

## DAILY NEWS

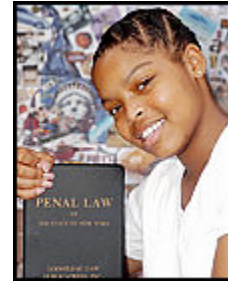
Flocking to class  
for legal eaglets

BY NICHOLAS HIRSHON

It was January, and Crystal David had just received a medal for leading Intermediate School 59 to the next round of the basketball playoffs.

But free throws and three-point shots were the last things on her mind.

Crystal, 13, and her mother, Adrienne, rushed from the gym and frantically made their way to St. John's University, where the eighth-grader had a 6:30 p.m. interview to get into a program that could change her life.



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Then, in April, Crystal learned she had been accepted into Legal Outreach Inc.'s five-week Summer Law Institute, which introduces the law school admissions process to younger students with economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Orientation was held last month, and classes are scheduled for the next two months.

"I want to be one of the truthful lawyers who represents one of the innocent people," Crystal said. "If you're guilty, I'm sorry, I cannot represent you."

A recent study by the American Bar Association found that in 1994 just 24,611 of the 128,989 students enrolled in law schools were minorities - just 9,681 were African-Americans like Crystal.

Crystal's passion is what stood out to the program directors from Legal Outreach, an organization which tries to get inner-city teens - most of them minorities - prepared to apply to law school.

John Rose, a 13-year-old who will participate in the program with Crystal, knows all too well the problems facing blacks trying to embark on successful careers. He lives a block away from a project at Foch Blvd. and 164th St., where gangs regularly hang out, he said.

"All they do is get locked up, shot up," he said. "That's it."

The program's requirements are a bit strict: Students who do not heed the dress code policy, for example, will have money deducted from the \$175 check they are scheduled to receive at program's end.

The point of giving each student a paycheck is to instill professional values in them. The value of the check can go up as a reward for winning mock trial cases, to be argued before Queens County judges in the program's final sessions.

John is aware of the program's intensity, but he remains relaxed and keeps in mind the conversations he has with the people who hang out by the project near his house.

"That's what y'all want to do?" he said he asks them. "Where you going to be 10 years from now?"

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