

*The Roanoke Youth Court Advisory Council,
Valley Character and the faculty and students of
Patrick Henry and William Fleming wish to
express their sincere appreciation to
the attorneys who provide their time and
mentorship to Virginia's first youth courts:*

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David Williamson • Christine Winder

*If you are interested in volunteering,
talk to Doug Densmore, Al McLean or
one of these people.*

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Trustworthiness:
Being honest. Standing
up for your friends.
Doing the right thing.



Respect:
Respecting others and
using good manners.



Youth Court

The Youth Court is a school-based and operated activity where the defendant, court officers and jury are all under 19 years of age. It is a real hearing where student peers listen to actual disciplinary cases and decide sanctions.

The Youth Court at Patrick Henry High School in Roanoke was the first such court in Virginia. It was a vision of Valley Character's Legal Committee and developed with the Roanoke City School system, a distinguished group of educators, law enforcement officials, attorneys, juvenile judges, juvenile probation and parole specialists, civic leaders and students, many of whom were already associated with Valley Character. The program has been such a success that it is being implemented this year at William Fleming High School.

With more than 900 courts in 45 states, Youth Courts present an alternative to suspension or other disciplinary sanctions by allowing student offenders the opportunity to present their case to a group of their peers for resolution. These programs simultaneously offer education, training and "hands on" experience in the legal system.

Youth Court defendants are offered a choice between suspension and a trial before their peers. They must agree to complete the sanction handed down by the court. Cases are heard on incidents ranging from class disruption to fighting. Sanctions include community service, counseling, contracts and apologies. In addition, each defendant must agree to subsequently go through Youth Court juror training and sit on a jury panel. Seeing the situation from the other side has become an effective tool for youth to see the impact of their actions on others.

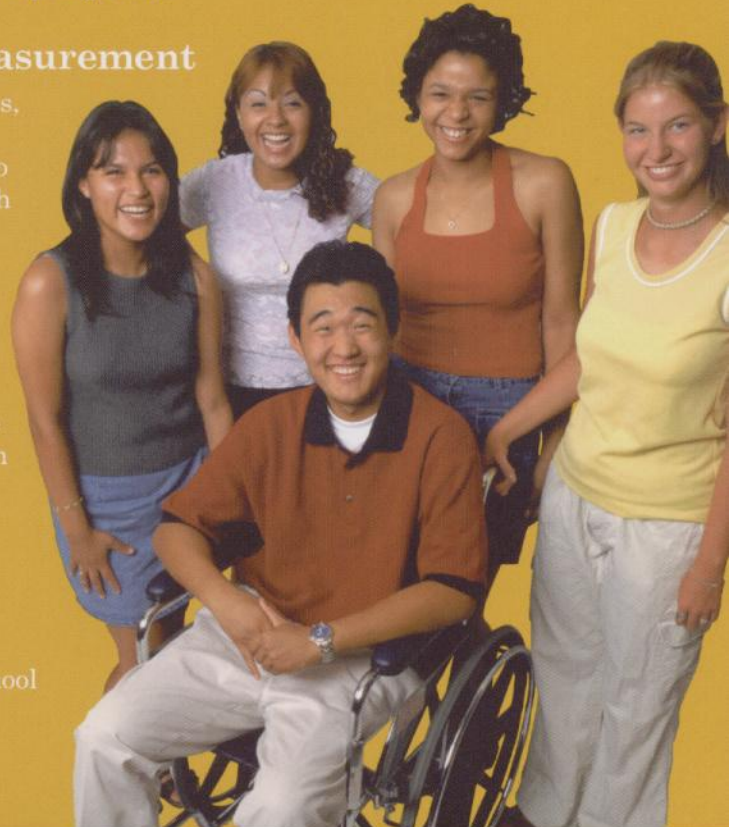
In May 2004, Robert Crouch, Virginia Assistant Secretary of Public Safety, personally attended a court session. He praised the participants and stated that the Patrick Henry Youth Court would be the model for the rest of the state. That kind of praise and affirmation will ensure the growth of Youth Court.

As of the end of 2004, Youth Court has trained approximately 85 students to hear cases at Patrick Henry High School. Students have heard around 55 cases so far. William Fleming High School has trained 90 student jurors who will start to hear cases in spring 2005.

Youth Court Measurement

Over the next three years, goals are to:

- 1) Train 200 students to become jurors at each school
- 2) Cut suspension days by 40%
- 3) Track follow-up behaviors of defendants and attempt to formulate a correlation between Youth Court intervention and recidivism.
- 4) Develop a turn-key program that can be duplicated in other communities and school districts.



visit valleycharacter.org for more information