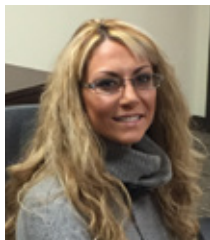


MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Court Visitation Program

Carmina Tessitore, The Law Offices of Carmina Tessitore, Shelton

It was in upstate New York while a student at Sage College working with juveniles that sparked Carmina Tessitore's interest in legal work, and continued at Albany School of Law. In the courts she became more fascinated with the process and experience of small claims and alternative dispute resolution. After deciding to return to Connecticut, and then being admitted to the Connecticut Bar in 2008, her involvement in the CBA began first in the Young Lawyers Section then as a member of the Alternative Dispute Resolution, Small Firm Practice Management, and Family Law Sections. Last year she served as chair of the Women in the Law Section.

Attorney Tessitore spends most of her practice with family law issues. Through serving as an adjunct professor at Quinnipiac Law and working with children in family practice, she became interested in the CBA's Court Visitation Program, in which she started volunteering in 2013. This program continues to open her eyes to working with juveniles and their experience in the court system, and how the program can offer options to kids and make a difference through the tour.

The Court Visitation Program provides high school students with a backstage view of how the court system works. Each

geographical area (GA) has a court visitation volunteer attorney who receives notice that a school is interested in a tour. That volunteer then contacts the school and coordinates a date with both the school and the court. The volunteer attorney meets the school at the court, sometimes with additional volunteer attorneys, and they start their 2-3 hour tour.

Attorney Tessitore works with both GA 1 (Stamford) and GA 20 (Norwalk). She schedules tours for the students to experience how court works by sitting in a Q&A with a judge, prosecutor, and public defender to talk about how they got involved in their professions and what it entails. In some courts, the marshals share their experiences and occupation. They also talk about why they have chosen this career, and explain that the court is not like TV. The students ask about murder cases, domestic violence, drug cases, favorite cases, and disappointments. The students then sit quietly through arraignments, and sometimes criminal cases, to finish their tour.

Giving the tours is a reminder of why Attorney Tessitore chose her profession. The tours give other options to the students and shows them how they can make a difference. Almost all the students state that they are not interested in a legal career. However, the tour brings the experience to a human level and the potential professions they could choose.

The Court Visitation program is co-sponsored by the Connecticut Bar Association, the Connecticut Judicial Branch, and the Connecticut Judges Association. **CL**

Additional volunteer attorneys are always helpful to assist in the tours or to visit classrooms of the participating schools throughout the state. Similarly, if you identify a school that might be interested in a court visitation, contact Bill Chapman at bchapman@ctbar.org or (860)612-2004.

Thank You to Participants of the Law Advisory and Civics Education Program

The CBA and its Civics Education Committee gratefully acknowledges the following lawyers and judges who participated in the Law Advisory and Civics Education Program 2015-2016.

These volunteers met weekly with groups of Middle School students across the state, exposing them to topics, including The



Judge Kenneth Shluger and Rep. Ernie Hewitt at the State Capitol with students from Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in New London.

Declaration of Independence, The Revolutionary War, The Constitution, The Bill of Rights, Habeas Corpus, civics, the presidential election, and the court system itself.

For most of the kids, the highlight of the program was the courthouse visit where they interacted with court personnel, observed real cases, and then performed their mock trial in a courtroom. Volunteers included:

Barbara Aaron	Ralph Monaco	Allenston Sheridan
Dr. Alison Burdick	Paige Quilliam	Judge Kenneth Shluger
Michael Cartier	Robert Tukey	Robert Simpson
Judge Leo Diana	Erica Rodriguez	Kelly Therrien
Kevin Emerson	Kraig Sanquedolce	Judge Dawne Westbrook
Brette Fitton	Sarah Capalbo	Kevin Wickless
Karen Gersten	Saunders	
Kristi Hanney	Lindsay	
Jonathon Lane	Savona-Donka	

If you would like to learn more about getting involved in the program this year, please contact Judge Kenneth Shluger at kenneth.shluger@jud.ct.gov. **CL**