

# MEDINA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDGE KEVIN W. DUNN SEPTEMBER 2014

## MEDINA COUNTY TEEN COURT PROGRAM BEGINS FIFTH SEASON

The Medina County Juvenile Teen Court Diversion Program began again this month, making this the fifth season of the program since its beginning in 2010.

Twelve Medina County student volunteers attended the training session Saturday, September 27 with Teen Court advisors; Magistrate Susana Lewis, Chief Probation Officer Jodi Albertson, Director of Programming Phillip Titterton, Public Defender Tim Lutz and Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Lauren Hase.

The student volunteers spent the training day learning juvenile court vocabulary and about the Teen Court process.

There are usually one to two hearings held during each monthly Teen Court session. The student volunteers work alongside professionals to prepare and present both sides as prosecution and defense in an actual juvenile court case.

When a juvenile offender participates in Teen Court, they go before a jury of their peers. The student volunteers who comprise the jury members decide on consequences and sanctions for the offender, which may include but are not limited to, Community Service hours, restitution made to victims and handwritten letters of apology. The jury

will also always order the offender to participate as a jury member in a future Teen Court trial, allowing the juvenile to experience the other side of the court case. In the end, when the juvenile completes all of his or her orders, their case is dismissed, almost as if it was never filed in Juvenile Court.

Teen Court also offers a financial incentive for the juvenile and their families. Currently, Teen Court carries a fee of 50 dollars in addition to any costs for Community Service and restitution, compared to a traditional juvenile court hearing that may cost anywhere from 180 dollars or more.

Teen Court is a nationally recognized program that is proven to reduce crime, according to the Urban Institute's Evaluation of Teen Courts Project. The evaluation determined that six-month recidivism figures, or a relapse of criminal behavior, among the four teen courts studied, ranged from only six to nine percent.

"This group seems excited, interested and really engaged in the entire process," said Magistrate Lewis. "Their focus will be on restorative justice by considering the victims and the community in each case, but they also are going to act as a positive role model and mentor to the offenders who participate in Teen Court."

### HOW TEEN COURT WORKS:

A misdemeanor offense charge is filed with the Medina County Juvenile Court.

The juvenile offender appears in court for his/her First Appearance hearing. If they are a first-time, low level offender, they may be proposed Teen Court and required to submit a urine screen before their hearing.

Acceptable offenses include but are not limited to:

- Petty Theft
- Disorderly Conduct
- Criminal Damaging

Accept/admit offense

Decline

The juvenile offender will return at a later date for his/her dispositional hearing in Teen Court.

Case will return for disposition, or sentencing, in the traditional juvenile court setting.

Teen Court volunteers serve as prosecutor, public defender, bailiff and jurors in this alternative hearing. Ultimately, a jury of the defendants own peers will decide any consequences.

Once all orders are completed and costs are paid in full, the case will be sealed and expunged.

## INTAKE DEPT. IMPLEMENTED IN JUVENILE COURT

Medina County Juvenile Court implemented a new intake department this month, hiring David Jenks as Intake Officer.

The Intake Department Officer will be responsible for providing pre-adjudicatory information, such as mental health history, drug and alcohol history, school attendance, grades and social history to the Court through interviews with juvenile offenders and their parents prior to their first appearance hearing. This information will help the Court decide how to proceed with each individual case.

"The Intake Department will help us expedite the process of identifying appropriate programs and services to meet the needs of at-risk youth sooner," Judge Dunn said.



In addition to preparing background information on youths and recommending appropriate programs, Jenks will also monitor juvenile offenders placed on compliance orders.

Jenks, a Medina County native and Wittenberg University graduate with a degree in psychology, previously worked as a social work case manager in Nashville, TN for over a year before moving back to Medina County.

"I'm excited to have a hand in helping the kids who come through this court and their families," Jenks said. "In social work, you kind of walk alongside the youths and meet them where they are, but here, I will be the first person they see and be able to recommend appropriate programs to get them on the right track."

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## MCJDC EARNs PERFECT HEALTH DEPT. INSPECTION COMPLIANCE SCORE, AGAIN

The Medina County Juvenile Detention Center earned another perfect score on their annual Medina County Health Department inspection.

The Health Dept. checks all areas of the facility for cleanliness, lighting levels and the presence of insects.

MCJDC Superintendent Ron Stollar said residents are responsible for cleaning their cells daily, as well as the unit they are living in. JDC officers conduct a general cleaning of the remainder of the secured areas in the building on a weekly basis.

Stollar said he suspected the facility would receive a perfect score and anticipates continued 100 percent compliance in the future.

Below is a summary of criteria required by the Medina County Health Department for inspection compliance.

### CELLS

Mattresses and pillows must be clean and in good repair. Sinks, toilets and drinking fountains must be operational and clean.

### CLOSETS

Cleaning products must be non-toxic and closets must be kept orderly.

### GYMNASIUM

Must have restroom and water fountain accessible.

### MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

Medications must be locked away and necessary medical logs and records must be maintained and available for review.

### CLASSROOMS

There must be an accessible restroom and water fountain.

### SHOWERS

Facility showers must be operational and clean.

## Newly Designed MCJDC and Juvenile, Probate Court Websites Launch This Month

The Medina County Juvenile Detention Center website was launched this month. The first official website for the detention facility includes information such as MCJDC administrative hours, visitation hours and a copy of the resident handbook.

In addition to a new MCJDC website, the Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court website also received a makeover. You can view both sites at [www.MedinaJDC.org](http://www.MedinaJDC.org) and [MedinaJuvenile.org](http://MedinaJuvenile.org).

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