

Our Mission:

ASSIST JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR BEHAVIOR; TO HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTION AND TO TEACH THEM TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS IN THE FUTURE, WHILE TREATING THEM WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY; TO INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY THROUGH VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES; AND TO PROMOTE BETTER COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOUTH, PARENTS, SCHOOLS, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, AND COMMUNITIES.



From left to right: Katie Zakrewski, prosecuting attorney; Nathan Quarantillo, defense attorney; Judge Larry Schultz; Hillary Trump, defense attorney; Emily Yarrington, prosecuting attorney.



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For more information...  
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Morgan County  
Teen Court



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## Overall Goals

Morgan County Teen Court is designed to educate youth about the judicial process. Each participant in Teen Court, whether a defendant, clerk, juror, teen prosecutor or teen defense attorney, is involved in a positive and meaningful way.

Morgan County Teen Court allows youth participants to be seen as resources to the community by empowering youth to make decisions throughout the Teen Court process.

Teen Court provides a means by which youth offenders can be accountable for their actions, learn from the process to make better decisions in the future, and have a positive impact on the community through community service, rather than traditional justice routes.

In addition, Morgan County Teen Court provides adult mentors to youth involved in the program, both on the defense and on the prosecution sides of the process. Having adult mentors in the teens' lives increases their chances for being healthy, productive members of the community.



A jury training.

### WHAT IS TEEN COURT?

Teen court is a unique justice program for youth between the ages of 11 and 17 who are alleged to have committed a status offense or act of delinquency. Upon successful completion of the program, charges are dismissed.

### HOW DOES TEEN COURT WORK?

Cases are referred, for offenses that occur within the school and local community, by the circuit court if the court finds a youth a suitable candidate for the program.

Youth/parents who are accepted into the program must consent to cooperate with Teen Court. All defendants must agree to cooperate prior to participation. Defendants are represented by a teen defense attorney. The prosecutor is also a teen attorney, and both attorneys are assisted by adult attorney mentors. Each teen attorney makes an opening statement, the defendant testifies and is cross examined. Evidence is considered. An adult judge presides and the teen jury deliberates and reaches a verdict and determines a sentence which includes mandatory community service and jury duty in future teen courts. Upon completion of Teen Court sentence, the charges against the juvenile are dismissed.

### Teen Court Activities:

Jury Training— Teaches youth about the Teen Court program and about the different options available when they implement a sentence on the offender. Trainings are provided four times a year at each participating school.

Attorney Training— This training is provided by a licensed WV attorney. The youth are trained on how to prepare opening and closing statements, how to examine and cross examine witnesses and techniques on interview skills and court room presentations. Training is provided two times per month.

Teen Court Club Meetings— A guest speaker, such as probation officers and the prosecuting attorney, provides information about the Judicial system. Teen Court business is also reviewed, such as recruitment, public relations, and scheduling activities.

Teen Court Hearings— Trained jury members are called to serve and selected attorneys present their case in front of the Teen Court judge. After the case has been presented, the jury deliberates and determines sentencing.