

# 4-H Enhances Leadership and Public Service

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

 University of  
**Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment



## Carroll County 4-H Youth Act as Attorneys, Bailiff and Jury Foreman for Teen Court

Carroll County Extension Office  
500 Floyd Drive  
Carrollton, KY 41008  
Phone: (502) 732-7030  
<https://carroll.ca.uky.edu/>



[extension.ca.uky.edu](https://extension.ca.uky.edu)  
*It starts with us*



2018 – 2019 Carroll County Teen Court Leaders

Carroll County Extension Agents worked with the District Court Judge, County Attorney, and Court Designated Workers to establish a Teen Court program in 2017. Seventeen Carroll County 4-H teens, ranging from 7th to 12th grade volunteered to serve as peer leaders of the Teen Court Program. They completed summer training sessions, which included mock trials led by the District Court Judge and County Attorney.

According to the Kentucky Court of Justice, Teen Court programs are based upon the premise that most young people want to correct poor decision-making. Therefore, first-time juvenile misdemeanor offenders are given the opportunity to participate in Teen Court conducted by their peers with the supervision of legal professionals. The youth defendant pleads guilty and agrees to accept an appropriate sentence

determined by a jury of their peers, based on the circumstances of the offense. The court professionals refer cases, meet with the defendants and parents, systematically monitor the defendant's compliance with the sentence, and supply all necessary information and statistics to the Teen Court state coordinator.

Carroll County Extension Agents assist in assigning roles for the peer leaders which rotate during the year. The peer leaders use their communication, decision-making, and leadership skills to work in teams as prosecuting attorneys, defense attorneys, bailiff, jury foreman, and youth jurors. 4-H teens heard cases related to shoplifting, theft, criminal mischief, and harassment. Sentences carried out as a result of the offense included community service, letters of apology, and serving as a juror on a future Teen Court case. Offenders who complete their sentence have their case considered for dismissal to avoid a formal court record.

The 2018-2019 Carroll County Teen Court program continues with 20 4-H teens completing training. Their experience influenced their perspective of the justice system while introducing a variety of career paths. The teens exhibit a high standard of ethics and professionalism while interacting with legal and judicial professionals.

**Carroll County's program is one of twenty-three Teen Court programs in Kentucky, but the only county where the 4-H members are the trained teen leaders.**