



SPOTLIGHT ON THE COURT VISITATION PROGRAM



Students from Enfield High School with educator Colene Ceniglio enjoy a court visit to Rockville Courthouse in October, 2023.

“It was truly inspiring to hear about all the jobs involved in the court. Thank you for all the passionate answers to our questions.” These were the words of one Tolland High School student after their class visited the Rockville Geographical Area Court as part of the Court Visitation Program earlier this year. The Court Visitation Program is a partnership between the Connecticut Bar Association and Connecticut Judicial Branch. Through the program, middle school and high school educators can give their class the opportunity to have a field trip to a local criminal court.

During a typical court visit, students have a chance to meet and talk with a judge, prosecutor, public defender, and/or court personnel. In addition, they observe criminal proceedings in court and

receive a tour of the courthouse. These visits help the next generation develop an interest and understanding in justice and the legal profession. The students are accompanied on their trip by an attorney volunteer from the CBA. This year, 28 CBA attorneys volunteered to help arrange court visits and accompany students. Those volunteers worked tirelessly to coordinate logistics, line up an exciting array of speakers, and make the court visits a memorable experience. On the judicial side, Judge Barry Armata leads the Judicial Branch’s efforts, and countless judges, court clerks, and court personnel from the state’s 18 Geographical Area Courts gave their time and dedication to the program.

Since the inception of the Court Visitation Program in 1980, over 100,000

students from public and private middle schools and high schools throughout the state have participated in the program. This year alone, 54 student groups, or approximately 2,000 students, participated in field trips to local courthouses.

Students, educators, and legal professionals report enjoying the Court Visitation Program. Deb Pikiell, a teacher at Plainville High School described a court visit as part of Plainville High School’s Career Focused Learning Adventure Day as a “rich experience” that students viewed as the “best day ever” in court.

Attorneys interested in volunteering and educators interested in bringing their class or student group to a courthouse can sign up at ctbar.org/courtvisitationprogram. ■