



High school students compete in mock congressional hearing

On Jan. 11, students from Granbury High School and the Episcopal School of Dallas participated in mock congressional hearings at the State Capitol as part of the We the People program. Granbury High won first place for the second consecutive year and will compete in the national finals, held in Washington, D.C., in April.

The State Bar Law-Related Education Department organizes and implements the Texas branch of the We the People program, which is heralded as an effective way to encourage civics participation and critical thinking. Throughout one semester, students from a single class study the We the People constitutional law textbook and then travel to Austin to participate in the mock congressional hearings.

During competition, students share their responses to a previously disclosed question, and then each judge asks follow-up questions that the students have never heard. Judges score several aspects of their responses, including their understanding of the issue and use of supportive evidence.

As an example of how the program can influence Texas students, Texas Tech University School of Law professor Julie Doss—who participated in We the People when she was in high school—served as a judge of this year's competition.

Above from left: Granbury High School students Jack Wiley, Macaul Montgomery, Ty Robertson, and Kevin Horn field judges' questions during the We the People mock congressional hearing at the State Capitol in January.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SAMANTHA YOUNGBLOOD/UT LAW

Volunteers from UT Law School aid Rio Grande Valley

Several volunteers from the University of Texas School of Law spent part of winter break in the Rio Grande Valley assisting residents with legal matters at no cost.

Between Jan. 5 and Jan. 10, UT students, faculty, and alumni supported the Wills on Wheels project in Pharr and Brownsville, contributed immigration law assistance through the South Texas Civil Rights Project and the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project, and helped run Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals clinics in San Juan.

"We helped over 200 low-income clients with an array of matters," said Tina Fernandez, director of the UT Law pro bono program. "The clients and students benefited from the work done on the trip, and, for some, the experience was even transformative."

Above from left: University of Texas School of Law students Mackenzie Meador and Pedro Villalobos help youth at a school in San Juan file for deportation deferrals on Jan. 7.

Battle Buddy 57 raises more than \$12,000

On Dec. 14, 2013, Abraham Watkins served as the title sponsor of Battle Buddy 57 in Houston, which raised more than \$12,000 for the Olivia Grace Stevens Endowment Fund for Neonatology. The fund supports research, education, and training at the Newborn Center at Texas Children's Hospital. During Battle Buddy 57, teams completed 57 repetitions of a crossfit workout in honor of Olivia Stevens, a Houston child born with a rare chromosomal deletion who spent her first 57 days in the intensive care unit.