

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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IT'S A NEW SCHOOL YEAR! MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT LEARNING CENTER WELCOMES STUDENTS, SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

LANSING, MI, September 4, 2012 – As a new school year begins, the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center is gearing up to welcome students and others who make the Learning Center part of their civic education.

Now going into its 10th year, the Learning Center conducted 363 tours for over 11,000 visitors during the 2011-2012 school year. Rachael Drenovsky, the Learning Center's coordinator, said she expects at least that many visitors in the 2012-2013 academic year.

Visitors are often surprised by how much the Learning Center has to offer, Drenovsky said. "I think a lot of people come here expecting very little, and are surprised to find out how much we offer," she said. "They're amazed by our interactive exhibits. This is an immersive learning experience in which a visitor is a participant, not just a viewer."

Exhibits include a mock courtroom where visitors role-play the parts of a judge, attorneys, jurors, and witnesses. Visitors can test their knowledge by playing "What Every Juror Should Know" and put themselves in the shoes of a drunk driver with the "Drinking and Driving: Know the Consequences" exhibit. Online resources include games, lesson plans, research resources, and a free newsletter for educators, *Justitia*.

The 3,800-square-foot Learning Center is staffed mainly by volunteers, who lead tours and work on special programs. Drenovsky stressed that volunteers do not need a background in education, law, or government. "That kind of experience is helpful but not necessary," she said. "What's essential is having a interest in the law and a passion for sharing learning with others."

Volunteers attend a series of three-hour orientation sessions and commit to a minimum of eight hours per month. Some volunteer positions have additional time and training commitments. More information is available at www.courts.mi.gov/plc/, or call 517-373-5027 for a volunteer application. Interviews and background checks are required for all applicants.

The Learning Center, located on the first floor of the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing, is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tours are available on a walk-in basis, but reservations are encouraged, especially for groups of 10 or more. To schedule a tour, call 517-373-7171 or e-mail DrenovskyR@courts.mi.gov.

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