



# **SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT**

## **FOCUS ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**A GUIDE TO LOCAL COURT PROGRAMS**



---



---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---



---

Introduction.....	<b>2</b>
Judge Murray	
Mission Statement.....	<b>3</b>
Programs.....	<b>4</b>
Alternative Dispute Resolution.....	<b>5</b>
Mediation Center	
Judicial Arbitration	
Bench-Bar Liaison Groups.....	<b>7</b>
Court Internet Home Page.....	<b>8</b>
Domestic Violence.....	<b>9</b>
Task Force	
Domestic Violence Court	
Family Law.....	<b>11</b>
Family Law Facilitator	
Pro Per Clinic	
Orientation	
Access to Visitation	
Orders after Hearing	
Youth Policy Council.....	<b>16</b>
Tentative Rulings.....	<b>17</b>
Drug Court.....	<b>18</b>
Adult	
Juvenile	
Mock Trial Competition.....	<b>20</b>
Community-Focused Court Planning.....	<b>21</b>
Court and Community Liaison and Leadership.....	<b>22</b>
Customer Service.....	<b>23</b>
Juror Appreciation.....	<b>24</b>
Speakers Bureau.....	<b>25</b>
Courtroom to Schoolroom.....	<b>26</b>
Classroom Speakers	
Courthouse Visits	
First Impressions	
Summer Youth Mentoring	
Interpreter Services.....	<b>28</b>
Publications.....	<b>29</b>
Pro Per Kits	
Instruction Sheets	
Resource and Referral Sheet	
Fee Schedule	
Community Focus Brochures	

---

---

# INTRODUCTION

---

---



Dear Member of Our Community,

On behalf of the 25 judges, 4 commissioners and referees, and 270 employees of the San Joaquin County Superior Court, welcome to your court.

This booklet is intended to inform readers about the various court programs your court offers the community. The publication of this booklet is part of a larger effort initiated by the governing body of California's courts, the California Judicial Council. Dubbed "community-focused court planning," this effort began in California in 1998, and was spearheaded by the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, Ronald George. The vision of Justice George is that each county court system in the state will enhance community access to the courts, do more in the way of outreach to the community, and plan court programs and operations with the desires of the community in mind.

While our local "community-focused planning" effort began in February of 1999, we began providing most of the outreach programs outlined in this booklet long before then. We are pleased to bring you two new programs initiated in 1999, our Jury Orientation program and our Courtroom to the Schoolroom program.

We invite you to read about all of our programs, and hope that you will take advantage of them. San Joaquin County Superior Court is your court, and we are here to serve you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. J. Murray, Jr.", written over a light blue horizontal line.

**WILLIAM J. MURRAY, JR.**  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Chair, Community Focused Planning Team



# **MISSION STATEMENT**

**T**he mission of the Superior Court is to dispense fair and impartial justice in an effective, efficient, and fiscally responsible method which is responsive to the needs of the public. The court provides judicial services for the public to assure:

- maximum access to the courts by the public
- quality of service that promotes confidence and generates support from inside and outside the justice system
- interpretation and enforcement of the law in a way that provides due process, fair treatment, and individual justice

# **PROGRAMS**

The following programs were generally developed as unmet needs became apparent. Impetus for change often came from within the court, but just as often constructive suggestions were generated from outside. Participation in the long range strategic planning process mandated by the Judicial Council has focused the court on the needs and concerns of the local community. All of the current programs outlined in this publication are intended to meet those needs. This planning process approach is ongoing and future adjustments will of necessity be made to enable the court to deliver on its mission statement.

Many programs cross agency boundaries and call for a collaborative approach to common issues and concerns. This can only be fostered by an open climate of communication and a continuing focus on improvement. The great challenge is to become more efficient in the use of resources while maintaining and even improving the delivery of services.

---

---

## **Alternative Dispute Resolution - Mediation Center**

---

---

**T**he courts entered into an agreement with the Mediation Center of San Joaquin County for the provision of a variety of dispute resolution services beginning February 1, 1994. The Mediation Center is a private non-profit agency formed by a group of community members to provide choices for people in dispute. Their purpose is to provide education and services to build the use of mediation as a peaceful way to resolve disputes.

The Mediation Center's Community Mediation Project utilizes a three hour long, three person panel process staffed by trained volunteer mediators. Their resolution rate has exceeded 80%. Additionally, they provide community training for mediators, community outreach to local service clubs and associations, and school based training to assist students and administrators in setting up campus mediation projects.

Specifically for the courts, the Mediation Center provides the Civil Harassment Court Project and the Small Claims Court Project. Both programs are designed to encourage parties to reach a mediated agreement before coming to court. The Civil Harassment Project is available once a week and the Small Claims Project meets three times a week at the courthouse. Both programs have a resolution rate of about 70%. This impressive result means seven out of ten cases brought to court on those two calendars are resolved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties without taking up valuable court time.

Plans for the future include two "set-aside" programs, one for landlord/tenant disputes and one for criminal diversion where the District Attorney and Public Defender agree that restitution or reconciliation is more valuable than prosecution.

The Mediation Center is also developing a program that will serve families who have disputes in areas such as; music, clothes, homework, friends, chores, respect and other family issues. This project will team a teen mediator and an adult mediator to provide service to parents and teens in dispute.



---

---

## **Alternative Dispute Resolution - Judicial Arbitration**

---

---

**T**he court has operated under the Judicial Arbitration Rules for Civil Cases found in the California Rules of Court, §1600, et. seq., since the early 1980s. Approximately 30% of all civil cases filed are referred to Judicial Arbitration at the time of status conference, which is held 150 days after the filing of the initial complaint. The cases are closely monitored by court staff so that they proceed through arbitration within the required legal time frames, thereby reducing delay. Early referral to Judicial Arbitration provides the litigants a more informal setting to discuss and disclose the issues of the case.

It is estimated that of the cases referred to Judicial Arbitration, 17% of them settle prior to hearing, 18% are dismissed prior to hearing, 9% proceed to court judgment pursuant to the arbitrator's award, and 50% request a trial de novo after hearing. Of the 50% that are set for trial, only about 5% actually end up being tried and the other 95% settle before trial.

---

---

## **Bench-Bar Liaison Groups**

---

---

**T**he legal community represents the largest consumer base of court services. A close working relationship between the bench and the bar fosters benefits to the public in general, and to litigants specifically, in the delivery of these court services. The San Joaquin County Bar Association has always been active in community and civic affairs and under the direction of successive bar association presidents has continued to work cooperatively with the courts on issues of mutual concern.

Judges and court administrators serve jointly with attorney representatives on a variety of committees to oversee the coordination of programs and services of both the court and the bar association. These groups meet regularly and are comprised of Judges and administrators with assigned responsibility for given areas and attorneys who practice in those areas. The committees are as follows:

- Court Assigned Counsel
- Peer Review Sub-Committee
- Juvenile Court
- Probate
- Unified Court Liaison
- Women Lawyers Section
- Family Law Section

In San Joaquin County, the bar association through its Lawyer Referral Service is the contract provider of indigent defense in criminal cases where the Public Defender declares a conflict. The committees that oversee this crucially important function serve as watchdogs over the quality and the public cost of such services. The courts have a vested interest in a system which delivers competent and cost effective services to indigent criminal defendants and these bench-bar liaison groups make that goal a reality in San Joaquin County.

As the court moved through the unification process pursuant to the passage of Proposition 220, these committees were invaluable for their input and suggestions. The result of that assistance was a relatively smooth transition through a major systemic change for the courts.

A long range planning goal is to expand the court-bar collaboration to include the local media. Regular bench-bar-media meetings will assist collaboration, communication, and public education efforts.

---

---

## **Court Internet Home Page**

---

---

**A**t the suggestion, and with the assistance of the Technology Committee of the San Joaquin County Bar Association, the Superior Court went online with the San Joaquin County Superior Court Web page in March 1997. The court web page, currently found at [www.stocktonet.com/courts](http://www.stocktonet.com/courts), is always “under construction” as with most web pages.

Currently, it has links to general information regarding judicial assignments, traffic, small claims, family law, jury service, and a court directory. The current Court Rules are online, and also available in a separate downloadable file, and the current fee schedule is accessible. There are six court departments that currently issue tentative rulings and all of those are on the web site, updated daily. The Community Focused Court Planning Team has a page with public access to the Long-Range Strategic Plan draft and the Public Report: 2000. Links to other web sites include governmental organizations and resources for legal forms, case law and statutes.

There is a feedback section and those messages come directly to a senior court administrator for review and action.

An updated site on the court’s own server is scheduled to be up by the end of 2000. It will include public access to civil court calendars, online traffic fine payment, and eventually, e-filing of court documents.

---

---

## **Domestic Violence - Task Force**

---

---

**T**he San Joaquin County Domestic Violence Task Forces was formed in October of 1994. Its members include representatives from the Courts, District Attorney, Probation, Law Enforcement, Health Care Providers, Service Providers, and the Women's Center. The overall objective of the Domestic Violence Task Force is to prevent and reduce the incidence of family violence in San Joaquin County by identifying and implementing appropriate strategies to combat such violence through education and a coordinated, unified, community response.

Very few crimes are as central to the destruction of the family as domestic violence. Indeed, research has shown that domestic violence is perpetuated from generation to generation. Batterers learn violent behavior from their parents and victims learn to accept such behaviors from their parents. Community collaboration is the key to success in reducing the problem of domestic violence. The entire community must respond to family violence as serious conduct. Education and early intervention is part of the coordinated strategy that will stop the violence before it can replicate itself in the lives of the children who witness violence, or worse, become victims themselves. The identification of resources available to victims, perpetrators and other community members as well as serious and consistent treatment of domestic violence cases in the justice system will save lives, break the generational cycle of violence and dramatically reduce the number of assaults, rapes, kidnaping, and murders that often result when violence is allowed to escalate without early intervention.

---

---

## **Domestic Violence - Domestic Violence Court**

---

---

The Superior Court has recognized the critical need of addressing the question of domestic violence in our community. The result of this concern was the formation of a dedicated Domestic Violence Court as of January 1, 1998. This specialized court provides a forum in which all participating agencies, including the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Adult Probation and victim advocates are able to effectively address this serious crime and to provide services at the earliest point of intervention.

Specially trained staff, including attorneys in both the District Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit and the Public Defender's Office handle criminal cases. Further, probation officers and victim advocates also participate and are able to address the court and provide valuable information without unnecessary delays. Outreach services are available for victims, children, and offenders, and referrals are available throughout the court process.

This court has the advantage of expediently addressing new cases and also receiving up to date information on existing cases where probation has been granted. Offenders who violate misdemeanor or felony domestic violence probation terms are also handled in this court. This eliminates the need for future court appearances in different courts and encourages a consistent approach to offenders. It is anticipated that the Domestic Violence Court will be expanding in the future to include handling of all domestic violence preliminary examinations and felony arraignments.

This consolidation of resources will help promote consistency in court orders and sentencing and will offer an immediate forum for open and effective discussion of domestic violence issues. As of July, 2000, the Domestic Violence Court has handled over 3,700 misdemeanor domestic violence cases and now averages about 175 new cases per month based on the combined efforts of the involved agencies and departments.

---

---

## **Family Law - Facilitator**

---

---

**T**he Family Law Facilitator was established statewide pursuant to statute, effective January 1, 1997. Each county is authorized to have a Facilitator, who is charged primarily with assisting pro per litigants with their paperwork in the area of family law. The statute, found in Family Code Sections 10000, et. seq., authorizes the Facilitator to provide services in the specific areas of child support, spousal support, and health insurance in an action for dissolution, nullity, legal separation, exclusive child custody or paternity. San Joaquin County has extended the services to include modification of child custody and support, domestic violence, civil harassment, and guardianships. The philosophy is to make our courts user-friendly to the unrepresented so that they have greater access to the judicial process. A majority of the time is spent on Family Support Division matters, either by way of responding to actions to establish parental relationships and support or modification of child support in District Attorney actions.

Attorney Herb Horstmann is the current Family Law Facilitator. He has been in that position since September 1, 1997. He is available on a daily basis from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Room 359, which is located on the third floor of the Courthouse. In addition to supervising the Pro Per Clinic, he is available for individual appointments to assist people.

---

---

## **Family Law - Pro Per Clinic**

---

---

To assist litigants who represent themselves, a Pro Per Clinic is operated daily from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Room 355, located on the third floor of the Courthouse in Stockton. There are three part-time employees who staff the Clinic daily, in addition to volunteers who donate time to the program. The Pro Per Clinic is available to help people with their paperwork and run schedules from the computer support program Dissomaster. Neither the Family Law Facilitator nor the staff give legal advice and they do not represent the litigants in court. The staff includes two law students from Humphrey's Law School and one paralegal. Volunteers come from the law school or the community.

During calendar year 1999, both the Facilitator and the Clinic met with and gave assistance to approximately 6,500 people who would otherwise not have had the necessary assistance to bring their matter to court. In addition, an average of 325 phone calls per month were answered. Statistics also show that during the same period of time, 75% of all new filings for dissolution, annulment and legal separation were filed by people representing themselves. About 99% of the domestic violence restraining order petitions were filed by pro pers.

The response to the program has been extremely positive. Court staff constantly receive thanks from people who are helped. The program eases the court calendars, since the necessity for continuances due to improper filings is limited, and the clerical staff no longer must continually advise people to return and refile documents correctly.

---

---

## **Family Law - Orientation**

---

---

**E**very First and Third Wednesday at 3:30p.m., the Family Court mediators conduct a one hour session for those coming to court for child custody or visitation issues. All parties should attend one orientation session before their first court appearance.

The session consists of a video presentation, handouts, and a question and answer period with the Family Court mediators, and no appointment is necessary. The orientation is designed to help people understand what will happen in family court. Attending will help minimize nervousness about the court process and foster better preparation.

---

---

## **Family Law - Access to Visitation**

---

---

**T**he San Joaquin Access to Visitation Program provides supervised visitation at the Walter Britten Visitation Center, 500 W. Hospital Road, French Camp, or monitored visitation at the Child Abuse Prevention Council, 604 E. Acacia, Stockton, for non-custodial parents and their children. This program is sponsored by the Superior Court and funded by the Judicial Council of California. The main goal is to provide visitations in the best interests of the child, specifically, the health, safety, and welfare of the child. Supervised and monitored visitation between parent and children may be ordered by the court where it is determined that a safe environment needs to be provided.

Visitation can be scheduled for evenings or weekends to accommodate parental work schedules. Visiting sites are child-friendly rooms or outdoor areas that have toys, books, games or play equipment available. Snacks are served or the visiting parent may provide a snack or meal for the child. Special arrangements can be made for a birthday celebration or a pet visit.

Providers are neutral third parties who monitor the visitations and assure compliance with the court-ordered terms. This interagency cooperative effort seeks to encourage frequent and continuing contact between parent and child without compromising the safety and welfare of that child.

---

---

## **Family Law - Orders after Hearing**

---

---

In 1996, after looking at a similar program in Stanislaus County, the Family Law court began preparing Orders After Hearing in custody cases involving two pro per litigants and CLETS restraining orders for all cases. Many pro per litigants were having difficulty preparing a properly worded order, necessitating multiple trips to and from the Clerk's Office and the judge before orders were signed, filed and in place. This delay caused frustration and often prevented needed protection and direction for children and parents. Law enforcement, called to mediate these disputes, had difficulty determining which, if any, court order was current.

To alleviate these difficulties, the Superior Court dedicated additional clerical staff and a laser printer to the courtroom to prepare and process the formal written order as soon after the hearing as possible. The order is generally available to the parties within one hour of having been made from the bench. This has greatly reduced the need for multiple return trips to the courthouse by pro per parties and has made law enforcement's difficult task much easier.

Because of this success, the program was expanded to include cases involving attorneys as well. The clerks now prepare stipulated custody orders for attorneys. A form is provided to attorneys which sets forth all of the provisions of the stipulation which the clerk then uses to prepare the order. The order is usually ready within an hour.

---

---

## **Youth Policy Council**

---

---

The Youth Policy Council was established to promote and facilitate inter-departmental cooperation and communication so that the participating agencies maximize delivery of services to youth and their families in an efficient and effective manner. They develop and present policy and issue statements on needs of at-risk children and their families.

The Youth Policy Council is chaired by the Juvenile Justice System Coordinator and composed of the heads of the county offices of Probation, Human Services, Mental Health, Superintendent of Education, County Administrator, Family Law Commissioner, and the Presiding Juvenile Court Judge. This body gives direction and establishes policy for SMART, the Special Multi-discipline Assessment and Referral Team, which is the staff arm of this inter-departmental program.

SMART was not created to solve routine departmental case problems. Referrals generally are made for children with complex personal, family or social problems, or who are involved with several service or enforcement agencies. The typical referral involves multiple problems; school, family, peer, social, emotional, behavioral and legal problems where the solution is beyond the scope of a single agency and requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

There is a need to identify children and families who are in danger of becoming the responsibility of public agencies. Resources should be prioritized to provide the necessary services to those at risk for out of home placement. The underlying principles for structuring intervention and services for these children and families with multi-dimensional problems are to protect the child and the community, provide for the least restrictive environment that appropriately addresses the needs, encourage the development and use of public/private partnerships to enhance services to children, and assure the delivery of quality services by establishing common measures of performance outcome.

---

---

## **Tentative Rulings**

---

---

**C**urrently, six Superior Court departments issue tentative rulings on civil law and motion matters, including probate and family law. In these matters the court has already received written arguments and authority for the position of each party. Court appearances simply to hear the ruling of the judge, especially in routine matters, is not the best use of time for the court, the attorneys, or the parties. Unnecessary expense is avoided and convenience to the parties is achieved by having the court announce, one day in advance, a tentative decision on the matter.

The tentative decisions of each of the six Superior Court departments are available after 1:00pm the day before the hearing by a recorded phone message on a dedicated telephone line and on the Court Internet Web Page. If the tentative ruling is satisfactory, the parties need not appear at the scheduled time, and the tentative ruling will become final. Any party not satisfied with the tentative ruling may choose to appear and argue the matter orally, after notice to the other side.

Attorneys may also choose to utilize the services of "court call" in lieu of a personal appearance. This third party supplied procedure is in place for the four Civil Law and Motion departments. It allows telephone conferencing between the attorneys and the court for motion argument, scheduling and other issues, without the necessity of traveling to court.

---

---

## **Drug Court - Adult**

---

---

The Drug Court concept, which originated in Florida about ten years ago and has rapidly been adopted nationwide with a high degree of success, started in San Joaquin County in 1995 with similar results. The program is successful because it employs a variety of methods used to intervene in the participant's addiction, from incentives for progress in the program to sanctions for violations of the Drug Court contract which participants sign upon entering the program.

Participants are intensely monitored by the Court and external program case workers. Drug Court participants are randomly and frequently tested for drugs to assure compliance with program standards. In the event of a relapse, intensive counseling plus a variety of sanctions may result, from extension of the participant's term in the program to termination and imposition of the original sentence.

Successful graduates of the one year program benefit from permanently stayed sentences and fines. As of May 2000, Drug Court has had 282 graduates, has saved bed days in County Jail totaling 134 years and 74 years of bed days in State Prison, and has contributed to the birth of 14 drug-free babies. Currently, there is approximately a 10% recidivism rate, far better than the 70% rate experienced by more traditional methods in the Criminal Justice system. Approximately 75% of graduates are employed or are full-time students. Many graduates have gone on to live successful and productive lives, obtaining driver's licenses and jobs for the first time in years.

Drug Court relies on the support and involvement of the community and is funded primarily through grants and community matching funds. Local law enforcement and justice system officials, health and treatment providers, businesses, and Kaiser Permanente are solidly behind this effective, intensified program of drug intervention.

## **Drug Court - Juvenile**

The Juvenile Court began a Drug Court program patterned after the successful program in adult Drug Court, but specifically designed for the needs of minors. KADAP, or Kid's Alcohol Drug Alternative Program, is the treatment component of the Juvenile Drug Court and provides punishment and treatment alternatives to incarceration or a residential program.

KADAP is a comprehensive client centered out-patient program utilizing the combined resources and expertise of the Juvenile Probation Department, Office of Substance Abuse, Office of Education, Pacific Complementary Medicine Center, and the Juvenile Court. KADAP provides the Juvenile Drug Court with a treatment component and a viable and meaningful alternative to detention through intensive probation supervision of juvenile substance abuse offenders, intensive substance abuse counseling in a controlled setting, and reinforced remedial education. The primary focus of KADAP is treatment and recovery, accountability, and responsibility to others.

The specific treatment components of KADAP are:

- Reinforced remedial education
- Drug and alcohol counseling
- Acupuncture
- Drug testing
- Electronic monitoring
- Weekly Juvenile Drug Court appearances
- 12 step or other self-help meetings
- Daily contact with the probation officer
- Community service
- Journaling

---

---

## **Mock Trial Competition**

---

---

**E**very year since 1982, on a Saturday in February, the San Joaquin County Bar Association, the County Office of Education, and the Superior Court sponsor a mock trial competition for participating area high school students. Teams are chosen by their respective schools and a common fact pattern for the mock trial is developed by the Constitutional Rights Foundation. Judges volunteer and preside in actual courtrooms where the case is presented by the student teams. The presentations are scored by local attorneys. The winning team earns the right to represent San Joaquin County in the California State Mock Trial Championships held in March.

This experience helps students to understand the link between our constitution, courts, and the legal system. It provides youth with an opportunity for interaction with positive adult role models in the legal community.

---

---

## **Community-Focused Court Planning**

---

---

**T**he court has a permanent court-community advisory board called the Community-Focused Planning Team. This group is made up of members of the community, judges and commissioners, and court administrative staff. It is organized into three committees, the Community Liaison Subcommittee, the Publications Committee, and the Youth and Education Committee. The complete Planning Team meets quarterly.

The mission of the Community-Focused Planning Team is to:

- Serve as a court and community advisory body for the Superior Court.
- Provide community input for the evaluation and/or implementation for the planning goals and strategies outlined in the Superior Court's Long-Range Strategic Plan.
- Assist the Superior Court in its community-related programs.

---

---

## **Court and Community Leadership and Liaison**

---

---

**T**he Court and Community Leadership and Liaison Program establishes a bridge between the Court and various ethnic and immigrant communities as well as the disabled community in San Joaquin County. The program is designed to provide an effective means of communication between the Courts and people from these communities.

The program has three components. First, participants in the program attend an “Academy” which provides them with information covering general topics related to the justice system and topics specific to our local justice system. Second, individuals who “graduate” from the Academy serve a liaison function with their communities. They are available to answer questions people in their community may have concerning the justice system and/or to contact the person within the system who might be able to answer the question. Third, participants serve as representatives for their communities and meet with the courts on a regular basis to discuss court-related problems or concerns in their communities.

---

---

## **Customer Service**

---

---

In January 1999, the Court instituted a customer service comment protocol. The intention was to give customers an opportunity for input as to the level and quality of service they received from the court, anonymously if desired. All branches of the court have Customer Comment Cards, in English and Spanish, available in the public areas for customer use and input. The cards go into a locked box which is emptied daily by a court manager and reviewed for critical issues that may need immediate attention. Managers then meet weekly with staff to review and take action on the comments. Any complaints are investigated by supervisory staff and a response made to the complaining party within 30 days. Positive comments regarding specific employees are shared with the employee and placed in their personnel file.

---

---

## **Juror Appreciation**

---

---

**D**uring the week in May designated as Juror Appreciation Week, the court makes a special effort to acknowledge the critically important community service rendered by citizens as they perform their civic duty as jurors. During this week the jurors are welcomed each day by one or more judges who will participate in the orientation process, discuss jury selection procedures, and answer questions jurors may have before they are sent to a courtroom.

Complimentary fresh coffee and pastries are provided to all jurors during the entire week. The County Board of Supervisors issues a proclamation honoring jurors and it will be read to the jurors during their orientation and posted in the Jury Assembly room. Jurors will also receive a commemorative pen.

---

---

## **Speakers Bureau**

---

---

**T**he Superior Court is in a unique position to serve the community with a variety of informed experts in diverse areas. From a general explanation of jury service to the technical details of unreasonable search and seizure, from small claims court procedures to the intricacies of probate, the court can supply a speaker to service clubs or community groups on nearly any court-related topic of interest. This process provides timely and relevant information on a number of subjects to community members and acquaints citizens with their elected and appointed officials.

---

---

## **Courtroom To School room**

---

---

**A**s part of the courts's community-focused planning, it was decided that a primary focus of public outreach efforts should be the youth of the community. While the court must continue to educate the adult public about the courts, youth represent the citizens of tomorrow. The goal is to provide youth with a positive perspective of the justice system, teach them about their rights and responsibilities under the law, educate them about the concept of non-violent dispute resolution, and open their eyes to possible careers in the justice system. As a byproduct, the media coverage of those efforts should serve to enhance the confidence the public has in its local court system.

The Youth and Education Subcommittee of the Community-Focused Planning Team has developed four programs under an umbrella called "Courtroom to Schoolroom." The four programs are 1) *Classroom Speaker Program* 2) *Courthouse Tours* 3) *First Impressions* and 4) *Summer Youth Mentoring Program*.

### ***Classroom Speaker Program***

Upon request, judicial officers go into schools to accurately educate youth about the judicial system and to give them positive impressions of the justice system and the judiciary. Four classroom presentations designed to achieve these goals and meet the needs of students were developed: 1) *The Courts as the Third Branch of Government and the Importance of Jury Service* 2) *Common Issues for Youthful Drivers, Traffic Laws and Penalties* 3) *Juvenile Law and You* and 4) *Family Law and You*. A pre-visit pamphlet is available for teachers and administrators and materials are provided during the presentations. Judicial officers are also available to participate in Career Days as requested, where similar subjects and materials are discussed.

### ***Courthouse Tours***

With a desire to increase the number of field trips to the courthouse, the court provides a more formal program called Courthouse Tours. Each tour includes a presentation to the students by a Judge and courtroom staff. Attorneys in the District Attorney's Office and from the defense bar may be available for some tours to provide information to the students. Students learn the roles of the judge, attorneys, clerk, bailiff, and court reporter. In addition to providing students basic information about the justice system, it is hoped that students will be exposed to career opportunities many of them had not considered before.

While transportation costs and logistics can present an impediment for some

schools, the San Joaquin County Bar Foundation has generously donated funds for field trip transportation costs. With these funds, more schools can take advantage of this program. Working with the school districts, additional grant money may be available for more field trips.

### ***First Impressions***

Modeled after the Los Angeles Municipal Court's award winning program of the same name, efforts are focused primarily on students who are from neighborhoods in Stockton where negative impressions about the justice system are often developed early in life. The goals are to give these students access to a quality orientation about the justice system, to develop positive impressions about that system, and provide them with an understanding of nonviolent dispute resolution.

A team consisting of a judge, prosecutor and defense attorney are assigned to each participating 5<sup>th</sup> grade class. The team teaches one class session per week for five to seven weeks. These class sessions involve age and grade level appropriate lessons designed to provide the students with basic understanding about the three branches of government, their rights under the Fifth and Sixth Amendments, and the workings of the justice system. The highlight of the program is a mock trial done by each class in a courtroom at the Superior Court. The trial involves the trial of the Big Bad Wolf for the untimely demise of two of the three Pig Brothers. After their mock trial, the students are treated to refreshments and provided with a certificate of appreciation signed by the justice system team.

### ***Summer Youth Mentoring***

This program is for students who are high school juniors and seniors and involves a four-week program during the summer. Monday through Friday, these students spend the first half of the day with their mentor. The program is designed to provide the students with insight into the justice system and career mentoring. Judges, court reporters, bailiffs and other court staff provide mentoring in the courts. Additionally, students may be placed in the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, or in the offices of private attorneys. Participating students may be paid through the Private Industry Council, or through a grant from the Partnership For Tomorrow, a program sponsored by the County Office of Education.

Several high schools in San Joaquin County require students to complete a senior project involving a service learning component as a prerequisite to graduation. The Summer Youth Mentoring program is also open for this purpose.

---

---

## **Interpreter Services**

---

---

**A**s mandated by law, the court must provide interpreter services for defendants in all criminal matters. There are sufficient interpreters available for the most common minority languages, but there are many languages reflecting our diversity that have no readily available interpreter pool.

The court contracts with Language Line Services to provide interpreter services in the courtroom by speakerphone. This service provides interpreters for more than 140 additional languages.

# **PUBLICATIONS**

**T**he court produces a number of publications designed to assist parties, particularly those who are representing themselves, in navigating the forms and procedures needed for court. Pro Per kits in the following areas contain instructions and the current forms necessary for proceeding in court:

- Child Custody
- Child and Spousal Support
- Paternity
- Adoption
- Domestic Violence Restraining Orders
- Civil Harassments Restraining Orders
- Probate
- Guardianship
- Conservatorship
- Small Claims
- Change of Name
- Emancipation

The court produces a series of Instruction Sheets for these additional areas and proceedings:

- Fee Waiver
- Dissolution
- Appeals
- Passports

The court also produces a variety of brochures and pamphlets describing and explaining Community Focus programs and planning efforts:

- Jury Information
- Jury Information for Employers
- Courtroom to Schoolroom
- Pulse of the Community
- Long-Range Strategic Plan Summary

Other materials include agency resource referral sheets, the current fee schedule, and brochures describing individual programs.