

**What is the time commitment for Youth Court?**

One night a month for 3-4 hours, plus an additional commitment of 4 or more hours for training.

**Is there a fee to participate in Youth Court?**

Juvenile defendants who, with the consent of a parent or guardian, choose Youth Court instead of juvenile court will be assessed a \$15 fee.

**How are juveniles referred to Youth Court?**

The Deputy Juvenile Officer will advise the Youth Court Coordinator on suitable candidates. Generally, juveniles will be first-time offenders who commit misdemeanor or status offenses and also show a willingness to make amends for their crimes.

**What can I do to get involved?**

Call the Youth Court Coordinator Scott Spilky at the Juvenile Office at 660-882-7472.



"Equal opportunity is and shall be provided to all participants in Extension programs and activities, and for all employees and applicants for employment on the basis of their demonstrated ability and competence without discrimination on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or status as a Vietnam-era veteran. This policy shall not be interpreted in such a manner as to violate the legal rights of religious organizations or military organizations associated with the armed forces of the United States of America."

Brochure Designed by  
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**"Youth Helping Youth"**



### **What is Youth Court?**

Youth Court is an alternative sentencing program offered by the Cooper County Juvenile Office to divert juveniles from the formal court process. Juvenile offenders between the ages of 12 to 16 who have been referred to the Juvenile Office for a misdemeanor or status offense are eligible. If an offender is deemed appropriate for Youth Court, he or she is given the option to come before a jury of his or her peers and have requirements assigned by the jury.

### **What are the objectives of Youth Court?**

In Youth Court the emphasis is on restorative justice, which simply means giving the offender a chance to learn from his or her mistakes and to make amends for the crime committed. Jurors in Youth Court are guided by the principle of "How can we help the defendant learn from mistakes made?"

### **Is the court really run by youth?**

While a judge will preside over Youth Court and adults will be available for advice, all the roles in the court are fulfilled by teens. It is not the job of a Youth Court jury to decide guilt or innocence because to be eligible for Youth Court a juvenile offender must admit guilt. However, it is the job of the Youth Court jury to decide on appropriate sanctions for each defendant.

### **What types of crimes are heard in Youth Court?**

Crimes include misdemeanor law violations such as misdemeanor stealing, simple assault, property damage and possession of alcohol or small amounts of marijuana. Other crimes include status offenses such as truancy.

### **What requirements are handed down to defendants in Youth Court?**

All juveniles who go through Youth Court will be required to complete 30-60 Community Action Points (CAPS) and to attend a Family Communications workshop. Other requirements can include community service hours, letters of apology, research papers, interviews and financial restitution. In addition, juveniles may be required to attend courses on anger management, shoplifting and addiction.

### **How does the community benefit from Youth Court?**

This special court serves the community in numerous ways. It educates youth toward a better understanding of the laws and gives them direct experience with the workings of the justice system. Problem youth with minor offenses may be overlooked in the justice system, but through Youth Court these youth are taught their behavior has consequences. The sentences handed down through Youth Court allow juveniles to learn from

their mistakes, to make amends for their actions and encourages them to make better decisions in the future, which benefits the community, the police and above all the youth themselves. Youth Court also handles relatively minor offenses, which frees up the Juvenile Court to handle the more serious crimes.

### **Who can participate in Youth Court?**

Any adult who is concerned about youth or any juvenile 12-18 years who wants to learn more about the justice system is encouraged to volunteer. Adults can fulfill many roles in Youth Court including as jury consultants and verdict processors. Juveniles can serve on a jury, as a bailiff or clerk and as prosecuting and defense attorneys.

### **Is there any training involved?**

Adults and juveniles who participate in the program will receive training to prepare them for their time in Youth Court. Juveniles will be given an introduction to the justice system and will also receive specialized training for their roles. Juvenile attorneys in Youth Court will be mentored and trained by practicing attorneys. Adults will be given an overview of the justice system and will be given training for their roles in Youth Court.

