

Adopt-a-School Program Marks First Year of Student Inspiration

June 9, 2016

As the school year comes to a close, Proskauer celebrated the highly successful first year of its Adopt-a-School Initiative. Launched in fall 2015, our Adopt-a-School program connects talented Proskauer volunteers with students from low-income communities to help them build critical career skills and to inspire success and leadership.

The initiative, which is conducted through partnerships with local schools, has been rolled out so far in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C. At the core of the initiative are volunteer-run enrichment sessions, which give students hands-on experience with critical skills, such as technology use, financial literacy, writing résumés, interviewing skills, marketing and college prep, among others. Proskauer volunteers have devoted additional time to other activities designed to enhance students' engagement with the community and sharpen key skills.

All told, across the four Proskauer offices, nearly 100 students took part in a range of enrichment activities. Proskauer volunteers – 122 in all – held 27 workshops and devoted more than 400 hours to working with the students.

Chicago - Experiencing the Ways of Justice and Sprucing Up a Home for Vets

In Chicago where Proskauer is working with Muchin College Prep students, volunteers complemented their workshop activities with two adventurous field trips. The first, organized by Nigel Telman, took the students inside a famous city landmark – The Dirksen Federal Building, a downtown skyscraper – where they entered the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. There they met with federal judge Sharon J. Coleman, who talked about her career, including her court appointment by President Obama. The students also were shown how a real-life courtroom operates and learned about some of the most interesting cases to pass through this court. Ann Grummitt and Hanna Eimiller also took part in the trip, along with all 25 Muchin students.

The second trip in Chicago focused on helping students feel more connected with their communities through volunteering. In May, five Proskauer volunteers – Hanna Eimiller, Ann Grummitt, Michele Reetz, Donna Sheridan and Jeramy Webb – traveled with the students to Hope Manor I, which is home to 80 male military veterans, and which is run by Volunteers of America (VOA). After getting an introduction to VOA and the facility,

members of the group worked as a team to clean up the home's backyard, while also transplanting bushes, planting and spreading mulch.

Los Angeles - Seeing Career Pathways, Learning Tech and Gaining a Marketing Edge

Proskauer is working with our long-term pro bono client, the Los Angeles Leadership Academy, on our LA Adopt-a-School program. Volunteers recently engaged students in a range of activities designed to sharpen their skills and expand their career horizons. In March, the office hosted a speed mentoring event with 16 middle school students, who were able to converse with 19 Proskauer volunteers about education and career pathways. Chris Ahn, coordinator of the L.A. Adopt-a-School program, led the workshop.

In April, the L.A. office hosted its second workshop with Leadership Academy students. This technology-focused workshop was led by Radiance Smith, an IT trainer. In the workshop, students learned social media "dos and don'ts," personal branding, and basic skills for using Microsoft PowerPoint and Excel – all geared to help them succeed in their high school careers and beyond.

For the final workshop in May, Chris Ahn, Jonathan Lee, Kate Ambrose and Alex Yebri ignited students' passion for marketing. The presenters explained what a brand is and the importance of building one.

New York - Cultivating Understanding on an Urban Farm, Spreading the Word on Pro Bono

As part of the New York office's Adopt-a-School program, Proskauer volunteers and 18 students from our program partner, Manhattan Hunter Science High School, went on an exciting journey in May, to get first-hand experience with how a farm works. The group boarded a ferry to visit GrowNYC's Governors Island Teaching Garden, an 8,000-square-foot urban farm that engages and educates in all aspects of urban farming. The students learned about different types of soil and about the plants and fruits being grown on the farm. They even put their green thumbs to work by mixing various types of soil and planting marigolds and were able to taste some of the farm's fresh vegetables.

The year's final Adopt-a-School session in June featured Bill Silverman, pro bono partner, who led a dynamic conversation with students about pro bono and the social responsibility of lawyers. Bill brought the pro bono concept to life by telling about his own experiences and sharing other real-world examples of lawyers championing the rights of pro bono clients.

Washington D.C. - Learning from Mentors, Supporting Veterans, Finding a Public Voice

The Washington, D.C. office kicked off its Adopt-a-School program in October with Stuart-Hobson Middle School by hosting a relationship development session so students and mentors could get to know each other.

In December, capturing the spirit of the holiday season, Stuart-Hobson students participated in a Proskauer-hosted workshop on the importance of community service. The workshop focused on veterans and the Fisher House Foundation, a group that provides free or low-cost lodging to veterans and military families receiving treatment at military medical centers. Students wrote cards to the veterans to thank them for their service; these cards were presented to vets and their families at a meal service hosted by Proskauer the following evening.

In February, volunteers hosted an enrichment workshop on public speaking. After learning tips for effective public speaking, students were broken up into groups and were asked to pick their favorite movie or book, hobby or sport, or influential person or celebrity. The students then got their assignment: to do a brief presentation on why they chose one of these activities or people as their favorites. The exercise helped students to move out of their comfort zone while letting them practice the presentation skills they had just learned.

Boston - Coming this Fall!

We're pleased to announce that our Adopt-a-School program will be launching in Boston for the 2016-2017 school year. The Match High School, the upper school campus of Match Charter Public School in Boston, will be our new partner for this program. Mike

Hackett and Lou Sorgi are leading the Boston program and they kicked off the program with a presentation at the school on June 15.