

Law Day Projects

Ideas for County Bar Associations

EDUCATIONAL

- *Incorporate the ABA Young Lawyers Division's "We The Jury" Program*
Educate high school students about one of the most valuable civic duties in which they can participate: jury service. Materials available from the ABA include an 86-page curriculum guide, video and promotional items. Curriculum materials for the project were created by the Texas Young Lawyers Association and are available at www.abanet.org/yld/wethejury/wethejury.pdf.
- *Honor Law Day contest winners from your county*
You could have an "Honor Docket" at the district courtroom, with the district court judge presiding, that honors all of your local winners inviting his/her parents, teachers, guests and ask the local newspaper to cover the event
- *Law Day Open House or Courthouse Tour*
Invite classes (or one grade only) to tour building and have offices explain what they do. Hold the open house in the evening, encourage children to bring parents, combine with demonstration of mock trial.
- Field trip for students to court to observe trials in progress
- *For high school students*, organize a panel discussion with the district attorney, public defender and individuals who have been convicted of crimes (Oklahoma County Bar Association sponsors this project.)
- *Mock Trials in Courtroom* with local attorneys and judges participating
Examples: Put a teacher on trial for giving too much homework or a student for talking too much, or physical education coach for making students run too many laps. OBA Law-related Education Department has free scripts of trials for all grades, including kindergarten.
- *Lawyer in the Classroom* discussing law as a career, our rights and responsibilities as citizens, etc. Could be at a school wide career day assembly. Speak to high school students about their legal rights and responsibilities when they turn 18. Handout materials are available by contacting the OBA Law-related Education Department. Information about the program is available at www.okbar.org/public/lre/classroom.htm.
- *Judge in the Classroom*
Invite judges to classes or community groups to discuss their role in our justice system.
- *Mock Trial in Classroom* - Students participate as attorneys, jurors,

witnesses (OBA Law -related Education Dept. has sample mock trials for different grade levels.) Contact: janem@okbar.org.

- *Forum in the Classroom*
Using the town hall meeting format students could hold a forum on a current or historical topic by taking roles representing various positions on the topic and engaging in an orderly discussion. Lawyers, judges and other community representatives can participate as guest speakers, advisors or observers of the forum. A sample forum topic could be--the restriction some shopping malls have placed on students coming to the mall in large groups. Some malls now require the presence of an adult; others do not permit students to enter in groups after a certain time. Malls have taken these actions in order to protect other shoppers.
- Coordinate with local teachers to award good citizenship ribbons or t-shirts to elementary students.
- Work with local teachers to award outstanding civics or social studies students.
- *Lawyer for a Day* - High school seniors shadow an attorney and/or judge for a day or afternoon to experience what it really means to be a lawyer.
- *Drunk Driving Awareness* project at local high school (For high school seniors). Involve local law enforcement to give talks, show films of accidents or present a wrecked vehicle to emphasize the dangers of drinking while intoxicated. Or have a victim of a drunk driver speak, etc.
- Arrange for juvenile offenders to share their experiences with their peers about what they've learned the hard way.
- Speak to adult learners enrolled in literacy, English as a second language, graduate equivalency degree (GED programs). Focus can be on Constitutional rights, duties of citizenship, etc.
- Sponsoring a scholarship for students from your county to help defray the cost of college

FUND RAISERS

- Law Day "Run for Justice" fund raiser to benefit a local nonprofit organization (Both Cleveland County and Tulsa County Bar Associations sponsor a fun run offering cash prizes, t-shirts, etc.)
- Sponsor golf tournament fund raiser
Use proceeds to benefit a worthy cause or for prize money for county poster, essay, and video contests. (Pottawatomie County sponsors an annual golf tournament.)
- Having a silent auction at your meeting or banquet to raise money for community organizations that help our profession, such as your local domestic violence shelter, homeless shelter, Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma office or CASA (OSU and OU will help you get autographed items for your auction)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Hold a Law Fair at the local mall or other high traffic area (Tulsa County Bar Association has an annual law fair at Promenade Mall). Can be one county bar booth or several community service organization-sponsored booths involving-- fingerprinting, voter registration, rape crisis prevention, domestic violence centers, teen pregnancy shelters, drug awareness organizations, DARE program.
- Finger printing of youth at local courthouse
- Voter registration drive
- Worksite-based lunchtime presentations on practical legal issues such as writing a will, landlord/tenant law, when and how to use a lawyer and how to find one, buying and selling a home, credit & bankruptcy. Contact large employers in your area. Employees provide their own brown bag lunches and enjoy the convenience of not having to leave the workplace. The purpose is to provide information, not to solicit potential clients.
- Speak at Senior Citizen Centers
OBA has for sale pamphlets on wills, probate, joint tenancy, advance directives, etc.
- Plan a free seminar to educate the public on specific practical law issues like owning private property or landlord/tenant rights.
- Contact community civic and professional organizations and offer to provide attorneys to speak at meetings on practical law issues.

- Naturalization ceremonies
Call attention to civic rights and duties and witness new Americans pursuing their dreams by hosting a swearing-in service. Ask new citizens to explain why they've chosen U.S. citizenship.
- Participate in Ask A Lawyer call-in project – Thursday, April 30
Recruit attorneys to staff phone(s) locally for at least one hour during OETA Ask-A-Lawyer program or for several hours throughout the day giving free legal advice to residents.
- Arrange to do a radio or cable TV talk show or be a guest on an existing show. Select a topic that will click with the audience. Practical law issues such as how to buy and sell a house or when to draw up a living will, could be of great interest to your community.
- Develop and distribute resource guides, including addresses and phone numbers for community services such as women's shelters, literacy groups or victim's assistance programs.
- Advertising your events in church bulletins and on local radio and TV shows
- Having your local radio and TV show interview local attorneys about what they do and/or particular legal issues

PROFESSIONAL CAMARADERIE

- Chili cook-off
Individual attorneys or law firms, compete for top chili chef or costume award. (Blaine County Bar Association has sponsored chili cook-offs.)
- Sponsor golf tournament fund raiser
(For a worthy cause or for prize money for locally sponsored poster, essay and video contests)
- Law Day luncheon
Present Liberty Bell Award to a non-lawyer or lay organization who has given outstanding community service by promoting a better understanding of the law. Or make the event a community mini-forum on justice issues. Allow each lawyer bringing one non-lawyer guest.
- Recruit a group of lawyers to help a nonprofit organization build a house, serve food to the homeless, paint a needy older person's home or other hands-on project (great opportunity for professional image building).

For more info: contact Melissa Brown, Oklahoma Bar Association, melissab@okbar.org