

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF MARIN**



Press Release
(January 18, 2011)

Terra Linda High School Students To Observe a Real DUI Trial

On Wednesday, January 26th, Marin County Superior Court Judge Kelly V. Simmons will preside over a Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs (DUI) trial before the senior class of Terra Linda High School in its performing arts theater from 8:00AM to 12:00PM.

This will not be a fictional trial but rather an actual criminal proceeding. A courtroom will be set up on the stage and the judge, attorneys, witnesses and defendant will present the case to an advisory jury of students. Based on the evidence and testimony, the judge will make the finding as to whether the defendant is guilty of the charge of driving while intoxicated by applying the existing laws in California. Conducting a real DUI trial in a high school setting is an innovative strategy to help raise student awareness of the consequences of drunk driving and reduce community alcohol problems, including motor vehicle crashes. Students will witness the legal consequences of drinking and driving and learn about the defendant's arrest, detention, public trial and, if convicted, the imposed fines, penalties and other consequences to the defendant, such as impacts on auto insurance premiums, employment and personal life. Students will also have an opportunity to learn more about how the court system handles DUIs, one of the most prevalent types of cases filed in Marin County.

Following the trial, Judge Simmons will make a brief presentation and facilitate an interactive civics lesson about the case. The intent is to allow for significant dialog about the trial itself and the pitfalls of driving while intoxicated between the students, defendant, judge, attorneys, witnesses, law enforcement officers, teachers, and special guests.

Presiding Judge Terrence R. Boren hails this program as the first in a series of DUI trials in Marin high schools designed to give students an opportunity to see the consequences of drinking and driving. He acknowledges the Court's Community Advisory Committee members for their countless hours planning and organizing the program and for the excellent collaboration between the Court, schools and justice partners to bring the Real DUI Court in Schools program to fruition. He states, "We all know that DUIs often have tragic, even though unintended, consequences that not only permanently alter the lives of victims but that can also have a lasting, negative impacts on the lives of young drivers. As a community, we have a duty to raise the awareness of teen drivers of the avoidable consequences of drinking and driving. This program has been successful in other counties in reducing incidents of teen DUIs. The Court's goal is to ensure that Marin students walk away from the trial with a full understanding of risks they take if they drink and drive."

"The Superior Court of Marin County is bringing a unique and profoundly important opportunity into our schools", said Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools. "Students will be immersed in an experience that will stay with them for many years to come as they witness the very negative consequences of drinking and driving. This is a unique and valuable educational tool that will help teach our children to make safe and healthy decisions."

Drinking and driving continues to be the leading cause of collisions resulting in injury or death. Statistics show that 3 out of 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related motor vehicle crash at some point

in their lives. Furthermore, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-19 year olds – with the primary collision factor being alcohol. The Real DUI Court in Schools is a prevention program designed to help students make more informed choices to resist enticement from the alcohol industry and overcome social pressures to drink.

The Real DUI Court in Schools program is a collaborative effort involving the Court and its Community Advisory Committee, Marin County Office of Education, Terra Linda High School, District Attorney, Public Defender, Sheriff and Probation.

For additional information regarding this press release, contact the
Office of the Court Executive Officer at: (415) 444-7020.