



What is Youth Court?

Youth Court is a diversion program that addresses first time, low-level crimes or offenses that have been committed by youth ages 10 through 19 in the Town of Bethlehem. These peer led sentencing hearings are not trials and do not determine guilt or innocence. The offender must be willing to accept responsibility for his/her actions in order to proceed through Youth Court. The jury's responsibility is to decide on a meaningful sentence after listening to both sides of the story. Sentences include community service hours, apology letters, educational classes and other applicable requirements.

What is a Youth Court Juror and what are the Responsibilities?

- Must be in grades 8-12
- Live in the Town of Bethlehem
- Have an active email account that is checked regularly (it can be a parent's/guardian's)
- No training required
- Jurors can volunteer as often as they'd like based on their own schedule and availability
- If you are chosen for a jury, you do need to attend your scheduled case, unless you have contacted the Director and excused yourself
- Excuse yourself from jury duty if you have a conflict of interest in the case

During the course of the hearing, jurors will be given instructions by the judge on their role in determining an appropriate sentence. Jurors will be led in their deliberation and discussion by a Jury Foreperson who is a trained member of the program. As a juror, you will work with your fellow jurors to reach a unanimous decision that not only provides appropriate sanctions for the offender, but also presents the offender with an opportunity to learn and grow from the experience, keeping in mind the community and victim's perspective. Ultimately, the jury should recommend a sentence that is fair, justifiable, and is in line with the goals of restorative justice (striking a fair balance).

All information revealed in the course of a hearing, including the names of offenders or witnesses is confidential and is NOT to be shared outside of the courtroom. An Oath of Confidentiality is read and signed off on by each juror PRIOR to their participation for each and every case.

Volunteer jurors will receive an e-mail announcement from the Youth Court Director requesting volunteers for a specific case date and time approximately a week before the case date. Once all volunteers have had an opportunity to respond, a juror assignment e-mail will be posted.

I have read the information above and would like to become a Bethlehem Youth Court Jury Volunteer.
(Please print)

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ **SCHOOL/GRADE:** _____

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Please mail or email completed forms to Bethlehem Youth Court (contact information below).