

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Open Doors to Federal Courts

“Second Founding”; Sesquicentennial of the Reconstruction Amendments to the Constitution

Volunteers are needed to participate in this year’s Open Doors to Federal Courts program to occur in **April, 2016**. Open Doors is a national initiative in which Federal Judges introduce high school students to the Federal Justice System and encourage students to pursue careers in the justice system. The Minnesota District Court has participated for many years.

Each year, the program features classroom visits that introduce some aspect of the law and includes presentations by members of local bar associations, state and federal judges and courts’ probation officers, who explain why they chose their career, how they prepared themselves academically, and why they believe their service makes a difference. Following the classroom visits, the students attend a half-day follow-up assembly designed to reinforce the themes first introduced in the classroom.

This year the program will focus on the Sesquicentennial of the Reconstruction Amendments to the Constitution, (13th, 14th and 15th) what the National Constitution Center, and the Constitutional Accountability Center call the nation’s “Second Founding.” The abolition of slavery (13th Amendment), the definition of citizenship, the creation of the equal protection and due process clauses of the 14th amendment, and securing that the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude, (15th Amendment) gave constitutional expression to the “new birth of freedom” about which President Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg.

The classroom visits will include a brief academic presentation about the reconstruction amendments, following which volunteer lawyers , judges, and/or probation officers will speak with the students about their careers and answer the students’ questions.

This year’s half day follow-up assembly is still a work in progress, but will likely feature a panel discussion of what the reconstruction amendments mean in the 21st Century.

There will be a **volunteer recruitment/orientation meeting on Wednesday, March 9, 2016; at 4:30 PM** in the **2d floor Jury Assembly Room** in the **Minneapolis Federal Courthouse** (300 South Fourth Street; Minneapolis, MN 55415). Please come to learn more about the program. If you participated in last year’s program, please come back, and bring three friends. If you are new to the program, please come and learn more about this exciting opportunity to impact the lives of young people.

For more information about Open Doors to Federal Courts, call:

Magistrate Judge Franklin Noel (612-664-5110)

Or visit: < <http://www.mnd.uscourts.gov/Community-Outreach.shtml>>