



NORWALK-LA MIRADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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Mock Trial Program Offers Glimpse into Judicial System

Norwalk-La Mirada Unified Seventh-Grader Recognized for Her Role as Key Witness in Mock Criminal Trial

Hutchinson Middle School seventh-grader Kiana Jones is being recognized among hundreds of her peers across Los Angeles County for her stand-out role as T.M. Little, a key witness in People vs. Shem. The hypothetical criminal case involving the theft of a valuable painting was part of the Constitutional Rights Foundation's Mock Trial Competition, which provides middle and high school students with hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of the judicial system.

Kiana was recognized this month by the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified Board of Education for her performance in the mock trial competition, which was held in November. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors will host a reception for all winners county-wide on Feb. 10.

"We are so proud of Kiana for her award as an 'Outstanding Defense Witness,' said Hutchinson Principal Sara Siemens. "This recognition shows the dedication of our all of our students and staff, who put in so many hours in preparation for this competition."

Hutchinson students Luke Harmon, Noemi Munoz and Daniella Villegas received Honorable Mentions for their strong performances in the competition.

Beginning in September, students met three times a week after school and on several Saturdays to prepare. Guided by La Mirada resident and attorney John Davis and their mock trial teacher-coach Jenny Sosa, students studied a hypothetical criminal case, conducted research and developed questions and arguments. Students also learned the roles of court bailiffs, clerks, witnesses and defense and prosecution attorneys. During the competition, students competed against other Los Angeles County middle schools and were evaluated by local judges and attorneys.

"Our goal in Norwalk-La Mirada Unified is to prepare students for successful futures; part of that preparation is providing enrichment opportunities such as the mock trial program, which helps students improve their critical thinking and communication skills, while teaching them the importance of civic involvement and responsibility," said Interim Superintendent Ginger Shattuck.

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Every year, the Constitutional Rights Foundation creates a hypothetical criminal case and corresponding materials such as case law summaries, witness statements and official exhibits based on issues facing today's youth.

"By participating in this program, students have an invaluable opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at what a trial is all about," said NLMUSD Board of Education President Jesse Urquidi. "Congratulations to the entire mock trial team at Hutchinson for their achievements in this year's competition."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

MOCKTRIAL1: Kiana Jones, a seventh-grader at Hutchinson Middle School, is being recognized as an Outstanding Witness in the Los Angeles County Constitutional Rights Foundation's Mock Trial Competition.

MOCKTRIAL2: Students at Hutchinson Middle School get hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of the judicial system through the Mock Trial program.

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