

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VOLUNTEER DOCENTS HONORED FOR WORK WITH MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT LEARNING CENTER

Center seeks more volunteers to serve as “ambassadors for judicial branch”; applications accepted now for next docent training in September

LANSING, MI, July 21, 2010 – Volunteers who gave more than 700 hours of their time to the [Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center](#) were recently honored by the Court as “ambassadors for the judicial branch.”

The volunteer docents guide school groups and other visitors through the 3,800 square foot education center, located on the first floor of the [Michigan Hall of Justice](#). Volunteers’ responsibilities included demonstrating [interactive computer games](#) and other hands-on activities at the center, including a virtual courtroom. Other duties included working behind the scenes on workshops and special programs.

At a recent volunteer recognition event, Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly, Justice Elizabeth A. Weaver, and Justice Stephen J. Markman represented the entire Court in thanking the docents for helping to educate the public about Michigan’s justice system. In expressing the Court’s appreciation, Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly noted, “You have been outstanding ambassadors for the judicial branch of government, helping young visitors and their parents and teachers understand how Michigan courts function.”

First-year volunteers included Patricia Babcock of Lansing, Carl Gallagher of Dimondale, Sara Kanya of Holt, Kathy Mascoli of Mason, Greg Pollack of Lansing, Frank Sydnor of Lansing, and Jane Wilensky of Okemos. Also commended for leadership and continued service were returning volunteers Jackie Adams of Charlotte, Ilena Alvarez of Lansing, Elizabeth Ayoub of St. Johns, Al Chapman of Lansing, Candy Chatfield of Lansing, Jacob Drenovsky and Veronica Drenovsky of Durand, Cassandra Heos of East Lansing, Mary Pat Jaracz of Okemos, Betty Krohngold of East Lansing, Elizabeth Mead of Birmingham, Tom Ryan of Bath, and Rose Wright of Haslett.

Learning Center Coordinator Rachael Drenovsky said that the center relies on its volunteer docents. She encouraged new volunteers to share their time and expertise with tour groups, stressing that docents do not need a background in education, law, or government. “That kind of experience is helpful but certainly not necessary,” Drenovsky said. “What’s essential is having an interest in the law and a passion for sharing knowledge and enthusiasm with others.” Volunteers attend a series of three-hour orientation sessions and commit to a minimum of eight hours per month. Some positions have additional time and training commitments.

The next series of volunteer orientation sessions will be offered on five consecutive Thursdays, 9 a.m. to noon, starting September 30. Classes will include information about the Michigan judicial system, the Learning Center exhibits, and tips for giving great tours. Volunteers will need to attend all five training sessions. Volunteer applications are due by September 20. Visit the Learning Center web site at <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/plc/volunteer.htm> or call (517) 373-5027 for an application. Interviews and background checks will be required for all applicants.

The Learning Center is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tours last one hour and are available on a walk-in basis, although groups of 10 or more are asked to schedule tours in advance by calling (517) 373-7171 or e-mailing DrenovskyR@courts.mi.gov. An online form for school tours is available at <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/plc/misc/SchoolTourRequest.pdf>.

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