

Court, Legal Aid immerse students in legal profession



Community Legal Aid's Summer Associate Program is designed to expose law students to the real-world experiences of the legal profession, including the dynamics inside the courtroom.

Students were invited by the Honorable Cynthia Westcott Rice, Trumbull County Common Pleas Court Judge, to observe a felony child rape trial on June 21st and 22nd. Students returned to Judge Rice's court on June 26th to attend criminal arraignments and hear from other court personnel.

Prosecutor Chuck Morrow taught students about the grand jury process; Magistrate Patrick McCarthy talked about the civil protection order process; and Judge Sean O'Brien shared his view from the bench. Judge Samuel Bluedorn provided an overview of the domestic relations and juvenile courts and magistrates Ashleigh Musick and Jami Bishop shared practice tips.

Rachel Nader, advocacy director for Community Legal Aid, explained the value of partnering with courts to support the professional development of students.

“By providing an in-depth look into the professional life of an attorney, students broaden their understanding of what to expect when moving from the classroom to the courtroom,” Nader shared.

Students noted the value of the immersive experience with the court.

“The court field trips have been eye-opening. I have a newfound interest in litigation and plan to explore that path in my second year of law school,” shared Tatyana Webler, a student at the University of Akron School of Law.

“The Trumbull County Court visit was one of the most welcoming experiences! The court allowed us to see a multitude of proceedings and was very open with any questions we had,” shared Kayleigh Long, a student at Capital University Law School.

Long added that she wished all law students had similar exposure to courtroom dynamics.

Students in the 12-week program also gain experience drafting pleadings, interviewing clients, analyzing evidence, researching case law, and may assist with actual court hearings.

More information about CLA’s student programs can be found at www.communitylegalaid.org/students.

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