

"It was helpful to have people my own age trying to understand me as a whole person not just viewing me through the bad decision I had made."

Elizabeth, Teen Offender

MISSION

The Youth Court's mission is to mitigate the school-to-prison pipeline by providing a unique peer-driven restorative justice model as an alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system. Youth Court empowers young people to take an active role in addressing criminal offenses of their peers.

Using these proven principles, teen offenders take accountability for their actions and commit to repair damage done to others, while restoring relationships with their families and community.

Youth Court also offers teens the agency to drive an important decision-making process that has real-life implications for their peers, while gaining 'hands-on' knowledge of the juvenile justice system, 'trauma informed' responses, and effective restorative problem-solving strategies.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

CONTRIBUTE

- Make a tax-deductible gift to support your community's teens
- Host a house party and spread the message

VOLUNTEER

- As a youth juror, bailiff or advocate (ages 12-21)
- Judges and attorneys as hearing facilitators
- Adult Case Managers

ADVOCATE

- Provide interesting and educational community service projects for youth
- Offer speaking opportunities on Youth Court at your school, business, or community group

DON CARNEY

DIRECTOR OF RESTORATIVE YOUTH SERVICES

dcarney@ymcasf.org • 415-459-9622

JULIE WHYTE

YOUTH COURT ADMINISTRATOR

jwhyte@ymcasf.org • 415-459-4875

Scan to view a video of Youth Court in Action!



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA YOUTH COURT

**RESTORATIVE SOLUTIONS:
ACCOUNTABILITY,
NOT PUNISHMENT**



**FINDING JUSTICE:
ENDING THE SCHOOL
TO PRISON PIPELINE**

YOUTH COURT

Youth Court is a unique peer-driven forum where young people are empowered to craft restorative consequence for peers charged with misdemeanor offenses or infractions. Trained as advocates, bailiffs and jurors, teens lead all aspects of the program.

The Youth Court approach has grown rapidly over the last two decades; expanding from 78 in 1994 to over 1,200 nationwide in 2018; worldwide, over 500. This increase is a result of documented and significant reductions in repeat offenses.

The Youth Court is administered in collaboration with the Superior Court, local law enforcement, Probation, District Attorney and Public Defender, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission, as well as Administration at local schools and County government.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The YMCA Youth Court is part of an international movement that focuses on the following principles:

Principles of Restorative Justice

- Taking full accountability
- Repairing harm done to relationships and the community
- Providing offenders with increased resiliency and genuine community connection and reintegration

“Youth Court is a truly peer-driven and non-judgmental approach that utilizes honest and open communication between teens, their parents and affected community members to effectively repair harm.”

Ric, Father of Youth Court Offender



HOW YOUTH COURT WORKS

- Youth are referred by Probation, local police and middle and high schools
- Teens who have taken accountability for a misdemeanor offense or infraction are eligible
- The youth offender and the community are represented by student advocates trained in Restorative Justice principles
- Jury questions focus on what led up to the offense, a teen’s support systems, grades, drug and alcohol use, interests and strengths
- Local judges and attorneys sit as hearing facilitators
- Adult case managers mentor the teen and support the family in successfully completing the program
- Successful completion of the program results in no juvenile record

A RESTORATIVE CONSEQUENCE

Mandatory Aspects:

- Serve between 2-5 times as a juror to support other teens
- Complete 10-40 community service hours that are additive to the teen’s life
- Complete 12 hours (6 with a parent) of Harm Reduction Alcohol and Drug Safety Skills Training

Discretionary Aspects:

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Additional Counseling
- Anger Management Training
- Reflective Essays
- Letters of Apology
- Restitution to the Victim