



news

Colorado Judicial Branch
Michael L. Bender, Chief Justice
Gerald Marroney, State Court Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 17, 2010

Contact: Robert McCallum or Jon Sarché
303-837-3633
303-837-3644
robert.mccallum@judicial.state.co.us
jon.sarche@judicial.state.co.us

Donation will help launch new truancy reduction program *Masonic Lodge provides funds to explore alternatives to school suspension*

CENTENNIAL, Colo. – A donation from the Lawrence N. Greenleaf Masonic Lodge No. 169 A.F. & A.M. will allow Aurora Public Schools and Colorado’s 18th Judicial District to start a program to explore alternatives to school suspension to keep students in school and out of truancy court.

The \$11,400 donation, part of an annual effort by the lodge to donate money to nonprofit groups working to help children, will help bolster truancy prevention efforts through early intervention and community-based collaboration.

“This generous gift will help us add another layer of support to the truancy reduction and prevention program run by the courts and by Aurora Public Schools,” said Magistrate Rebecca Moss, who brought the program to the district after successfully running a similar program in Pueblo. “Through the program, we’re seeing significant decreases in truancy. Keeping kids in school is a great way to help keep them out of trouble not only during their school years but also later in life.”

The program requires that a school-based specialist make contact with the student and his or her family after a second unexcused absence and refer the family to community-based programs who have partnered with the courts. Those programs are designed to help determine the reasons for the student’s truancy before he or she becomes detached from school and falls so far behind that he or she becomes likely to drop out and end up in truancy court.

“In Aurora Public Schools, we are making huge strides to curb truancy. It is critical to instill the value of class attendance early for all of our students, and we are doing just that,” district Superintendent John L. Barry said. “Our community clearly supports our efforts, and we

thank groups like the Masonic Lodge for the support. Our vision is to graduate every student with the choice to attend college without remediation. To meet this vision, students must be in class every day. We must keep students engaged in school because the lifelong impact of truancy is profound.”

The number of habitually truant students in Aurora Public Schools dropped by 449, or 1.7 percent, from 3,621 in the 2008-09 school year to 3,172 in the current school year.