



COUNTY OF YOLO
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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District Attorney's Neighborhood Court Seeks Volunteers

(Woodland, CA) – February 8, 2018 – The District Attorney's Yolo County Neighborhood Court (NHC) will hold volunteer trainings through May, for local community members interested in serving as panelists in a restorative justice process. The first training will take place on Saturday, February 10, 2018, from 8:45am – 5:00pm, at the Davis Police Department.

NHC is an innovative diversion program which has been in operation since June of 2013. NHC is staffed by local volunteers who hear and facilitate these cases and develop agreements aimed at providing individualized outcomes for misdemeanor and infraction-level offenses outside of the traditional court process using the principles of restorative justice. Program outcomes are designed to educate and address the underlying issues affecting offenders while prioritizing their acceptance of responsibility and reparation of harms to the community and any direct victims affected.

Volunteers are asked to commit to one year of service, but many have extended their service as they see the impact the conferences can have on the participants' mindset. Davis Panelist Faye Ashley, shares, "The most meaningful experiences are those when I see someone come to understand how his/her actions can impact others. I like thinking it lays a foundation for more foresight in the future... I am of the opinion that punishment that is not directly linked to the offense can too often result in a quid pro quo condition that leaves an offender feeling licensed to repeat the behavior without thinking about its impact on others." Through their service, volunteers are able to affect not only the trajectory of an offender's life, but the way in which their entire city responds to crime.

NHC provides a voice for members of the communities affected by crimes to express how they have been harmed and what they need in order to make things right. To date, NHC has held over 1400 conferences in three cities. These conferences function best by involving a diverse group of panelists to represent their communities.

NHC volunteers receive training in the basic principles of restorative justice and the 3-step Neighborhood Court conference process. Including the February 10th training in Davis, there will also be training sessions on Saturday, March 10th in West Sacramento, and Saturday, April 7th, in Woodland.

To find out more about the Neighborhood Court program or submit an application and register for an upcoming training date, visit www.yoloda.org/nc or email Nicole.Kirkaldy@yolocounty.org.

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