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DRI Cares

Tucker Ellis & West Expands High School Partnerships By Carter Strang

Tucker Ellis & West (TEW) was the first law firm featured in DRI Cares, published last March. That article discussed TEW's comprehensive partnership with the Cleveland Municipal School District's John Hay High School Early College Program (JHEC). The partnership is part of TEW's unique **Pipeline Diversity Program**, which I coordinate. The partnership is now in its third year. Eighteen TEW attorneys are visiting JHEC's 10th Grade U.S. history classes teaching the award-winning 3Rs curriculum developed by the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, which focuses on Constitutional "Rights, Responsibilities, and Realities"—hence, the "3Rs"—and includes career counseling lessons.

TEW's partnership with JHEC includes coaching its mock trial team, which won the 2009 Cleveland Mock Trial Championship—its second consecutive championship. TEW also provided two more paid summer internships to John Hay students.

A Junior Achievement program has been added for 2009-2010, which will include TEW paralegals and staff, as well as attorneys not already participating in 3Rs or the mock trial team.

JHEC Principal Erin Frew reports that the passage rate on the Ohio Graduation Test (Social Studies) was 100% and attributes much of that result—as well as change in attitude by many students—to the TEW partnership.

In 2009, TEW doubled its funding of the Robert C. Tucker Scholarship, which provides money for graduates of the Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) to attend Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.

Louise Dempsey, Assistant Dean of the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and a recipient of the 2008 Wingspread Award for her efforts in increasing diversity in the legal profession, cited TEW's Pipeline Diversity Program as the "Gold Standard" for law firms in an article about the program that was published in the C-M's Alumni Association Magazine last spring.

In addition to the continued partnership at JHEC, TEW has expanded its Pipeline Diversity Program to its Los Angeles and Denver offices. In Los Angeles, that effort is coordinated by TEW attorney Leslie Criswell. She formed a partnership with the Los Angeles Municipal School District's Abraham Lincoln High School Law, Business and Government Academy (ALHS). Working with the Constitutional Rights Foundation and the dedicated teachers at ALHS, a series of interdisciplinary lessons



was created that is now being taught at ALHS by eight TEW attorneys from its LA office. The lessons focus on vocabulary, writing and speaking skills in the context of legal issues. A mock trial component to the partnership is being planned as well. Increasing student confidence, interest and success in school and helping the students expand their horizons to consider challenging post-high school careers in law and other fields are program goals. To further assist achievement of those goals, TEW is funding ALHS achievement awards presented to students who show marked improvement and noteworthy accomplishment each semester.

In Denver, TEW attorney Pat Fennelly volunteered at Denver's Arrupe Jesuit High School compressive orientation program for incoming students. Arrupe Jesuit is a highly successful school serving primarily low income Hispanic students.

TEW's Janice Hugner is leading efforts in the San Francisco office to expand TEW's Pipeline Diversity Program to that city as well.

TEW's Pipeline Diversity Program is a model for other firms that are interested in increasing the number of minority/economically disadvantaged students that enter the legal profession.

Published by DRI

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