

Fact Sheet for Parents of Youth Volunteers

Four Cities Peer Court



The Four Cities Peer Court needs youth volunteers to serve as Defense and Prosecuting peer attorneys, jurors, and bailiffs. No prior education or specific background is required to volunteer. The Peer Court will provide training sessions for each job. Students who have experience in debate or law classes may be most familiar with the roles in the court; however, *every interested student is welcome*. There is a specific commitment asked for each role to ensure that the time spent training is worth it for the student.

What is the Four Cities Peer Court?

Youth Peer Court is a diversion program that is designed to give youth with first-time, low-level law violations a chance to repair harm and show accountability for their actions without involvement in the juvenile justice system. When a youth is cited for a first-time low-level law violation in Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale and Wood Village, the officer will offer the option to enter the Peer Court instead of the juvenile justice system. The youth must then agree to make an admission to the law violation. Youth are required to engage a parent, guardian or other pro-social adult in their pre-court interview and/ or Peer Court proceeding. While in Peer Court the youth will be assigned a volunteer student defense attorney (a peer) and a student prosecuting attorney. Once the case is heard, the jury (also peers) decides what type of accountability fits the law violation. The presiding judge, an adult attorney who is licensed in Oregon, maintains order, guides the process and oversees sentencing.

What is GGAPP? The Greater Gresham Area Prevention Partnership [GGAPP] is a community coalition designed to establish and strengthen collaboration within the communities served by the Reynolds, Gresham Barlow and Centennial School districts. The coalition seeks to significantly reduce substance abuse among youth and adults by addressing the risk factors in the community that lead to unhealthy behaviors and to support and increase the activities and protective factors for youth and families that promote a healthy and drug free community. GGAPP works with the Police Activities League (PAL) and is providing oversight for the Four Cities Peer Court.

Benefits to the Youth Volunteers:

- Being a part of something positive and exciting!
- Earning potential credit
- Setting the stage for Senior and Service Learning Projects
- Earning letters of recommendation for college applications

- Meeting new people
- Learning about the law, legal issues and concepts
- Making your community a better place for TEENS!

The Time Commitment:

Attorneys are asked to commit to twenty cases, and the jurors/bailiffs commit to four court dates, over a one year period. The court will be in session twice a week starting in September with up to three cases heard per session. The approximate preparation time per case for attorneys will be two hours. The defense attorney will contact the defendant to work on the case. The prosecuting attorney will get an information sheet to prepare for his/her case. Each court session will run from 4pm-6pm. Cases will be heard in local City Hall Chambers.

If you would like more information, please check us out at the web: www.ggapp.org