

1st Appearance in Court Not Bad Thing For Pair of Community-Minded Sisters

The Smith sisters looked out of place when they appeared before Judge Raymond Gross on April 21. But even though they were dwarfed by their surroundings, 10-year-old Celeste and 6-year-old Eliana were not intimidated . . . they knew they were there for a good cause.

After their tour of the courts a few weeks earlier with classmates from Leila Davis Elementary School, the pair set out to do something for kids who become part of court proceedings because of their parents' actions.

Celeste and Eliana began a coloring book drive and collected more than 100 books for Judges, judicial assistants and Unified Family Court staff to give to the kids when they're involved in dependency cases, passing time in court, etc. The pair collected the coloring books from their classmates, other friends and businesses.

To thank them for thinking of others, Judge Gross presented each girl with a teddy bear that sported a new necklace of beads that spelled out the name of the recipient. The necklaces were created by Angela Filippone, judicial assistant to Chief Judge Robert Morris.



Six-year-old Eliana Smith receives a teddy bear from Judge Gross. Each girl received a bear to show the court's gratitude.



Judge Gross convened a ceremonial session of court to speak to Celeste, right, and Eliana, thanking them for the donation and commending their actions.



Ten-year-old Celeste Smith, above, hands a box of coloring books to Unified Family Court Manager Debra Leiman, while Court Program Specialist Gina Jeffrey holds a second box. At right, smiles say it all as the sisters pose with Angela Filippone, who made the necklaces that spelled out each girl's name in beads and adorned the bears' necks.

