



Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County

Contact:

Clara Colmenero, PIO

c.colmenero@jbazmc.maricopa.gov

(602) 372-0874

Newsrooms: Video of this program can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiTUvlpOok>

Hope Closets Help Clothe Youth Being Released from Detention

Justice-involved youth can select shoes, pants, shirts and back-to-school supplies

PHOENIX (Feb. 1, 2022) – While being released from Detention, youth would often request to keep their detention clothes because they didn't have anything else to wear.

To provide youth some support, the Juvenile Probation Department, part of the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County, created the Hope Closet Program to make sure kids who are in need leave detention equipped with at least a set of clothes to wear.

"It was sad to me that we were going to be sending them to a new placement or a new foster home or group home in detention clothes," said Juvenile Probation Detention Deputy Chief Michaella Aguilar Heslin.

Justice-involved youth, both in secure care and on community supervision, can select items such as backpacks, clothing, toiletries and shoes at the Hope Closets located in the Durango Detention facility and the Durango Probation building. Resources from the Hope Closets are also available to the youth's immediate family members.

Most Hope Closet donations come from Judicial Branch employees, including Judicial Education Day when Superior Court judges donate back-to-school supplies to help uplift youth and provide them the resources they need to focus on their education.

"They've donated beautiful new backpacks and clothes and shoes, school supplies and everything a kid might need," said Aguilar Heslin "So, after Judicial Education Day we meet them there and we accept the donations, and it fills the truck back to the detention center and it feels really great, and we really appreciate all the judges for adopting our cause."

Juvenile Detention Officer Kathleen Turek says she was offered the opportunity to take over the Hope Closet, helping prepare and organize the items for justice-involved youth to choose from.

“They’ll come in and they’ll grab a bag and there’s a little sign up here and they will go through and pick up what they need,” said Turek.

And while every juvenile detention officer that has helped maintain the Hope Closet makes sure all the items are easily accessible, Turek says she was inspired to include her own donation in the Hope Closet to help kids stay warm during the winter months.

“The little beanies that are in here are little hats that I crochet, and I just lay them up here so the kids can pick one up if they like for themselves or their family,” she said.

This year, the Juvenile Probation Department partnered with Arizona State University’s Maricopa County Leadership and Education Advancing Public Service (MCLEAPS) program to host two full-time interns. One of those interns will be responsible for helping with the growth and maintenance of the Hope Closet. The Juvenile Probation Department welcomes new interns every semester, providing an opportunity for students to immerse themselves into the community and the culture of the Juvenile Probation Department.

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