



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Defender's 2nd Annual Youth Outreach Event June 23

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Public Defender's Office's Racial Justice Committee announces the return of For the Defenders of Tomorrow – a youth outreach and engagement event related to public defense which will be held on Friday, June 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Participants in For the Defenders of Tomorrow will be introduced to the positions and teams that make up the Yolo County Public Defender's Office. They will have a chance to meet attorneys and learn about legal proceedings, legal advocacy and public service within the criminal legal system. Participants will also get to know the role of paralegals, social workers, investigators and administrative assistants, and how their work enables the Public Defender's Office to provide holistic representation. In addition to observing in-person court proceedings, participants will have the opportunity to speak with a judge, learn the steps one needs to take to become a lawyer and test their knowledge of constitutional rights through hypothetical scenarios.

After the success of last year's For Defenders of Tomorrow event, the Public Defender's Office is excited to open up their doors once more to youth in the community. Last year, eighteen youth from around the county attended the event and this year, the plan is to have even more youth participate.

“Many youth may be interested in a career in the criminal legal system, but have never considered working in public defense,” said Deputy Public Defender Jonathan Opet. “If youth are thinking about working in law enforcement, corrections or another forensic profession, it is important for them to know the role of a public defender and how all these professionals come together to form our criminal legal system.”

At the conclusion of the event, participants will have a better understanding of not only public defense, but various aspects of the criminal legal system. It is the Public Defender Office's hope that this knowledge will not only inspire Yolo County youth to consider a career in public defense, but also inspire them to be change-makers both in the criminal legal system and in their communities.

“We hope participants will feel comfortable in sharing their experiences and observations from their own lives and neighborhoods, as well as their thoughts regarding how the Public Defender's Office can improve our representation,” said Public Defender Tracie Olson. “We aim to be good partners with the communities we serve, so part of the purpose of this event is to listen to the youth.”

For Defenders of Tomorrow is open to local high school students, Brown Issues Ambassadors, transitional age youth, current/former foster youth, gap-year students and local community college students. Space in the For the Defenders of Tomorrow event is limited. Those interested are encouraged to sign up by May 26 by contacting Eleni Bonilla at (530) 406-4525 or eleni.bonilla@yolocounty.org.

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