



MEDINA COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

Probate and Juvenile Divisions

93 Public Square, Room 104, Medina, Ohio 44256

KEVIN W. DUNN
Judge

MEDIA RELEASE

December 2, 2019

Juvenile Community Service Program Partners with Park District for Environmental Service Hours



Youth ordered to completed work with the Medina County Juvenile Court Community Service Program are getting the opportunity to immerse themselves in new outdoor experiences thanks to a collaborative effort with the Medina County Park District and Wolf Creek Environmental Center. Six youth worked alongside Naturalist Mark Ludwig and former Medina County Chief Naturalist Dan Bertsch to help identify and inventory birds at the Wolf Creek Environmental Center/Alderfer-Oenslager Wildlife Sanctuary on November 23.

The morning began with Ludwig and Bertsch teaching the youth about various birds and their markings, such as the Black-capped Chickadee, the Tufted Titmouse, and the Blue Jay. All youth were provided binoculars, a reference book, and a checklist to begin bird watching from indoors, scanning the trees and feeders for the various species. All of the data collected throughout the day was entered into eBird.org, the world's largest biodiversity-related citizen science project, managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

"Nature provides a simple, calming outlet for people," Ludwig said. "Our mission at the Center is to get the community excited about nature and the outdoors. It's a part of all of our lives and can provide so much, especially patience."

Ludwig explained to the youth that there may be some lulls while bird watching, and that was to be expected. After a few minutes of low bird activity, he decided to take the youth outdoors for a hike to seek more birds and learn about other aspects of nature. There, they got to see a beaver dam and lodge, a bat house, and explore the different areas of the sanctuary.

"We tell youth all the time, 'Say no to drugs,' but then my question is: Say yes to what?" said Bertsch. "We should be encouraging these youth to fill their lives with something positive and fulfilling and I believe nature provides that."

To learn more about the Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court or Court programs, visit our website at MedinaProbate.org.

The collaborative effort with the Park District and Community Service Program will continue with future outings to identify and inventory plant species and insects, as well as help conduct stream surveys.

“Community Service hours are a sanction for breaking the law or not following the rules of Probation, but giving back to the community doesn’t always have to involve picking up trash or washing cars,” said Judge Kevin W. Dunn. “This collaboration is beneficial on both sides. It will allow the youth to help our Park District with their studies and surveys, but it will also show the youth that nature can be an outlet they can turn to when they’re stressed or need a calm moment. They are learning about their environment, but I hope they gain some insight for themselves as well.”

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