

Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

FALL 2002

Restorative Justice Program

Courts Awarded Grant to Establish RJ Program

The new Restorative Justice program is here to serve you:

- Office of Justice Grant awarded for 2002-2003.
- Program to use RJ principles that recognize crime injures people, destroys relationships, harms the community.
- Program to focus on both criminal and "pre-criminal" behavior.
- Process involves face-to-face conference with victim(s).

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Eau Claire County will have a new program to address juvenile crime in 2002-2003 thanks to a recent Office of Justice grant award. County officials joined forces on the proposal in response to the growing problem of juvenile offending. The award was part of a Federal block grant available annually through Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act funds.

In recent years, a new way of addressing delinquency has emerged. The Restorative Justice concept or "RJ", has become popular among justice practitioners and victim advocates alike. The reported success of these programs is due to the emphasis on direct victim input in holding a young offender accountable.

The Eau Claire grant award is currently being used to begin a strong program of RJ interventions for youth involved in criminal and pre-criminal activity. The program will initially focus on "victim/offender conferencing" as a method to deter crime in youth and provide victims an outlet for restoration. Conferencing involves a face-to-face meeting between victim

and offender where both parties openly discuss the crime, the effects on the victim, and plans for repair.

Fundamentally, the RJ program recognizes crime injures people, destroys relationships, and harms the community. It also creates an obligation for the offender to make repair.

A partnership between Goodwill Industries and Eau Claire County has made this project a reality. Goodwill is the fiscal agent and employer to all RJ staff. The program is located at Goodwill and is currently accepting clients. For more information, call (715) 835-6521.



Program emphasizes the need for victim input in holding a young offender accountable.

Did You Know...

Restorative Justice is a philosophy used in many different settings. There is a good deal of overlap between the values of restorative programs and faith based, restitution based, conflict resolution, and accountability thinking literature. It is not unusual to see "restorative practices" incorporated into the

training plans of conscientious companies who are trying to address issues like "workplace bullying."

Schools are using conferencing and circles to resolve conflict among students. Community Justice Centers are cropping up across the United States to

bring the power of problem solving back into the hands of the people. Restorative Justice has been a lifestyle standard in many Hmong, Native American, Mennonite, and European communities. Restoration is a new term for old values that work. Visit www.restorativejustice.org for

Restitution Thinking

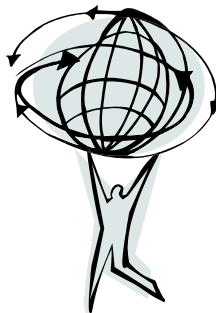
In recent years, “restitution thinking” has become a popular way of helping educators create healthy classrooms. Restitution thinking is a way of reframing school discipline. Diane Gossen, internationally known author and trainer in the area of restitution

thinking has begun a longstanding relationship with the Eau Claire School system as a trainer.

Diane offers restitution as an innovative approach to “understanding young people will make mistakes, what they need is proper guidance to identify when they’ve done something wrong and how to correct it.” The training emphasizes “self-management” as the preferred method over shame, offering specific alternatives in monitoring and managing so the child learns the concept. Drawing on years

of experience in public schools, school-based programs, drug rehabilitation centers, community centers, correctional facilities, and university level instruction, Gossen demonstrates the many advantages of “restitution thinking” over traditional methods of discipline.

Training in “Restitution I” and advanced “Restitution II” training will be offered to public school faculty this Fall. For more information, contact Jean Christianson, the AOTD Prevention Coordinator at Eau Claire Public Schools (715) 833-3481.



Training in Eau Claire Schools helps educators encourage students to think and behave responsibly.

In Your Community

EAU CLAIRE OFFICIALS INSTRUMENTAL IN DEVELOPING WIDE RANGE OF PROGRAMMING TO ADDRESS AND PREVENT DELINQUENCY.

It’s amazing how much impact a small group of committed individuals can make on a community. Key officials from juvenile justice, human services, the school system,

and law enforcement have come together to address the issue of pattern

delinquency. The results of long hours of these groups are now starting to pay off.

The Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee is a prime example, having coordinated the very successful new school “Truancy Program.” It is a speedy, multi-disciplinary response to school absenteeism. Truancy has decreased by 30% during the program’s first year.

The MARTY Project, a now well-established project that provides

positive outlets for at-risk kids, reports having worked with hundreds of cases since the program’s inception. The Coalition for Youth, which continues to expand the number of services offered to at-risk youth. And of course, the Restorative Justice Project, emphasizing reparative thinking in youth.

Typically operating on minimal funding, public programs need community support. If you have ideas, skills or resources that may be

Community Problems, Community Solutions!

Restorative solutions recognize that crime damages people, relationships and the community. Because the very fabric of our community is affected by crime, the involvement and input of community members is needed for effective resolution.

In late September, the Eau Claire County Restorative Justice Program will be recruiting community volunteers to facilitate victim/offender conferences.

Volunteers Mediators will make a six month commitment to the program, facilitating at least one victim/offender conference per month. The program is seeking volunteers interested in preserving community peace and connectedness. Training will be offered in basics of RJ, working with victims/offenders, conferencing, criminal justice, restorative practices, etc. in mid

October.

The Restorative Justice program hopes to draw on the diverse skills and interests of community members to form a pool of willing volunteers. If you or someone you know would be right for this experience, please call (715) 835-6521.

Empowerment through Learning: NRJTI Summer 2002 Conference

The Eau Claire County Restorative Justice Project staff attended a three-day conference at the National Restorative Justice Training Institute in St. Paul. Carolyn McLeod of the Washington County Justice Project and Dr. Mark Umbreit of the Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking the model of "humanistic mediation" for use in conferencing, small group/family circles, community circles, and sentencing circles.

This was an applied training where not only were participants encouraged to

interact with the presenters, but were required to participate in numerous hands on activities. Highlights of the conference included participation in actual conferences and circles with the help of trained mediators.

An emphasis was placed on the victim, offender, and community experience in each of the role plays. Important programmatic guidance was provided to enhance implementation efforts for new programs. Eau Claire County Restorative Justice staff were recipients of tuition scholarships

awarded to promising new RJ projects. Visit NRJTI on the web for additional information on conferencing, circles, and other restorative practices at <http://ssw.che.umn.edu.rjp>



Internationally renowned RJ experts help Eau Claire staff find "true north" during program set up phase.

Restoration for Victims

Victims need to be part of the justice equation. One victim put it well when she said, "The system is all about me without me." Restorative Justice acknowledges that victim healing needs to be central to a meaningful experience of justice. Howard Zehr, in his book, **Changing Lenses**, suggests victims need answers to some basic questions if they are to find healing:

1. What happened?
2. Why did it happen to me?
3. What if it happens again?

4. What does this mean for me and for my outlook (my view of the world, my future, my faith)?

In addition to having questions answered, victims need opportunities to express and validate their anger, fear, and pain. They need to speak the truth of what happened to them. They need to see this truth influencing case outcomes. We need to listen to what they have suffered and what they need. To the extent possible, we need to seek to give them back what they've lost. When victims' needs are unmet,

they find it difficult to have any resolution concerning the crime. Restorative approaches (which can be applied by anyone, anywhere) create environments where these needs can be addressed. True justice focuses on

**"VICTIMS NEED TO BE EMPOWERED. THEIR SENSE OF PERSONAL AUTONOMY HAS BEEN STOLEN FROM THEM BY AN OFFENDER, AND THEY NEED TO HAVE THIS SENSE OF PERSONAL POWER RETURNED TO THEM."
HOWARD ZEHR**

Accountability in Action!

As a companion service will be offered to young offenders who participate in the new Restorative Justice Program. Accountability Mentoring, offered to those youth who agree to conference with their victims, will begin in October. Accountability Mentors will be available to advise, guide, and support young offenders who are seeking to make amends to a victim.

The period of time it takes for a young

person to make repair is referred to as "reparative probation." During that time, the client will be in regular contact with his/her mentor to ensure follow-through on repair to the victim.

Mentoring responsible behavior and thinking is based on the idea that accountability without support is less than effective. The

"check-in" design of the program is used effectively for a number of psycho-social interventions in such settings as probation and addiction control.

Accountability Mentor training will be provided on a one-on-one basis. For more information, contact Loren at (715) 835-6521.

Restorative Justice Program

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E-MAIL US WITH YOUR QUESTIONS:

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Dedicated to building a safer community by discouraging juvenile crime, restoring victim well-being, and emphasizing direct offender accountability.

Fall Calendar of Events:



**Looking ahead to the
Fall Calendar of
activities...**

AUGUST 2002:

Back to school training in Restitution Thinking will be offered to academic staff for Eau Claire public schools and to a limited number of interested individuals by request. Call Jean Christianson for more information.

SEPTEMBER 2002:

Deadline to complete interest form for Volunteer Mediator for victim/offender conferencing is Friday 09-30-02. Request, fill out, and return your form to Tricia Lenz in September.

OCTOBER 2002:

Training classes for Volunteer Mediators are Tuesday and Thursday

evenings offered October 8th & 10th, and again October 15th & 17th from 5-9 p.m. Supper provided; location to be announced. Call for more information (715) 835-6521. Individual training classes will be offered for Accountability Mentors due to the small number needed by the program.

NOVEMBER 2002:

Conferencing experiences for volunteers will begin in November 2002 and continue through March 2002.

DECEMBER:

Happy Holidays...look for our winter