



HAMILTON JUSTICE EDUCATION NETWORK CONTEST

Traditionally, the Hamilton Justice Education Network (HJEN) holds an annual essay contest. This year HJEN is expanding the contest to include a creative contest also!

High school students have **two options**:

1. Essay Option:

Write a 500-750 word essay in response to one of the case study topics below.

2. Creative Option:

Submit a creative piece in response to one of the topic headings below. This can include a drawing, painting, poem, song, short skit, or any other creative medium you choose. (Max. group size of 3)

TOPIC 1: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE LAW

Case Study: Gavin Gourmet is a student in his final year of culinary school at Markville College. Gavin has always wanted to be a chef. He is at the top of his class and is praised regularly for using innovative cooking techniques to create dishes that are both delicious and beautiful. Gavin has applied to a number of chef positions at restaurants all over the city. He has not been invited for a single interview although several of his classmates already have jobs.

One night after class, Gavin is searching online for yet another position to apply to. He comes across a blog, and is surprised to see his name. The blog reads:

“DO NOT HIRE LIST – MARKVILLE COLLEGE”

Gavin Gourmet, a student in Markville’s Culinary School, was formerly employed as a waiter at ABC Restaurant. Gavin was disgracefully let-go for taking more than his share of tips.

Would you want a thief working for you?

Gavin cannot believe that someone could write such malicious lies about him on the internet. He has never set foot in ABC Restaurant, and would never take something that didn’t belong to him. Gavin asks around and finds out that Rachel Risotto, his culinary school classmate, is responsible.

Gavin now knows why he hasn’t received any calls for interviews. As part of the screening process, it is common for employers to use the internet to learn more about applicants. Gavin feels as though his career is over before it has even started

Do you believe Gavin would be successful if he launched a lawsuit against Rachel for defamation? Is Rachel protected by the right to free speech?

TOPIC 2: MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCING

Case Study: Tiffany Tweeter was housesitting for her Uncle Headnovel while he was out of town. She opened a drawer in the living room and found a gun. Tiffany had never held a real gun before, so she picked it up. Thinking this might make a cool profile picture, Tiffany proceeded to take a “selfie” of her with the gun. Coincidentally, at that moment the police arrived to execute a search warrant of Uncle Headnovel’s house and saw Tiffany holding the gun. Tiffany was charged with possession of a loaded firearm.

According to the *Criminal Code*, the mandatory minimum sentence for a first offence of possession of a loaded fire arm is imprisonment for three years. The judge found that the mandatory minimum sentence violated Tiffany’s rights under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and sentenced her to one year imprisonment instead.

Should the judge be able to give a different sentence than what is set out in the Criminal Code? Why or why not?

TOPIC 3: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Case Study: Stefan’s income is too high to qualify for legal aid, but not enough to afford a lawyer. Sasha wants to bring a case to Small Claims Court, but has a difficult time understanding English and requires an interpreter. Louis is self-represented at trial and misses his appeal deadline because he did not understand the rules. Keith thinks he might have a claim against his landlord, but does not know where to get more information. Karen has a hearing impairment and is worried she will not be able to follow what happens during her trial.

More and more people are having problems accessing the courts and legal information in Ontario and across Canada. Many think that the justice system is too complicated, too slow, too intimidating, or too expensive to deal with their issues.

What can be done to increase access to justice? What changes would you make to ensure more people are aware of their rights and are able to use the court system effectively?

PRIZES

The winners of the essay and creative categories will win a trip to the John Sopinka Court House, including a tour and an opportunity to watch court, and lunch with the Honourable Justice Jane Milanetti of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice!

DEADLINE: April 25th, 2014

Please send electronic copies to:
HJENStudents@gmail.com

Please send hardcopies to:
HJEN Contest
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