



Future Leaders in Law

Leadership in Law program graduates another round of high school students, exposing them to careers in the legal field, forensics, and law enforcement.

There is no better way for students to learn about being a prosecutor or other jobs in law enforcement or government than immersing themselves in the day-to-day operations while hearing from the experts.

Court hearings, witness interviews, crime scenes, mock trials – these are just a few of the experiences that high school students encounter during the intensive Leadership in Law program offered in southeastern Indiana.

The weeklong program offers an overview of the criminal justice system and introduces the students to local law enforcement officials who help the system run, including the coroner, state police, crime scene technicians, judges, defense attorneys, and so many more.

Dearborn-Ohio County Prosecutor Lynn Deddens answers questions on the work that goes on behind the scenes to make it a success:

Q&A - When did this program start and why? *The program started in the summer of 2011. Judge McLaughlin of Dearborn Superior Court II and the former Prosecuting Attorney wanted a program for students to explore career opportunities in the legal field, law enforcement, and forensics. Then as a Deputy Prosecutor, I took an old murder case that was successfully prosecuted in Dearborn County and turned it into the case that is used for the experience.*

What is the goal? *To give students the opportunity to have a hands-on, real-world experience and explore legal careers, law enforcement, and forensics.*

How many students have been through the program? *About 230 high schoolers over the course of 15 years. Each class runs anywhere from 12-20 students. We try to limit the number to 15 or less now. Students are chosen through an application process and essay. It's free for them to attend.*

Have you had any successes with the program where students went on to be involved in law enforcement? *Interestingly enough, we have two local attorneys who went through the program when they were graduating from high school. We also had a student who went on to the Indiana State Police Forensics section as well.*

What is your favorite part of the program? *It is always so rewarding when you see the students at the beginning of the week. They are quiet. Then by the end of the week – by the time they have been divided up into prosecutors, defense attorneys, and witnesses – all their personalities come out! The passion that they possess is inspiring and helps me remember why I do what I do... and it is still the best job in the world!*



Dearborn-Ohio Prosecutor
Lynn Deddens



High school students who participate in the Leadership in Law program have a packed week learning all about the criminal justice system and meeting with experts across Indiana. Then they put what they've learned into action in the courtroom.



What is your favorite part of the program? (Continued from previous page)

Another highlight is their opportunity to speak with Judges, defense attorneys, other business and community leaders, and law enforcement officers – people that are normally not in their realm. They have the opportunity to speak with them, ask lots of questions, and see if this is a career they are interested in pursuing. It is great to be part of the connection in helping them discern if this is the right career path for them.

From a personal standpoint, it helps reignite the passion that I have for my job. Seeing others interested in your job and the legal field in general is always a great reminder as to why we love the jobs we do!

What do Students say about the program?

“Thank you for letting me be a part of this opportunity! This program confirmed for me that I want to do Forensic Science. Seeing the crime scene, based on an actual crime, and being involved in the process made me realize that I would love to do the science part of things.”

“Thank you for letting me do this! This is the most fun I have had and opened my eyes to actualities of law. I met amazing people and would do this a thousand times again! This was probably one of the best weeks of my life!”

Here is day recap from an agenda during the recent Leadership in Law program:

The students ventured to the Dearborn County Law Enforcement Center where they met with JCAP (Jail Chemical Addiction Program) Director Tisha Linzy, and heard the participants share their life experiences. They also shared how they are working hard to change their mindset in breaking free from addictions.

Next was a presentation from Judge McLaughlin. She gave guidance to the students on procedures for the mock trial.

For lunch, we hosted a roundtable with Senior Judge Humphrey, Judge McLaughlin, and Judge Joe Johns of Lawrenceburg City Court.

Following lunch, students heard from Amber McClain and Brittani Evans from Indiana State Police/Indiana Fusion Intelligence Center.

I (Prosecutor Deddens) organized the students into groups for their mock trial and gave an overview of the trial process – conducting witness testimony as well as presenting evidence. Then the students had the opportunity to work with prosecutors and defense attorneys to prepare for their mock trial.

Finally, it was the opportunity for the students to shine... the mock trial! These students brought their A game. They did opening statements, direct and cross examinations of witnesses, played witnesses along with presenting evidence and closing arguments. They did a phenomenal job!



Bailey's Tip
Come and join the fun!!