

NEWS RELEASE: May 12, 2011

Greene County Teen Court Volunteers to be recognized Friday evening

Volunteers with the Greene County Teen Court will be recognized at a banquet Friday, May 13, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Greene County Elections Center, 1126 Boonville Ave., Springfield.

Teen Court is an alternative sentencing program for juvenile offenders, ages 12-18, who have committed a misdemeanor offence. Participants in the 90-day program are sentenced by a jury of their peers — teen volunteers, some of whom have also completed the Teen Court program. Offenders also appear in court with a teen attorney and a teen prosecutor. Teen Court juries sentence offenders to constructive sentences including a combination of community service, written apologies, family counseling workshops, drug screens, victim impact panels, and participation in jury duties. Offenders who successfully complete the program will not have their offence included in their juvenile record.

“Our Teen Court program is a peer-based juvenile justice service which balances juvenile accountability and treatment,” said Perry Epperly, Chief Juvenile Officer and director of the Greene County Juvenile Office. “Teen volunteers and participants learn how the juvenile justice system works from a hands-on perspective.”

Teen Court would not be possible without volunteers, including attorneys from the Greene County Prosecutor’s Office and five seated judges from Greene County’s 31st Judicial Circuit, Springfield Municipal Court and the Missouri Court of Appeals-Southern District. Friday’s banquet will highlight their service as well as that of other adults and teens who make the program a success.

The Greene County Teen Court program and Friday’s banquet are funded by the Juvenile Office’s probationary service funds.

For more information, call Julie Hershberger, Greene County Juvenile Probation Officer and Teen Court Coordinator, at 417-829-6137.

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