

Lewiston's Chisholm Touts Retiring Youth Court Founder Richard Kendall

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**Richard Kendall, who founded the community's Lewiston-Auburn Youth Court (LAYC), is retiring from active participation on the LAYC Advisory Board after numerous years of service.**

Lewiston's Director of Recreation Maggie Chisholm, who serves as the City's Youth Court Coordinator, commended the collaborative spirit of the Youth Court, ***"It is a very educational and meaningful process to be involved with. Founder Richard Kendall certainly set the standards high for this very important opportunity for youth to hold their peers accountable."***

In 1999, Kendall's innovative concept that youth can hold peers accountable for their actions while providing an opportunity for restorative dispositions has indeed been very effective. With the support of Judge Paul Cote and partnerships with the Auburn Police Department, area high schools, the Androscoggin District Attorney's Office, local attorneys, supportive residents, and other organizations, Youth Court began during the 2001 – 02 school year and has been a valuable aspect of the community ever since. Kendall has consistently rallied support to maintain the program from its inception, and his work has paid great dividends for youth on both sides of the courtroom bench.

Kendall has also served as a local businessman and community leader and was recognized and honored on May 17<sup>th</sup> as the Youth Court founder. Judge Paul Cote spoke at the ceremony and expressed deep appreciation to Kendall on behalf of the Board and participating students. Cote praised Kendall for his initiative, follow-through, and commitment, adding that the program is only one of his many contributions to the community.

**At the ceremony, Edward Little High School seniors Caroline Dunn and Hannah Martin were also honored**

**as they departed LAYC to pursue future endeavors.**

As a participant with Youth Court, students like Dunn & Martin learn about the judicial system with the aid of program coordinators, like Lewiston's Chisholm, and proceed to hear actual juvenile cases involving non-violent, first-time offenders. Although guilt has already been determined before offenders appear before the Youth Court, a three-judge panel made up of trained high school students decide the appropriate dispositions, which can involve public service work, letters of apology, and written essays. Youth prosecuting and the defending attorneys present the cases to the panel of youth judges. The courtroom is complete with youth court clerks and bailiffs.

Since its inception, LAYC has processed 100 plus cases, easing the burden on the local court system and providing an alternative to a public juvenile record for respondents. The program involves minimal funding, as it relies primarily on volunteers. Youth Court will begin its 11<sup>th</sup> year in the fall.