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Getting an up-close view of courtroom proceedings

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Ohanna Kreza-Rodriguez got to see a judge hand down a sentence and an FBI agent give testimony.

The 16-year-old junior at Fort Lauderdale High School's pre-law and public affairs magnet program did so during Law Day in Fort Lauderdale, along with about 40 other students.

"It was very informative and gave me a different perspective on how things were in the court system," she said. "It was very interesting, and I would do it again next year."

Law Day, which was hosted by the Federal Bar Association and the Southern District of Florida, is a national program.

"The purpose is to have a day every year to focus on law in the legal system," said **Mark Levy**, president of the association's Broward chapter.

The theme for this year's Law Day was "Magna Carta: Symbol of Freedom Under Law," to celebrate its 800th anniversary. The local theme was "Diversity and Inclusion in the Law," in which a panel of lawyers discussed overcoming obstacles in their careers, Levy



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About 40 students from Fort Lauderdale High School took part in the recent Law Day.

said.

The students also learned about the Magna Carta and how it relates to modern society and saw a mock trial in which a search of students' lockers was conducted, said federal Judge **Beth Bloom**.

"We wanted a mock trial students can relate to and had a discussion about security versus freedom," Bloom said.

"I think the students had a great and varied experience," Levy said. "They put on a mock trial, learned about search and seizure issues in a school setting, observed live court hearings and heard a panel of speakers talking about obstacles they faced in their career."

Kreza-Rodriguez, who wants to be a police officer, enjoyed the experience.

"I want to go into law enforcement for my career, and even though I might not always be in a courtroom, I got to see what it would be like in that situation," she said.

Levy and Bloom said Law Day can help the students in their future studies and career.

"It's always really helpful to see what it's really like," Levy said. "A lot of kids don't get to see a real courtroom. Being able to see the real thing at such an early point allows them to put what they learned into perspective, and that's always a good thing."