



Wisconsin | Campus Compact

Best Practices in UWEX Service-Learning

Teen Court

4-H Youth Development Programs

Started in 2001, Teen Court is a program for first-time offenders who commit misdemeanor crimes or ordinance violations and who admit their guilt. Offenders request attending Teen Court as an alternative to municipal or juvenile court. Marinette County uses a panel system of high school student volunteers serving in several roles to conduct court.

Teen Court is an excellent way to empower youth. The teen panelists learn about how laws are enforced and how the court system works. They serve as the “judge and jury” and work to determine appropriate sanctions that correct behavior, not punish behavior. Panelists focus on how best to help the offenders put their lives back in order. They practice listening and questioning skills, decision-making, confidentiality, and leadership.

Sanctions are intended to be learning experiences and are developed with the offenders’ interests in mind. Past sanctions include writing apology letters, speaking out to the public, and performing community service. Several offenders have put in extra hours of service beyond what was required because their experiences were positive. Many had never done community service before and now felt needed and appreciated. Some former offenders even go on to serve as Teen Court panelists.

Contact information:

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