



**COMMUNITY JUSTICE
INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION**

Fraser Region | British Columbia

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Crime and conflict result in harm to people. Restorative justice seeks to heal and right the wrongs, focusing on the needs of the harmed and those responsible for the harm. It encourages accountability, healing and closure for all.

————— OUR MISSION —————

To foster peacemaking and the resolution of conflict in the community through the development and application of restorative justice values, principles and processes.

————— OUR VISION —————

We aspire to the achievement of a society where the natural response to conflict and harm is more restorative than punitive, more relational than isolating, and more healing than productive of further harm.

————— OUR VALUES —————

In all of our relationships, our actions will be guided by an ethic of care characterized by safety and responsibility.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

BY DAVID L. GUSTAFSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



David L. Gustafson
Executive Director

Perhaps it is the approach of another birthday, one more milestone coming into view, or the thought of yet another AGM and another year racked up beyond the point at which so many of my friends and colleagues have retired (and a few are wondering what is wrong with me). Those milestones definitely have me feeling a little introspective as I begin this year's reports, and in that introspection I find surfacing an answer to the question "Why don't the golf links, or sailing in Micronesia, or simply days filled with greater leisure appeal to you?" The answer is a simple, and resounding, one: "MEANINGFUL WORK!"

The VOMP report this year (as in most) conveys something of the joy I have in continuing to serve as a 'practitioner' here at Community Justice Initiatives, in addition to attempting to keep a (light) hand on the helm. But witnessing transcendence for VOMP participants who are navigating the most difficult of straits with us (myself, Eroca Russell, Aaron Lyons and Susan Underwood) as guides, is only one part of it. As I look around the office, I am reminded of all that transpires here that has the other staff echoing that same resounding "MEANINGFUL WORK..." I try to visit with each of the staff fairly frequently, to hear about and engage with them about what is transpiring in their own domains. While struggles are always part of enflashing vision, I, almost inevitably hear some variation on that theme: "... meaningful work." The staff reports on the various programs in this year's annual report bear that out. What I want to convey here, is gratitude to each

of the staff, to the Board of Directors and to you, the Agency's membership, for the privilege of having what constitutes work that has meaning for all of us, and which accomplishes much in the lives we touch.

Watching the schools program grow, deepen and develop has been a joy. The "Whole Schools" vision and investment that Kaylie and Karla are bringing to their work is paying remarkable dividends. Karla, often with Christianne's able assistance, soldiers on while Kaylie is on maternity leave, nurturing the newest member of the CJI family, baby Wolfgang. We (and the students and school staff) look forward to Kaylie's September return.

Not so long ago, we toyed, as an organization, with concentrating on twin foci: the Restorative Action Program in the school district, and VOMP, the serious crime program in the prisons, while letting 'Training' take a back seat, so as not to become too badly stretched. But things change: new opportunities to take on training emerged, and first with Aaron's leadership and now Christianne's, CJI once again is a force in all three of those realms.

We anticipate that developmental work over the past year will also begin to come to fruition in the newest of our program innovations: a Collaborative Sentencing Program (CSP), which may be our most audacious foray yet into the Criminal Justice System (and attempting to find solutions for many of its ills). Stay tuned.

I particularly want to offer thanks (and Kudos) to Jennifer Siemens who stepped into the role of Acting Executive Director during my three month study leave (back to the University of Leuven, Belgium), and, (no surprise) with support from superbly organized Saskia Epp, ably fulfilled that role in addition to her other duties.

To each of you who make life at CJI deeply meaningful, you peacebuilders who so frequently are caught practicing "radical kindness", I offer my personal thanks. It is a joy to journey with you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016/2017

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Fae Chato-Manchuk	Vice Chair
Alison McVeigh	Secretary
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Susan Underwood	VOMP Mediator
Eroca Russell	VOMP Mediator
Aaron Lyons	VOMP Mediator, Trainer
Kaylie Maughan	School Program Coordinator
Karla Woelbern	School Program Facilitator
Christianne Paras	Training and Education Coordinator
Jennifer Siemens	Office Manager
Saskia Epp	Administrative Assistant

TRAINING AND EDUCATION REPORT

BY CHRISTIANNE PARAS, TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATOR



Christianne Paras
Training and Education
Coordinator

This has been an excellent year for the Training and Education Program – supporting local communities in building capacity and fostering healthy relationships, as well as continuing to work across provincial and national borders to enhance knowledge and skills in restorative justice.

CJI was honoured to be the recipient of a generous grant from the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to offer the ‘Advanced Restorative Justice Practice Fellowship’ for leaders and representatives

of Community Accountability Programs (CAP) and Indigenous Justice Programs (IJP, formerly Aboriginal Justice Strategy Programs) across BC. The purpose of this initiative was to extend the capacity of restorative justice service providers by offering advanced training opportunities to help committed practitioners further deepen their perspectives of RJ values and principles, and develop skills for facilitation using a Victim Offender Conferencing model. There were two cohorts for the Fellowship project; each received a 4-day initial training and then a 3-day follow-up training. The initiative also included an inter-agency peer support component in which those who took part in the training partnered with another participating organization to set individualized goals and offer support and feedback for each other.



Langley Fellowship Cohort

Shanna Grant-Warmald from Restorative Justice Victoria, who took part in the Langley Fellowship, shared that:

“Being part of the seven-day Fellowship was such a gift for me and my program, Restorative Justice Victoria. Two volunteers and I were able to learn from top restorative justice practitioners and connect with peers from across BC in an intimate environment that fostered significant advances in our work. It reinforced the need to be acutely aware of trauma, victims’ needs, shame, and our ethical responsibilities. I really appreciated the combination of practical skills, group discussion, roleplaying, and research that we participated in, and have taken back so many teachings to clients, colleagues, and volunteers.”

Kim Rowe from Peoples Haven, Tahltan Band said of the training:

“Victim Offender Conferencing is a valuable tool, especially in our line of work in Community Justice, making connections in our Northern Area is also very valuable for a client. I found our last meeting in Kelowna to be very knowledgeable especially in regards to the differences and commonalities between the restorative justice and the IJS programs. Being able to participate in this training whether in Langley or in Kelowna has certainly broadened my knowledge of just what not only this Province, but Canada is doing to help lower the amount of our Aboriginal people involved with the legal justice system.”

I have been elated and humbled to have collaborated in the delivery of this initiative with esteemed CJI trainer and facilitator Aaron Lyons, and Ron Wiebe-award recipient Alan Edwards. Alan works with the Correctional Service of Canada’s Restorative Opportunities Program for Serious Crime (based in Edmonton), and his creative, responsive approach contributed so much to the success of the project. In addition, it was wonderful to see connections being cultivated and relationships being strengthened between participants and organizations in the Fellowship.

Another exciting project, called ‘Building Vibrant Communities’ has resulted from CJI’s partnership with the North Shore Disability Resource Centre and Community Resource Network. Together, we have created a facilitator toolkit and a three-part workshop on community dialogue circle processes. This initiative began due to conflicts in congregate living settings such as seniors’ homes, which resulted in negative community relations, police interactions, and evictions. Through this project, a number of workshops have been offered to program coordinators, managers, advocacy and support workers of various organizations for mental health, new immigrants, seniors and youth. We are very grateful for funding from the BC Association of Community Response Networks, the District of North Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver, the North Shore Soroptomists, the Province of British Columbia and the United Way of the Lower Mainland.

The Training and Education Program also continues to support the growth of restorative justice internationally. This year, we were privileged to host a group of South Korean restorative justice practitioners. We began with a circle facilitated by Brookwood Secondary students involved in restorative action, followed by presentations by local restorative justice groups. We would like to extend many thanks to the Brookwood counsellors, and the students who facilitated the session. Next was a visit to Abbotsford Restorative Justice and Advocacy Association. Our visitors’ time in the Lower Mainland concluded with a two day ‘Heart of Restorative Justice’ training workshop. The group expressed their gratitude to CJI for hosting the day of presentations and providing the training. They shared how much they learned and look forward to visiting again!



Students from CJI’s Restorative Action Program
with visiting South Korean restorative justice practitioners

The underlying strength of the Training and Education Program comes from its network of remarkable trainers, and its outstanding, constantly evolving training curricula. I am looking forward to seeing the program continue to grow and deliver its exceptional and sought after service throughout Canada and beyond over the coming year.

VICTIM OFFENDER MEDIATION PROGRAM

BY DAVID L. GUSTAFSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"I would like to leave you with this poem which I have had on my wall for the better part of my sentence", Pierre (not his real name) wrote:

"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensibility and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."

'Pierre', just weeks before, had encountered two people very much like those described in the text he had quoted: beautiful people; a husband and wife who had lost their son to murder. Pierre was one of seven men ultimately convicted of the death of 27 year old Graeme, a naïve young man who had gotten caught up in things, and with people, beyond anything he had bargained for, ferrying 17 kilograms of cocaine in hopes of some quick cash, across the country from Vancouver to Ottawa. When the bus he had taken pulled into the station, Graeme abandoned his luggage, the bags containing the cocaine, fearing that the police parked there might have somehow been tipped off and were waiting for him. The bags went into the lost and found at the bus station. That story, however, didn't 'wash' with the gang awaiting the delivery. They kidnapped Graeme, took him to a warehouse in Montreal and beat him over the course of the next few days, injuring him so severely that blood clots formed in his legs. It appears that his tormenters finally decided to test Graeme's story. He was unchained and released to return to the bus station to claim the bags he said he had abandoned there. He was able to retrieve the bags and began to walk down the street with them toward a rendezvous point when he collapsed. The blood clots in his legs had migrated to his lungs. Paramedics attended him and loaded him into an ambulance, together with his bags. Enroute to the hospital, Graeme disclosed to the attendants what had happened, and how he happened to be so badly injured. Tragically, he succumbed to those injuries on the way to the hospital.

How Graeme ever became involved is something of a mystery. Pro-social, health and sports minded, "the friendliest person you could meet... always willing to help others", never involved with drugs or anything unlawful, Graeme was an unlikely candidate for criminal activity. In fact, it may be that his utter reliability was the thing that recommended him for recruitment as someone who could be depended upon to convey this one shipment across the country. Tragically, however it was that he became involved, his part cost this gentle young man his life. That was July of 2005.

Over the next years, his grief stricken parents were embroiled in four sentencing hearings for a total of seven co-accused, all of whom pled guilty, travelling back to Ottawa for each of those proceedings. Remarkable support from very caring and involved police and convictions for all seven accused met the need for some degree of public vindication, but did not satisfy their need for information. There was still too much shrouded in mystery.

Life carried on, as it must, the darkness of it all penetrated by light on occasion, but those occasions were often a double edged sword for each of the family members: what should have been unmitigated joy so clearly marked by the absence of the beloved son, brother, nephew, grandson.

Ian had been a respected funeral director, and Marlyn a support worker at the funeral home, professions which, quite understandably, they could no longer pursue. Ian began his own business, working long hours in physically demanding work, which at least forced concentration on the tasks at hand, for a time, each day. Marlyn, though a member of a Roman Catholic Church, herself, had previously worked as an Administrative Assistant at Peace Mennonite Church, where she heard about a concept that intrigued her: "Restorative Justice". She 'Googled' the term, and the search brought up CJI's website, a description of the Victim Offender Mediation Program, stories very similar to her family's story, and contacts for the staff. She called the office, and Sandi Bergen and I met with her scant hours later. I recall that as a remarkable meeting, with one of the strongest, yet most compassionate and gracious people I had ever met. We arranged for Marlyn and Ian to meet with Robert, another of our VOMP participant alumni, himself a family survivor of homicide,

another courageous, strong and gentle soul. Robert shared his family's story with them, describing how his participation had assisted him to begin to heal and transcend the many years of suffering in the aftermath of his sister's murder. Soon after, Marlyn and Ian made the choice to participate in VOMP, in hopes that it would prove as healing and beneficial for them as it had for Robert, his wife, and the offender in their case.

Ultimately, Marlyn and Ian met with three of the seven co-accused in prisons more than halfway across the country, each time with our accompaniment, start to finish. Each of those meetings were powerful and profound in their own ways, and would take a volume to describe. The last of those meetings was with Pierre. We met in a small boardroom at the prison. Where normally we would meet with participants across a five foot boardroom table from one another - at least to begin with a sense of physical distance and safety - this time, Marlyn and Ian, veterans now of the process, suggested that we didn't need the table. We chose to meet in a circle, with our wheeled boardroom chairs drawn close together. I'll never forget the sight of this diminutive mother, chair pulled up close to Pierre's, their knees almost touching, fearlessly engaging with the 6'2", 190 lb., Pierre, who openly acknowledged his former criminal lifestyle, she and Ian courageously sharing with him what life had been like for them since the news of Graeme's death, then respectfully listening and asking clarifying questions as they invited his response. Most people likely can't picture such a scene without imagining the expression of hurt so deep it would spill into rage and the need to wound the one responsible for an enormous reservoir of pain. But that rarely happens in this process, and didn't on this day. There is no question that the hurt was communicated in the telling of the story, and no question that Pierre heard it deeply and responded with a degree of empathy and articulation (and in his second language), that no one could have anticipated. But the intent was not to harm, but to heal; not to revisit the pain and loss in endless cycles, but to seek to transcend it. It is amazing how, even in the most heinous offences and tragic circumstances, meaningful dialogue, speaking from the heart, responsibility taking by offenders and the offering of genuine apology, can play so profound a part in enabling healing and transformation. Perhaps more astonishing, still, is the impact on people like Pierre when they are met by people like Ian and Marlyn, whose intent is, in part, to challenge the other to "do no harm, to anyone, by any means, from this point on". As this meeting came to a close, Ian and Marlyn spoke words that left Pierre almost speechless. "You have apologized for the pain you have caused our family, and that has meaning for us; we forgive you, as much in order to free ourselves as to free you from the burden of this." "All that we ask is that you do not treat this lightly, that you offer to others the grace and mercy we have offered you; that you do no further harm." Then, Ian, rose to his feet, took a step toward Pierre, wrapped his arms around him and hugged him: "I forgive you", he said, "for your part in Graeme's death." Pierre was not the sort to shed tears even in the face of this, but the emotion was clear. He quietly returned the embrace, nodded, almost silently forming the words "Thank you." and was escorted from the room to return to his cell.

A few months later, a letter from Pierre addressed to Ian and Marlyn arrived at our offices. I took it first to Marlyn's work place, where she invited me to sit with her as she read it. Pierre had written:

Nothing could have prepared me for the impact our meeting has had on me. You have given me the opportunity to begin to understand how my actions have impacted your lives in ways otherwise I may never have had the chance to realize. I must tell you that you are both now an inspiration to me and without a doubt you both are two incredible

human beings that can only inspire me to become a much better person. I thank you for the kindness, patience and generosity you have shown me. Facing both of you was an unknown feeling. The last thing I wanted to do was to cause you more pain and suffering. You have both made such a strong impression on me that out of the blue I now catch myself thinking about you. I would like to apologize one last time for the pain I have caused your family and I'm truly sorry for the role I played in Graeme's death. From this point on I can only wish that your whole family finds peace and happiness. I am a man of my word and I will keep my promise to you [to harm no one else in the future]....I would ask you to keep me in your prayers as I will do the same. I truly wish you both and your daughter the best and I want to leave you with this poem that I have had on my wall for the better part of my sentence:

"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensibility and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."

Enclosed with the letter was a rosary that a loved one had given to Pierre, with a simple P.S. "Somebody special gave me this cross and I would like to give it to you. Sincerely yours, Pierre."

As she read these final words, Marlyn's fingers traced the beads of the rosary, familiar to her from childhood 'til the present, and through quiet tears, she said, in her lovely Scottish accents, "This is incredible... when we began it was to get answers to our questions, and hold him to account. We never could have foreseen an outcome like this."

Before Christmas, Ian wrote to Pierre, one more exchange in which the value of the process they had been through was underscored, thanking Pierre for being willing to receive us and to engage in the process in what had proven to be healing ways. He added: "...the rosary you sent has become 'A Sign of Peace' between us."

In relating these stories, especially those in which the themes of apology, repentance, forgiveness and absolution figure highly, I almost always feel compelled to add a caveat, such as this one, borrowed from last year's report:

It should be clearly stated that not everyone who seeks to participate in VOMP does so motivated to forgive (or to seek forgiveness). In fact, many victims/survivors start in a far different place, simply needing answers to questions never answered in the Criminal Justice System's processing of their cases. Some need respite from desperate pain, and hope that their experience will be as helpful as that of others whose stories they have heard. Some seek what they describe as "healing": a new degree of resolution of the trauma...hoping for an increase of peace and greater resilience for themselves and their loved ones. Others still, (both victims and offenders) participate in hopes that their involvement will impact the other for good...

Whatever the motivation, most find a good deal of what they were looking for when they determined to ask for an encounter with "The Other". And, as the participants...here did, some report experiencing that granting forgiveness can set both themselves and their offenders free in ways they had never expected nor anticipated.

In cases such as these, the one responsible for the harms must recognize that there is truly nothing s/he can offer tangibly that will suffice to remedy the damage done, and that apology is inadequate. Martha Minow would go so far as to say that "An apology is inevitably inadequate."¹ But there is a paradox here, which Nic Tavuchis in his marvelous book

Mea Culpa sees and describes: "An apology, no matter how sincere or effective, does not and cannot *undo* what has been done. And yet, in a mysterious way and according to its own logic, this is precisely what it manages to do."² "Mysteriously, in a simple speech expressing regret, a ritual exchange takes place that enables healing, even in the aftermath of serious offences."³

While Marlyn and Ian deal with frequent reminders of the loss of their son, they have found freedom in meeting with the men responsible as well as resilience and new levels of meaning in the ways in which they have chosen to live their lives. Marlyn continues to work for a funeral home: this time as a coordinator for families who have tragically lost loved ones, especially in cases of homicide or suicide. She has been honoured for her foundational work with the BC Bereavement helpline, and for the self-help groups she runs. She and Ian are regulars (and regular hosts) for the groups CJI began a number of years ago for others who had participated as victims/survivors in our VOMP program, a simple pot-luck gathering in one of our homes that brings together a group of people who have sustained losses of this magnitude, and who are able to provide deeply meaningful support for one another. Ian and Marlyn are marvelous examples of folk of the sort that Dr. Judith Herman had in mind when she wrote:

Most survivors seek the resolution of their traumatic experience within the confines of their personal lives. But a significant minority, as a result of the trauma, feel called upon to engage in a wider world.

These survivors recognize a political or religious dimension in their misfortune and discover that they can transform the meaning of their personal tragedy by making it the basis for social action. While there is no way to compensate for an atrocity, there is a way to transcend it, by making it a gift to others. [For these individuals,] the trauma is redeemed only when it becomes the source of a survivor mission.⁴

That sense of vocation, of calling to a survivor mission, is captured in a quotation that continues to compel Marlyn to serve in just these ways. She reminds herself (and others of us) that: "Hope has two beautiful daughters – Anger and Courage – Anger at the way things are and the Courage to change them." – St. Augustine.

Not everyone who participates in VOMP has the same experience of transcendence or transformation of their personal tragedy, but many, over the 27 year history of the program, have. The notions we had at the beginning, of melding learnings from the worlds of victim offender mediation, peacebuilding, trauma recovery and offender treatment programming have been vindicated and have borne fruit in many lives. From humble beginnings here in the West, VOMP has matured and grown into a national program, (now known as Restorative Opportunities) which is available to victims/survivors and the federal prisoners who caused them harm from Coast to Coast. In July of 2017 we, Sandi Bergen, Jamie Scott and I, will be training yet another cadre of facilitators for the program in the other regions of the country, since the demand for our services continues to grow beyond any expectation that we might have had for the program when we originally conceived of it and took our first tentative steps.

I want to offer here our thanks to all who have placed their trust in us, in fact, whose daily lives teach us, "That there is hope. That to be instruments of mercy fills us up. And that sharing love and passion heals us, and gives our lives cohesion, direction, and meaning"⁵; to the Marlyns and Ians, who have taught us these things as we've journeyed together, at every step, profound thanks.

² Tavuchis, N. 1991. Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p. 33).

³ Gustafson, D.L. 2017. "Thoughts on the Impact of Apology", University of Leuven Institute of Criminology, p. 4.

⁴ Herman, Judith Lewis. 1997. Trauma And Recovery, p. 207

⁵ Laura Locke, a review of Anne Lamott's *Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy*, Riverhead Books; 2017, in *Kolbe Times*, (April 2017), retrieved from: <http://www.kolbetimes.com/hallelujah-anyway/>

¹ Minow, M. 1998. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*. (Boston: Beacon Press, p. 114).

RESTORATIVE ACTION PROGRAM

BY KAYLIE MAUGHAN, SCHOOL PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Kaylie Maughan
School Program Coordinator

With 17 years under its belt, the Langley Restorative Action Program has withstood the test of time. It continues to rise to meet new challenges amidst a sea of continual changes happening in the community, resources, staffing, and school culture.

While our methods and modes of delivery may change to adapt to new needs and sociocultural awareness, our program has always focused on the importance of experiential based learning in a circle format. This allows youth to have a safe space to explore topics related to conflict, such as creating connection, empathy, understanding and coping with emotions, anger, arousal, perspective taking and assumptions, as well as active

listening and communication skills. Having explored these topics through role play, dialogue, discussion, and hands on activities, youth can practice resolving conflict in their own lives based on restorative principles. Older youth in secondary schools can undertake formal training with us in these skill sets to become Restorative Peer Mediators for their schools, helping to resolve the conflicts of their younger peers, and leading club meetings.

When more complex and serious cases arise, our growing team of professionally trained Restorative Mediators are ready to respond. We work closely with the schools, district, police and mental health teams to provide a more adaptive response.

This year marks another year of growth for our team as we were fortunate to add Karla Woelbern as a professional restorative mediator and circle practitioner. She has been a practicing restorative justice mediator for a number of years and has a plethora of experience working with a diverse range of youth. Together, alongside Cristy Watson, our long-time colleague and district teacher, we are a very passionate team!

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Our ongoing mission to implement a whole school approach to our program is finally seeing impactful results. We can now report that a number of schools have had every classroom and staff member trained or involved in the Restorative Action Program, either through our 10 week OWN IT circles program or mediation training. One of our most prominent examples of this is Yorkson Creek Middle School, the biggest school in the Langley District with over 1200 students (grades 6-8) and over 60 staff members. This school has been fully trained and many of the youth have had refresher or advanced training. Trained teachers are beginning to use our OWN IT curriculum independently. They feel it provides a useful method and guide to resolving conflicts in the classroom and helps them to talk about important issues youth may be facing that impacts their classwork. Alex Hope Elementary has also been steady on the path to having a fully trained school, after contracting us to train their entire staff during their annual professional training day in February.

This year we also felt the need to refocus our energy on our secondary school programs, both to support the Restorative Action Clubs that are already thriving, and to get more schools on board. We provided a number of Restorative Peer Mediator trainings to ensure these programs were meeting the needs of both the youth, and schools involved. In total we trained six high school cohorts in Restorative Peer Mediation over three full 4-day trainings, with over 125 youth ages 13-18 attending. These numbers may seem minimal, but in fact represent a 60% increase in numbers, and three new schools willing to create peer mentorship programs with staff dedicated to their development and continuance. Moreover, since the training these more mature students receive is very intense and impactful, students must self-select and commit to four full days of training in order to receive certification. Many of these peer mediators meet on a weekly basis to connect with each other, develop their skills and work with school staff during conflict. One of these schools, Brookwood Secondary, went above and beyond this year, and hosted a CJI training with visiting Korean restorative justice practitioners and teachers with the peer mentor youth

from the school leading circle discussions and activities, and connecting with youth interpreters from the school to act as guides to the process. Watching these youth take the lead with such skill was such a wonderful thing to see, and I know the Korean professionals were amazed and full of questions for them. In order to keep these new developments energized, we hope to organize and fund an annual two day retreat for these youth mediators where they can connect with other peer mediators in their district, build and advance their skills, and come away with new commitment and energy towards the program.

As we grow exponentially every year in our caseloads for mediation, the need for training, and in the number of circle programs requested by schools, we are continually searching for new ways to get the word out to the community about what we do, and our need for funding. Although most school staff have heard of our program, most parents are often caught off guard when they hear that their child has participated in our program and they want more information on what it is all about. We were so grateful this year to find the funding to design a short video that explains the real needs for this program and the positive impact we seek to create (the video can be found on the CJI website). We hope to use it to help clearly explain our vision, while connecting us to funders who have similar hopes for their community. We debuted the video at our Gala fundraiser this year, and from the looks of the audience, it had the heartfelt impact we had been hoping for. The Gala also gave us time to reflect on the 17 years of development this program has benefitted from and honour some of the amazing people who have given so much to see it evolve. We also created the Community Spirit Awards to honour the teachers, schools and sponsors that embrace the restorative approach in ways that empower youth. We hope to continue these awards in the future and find a way to celebrate and honour the impacts the myriad of people who support and energize this program. Without them constantly working with us in a connected tapestry of compassionate community, we would cease to be the comprehensive responsive program we are.

2016/2017 VOMP STATISTICS

Referrals accepted: April 1, 2016 to March 31, 201725
Active cases in process as of April 1, 2016.....91

Significant Contact Victim or Offender314
(Face-to-Face dialogue meetings, telephone, written, in-person; includes support, therapy and after care)

YOUTH REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITH RESTORATIVE ACTION

"After taking the Mediation Training, I realized that I wasn't as good a communicator as I thought...that I was part of the problem and why I was so frustrated when talking to my close friends and adults around me. I was not really listening or hearing at all. I want to work harder on these skills."

Grade 11 Participant in Restorative Action Peer Mediator Training

"I found out in circle that I was not the only one who lost [a family member] and that made me so happy...we are friends now"

Grade 4 Participant in OWN IT Peacercircles

"I felt overwhelmed and unhappy and thought no one would ever understand why I did it, or want to be friends with me again. You [Mediators] helped me understand that even though it would be hard this could get better."

Grade 8 Voluntary Participant in Restorative Mediation

"It was so much fun, with all the games and get to know you activities, I got to make new friends that are real, not based on popularity or who has the best tech, which was helpful because I was alone as the new kid for so long."

Grade 6 Participant in OWN IT Peacercircles

"I was mad that the other person would not take responsibility for what they had done to me. Even though we could not do a mediation with the [offender], helping me sit down with the people who spread the rumours and made it worse, was such a good thing, even though it was scary. You guys helped me feel safe and I got to hear how badly they felt about it, and together we figured out a good way to fix things...[Now] I walk to school with some of them every day, and it really shows me they care and don't want it to happen again"

Grade 9 Voluntary Participant in Restorative Mediation

"I still think about the Iceberg [activity] all the time. Like when people get in my face or take my things, or are mean, I think what might be in their iceberg making them cold. Maybe they have things going on at home, or their parents are divorcing, or they feel sad. It makes me want to forgive them more and find out how to help."

Grade 5 Participant in OWN IT Peacercircles

2016 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

In June 2016, Community Justice Initiatives announced the Restorative Action Program scholarship recipients: Karlie La Rose from Langley Fine Arts School and Rachael Greenwood from Aldergrove Community Secondary School.

These two students have been active Restorative Peer Mentors in their schools for more than 4 years. Each has exemplified the values of the Restorative Action Program in their dedication to younger peers and

compassionate leadership within their schools. Both volunteer their time regularly in peer to peer mentorship and student council, while maintaining part time jobs and coursework. We are proud to have such role models in our community!

Rachael plans to pursue a career in counselling at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, while Karlie would like to pursue studies in pediatric nursing. We wish them the best of luck!



Left to right:
Kaylie Maughan,
Karlie La Rose,
Madeleine DeLittle



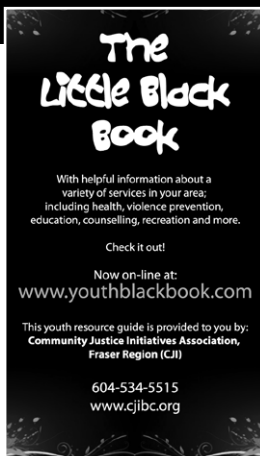
Left to right:
Kaylie Maughan,
Rachael Greenwood,
Kari Poole

"I have applied the skills I have learned as Restorative Mediator in my own life, when communicating in high stress situations with family, teachers and coaches. I dream of helping families deal with trauma and explore solutions together, that is its own reward." – Karlie La Rose

"I have seen how the work has mended relationships...I have noticed the people I have mediated continue to stay in healthy relationships with those they were in conflict with; it has made my community a happier more peaceful place. It has inspired me to a career path that involves helping others." – Rachael Greenwood

We are thrilled to honor these two bright young women with our Restorative Action Program scholarships. We are grateful for their contributions to positive school environment, and know they will continue to impact the community, whatever direction they choose to take.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK



Each year our goal is to make the Little Black Book website available and accessible to more community agencies, service providers, community policing, institutions that serve youth, as well as secondary and elementary schools. The objective is to make youth aware of services available to them in their communities and to provide a pro-active tool in helping them independently make healthy and responsible choices.

We distribute wallet sized information cards, free of charge, to all schools and community service organizations in in Langley, Surrey, White Rock, Delta, and Maple Ridge. The youth are encouraged to access the website for any help, questions or useful information they may need. The website and important numbers are listed on the card and can easily be carried in a wallet or purse. We have designed the card to be a convenient reminder that the Little Black Book is available online at www.youthblackbook.com

Last year we distributed over 15,000 wallet sized information cards. Our goal is to replenish the supplies of these cards annually. This project is not only a beneficial resource guide, but is also essential for the youth in our communities. We are dedicated to ensuring that it continues to provide the assistance that they need.

RESTORATIVE ACTION REFLECTION: WORDS FROM A STUDENT MEDIATOR

Three years ago I was sitting in a circle with a group of my classmates, not knowing what to expect from the Restorative Action training. What I wasn't aware of yet is the amazing opportunities, improved social and leadership skills, and lasting friendships it would give me.

I have now been a restorative mediator for the past three years, and through doing mediations, coaching in training sessions for younger students, as well as even having the opportunity to co-facilitate training at another high school, I have grown so much as a person and gained much respect for the hardworking people of Community Justice Initiatives for the beneficial work they do for students. Being a part of Restorative Action was one of the best decisions I have made because since I hope to go into education someday, it gave me valuable experience working with students my age and younger through difficult situations in a peaceful and meaningful manner. I entered training three years ago eager, a bit immature, nervous, and unsure. As I soon graduate from Brookwood Secondary, I will leave confident, happy, excited, and still eager to take on any challenges or opportunities that come my way; and I am happy to say that Restorative Action has helped me achieve this level of confidence. Having the opportunity to

work with such amazing mentors at Community Justice Initiatives like Kaylie, Christianne, and Karla has helped me make positive connections with others in my community, and most importantly, they believed in me. They are powerful and selfless women who want to help people, and that is what my goal is as well. Restorative Action has also helped students in my school, as some students are often scared to speak to adults. This program in schools gives students a chance to connect with current classmates in an environment that is non-judgmental, non-bias, confidential, and uplifting.

As I cross the stage this June, I will take the positive experiences and connections I have made over the years with me to UBC, where I will be studying International Relations and French. I am looking forward to life as I am entering the adult world soon, but whenever I am experiencing a conflict, I will use the problem solving and critical thinking skills I have attained over the years from this wonderful program and organization. I am forever grateful. Community Justice Initiatives, thank you.

Cheers, Ashley Haines

Brookwood Secondary School, Grade 12

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

BY JEFF CHRISTIAN, BOARD CHAIR



Jeff Christian
Board Chair

Once again, it is my privilege to write a few words on behalf of the Board of Directors.

I thought I'd tell you a bit about what being a board member with Community Justice Initiatives is like, just to make this year's edition a little different.

We are a diverse group of lay citizens, three women and four men; with business, education and government service backgrounds. We have a wide range of life experiences. So, when we

are called upon to discuss an issue, we bring much to the table, and the discussions can be quite lively! We like each other, and appreciate the contributions we each make, which I think enables us to work well together. We also like and admire our Executive Director and our staff.

As citizen board members, we enjoy a unique insight into the work of CJJ. We are over and over again reminded of the impact restorative

justice processes have on the lives of ordinary people in our community. I think this is important. The only down side to it is that for the most part, it is not something most people know about.

To highlight one example, we have an excellent Restorative Action Program working together with the Langley School District to teach and utilize conflict resolution methods and skills in our schools. Children in elementary schools are taught to use these processes. When they grow older and move on into high school, selected students are taught how to act as peer mediators, using the same skills and processes. In this way, we reduce the likelihood of violence, and the frequency with which students sometimes abuse others, electronically and/or in person. Students develop skills that are forever transferrable to any part of their lives. Imagine a school world where inevitable conflict is managed in a positive way, instead of being submerged, erupting into violence, or escalating online where so many students spend their time. We are not naïve enough to think all conflict will always be manageable in this way, but we do know that much of it can. Have a look at our new video about this program on our website. It is a powerful idea.

Finally, I would like to say a word (in layperson's language) about the core intent of restorative justice, which is to repair (to the extent possible) the harm that has been done. BY DEFINITION, that means the concerns, hurts and fears of those injured are at the heart of the process. It also means BY DEFINITION that those who have transgressed in some way MUST ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY for their actions. These two important core aspects make restorative justice processes far more rigorous than what we see today in our court systems; far more victim centred; far more effective when and where they can be applied. There is nothing "soft" about it. In fact, it can be far tougher to face your victim than to face an anonymous judge.

I invite you to think about it. Are those core purposes not what we want from a justice system? If you think so, what can YOU do to help?

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The faithful, ongoing support of individuals, organizations, foundations and community groups helped to sustain CJJ's programs over the last year. The Board of Directors and staff would like to acknowledge, and extend appreciation to these contributors:

Coast Capital Savings Langley Mennonite Fellowship
Correctional Service of Canada Langley School District #35
Hamber Foundation Province of British Columbia
TD Bank (Walnut Grove)

LITTLE BLACK BOOK SUPPORT

City of Langley Community Grant City of Surrey Community Grant
Township of Langley



COMMUNITY JUSTICE
INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION

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