

MIDDLE SCHOOL KIDS TACKLE TOUGH ISSUES: CAN THEY SOLVE THE ARIZONAS PROBLEMS?

May 02, 2007

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What:

Nearly 200 students will present their solutions to problems ranging from elder abuse to immigration during the State Project Citizen Showcase. Community leaders will listen to the students' presentations and help them better understand the democratic process of change.

When:

Friday, May 4, 2007

Opening Ceremony 9 a.m.

Rounds Begin 9:15 a.m.

Awards Ceremony 12:30 p.m.

Where:

Phoenix Convention Center

100 North Third Street, Phoenix, Arizona, 85004

Who:

Over 250 middle school students, teachers, parents, and community leaders. A nation-wide civic education program, Project Citizen, is conducted locally by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education and funded in part by the Center for Civic Education and the Arizona Department of Education.

State Finalists and Coaches:

- Mogollon Jr. High School, Jim Maner: Payson – School Vandalism
- Mogollon Jr. High School, Jim Maner: Payson – Heber Overgaard School District Final Exam Policy.
- Holy Angels School, Leonard Leverance: Globe- School Walkways
- Westwind Academy, Carrie Algozzini: Phoenix – Teen Suicide
- Landmark Middle School, George Colebrook: Glendale – Teenage Activities
- Shepherd Junior High School, Libby Hammond: Mesa – Hygiene Kits for the Homeless
- Rhodes Junior High School, Jeff Anderson: Mesa- Stopping Illegal Immigration into Arizona
- Rhodes Junior High School, Jeff Anderson: Mesa- Reducing Illegal Drug Use in the East Valley
- Underdown Junior High School, Mark McCall: Cashion- Elder Abuse & Neglect in Nursing Homes
- Underdown Junior High School, Mark McCall: Cashion – Improving Police Department Response Time

About Arizona's Project Citizen Program

Project Citizen is a portfolio-based civic-education project for middle and high school grade students. The program teaches young people to monitor and influence public policy. Students work

cooperatively to identify a public problem in their community. They then research the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop their own solution in the form of a public policy, and create a political action plan to enlist local or state authorities to adopt their proposed policy. Participants develop a portfolio of their work and present their project in an oral hearing before a panel of civic-minded community volunteers. Their portfolios were displayed for two weeks at Phoenix City Hall while they were being judged by community members. The winning portfolio display will be sent to the National Conference of State Legislatures in Boston, MA to compete for national placement with other states. The judging will be conducted by the State Legislators.

About the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education

The Foundation provides technical and financial assistance to legal aid organizations, schools and community groups working toward “access to justice for all Arizonans” through law-related education and free legal services and by promoting statewide collaborative efforts.

Helpful Websites:

- Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education: <http://www.azflse.org>
- Arizona Project Citizen: <http://www.azflse.org/pcitizen>
- Center for Civic Education: www.civiced.org
- National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL): www.ncsl.org