



San Diego City Attorney Jan I. Goldsmith

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 23, 2011

Contact: Gina Coburn, Communications Director: (619) 533-6181

CITY REACHES OUT TO EDUCATE YOUTH AGAINST BULLYING

San Diego, CA: This week at Fulton Elementary School in Southeastern San Diego, prosecutors and police officers are reaching out to teach 5th graders the importance of the criminal justice system, how it affects their community, and their involvement in both. Today, the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit of the City Attorney's Office, in partnership with the San Diego Police Department, Southeastern Juvenile Services Team, and Fulton Elementary, will begin a seven week program called *Juveniles and Justice*. The focus will be on "bullying". The students will learn how bullying hurts its victims, how police become involved, how bullying is handled in court and how they can address bullying they see in their school.

Principal Gwendolyn Kirkland brought the issue of bullying at Fulton Elementary to Captain Tony McElroy's attention in the fall of 2010. Captain McElroy passed that information along to Southeastern's neighborhood prosecutor from the City Attorney's Office, Jon Dwyer, and an effort began to address the issue. Resurrecting a program from the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit's past, with the help of Juvenile Services Team Officer Brian French, *Juveniles and Justice* was put into action to address bullying at Fulton in a way that would be both fun and educational for the students.

The *Juveniles and Justice* Program brings the police, the court system, and their roles in the community to the students in a fun and positive classroom environment. Through a staged example the program starts with the students witnessing bullying firsthand. As the program continues, the students have the opportunity to act like police officers and investigate the crimes committed by the bully. They will see the fruit of their investigation as the bully is caught and learn about what happens to a bully after they are caught.

To do that the *Juveniles and Justice* Program will introduce the students to the criminal court system. The program will culminate in the students acting as prosecutor, defense, jury, and witnesses in their own mock trial presided over by Judge Richard Whitney to determine the guilt of the bully. Throughout the process the students will learn about their school as a community, how they can be a positive member of that community, and who they can go to for help if bullying does occur.

The City Attorney's Neighborhood Prosecution Unit is committed to providing programs like this as a method to deter criminal conduct through education. NPU, in partnership with the San Diego Police Department, other agencies, and the community, works to combat crimes that reduce the quality of life in San Diego neighborhoods. These crimes include vandalism, graffiti, prostitution, disturbing the peace, alcohol and drug offenses, transient crimes and gang related offenses. Neighborhood prosecutors work in targeted neighborhoods side-by-side with police officers and community members on problem-solving initiatives.

###

Recent City Attorney media releases can be accessed on the San Diego City Attorney's home page located on the Internet at <http://www.sandiegocityattorney.org>

1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1620, San Diego, California 92101-4188 (619) 236-6220