



For immediate release

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Courtesy photo: MaldenPSC4RJ.jpg with following blurb: L-R: Dana Brown, Malden High School Principal; Maria Luise, Special Assistant to Mayor Christenson; Kevin Molis, Malden Police Chief; Candace Julyan of C4RJ; Ron Janowicz, Director of Malden High School Pathways Program; Jennifer Larson Sawin, C4RJ Executive Director; Ofc. Brian Tilley, Malden Police.

Malden High School teams up with Communities For Restorative Justice on Grant Project
Pilot will offer restorative practices in a public school setting.

Feb. 24 2014 -- Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ) and Malden High School have been awarded a \$21,000 grant to pilot the use of restorative practices in a school setting. The generous grant was given by a family foundation in Massachusetts to remain anonymous.

Restorative practices in a school setting include an array of measures aimed at building community and responding to harm. Schools across the Commonwealth and the nation have been adopting restorative practices with evidence mounting that “zero-tolerance” policies and other disciplinary measures are ineffective at curbing hurtful and disrespectful behavior. Schools are looking for alternatives to suspension and expulsion that address the needs of the student causing harm, and those who have been affected in the school community.

“This is a natural outgrowth of our 13-year partnership with communities and police in restorative justice,” says C4RJ Executive Director Jennifer Larson Sawin. “We look forward to an exciting year working at Malden High School.” The project will involve teacher training and coaching by C4RJ staff, Christy Barbee, Jennifer Larson Sawin, and long-time Malden resident, Candace Julyan.

The project has been developed with the full backing of Malden’s Mayor Gary Christenson, who is known for his ambitious agenda in the City. “We have a track record in Malden for applying forward-thinking approaches to benefit our youth,” says Christenson. “Piloting restorative practices here in Malden provides an effective strategy for long-term change that helps our youth build relationships, strengthen their connection to the community and ultimately reduce violence.”

Superintendent of Schools Dr. David DeRuosi affirms that there’s been strong support for the use of restorative practices to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, saying, “We need to equip our students with life-long learning skills like decision-making, empathy, and responsibility.”

Work will begin with a pilot project at Malden High School’s Pathways Program, an alternative approach to high school studies that allows students to study outside the regular day program. Says Pathways Program Director Ron Janowicz, “We’ve been preparing for this grant for several months. I’m eager to see how the training and rollout will take shape. This is a great place to start.”

C4RJ began in Concord in 2000. Today, C4RJ partners with 12 communities and is overseen by a board of directors. Its scores of volunteers work closely with law enforcement and others affected by crime throughout the process. More than 600 criminal matters have been referred to C4RJ since 2000. In recent years, C4RJ has been working with schools interested in incorporating restorative principles and practices. To learn more about C4RJ, visit www.C4RJ.com.