

Metro East Students Participate In Mock Trial at Southern Illinois Federal Courthouse In East St. Louis

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ST. LOUIS - A dozen students from the Metro East area convened at the Southern Illinois District Federal Courthouse in East St. Louis on April 24 to participate in a

mock trial. Students were given a fictional case and worked individually and in groups to compile evidence and exhibits, develop eyewitness questions and answers, and formulate both direct and cross-examination questions.

The trial was divided into two rounds in which each team of six had the opportunity to participate in one round as defense and in the other round as prosecution. They presented their case for a team of volunteer jurors and the Honorable Judge David Dugan presided over the case, guiding the students through the trial process. Program director, Sarah Jane Drury, guided the students for months in preparation for the mock trial.

After the mock trial, a group of U.S. Marshals graciously gave a presentation to the students detailing their role in federal law enforcement, allowing students to tour through a portion of the courthouse and try on their tactical gear.

Participant Maelyn Evans, of Trenton, had this to say about her experience:

‘Mock trial was very enjoyable and I learned so much that I didn’t know before and now appreciate about our judicial system. Our team had to do an incredible amount of combing through our materials to find points we would use to strengthen our side. I am very proud of my team and how we produced a valid case for the trial. There were some times when we didn’t know what we were doing at all, and certain parts of the case that had us all befuddled, but in the end we had a proficient hold on what goes on in actual courtrooms. Whenever I hear about trials and court cases going on in our country and around the world, I know the terms attorneys use, the set-up of the trial, and how it is arranged to work. I realize how important each position in the court is and how everyone works together to give the American people fair trials, as indicated in the Constitution. Mock trial made me realize how important the judicial system is and how it protects our country with a fair legal system.’

The students are members of a Classical Conversations community that meets in Maryville at Copper Creek Christian Church. Classical Conversations has communities all throughout the United States and over 50 countries in the world, offering programs for K-12 ages. Students are trained using the classical method, and there are currently campuses located in Belleville, Maryville and Greenville. For further information or for enrollment for the 22-23 academic year, please contact Elisa Strange, local support representative, at 618-383-6405.