhood obesity has more than tripled over the past 30 years. Teen Court addressed and provided solutions to childhood obesity as outlined in the recent health campaign set by First Lady Michelle Obama - Let's Move! This initiative advocates for the promotion of healthy lifestyles among youth. Teen Court specifically focused on childhood obesity by providing alternative and informative programs to promote healthy lifestyles capable of enhancing the self esteem of youth throughout Miami-Dade County. Teen Court partnered with the University of Miami Pediatric Cardiology Department and weighed approximately 1,200 kids. The doctors from University of Miami gave suggestions to the kids and parents on ways that they could maintain a healthy weight.



Teen Stat

School bullying statistics and cyber bullying statistics show that 77% of students are bullied mentally, verbally, and physically.

Teen Law Fact

Florida Legislature adopted an anti-bullying, including cyber-bullying, law on April 2008. The law is called "Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for All Students Act" (Fla. Stat. section 1006.147), named after Jeffrey Johnston, a 15-year-old boy who committed suicide after being the object of bullying, including In-

ternet bullying, for two years. This new Florida law prohibits bullying and harassment of any public K-12 student or employee, and requires public schools to adopt measures to protect students and employees from the physical and psychological effects of bullying and harassment.

Youth Violence Dialogue

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Audrey Edmonson from District 3 and the Miami-Dade Black Affairs Advisory Board teamed with the Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc., Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT), Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association, Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association, Haitian Lawyers Association, Juvenile Services Department, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools, came together to host a "Village Dialogue", a forum aimed at combating the proliferation of gang and youth violence. The Forum was held on October 29, 2010 at the Joseph Caleb Community Center in Liberty City, and ran from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Teen Court participated and gave out information on the Miami-Dade County Teen Court Program.

The focus was on sparking dialogue between youth and additional community stakeholders concerning the importance of identifying strategies to address the pro-



liferation of gang and youth violence within the community. Students from Booker T. Washington, Miami Edison Senior High, Miami Jackson Senior High, Miami Northwestern Senior High, and North Miami Senior High participated, and had their voice heard.

Student Court Update

Teen Court continues its focus of advocating and providing outreach/prevention and intervention services for youth to help decrease juvenile delinquency through supporting Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Zero Tolerance Policy by integrating the Student Court Program, an alternative for students who are in violation of Miami-Dade County Public School Code of Student Conduct. Student Court is a mirror image of Teen Court, where students who violate school rules and regulations agree to allow their peers to determine sentencing instead of the school's administration. Student Court offers an alternative strategy for addressing unsatisfactory behavior and keeps students in school, thereby reducing indoor and outdoor suspensions.

Kicking off the school year, was Northwestern High School, where students eagerly awaited their Teen Court training, and now they are onboard with Student Court. They are proceeding with Student Court and using it to benefit their school in hopes to reduce violence and crime in their school.



Joseph Aleandre conducting training at Northwestern High School

volunteer corner

Marchelle A. Wiley, Esq., Teen Court Adult Volunteer

Marchelle A. Wiley is one of Teen Court's most valued adult judge volunteers. Ms. Wiley has been practicing law for over 15 years. She attended Harvard Law School in Cambridge and previously graduated magna cum laude with a BA in English Classical Literature from Howard University.



Marchelle A. Wiley, Esq.

Ms. Wiley's experience includes the prosecution and defense of claims via litigation, arbitration, and mediation. Her practice includes commercial litigation, representation and counseling of clients in employment discrimination, retaliation, and harassment claims (race, sex, national origin, marital status, and religion). Ms. Wiley is also a trained Civil Litigation Mediator.

Ms. Wiley is a dedicated volunteer who participates as a Teen Court judge at both the Gerstein Courthouse and at the South Dade Government Center Courthouse. She started volunteering with Teen Court in the 1990's but then moved to New York. Upon returning to South Florida in 2007, Ms. Wiley immediately resumed volunteering with Teen Court. She serves as a presiding judge at the courthouses.

Ms. Wiley states the following about volunteering with Teen Court: "This is my way of giving back to the community and making a difference in teens' lives. Whether it be as a Teen Court participant or as a Teen Court volunteer, both have their lives affected by the program."

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.

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.

