

Bristol County District Attorney's Office
C. Samuel Sutter
District Attorney

Press Release
December 14, 2009

On Wednesday, December 16th, volunteers from Bristol County District Attorney Sam Sutter's and students from the Fall River Youth Court will be assisting the Fall River branch of the Salvation Army in its effort to prepare more than 3,500 holiday gift baskets for the needy.

The volunteers will be at the Salvation Army on Bedford Street from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday.

Due to the economic crisis, the number of people in need this year has increased dramatically. In October 2007, District Attorney Sutter announced an innovative office-wide volunteer initiative. During the past 26 months, more than 80 members of District Attorney Sutter's staff have volunteered more than 5,500 **after work hours**. The office volunteers have spent their after work hours engaged in mentoring, tutoring, coaching and environmental cleanup programs throughout Bristol County. This Wednesday's volunteer project with the Salvation Army is an extension of District Attorney Sutter's volunteer initiative, but is unique because it is also engaging Fall River students involved in Youth Court to also volunteer to help those less fortunate.

The members of District Attorney Sutter's office who have committed to assisting the Salvation Army this Wednesday include Second Assistant District Attorney Paul Machado, Director of Community Affairs Cecelia Porche, Assistant District Attorney Derek Coyne, Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Pereira, Assistant District Attorney Dennis Collins, Assistant District Attorney Bill Farias, Assistant District Attorney Diane Bunk and Administrative Assistant Deborah Saulnier.

"This is a wonderful partnership between volunteers from my office and teenagers from the Youth Court program to benefit those in great need during the season for giving," District Attorney Sutter said. "I am very proud of those from my office who are giving their free time to help and those from the Youth Court program."

The Fall River Youth Court was recently established thanks to financial, technical and logistical support from District Attorney Sutter's office. The Youth Court has also received generous assistance from the City of Fall River and the Fall River Police Department. Its first cases were heard in late spring 2009 and have continued into this academic year. Youth Courts provide a mechanism to divert largely first time offenders away from the juvenile criminal court system. Youths who agree to have their cases heard in Youth Court, participate in a hearing focused upon the appropriate sanctions to be imposed.

The evidence is presented by students representing the prosecution and the defense. The case is submitted to a jury of fellow students who determine the appropriate sanctions to be imposed. Sanctions include restitution, written apologies, service on future youth court juries, and offense specific courses, such as anger management. Additionally, each respondent is required to perform community service both as a method to pay back society for the wrong but also to engage the youth in his or her community.