

CSI CAMP

GIVES STUDENTS A CLUE TO FUTURE CAREERS

by Eileen Tizol '84



Seven years ago Joshua Duntley, associate professor of Criminal Justice, had an idea for how Stockton could better connect with the community.

“I thought local high school students would be interested in working to solve fictional murder mysteries, similar to those they see on their favorite television crime drama,” said Duntley.

Duntley mentioned his idea to colleague Christine Tartaro (professor of Criminal Justice) and found a partner in crime who shared his enthusiasm. Together, they developed Stockton CSI Forensics Camp, with Duntley serving as the creative mind and Tartaro handling the logistics.

The result was a unique residential camp that gives high school students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in criminal investigation and trial preparation.

With the help of numerous people who work in criminal justice, law enforcement and forensic psychology, campers work as part of an elite team of investigators and professionals to help solve a murder. They gain experience with evidence-gathering and evidence-testing techniques, such as DNA analysis, hair and fibers, blood typing and spatter analysis. Campers learn how to question suspects and witnesses and use the same techniques that investigators use to learn the facts of the case. For trial preparation they learn jury selection techniques, strategies for presenting their cases, and making arguments in a courtroom. The campers also learn what life is like in jail for those who are awaiting trial and for those who are convicted. Best of all, after each lesson, the campers get to experience each lesson in the context of a fictional crime.

Unique in many ways, CSI camp connects young teens interested in criminal justice with world-class experts and informs them of potential career choices with the police, FBI, corrections, and in fields such as criminal justice, forensic psychology, and the law. The program also includes field-specific trips, such as excursions to the county jail, medical examiner’s office, and the Federal Air Marshal training facility.



“I would recommend any high school student who thinks they are interested in a career in Criminal Justice to attend Stockton’s CSI camp.”

**—Jordan Pfifer, '13
BA, Criminal Justice**

The camp has grown immensely; over 400 CSI campers have come to Stockton from 22 different states, some as far away as New Mexico, Iowa, and Alaska. Many are repeat campers, and this year marks the first international student, coming from Mexico.

So far 36 of the campers have chosen to attend Stockton as students and one such camper, Jordan Pfifer, not only chose to attend Stockton, but now serves as a camp counselor as well. “I had already been leaning towards a career in law enforcement prior to coming to CSI camp. However, the camp gave me a better idea of what careers, specifically, were of interest to me and what steps I would need to take to pursue them,” she said.

Pfifer recently received her BA in Criminal Justice and will be returning in the fall to complete her MA, which she anticipates receiving in May 2014. As for her future, she says, “I would really like to obtain a position with one of the prosecutors’ offices in an investigation unit. “I’m really interested in the possibility of working with special victims.”

Now in its seventh year, Duntley and Tartaro continue to introduce innovations while giving individual attention to each camper. Their goal is to broaden academic horizons and increase self-confidence, and of course, see that the campers have fun! 🍀

