

Restorative Justice ("in action") Community Service

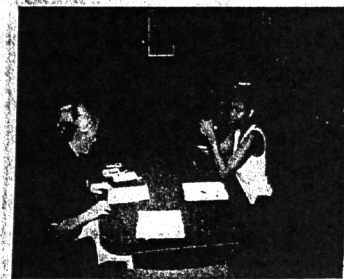


SAY San Diego
Social Advocates for Youth

Strengthening the Whole Child,
Whole Family, Whole Community
Since 1971

Teen Court - A Program of SAY San Diego

What is 'Teen Court'?



Each year SAY San Diego's Teen Court program educates hundreds of high school students about the justice system, including

consequences of crime, and provides hands-on courtroom simulations. The program holds formal sessions that keep up to 80 juve-

nile offenders out of the court system via peer adjudication, with training and participation by volunteer attorneys and law students.

Who Participates in 'Teen Court'?

The City of San Diego (the program's main funder) has identified priority zip codes covering all of central and north central San Diego, plus 92113/92114 (southeast). Participating high schools include Crawford, Clairemont, San Diego, Lincoln, Scripps Ranch, Torrey Pines and many others.

The system cannot operate without volunteer assistance: some **30-50** youth volunteers and 8 adult volunteers participate on a monthly basis

Referrals come from San Diego Unified School District police and the San Diego Police Department Teen Court receives more than 10 referrals

monthly for offenders whose cases are heard semi-monthly.

Eligible offenses are any misdemeanor—typically petty theft, marijuana possession or bringing a weapon to school.

Program Needs:

Volunteers are needed to serve as attorney trainers and judges

Gently used clothing - especially jackets and blazers

Donations are needed to cover food costs and incentives for participants. The total budget for these two items is \$1350 annually.

The Process

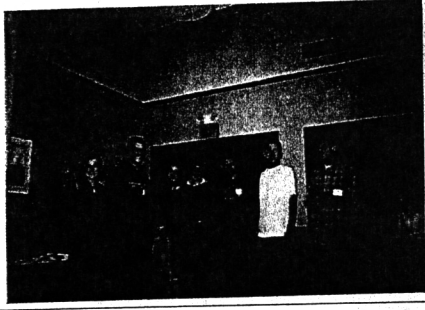
There are two types of hearings: the Attorney Style and a Peer Jury Panel. In the attorney style, adult attorneys work with youth volunteers to develop a sentence and present to the jurors. In a peer jury panel, there are no attorneys: the defendant comes before the court and presents his/her side of the story. The jurors are then allowed to

directly question the defendant.

Court nights are set up to be as real-life as possible. The "defendant" is called to testify, as are any witnesses if applicable. Cases are always decided in one sitting. The peer jurors are not deciding guilty or not guilty - just an appropriate sentence, as the offender has already admitted guilt. The

"verdict" or sentence recommendation is finalized that night. After the witnesses (offender and parents) have been called, the jurors are excused to deliberate. A Teen Court staff sits in on the deliberations to ensure that jurors follow program guidelines. Both hearings are typically finished within 1.5 hours (often within an hour for the Peer Jury Panel).

This project is funded in whole or in part with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



Volunteer Roles

Law students generally serve as attorney trainers, working with student volunteers who have participated in five or more cases and have requested to act as a student attorney. The attorney trainer coaches the teen attorney to decide what lines of questioning to use, how to present themselves in front of the court and the judge, how to do an opening statement, etc. The attorney trainers also participate in court nights. About two weeks before each hearing the program coordinator contacts the attorneys to ask who is available to act in the next case. The defendant has admitted guilt to the crime so both sides seek Restorative Justice. The defense team looks at mitigating factors and

prosecution team looks at aggravating factors.

Attorneys serve as judges, whose role is to lead the proceedings and provide guidance if needed. They also ensure the process is carried out fairly and make the sentence legally binding. They are given a script to follow and are allowed to improvise if desired.

Volunteer Placement and Training One interview is held with the program coordinator to determine if this is an appropriate match. If so, the individual needs to be cleared via SAY's volunteer coordinator. In the mean time, they receive all of the training materials for review.

The program coordinator meets with a judge immediately before his/her first hearing to review all information and the evening's agenda.

Time Commitment

A volunteer attorney assist with one or more hearings in an evening. The time commitment for judges can be more sporadic. Sometimes the program needs a judge to fill in for just that night and not again for several months. Attorney trainers must participate in one case a month for at least 6 months. Judges are asked for a commitment spanning at least six months, and to be available for at least one hearing/ case a month.



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Social Advocate for Youth (SAY San Diego) is a locally based non-profit organization dedicated to the positive development of San Diego's Children, families and communities. SAY provides a comprehensive and integrated array of services to some of San Diego's most vulnerable individuals and families. We fill a special need in the community by building collaborative and innovative partnerships that find cost-effective solutions to benefit children and families.

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