

BONNEY LAKE COURIER HERALD

Bonney Lake High junior gets hands on with court system

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Why does society make laws and what is the burden of enforcing them responsibly? One Bonney Lake High School student had the chance to see Bonney Lake's municipal justice system firsthand.

Destiny Lemco, a 16-year-old junior, spent a day with the municipal court in February as part of National Job Shadow Day and her high school's job shadow program, a requirement for the culminating portfolio.

Lemco was able to sit in on two legal hearings before helping court clerks file paperwork relating to a charge of driving under the influence.

The experience was eye-opening, she said.

"It's incredible the memory capacity a judge has to have, and the fact that they have someone's fate in their hands," she said. "They have to keep all the known facts in their mind so that they're not going 'Oh, that's a really good argument, but this side had a really good argument too.'

"I worked with the clerks filing paperwork for cases, and the paperwork for one DUI case is this thick for every single one," she said, holding her fingers about an inch apart. "Police have to do so much for those. A lot of work goes into the paperwork just to survive, just so someone can't say something went wrong in the process."

Lemco chose to shadow the court because she wanted to know why certain laws are made and how they came to be, she said. After all, somebody had to act in a certain way enough times to inspire a law against the action.

She first encountered those ideas during a seminar she took outside of school. Next year, she plans to continue to explore the law in the civics course, "You and the Law."

Lemco's plans involve a career in education. After graduation, she plans to earn an associate's degree before transferring to the University of California Santa Barbara and studying to become a world language teacher.

She spent last semester in the Choice program for student self-study, but returned to Bonney Lake High School because she preferred the structure, she said.

“I like any class that has a good teacher,” she said.

Lemco’s teachers in the court were more than willing to oblige her questions, and she received more answers than she had questions, she said.

Her experience also taught her what areas of the system she was comfortable with, she said as she recounted a legal hearing that involved minors caught drinking underage at a party.

“He had to let them off because the police didn’t follow one small step,” she said. “I don’t think I could be a judge. I don’t think I could look at somebody who I know is guilty and say they’re not because of a technicality.

“Maybe I could be a lawyer.”