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## Crossing the Digital Divide: Santa Clara County Superior Court Hosts Online Young Women's Power Lunch

*Event connects youth with female leaders to share and learn about their journeys, struggles and accomplishments*

The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara hosted 37 female-identifying students from 13 Santa Clara County high schools at a virtual Power Lunch event. The Power Lunch model aims to empower young women to see past any struggles or barriers they may be facing to move toward a positive future. This was the third time the Court's Outreach Committee hosted the event, but due to COVID-19 concerns, it was moved for the first time to a virtual platform on March 30, 2021.

The adult mentors, comprised of judicial officers, attorneys, elected officials and local female leaders, provided insight to the young women on demonstrating leadership and navigating networking in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as specific tools and healthy habits to combat stress.

"The long-lasting impact of the Power Lunch event starts with the Court providing a forum for the youth to see themselves in our local leaders, and to understand that there is a network of women who are committed to helping them succeed," noted Britney Huelbig, Deputy Manager, Civil Grand Jury, Santa Clara County Superior Court. "Leveraging technology to make this possible provided a unique space for this initiative to reach youth in new ways."

Supervisor Cindy Chavez and Deputy Public Defender Lori Stuart delivered timely and motivating messages for the students about how they may look to overcome adversity and doubt to find their path forward. In between speakers, the students met in smaller groups where successful professional female role models offered their insights and mentorship to the young women. The adult mentors also led a word cloud exercise intended to help visualize how connected each attendee was in their successes, struggles, and ideas.

Hon. Julia Alloggiamento, Chair of the Community Outreach Committee, said, "The Young Women's Power Lunch emphasizes the strength and power of women supporting other women. Even though this spring's event had to be remote, the passion, commitment, and support of the mentors and their desire to raise up these young women came through loud and clear. In what has been an incredibly challenging year for high schoolers, we hope this day gave them some inspiration and hope for the future that awaits them."

A brief excerpt from the event is posted on the Court's [Facebook page](#), and the word cloud created by attendees can be seen below.

This event could not have been possible without the additional efforts and resources provided by the Santa Clara County Office of Women’s Policy; the Offices of the Santa Clara County District Attorney, County Counsel, and Public Defender; the San Jose Unified School District; the Silicon Valley Urban Debate League; the City of San Jose; the California Judges Association; and the Santa Clara County legislators, educators, attorneys, and judicial officers who donated their time to make this an exceptional event.

