

MEDINA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDGE KEVIN W. DUNN JANUARY 2016

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT MOCK TRIAL HOSTED AT COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Six teams of students from Cloverleaf, Buckeye and Revere High Schools competed in the Medina District annual Mock Trial District Competition at the county courthouse January 29.

The students, who have been preparing their case since last fall, argued both sides of the mock case *State of Harmony v. Riley Green*. Each team presented the case twice throughout the day, once as plaintiff and again as defense to argue

whether an officer's use of deadly force was justified.

In Probate and Juvenile Court, Chief Magistrate Susana Lewis presided over the case with the assistance of attorneys Jared Hoover and Matt Ameer. The students were scored based on their understanding of the complex legal issues in the case, their cross examination and direct examination skills, as well as their opening and closing statements.

"The defense (Revere High School) did a good job trimming down the legal aspects to smaller phrases," Attorney Ameer said. "That makes it easier to understand, while the prosecution (Buckeye High School) was great about promoting their theme that the suspect was unarmed."

Magistrate Lewis and Attorney Hoover added to Ameer's



A student from Revere High School during direct examination of a fellow student playing the character of Riley Green.

praise by saying how impressed they were with the student's knowledge and presentation of such a complex case, but added that they could work on cutting down some of the wordiness during direct and cross examinations, as well as speaking slower and pausing for responses.

Attorney Ameer added one last bit of advice to the students. "Always have a last question," he said. "Never let the other side speak last. You all did a

great job. I admit that I learned a few things from you today."

The Medina County Mock Trial District Competition, coordinated by Attorney Andrew M. Parker, is sponsored by the Medina County Bar Association.

The goal of the mock trial program, created by the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education, is to better inform students about their constitutional rights and responsibilities and to fill the void in law-related education.

The program also assists students in developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

State finals for qualifying teams will be held in the Ohio Statehouse March 10-12, with the winning team advancing to the national competition.

State of Harmony v. Riley Green

In this case, character AJ Bryant is dressed in an archer costume for a medieval fair. When AJ causes a disturbance in a convenience store parking lot, Police Officer Riley Green responds. During the altercation, AJ pulls out his bow and arrow and Officer Green makes the decision to use deadly force to prevent further harm.

**Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court will be closed for
Presidents' Day February 15, 2016.**

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LEADERSHIP MEDINA COUNTY CLASS OF 2016 VISITS MCJDC AND JUVENILE COURT

The Leadership Medina County Class of 2016 stopped by the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center during their annual Government Day January 13.

During their visit, Judge Kevin Dunn spoke to the class about the process and programs of the Court, as well as the unique challenges he and his staff face when dealing with juveniles.

“Juveniles are challenging and they will eventually do something to disappoint you,” Judge Dunn said. “When that happens, people expect me to lay the hammer down as punishment, but our focus is on restorative justice. It is our goal at the Court and at the Juvenile Detention Center to provide sanctions when needed, but to also make these teens realize that they are part of a community and they need to learn to participate, be productive and help others in their neighborhood.”

MCJDC Superintendent Ron Stollar added to the Judge’s sentiments by explaining that certain protocol at the MCJDC encourages juveniles to make better decisions, such as a new incentive-based levels program where residents can earn their way to various rewards, possibly even become a trustee.



“We have leaders in our facility,” Stollar said. “They’re just not leading in the right way yet. We are trying to teach them to use their talents for good.”

Later that afternoon, the Leadership class was given various scavenger hunt scenarios. Four members of the class were given to task to arrive in Juvenile Court for a mock trial. The classmates acted out roles as an alleged delinquent child, played by Scott Gnau, charged with felony aggravated possession of drugs, while the others played the roles of parents and stepmother.

The classmates met with the Juvenile

Court Intake Officer, the Public Defender Tim Lutz, and had their hearing before Chief Magistrate Susana Lewis.

Magistrate Lewis explained the charge and the possible consequences Gnau faces, including license suspension, verbal house arrest, random toxicology screens, and a possible suspended commitment to the Ohio Department of Youth Services, which would not be implemented so long as he abided by any community control sanctions. Magistrate Lewis also explained the rights an alleged offender has as a juvenile, including the right to counsel. Magistrate Lewis told Gnau that due the severity of his charge, she was going to enter a plea of deny of his behalf and appoint the Public Defender. This would allow Gnau to consult with his attorney before moving forward with the case.

“I’m amazed to see that coming in here isn’t punitive, but more like a reset button for kids,” said Carrie Park, who played the stepmother in the mock exercise. “It’s obvious that the Court cares about helping these youth and focuses on restorative justice.”

HONCHARUK SWORN IN AS DRUG COURT COORDINATOR



Honcharuk with Judge Kevin Dunn after being sworn in Jan. 19.

Kevin Honcharuk was sworn in by Judge Dunn as the new Drug Court Coordinator January 19.

Prior to coming to Medina County, Honcharuk was employed at the Talbert House in Cincinnati where he worked in a residential setting with a dual-diagnosed juvenile population. In 2010, Honcharuk transitioned to working with an adult felony offender population at Oriana House, Inc. becoming the Program Coordinator at the Judge Nancy R. McDonnell Community Based Correctional Facility. This program was a sentencing alternative where residents attend treatment and programming in lieu of prison. Honcharuk supervised a team of eight case managers and was responsible for quality assurance of intake, release paperwork, progress reports and court correspondence. He also assisted in the development of the Transitional Services step-down program, offering clients additional resources to succeed in their

community upon successful completion.

“I think my experience with adults and juveniles, as well as residential and nonresidential programs, gives me a solid foundation of community corrections, treatment, and rehabilitation experience,” Honcharuk said. “Working with many different programs will allow me to bring a fresh perspective and hopefully some good ideas to the team to help Drug Court to continue to thrive.”

In his new role, Honcharuk will be responsible for overseeing the Medina County Juvenile Drug Court program and the Drug Court Specialized Docket Probation Officers.

“I am excited to be part of the team and continue to help Drug Court and other specialized docket programs continue to grow and better serve the youths in our county.”