

More Restorative Times

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The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Eau Claire County Restorative Justice Program



Second Anniversary &

Annual Restorative Justice Meeting!

ECCRJP History:

What began as a coalition of a few dedicated individuals from diverse areas of the justice field progressed into the Restorative Justice Planning committee in June 2001. This group, driven by the desire to implement restorative principles into the current system, applied for and won a three-year, step down grant from the Office of Justice Assistance in December of 2001. By March of 2002, this group became the advisory board of the Eau Claire County Restorative Justice Program. The newly hired Program Coordinator started on March 2002 while our first cases were accepted in August.

Inside this issue:

Volunteer Corner	2
Training for Police	2
Resource Library	2
Humanistic Approaches	3
Spotlight on RJ	3
Calendar of Events	4

To mark two highly successful years and many more, you are warmly invited to join us for our Annual Meeting and Second Anniversary on **Tuesday, March 30th, 8am in room G038 in the Courthouse**. At this gathering we will recognize the many that have assisted the program over the years, namely our wonderful board, past and present, and active volunteers. The program couldn't have thrived as it has without their dedication and support. Please check out this opportunity to meet the individuals that have made restorative justice possible and find what's lies ahead.

Also, if you have only heard about victim-offender conferences or have only seen a video reenactment, then this get together is for you! With the assistance of previous participants, we will be able to reenact part of an actual case mediated by our volunteers, with the names changed, of course. Coffee and yummy baked goodies will also be provided.

While well beyond our "infancy" stage, our program is poised to expand beyond the "terrible two's!" Come and see for yourself how your Restorative Justice program is growing! Mark your calendars; we'll see you

Accountability Workshop Update

As of the last time I wrote, our Accountability Workshop was just in the implementation stages. The response to this new program has been amazing! Over **66 juveniles** have been referred. After presenting five workshops, 34 juveniles have successfully completed the coursework.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, these Accountability Workshops accept juveniles who need to focus on decision making skills while realizing the impact their risky behaviors have on those around them. Ways for the youths to think about repairing the harm and building trust after unwise choices are also taught. These twice a month

group classes have been well received among participants. Here are a few comments by the juveniles regarding what they found most helpful:

"...[learning] how my community is involved when I do anything wrong"

"I got to tell people what I feel...and that other people can relate to me about things"

"it was very fun...well not that much fun...but fun"

One question asked by some is whether this course is a "restorative practice." A common description of a restorative practice is one that includes: chances for the victim to become involved;

for the offender to take responsibility, develop competencies, and repair the harm; and where community members are actively involved.

The juveniles referred to this class do not typically have a chance to meet their victims. Class exercises therefore develop offender's competencies in decision making and accountability, while the victim and community impact are presented as well. A more impactful means of victim education could be through a victim impact panel, which is in the planning stage right now. Thanks to all who have made the Accountability

Volunteer Corner

The Eau Claire County Restorative Justice Program held their second volunteer training on November 11th & 13th, 2003. Some of the topics discussed were working with victims, offenders, and the facilitation process. A total of nine people attended the two day training. Look to our next newsletter to learn about the new volunteers.

Special thanks to Tony Beardsley for

supplying the Program with space to hold the training. Another special thanks to Susan Saxe, a current volunteer, for helping with the training and speaking with the group about her experiences as a volunteer with the program. Thanks much!

The next volunteer training is tentatively set for June. Please contact Jess for more information on volunteering or to have your name added to the list.



Restorative Justice/Community Policing Training Offered

On Thursday, April 15th, David Hines will be presenting a training on Restorative Justice and Community Policing. This class will be held from 1-5pm at Rm 121 at the Emergency Service Education Center of Chippewa Valley Technical College.

David is a 26 year veteran of policing, serving in patrol, investigations, crime prevention. He currently coordinates community policing and crime prevention programs and the community restorative conferencing program from the Woodbury (MN) Public Safety Dept.

He has conducted over 500 restorative conferences and circles over the past 8 years.

This presentation will initially be open to any local and surrounding county law enforcement agencies interested in incorporating more restorative practices into their policing. If you would like further information, contact Mike about registration and check out www.cops.usdoj.gov and for other resources/publications.

Restorative Justice Resources Available!

We are constantly increasing the resources that we have available for volunteers and community members to research. Recently, we acquired the complete video series on Victim Offender [Conferencing] from the Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking from the U of M. Each video presents a different aspect or challenge and offers demonstrations and expert advice.

We are eager to expand our library and welcome any recommendations. Feel free to stop and check it out! In the meanwhile, many have spoken on justice and peacemaking; can you match up the following quotes?

1) True peace is not merely the absence of tension. It is the presence of justice.

2) Support without accountability leads to moral weakness; accountability without support is a form of cruelty.

3) Crime is a violation of people and of interpersonal relationships. These violations create obligations, the central one being to put right the wrongs.

4) Restorative Justice has an active conception of responsibility. Responsibility is virtue of wanting to make amends in the future for something done in the past.

Can you correctly figure out who stated the previous quotes? The answers can be found at our office or also on the internet!

A) Stan Basler, Oklahoma Conf. of Churches

B) John Braithwaite, researcher on shame

C) Martin Luther King Jr., peacemaker

D) Howard Zehr, grandfather of RJ

Ponderings About the Humanistic Approach

I recently stumbled upon a journal from my college years. A question I pondered in those pages was how to add a more humanistic approach to our criminal justice system. This was five years ago, before I even considered restorative justice!

According to Mark Umbreit, *humanistic restorative justice* is driven by dialogue, deep listening, and a non-partial connection of the facilitator to the parties involved. Imagine this process on television instead of your typical courtroom drama!

Students of criminal justice have expressed frustration when studying some of the criminological theories. Namely it seems that victims and criminals are in a different category than those that study them. Jerry Miller expressed in 1988 that there are basically two different kinds of criminologists: those that think

criminals are totally different from themselves and those that don't. With some exceptions (I think extreme sociopaths are truly different), I found myself in the latter camp focusing on empathy.

Why empathy? One cannot understand what an offender or victim goes through in a crime without truly listening and opening up one's heart to their stories. By viewing another human (and their experience) as someone totally unlike ourselves, we limit our ability to see their world, their needs, and how we could truly assist them. How can we view ourselves in someone's shoes if we cannot see a piece of ourselves in them?

When you think about it, haven't each one of us either been a victim or possibly small-time

delinquent? Or maybe we had a family member or close friend who has been in this situation. The point is we can all relate somehow to one another, to victims and, possibly to a lesser degree, to offenders. We are all interconnected and can practice empathy; it simply takes time, effort, creativity, and heart.

So what conclusions did I draw from contemplating humanism in criminology? Simply this: how we as a community respond to victims and offenders shows more about us as a community than it does about the crime. A criminal offense where a victim was created and an offender is obligated to repair the harm caused is a perfect looking glass for us to see ourselves at quite possibly our best as humans relating to one another.

Featured Restorative Justice Professional: Howard Zehr

A true innovator and life-long devotee to restorative justice, Howard Zehr is currently a professor for the Conflict Transformation graduate program at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia. Considered one of the founders of Restorative Justice, he has also been referred to as the "grandfather of RJ." As the founder and director of the Elkhart County PACT, the first Victim Offender Conciliation Program in the U.S., he was truly there at the beginning of the restorative justice movement in this country.

Zehr is most noted for publishing a well-received tome titled **Changing Lenses** (Herald Press, 1990).

This cornerstone work addresses assumptions about crime and justice in terms of a flawed lens of retribution versus a restorative (and more traditional) view of crime. The photography allusions come from Zehr's love of the art and his view that we are viewing a snapshot of crime dependent on our values.

Central to Zehr's theme is that our justice system should focus upon *needs* of those that have been impacted by crime, not necessarily what is thought to be deserved.

A more recent publication, aptly titled "**The Little Book of Restorative Justice**" (Good Books 2002), is a condensed

version of his philosophy on restorative justice. Both titles are available in our resource library.

In all, Zehr defines restorative Justice as "*a process to involve...those who have a stake in a specific offense...address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible.*"

~Next Month: Dr. Mark Umbreit on "VOC and Research"

"RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IS NOT: THE OPPOSITE OF RETRIBUTION; PRIMARILY ABOUT FORGIVENESS; MEDIATION; A PARTICULAR PROGRAM; NEW OR AN AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT"
~HOWARD ZEH

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

Restorative Justice Events



MARCH 2004

Friday, 19th 10am-2pm: Quarterly Wisconsin Restorative Justice Coalition Meeting held in at the Courthouse in Whitehall, Trempealeau County. Volunteers and interested parties welcome, discussion of challenges and progress of coalition. Contact Mike or Jess at 835-5861. We plan on attending, limited room available for driving!



Tuesday, 30th 8am: Second Anniversary and Annual Restorative Justice Meeting! **Mark that calendar!** Location: Courthouse, room G038. A celebration of Eau Claire RJ, meet the new and sustaining Board members, witness a demonstration, and meet some of our volunteers!

APRIL 2004

The National Restorative Justice Training Institute through the UofM School of Social Work will start its 2004 trainings in St. Paul! They offer a wide variety of introductory and advanced trainings. Their website at <http://sww.che.umn.edu/rjp> will soon post more information.

MAY 2004

3-5th: Keystone Colorado, 2004 Restorative Community Justice Conference. Contact info@coloradorestorativejustice.org

JUNE 2004

TBA: Bi-annual volunteer training offered. Contact Jess to have your name added to the list.