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The Pro Bono Collaborative Project Spotlight: RWU Law Street Law: Teaching Teens About The Law And Inspiring Future Lawyers 11-16-2017

Roger Williams University School of Law

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Project Spotlight

The Pro Bono Collaborative periodically spotlights one project or issue as a way to keep our volunteers and supporters aware of and engaged in PBC projects and local access to justice initiatives.



RWU Law's Street Law students

RWU Law Street Law: Teaching Teens About the Law and Inspiring Future Lawyers

Danny plans to rob a convenience store with his friend, John, who will act as a lookout. As John waits in the parking lot, he decides to go home. Danny kills the convenience store clerk. Did John commit a crime? Why or Why not?

Each year about 250 teenagers in Rhode Island grapple with Danny's situation: *Is it a crime? Why? Why not?* The discussions that follow are profound, fascinating, sometimes silly and oftentimes humbling. Young people are eager to learn about our legal systems and their legal rights but traditional high school and middle school

curriculums rarely include information about the law.

Since 2002, RWU Law has been sending teams of law students into local schools in low-income communities to teach teenagers about the law. From the first class on “What is a crime?” to the nuances of the 4th Amendment, RWU Law’s Street Law program brings the law to life and makes it accessible to teenagers at dozens of local schools in Newport, Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls.

As one former law student reflected:

“I think Street Law is an amazing, well-thought-out program that not only helps and advances law school students, but high school students as well...I learned from the students’ perspectives and opinions.” “I was able to teach as well and learn about Criminal law myself.”

“I enjoy doing pro bono work because of the feeling of accomplishment. Knowing that I have helped someone is a satisfying and great feeling.”

Aryana Badery RWU Law ‘18

Street Law is a national program aimed at teaching young people in schools about the law, while providing law students with a unique and powerful professional development opportunity. RWU Law students teach six one-hour lessons on criminal law or privacy issues related to social media. This year, thirty-one law students, mostly first year law students, joined the Street Law Program. During the fall semester, these students receive training and then practice teaching a lesson twice before going out in the community.

About the PBC

The PBC staff identifies and develops pro bono projects that appeal to transactional and business attorneys, facilitates ongoing pro bono projects and works to increase access to justice. The PBC is not a referral program, but instead matches law firms with community organizations to provide pro bono legal assistance in a specific area of

law. [Read more about the PBC...](#)

If you are an attorney and would like to get involved in this or any other PBC project, we would love to hear from you.

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