



Lawyers Helping Our Students

by Joseph L. Chairez



Looking for an opportunity to serve your community? Check out the Orange County Bar Association's new community service program: Teenage Legal Survival Skills.

The Orange County Bar Association is launching a program aimed at teaching our 17 – 18 year old high school students how the law will affect them when they turn 18. While young people are quick to understand the benefits of being an adult, most are unaware of the many new responsibilities and legal consequences of reaching adulthood. This program, through its presenters and materials, will cover various aspects of a young person's life that will change with adulthood, such as entering into contracts, entering the work place, crimes and consequences, marriage, voting, financial responsibility and other issues. As lawyers, our Orange County Bar Association members serve as role models and credible sources for instructing students on these laws that now affect their daily lives.

To reach as many students as possible, the Orange County Bar Association is coordinating the Teenage Legal Survival Skills program with the Orange County Department of Education and other organizations. Through this collaboration with the Department of Education, we have signed up numerous schools to conduct this 45 minute educational program in a classroom setting. In addition, the Orange County Bar Association has partnered with the Orange County Constitutional Rights Foundation to participate in its Business Issue Conference and will be working with other community groups and organizations to put on additional programs and workshops.

Being a volunteer presenter could not be easier. The Orange County Bar Association has volunteer trainers who will teach volunteer presenters the material and how best to put on this short program. Our volunteer trainers include lawyers from many fields of practice including family law, business law, personal injury and public law. They also come from a variety of firms including solo-practices, small firms, mid-size firms, and large national law firms. Each of these volunteer trainers share a common goal: To train our volunteer presenters to be effective presenters of the materials to the students. In addition to training, each volunteer presenter will be given the publication "When You Become 18: A Survival Guide For Teenagers" to handout to the students. This publication contains detailed explanations of the laws that will be discussed as well as answers to all the questions raised in the presentation.

Helping our students is not a new concept for the Orange County Bar Association or its members. In 2003, Orange County Bar Association Past President Robert Gerard pioneered the Orange County Bar Association's Lawyers for Literacy program. This program successfully had numerous volunteer lawyers reading books to third graders throughout Orange County. I had the opportunity to participate in the program and speak with a number of the lawyers who volunteered. Each and every one said it was a

rewarding experience. Robert's devotion to this program, and his successful implementation of this unique teaching opportunity, are to be applauded.

As with all community service programs, all volunteers are to be commended for the giving of their time and effort. For the Lawyer for Literacy program, however, there was one volunteer who truly stood out, and that was Pearl Mann. Pearl, as many of you know, is a busy lawyer and leader in many bar related organizations, including having served as a Past President of Orange County Women Lawyers Association and California Women Lawyers. When the Orange County Bar Association began looking for volunteers for its Lawyers for Literacy program, Pearl was quick to sign up. Pearl, however, in her usual spirit of giving not only made the commitment to teach a class, but also went on to speak to five different classes. Needless to say, Pearl has signed up to serve as one of our volunteer trainers for the Teenage Legal Survival Skills program.

My hope for the program is that those of you who have been looking for a chance to participate will take up this opportunity and join us in helping prepare our high school students to become active and responsible citizens. For those interested in participating, please call the Orange County Bar Association at 949.440.6700, ext. 126 for more information.

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