

Teen court in SLT needs volunteers

El Dorado County high school students are invited to take an active role in the juvenile justice system through the "Teen Court" Program. Volunteer training for students will be conducted for the South Lake Tahoe Teen Court on Oct. 1 from 5-6:30pm in El Dorado County Superior Court, 1354 Johnson Blvd. in South Lake Tahoe.

Upon completion of this mandatory training, teens will serve as the court personnel for real cases in which an offense has been committed by a minor, the minor has admitted to the offense, and has chosen to be judged by his/her peers.

"This is a unique opportunity for students in our community," said Tiffany Ellis, Teen Court coordinator, in a press release. "Students manage almost every aspect of Teen Court. Except for the judge, all other participants are students: the prosecuting and defense attorneys, court clerk, bailiff, and jury. Superior Court Judge Steven C. Bailey presides over Teen Court in Tahoe, and volunteer attorneys from the community aid student attorneys in developing their cases. Students come away with a real understanding of the juvenile justice system, and their interest and enthusiasm ensures that all defendants who appear receive a fair and appropriate sentence."

The Teen Court program began in 1992 in El Dorado County and is funded through the El Dorado County Health Services Department, Alcohol and Drug Programs. Cases are referred and managed by the El Dorado County Probation Department; in addition, the county Superior Court judges and sheriff's office are partners in the program.

Teen Court hearings in South Lake Tahoe will begin on Oct. 29

and continue through May 2010. Hearings will generally be the third Thursday of each month at Superior Court on Johnson Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe. Participants arrive at 4:45pm in preparation for the hearings, which begin promptly at 5pm.

For more information about Teen Court, contact Ellis at (530) 573.4372.