**Teen Court - Frequently Asked Questions**

*What is Teen Court?*
Teen Court is a voluntary program, which allows juvenile misdemeanor offenders to "pay" for their crime through community service, involvement in the judicial process (future Teen Court jury service), writing apology letters, and attending a variety of classes and seminars provided by Maricopa County.

These cases are presented by Teen Court attorneys to a jury of the defendant's peers made up of students in the Mountain Pointe Criminal Justice class. The jury members then assess a sentence of community service and other consequences - furthering the aim of restorative justice. Teen Court is a "hands on" educational opportunity, which allows teen offenders and teen volunteers to better understand our system of justice. Upon successful completion of Teen Court, the charges will be dismissed and removed from the youth's permanent record.

*Who is Eligible for Teen Court?*
Youths age 10-17 who are currently residing in Maricopa County may be referred to Teen Court from Maricopa County Attorney’s office. The defendant must enter a plea of "guilty" or "nolo contendere" for referral to Teen Court. Parental consent and participation is required.

*Is there a dress code?*
The following is enforced for all defendants, jurors, and volunteers:

* No caps or hats
* No short shorts or short skirts
* No tank tops or exposed midriffs
* No inappropriate logos on shirts
* No sagging pants or exposed underwear
* Cell phones or electronic must be turned off

Teen Court reserves the right to refuse involvement to anyone who does not abide by the dress code.

*What are the punishments for a particular offense?*
Punishment consists of a specific number of hours of community service and a variety of other consequences. There is a minimum of 5 hours of community service that must be assessed for each incident. The Teen Court Jury can assess more community service based on the evidence presented.

*What happens if I don't complete the consequences in time?*
Your case will be sent back to the referring judge and you will be required to abide by the judge’s decision, and the offense will go on your record.

*Is Teen Court real?*
Yes. The cases are real and so are the consequences. All participants are bound by a strict code of confidentiality.

*Why should someone opt for Teen Court?*

* Teen Court places the responsibility of the offense on the teen offender.
* Keeps offense off the teen’s record.
* Turns a mistake into a positive "hands on" learning experience.
* Reduces the chance teen recidivism by increasing their awareness of the repercussions of their actions.
* Teen acquires valuable work experience while doing community service.
* Community benefits through the community service hours performed by the teen.

*Do you have opportunities for volunteers?*
Volunteering to work for Teen Court is an educational and rewarding opportunity for both teens and adults. The Mountain Pointe Teen Court program is only available to students who are currently enrolled in the Criminal Justice class. However, all middle-school and high school students may volunteer as jurors at the community Teen Court centers throughout the greater Phoenix Metropolitan area. Students who participate at the community Teen Court centers do not need any prior training or experience. A schedule is created at the beginning of each school year, and can be obtained by contacting Mr. Nach.