



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**New Braunfels' Teen Court Wins Spotlight Award from the Teen Court Association of Texas**

**New Braunfels, TX** – The New Braunfels Municipal Court's Teen Court Program was established in 2009. It is a diversionary program that introduces offenders and non-offenders alike to the Court System, and involves players like the Bailiff, Clerk, Teen Prosecutor, Teen Defense Attorney, Teen Jurors, and the Adult Volunteer Judge. Students who are jurors listen to a defendant's case and they determine what type of punishment the defendant will receive. The teen jurors, historically, have been very firm with the defendants.

Teen Court is completely run by our City's Municipal Court with the help of Juvenile Case Manager and Teen Court Coordinator, Norma Herrera, and Municipal Judge, Rose Zamora. It also has the advantage of several community adult volunteers, who have added tremendous experience and wisdom to the Teen Court Program.

New Braunfels hosted the Teen Court Association of Texas Conference this past week. There were over 22 visitors to our city in attendance at the conference to learn more about Teen Courts across the State.

"We are proud to announce that the New Braunfels Teen Court Program received the Spotlight Award from the Teen Court Association of Texas at this year's conference," said Municipal Court Judge Rose Zamora. "In addition, our very own Norma Herrera has been elected by her fellow Juvenile Case Managers across Texas as the new 2017-18 President-Elect of the Teen Court Association of Texas. We are very proud of her accomplishments, and we look forward to her success!"

Since the New Braunfels Teen Court's inception, many changes have taken place. There is a more interactive Teen Court Attorney Volunteer Program that provides extensive training and education in the legal field. These attorneys experience nine two-hour sessions of legal curriculum including, but not limited to, opening and closing statements, the court system, evidence rules, trial processes and procedures, criminal offenses and punishment, objections and perjury, direct and cross examination, roles of attorneys, and case preparation. At the end of the sessions, the teens are given a Teen Attorney Bar Exam. Since its inception, the program has graduated 22 teen attorney volunteers. Of the first graduating class, six have continued on to be mentors for the new teen attorney volunteers, two are pursuing careers in the legal field, and three have gone on to college.

Teen Attorney Volunteers also assist in the community. Most recently, a few Teen Attorney Volunteers participated in a Mock Trial with elementary students and they were able to mentor junior second grade attorneys to complete a direct examination in the case of the Bears v. Gold E. Locks.

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