

The St. Clair County Teen Court represents an alternative approach to juvenile justice that holds the first time nonviolent youth offenders accountable through a sentence imposed by their peers. The Teen Court emphasizes accountability and responsibility rather than traditional punitive measures, thereby focusing on balance and restorative justice.

Through this restorative approach, special emphasis is placed on restoring individuals who have been harmed, the respondent who caused the harm, and taking steps toward broader community healing.

The court operates under the three rules of restorative justice:

1. How can you hold the offender accountable for his or her offense?
2. How can you help the offender repair the harm to all the victims?
3. What does the offender need to become a more productive member of the community?

As respondents assume responsibility for their actions, and through successful completion of their remedies, those cases are not charged in juvenile court. These youth then have more opportunities to access housing, higher education, armed forces, and other desirable career options as they successfully transition into adulthood.

Established in 2016, the Teen Court has graduated over 220 teens through their program and has a 6.75% recidivism rate three years post-graduation. Led by Judge Annette Eckert (Ret), this program gives our teens a second chance to make amends and stay out of the juvenile justice system.

The success of the Teen Court is directly related to the hard work and dedication of staff, volunteers, and mentors who are dedicated to saving our future, one teen at a time. Law Enforcement is grateful for your commitment to this amazing program.