



THE TALKING PIECE

On Compassion – “to bear with...”

By Jennifer Larson Sawin, Executive Director

Earlier this month, I was invited to attend a lecture on compassion. The event was organized by Mr. Malcolm Astley, a man who had been hurt immeasurably by the loss of his daughter Lauren to violence. Since then, he has been intent on learning how we are capable of feeling deeply for—and with—one another. (After all, the Latin roots of compassion, mean “to bear with” someone.) The lecturer was convinced that one way we can teach compassion is to model it. With heart, commitment, and consistency.

I believe that we seek to act with compassion here at C4RJ. Our volunteers, many of whom have been with us since our earliest days twelve years ago, show great compassion in their work. With those who’ve caused harm, our volunteers prod and encourage. With those who are hurt by crime, our volunteers stand by and support.

To mark April as Volunteer Awareness Month, we profile two volunteers. We are grateful to them, nearly 100 of their peer volunteers and our many supporters who help fulfill our mission to heal, hold accountable, and put right.

CASE STORY

Victim comes out “a Winner”

By Christy Barbee, Chief Case Coordinator

John* was a talented young man, good with his hands and smart to boot, but his judgment could get the better of him. One day, police were alerted by a caller who spotted a young man exiting a shop when the owner wasn’t there. A trail of clues led police to John. He was arrested for breaking and entering, then appeared in court, where the incident was continued without a finding on the condition that he stay out of trouble.

John soon got in trouble for making false calls to 911. When the police traced the calls to him, and the officer asked John what he thought he should do to make amends for the two incidents, John replied, “Maybe work for Mr. King.” Mr. King was the owner of the shop John had earlier entered without permission. Turns out some of Mr. King’s tools had gone missing, too. As for the 911 calls, John said he made them because he wasn’t feeling safe at home.

And thus began John’s and Mr. King’s experience with restorative justice. Sitting together, John and Mr. King got to know each other and came to an

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* This story’s names and precise circumstances have been altered for confidentiality. Victim quote is verbatim.

INSPIRED EFFORTS Volunteer Profiles

Di Clymer
Concord, MA



What brought you to C4RJ?

What brought me to C4RJ was a deep frustration from witnessing prisoners

disconnected from their crimes. At the time, I was coordinator for Concord Prison Outreach which offered inmates insights, skills and hope. But few fully understood the harm they caused. With court procedures often masking the issues, inmates didn’t face their victims, feel their pain, repair the harm, earn self-respect, or discover empathy.

When we heard about the restorative justice work of Judge Barry Stuart in the Yukon,¹ we asked him to come to Concord. He spoke at West Concord Union Church and people were enthusiastic about the concept. Chief Len Wetherbee (ret.) later offered the first concrete proposal to begin a restorative justice effort in Concord through the police department. The rest is history.

What keeps you here?

What keeps me involved with C4RJ

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¹ Judge Stuart implemented restorative justice in the Yukon (Canada) Territorial Court in the early 1990s. His vision paved the way for many restorative justice initiatives in North America.

Volunteer Profiles *continued from page 1*

are the successes I see: healing for a victim, learning and growth of an offender, appreciation of loved ones. Most importantly for me, the program gives someone who's caused harm a place to listen to the hurt and anger of a victim, family, and community members. We all participate in determining repair. And everyone can witness when something good has happened. Satisfaction happens infrequently within the criminal justice system. It is exciting to witness it first-hand, outside prison walls, and within a caring community.

Share a brief story.

One case that delighted me was when the kids who had played a cruel prank on a younger student agreed to develop a section for the school health curriculum on "The Harm Caused by Pranks." They did an excellent job putting their new awareness of such an offense to good use for the community.

What are others saying about Di?

"Di brings her varied life experience, compassion, and patience combined with a willingness to enforce the boundaries when necessary. I've seen her gain trust with a fairly self-centered offender.

Di was able to help her begin to repair the relationship with her mother."

– *Keith Man, Case Coordinator Blue Team*



Bob McGowan Acton, MA

What brought you to C4RJ?

I first heard of C4RJ eight years ago when I was at a gathering in Concord and met Jean Bell, one of the founders. In 2007, Det. Keith Campbell (Acton PD) told me that C4RJ was looking for a local resident to help coordinate expansion. I agreed to do that and after learning more about the program, I decided to volunteer.

What keeps you here?

I've been impressed with the impact that the process has, both on victims and on those who have committed offenses. Victims have the opportunity to meet with the offender, share how the harm has impacted them, and say what they need in the wake of the harm. Offenders can assume full responsibility and take steps to make amends. The process appears to have been healing

for victims; and offenders learn lessons that will help them avoid mistakes in the future.

Share a brief story.

One of the most powerful cases that I remember was after a house party. A group of teens used a hidden key to enter the home of a friend when the family was on vacation. During the circle, their friend's dad, who had coached some of them in sports, shared his sense of betrayal. The kids had tears in their eyes. The young man I was working with as a facilitator² was very moved by the entire process; he sought out an opportunity to talk with fellow students about what he had done and what he had learned.

What are others saying about Bob?

"Bob's good nature and optimism encourages offenders to communicate thoughtfully. In my view, this is one of the keys to a successful case."

– *Eileen Brooks, Co-Case Coordinator Green Team*

2 "Facilitators" are C4RJ volunteers who work closely with those who've caused harm. Facilitators generally help examine decision-making and work with the offender over 2–3 months to complete the plan of repair which may include making restitution to the victim, composing letters of apology, or a wide range of other steps.

Mark Your Calendar: Zehr Returns June 2nd

On Saturday June 2, 2012, Howard Zehr will be returning to the area for a daylong conference on restorative justice at Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord. Zehr, widely known as the "grandfather" of the field, visited C4RJ for the first time in 2009 and spoke to a packed house. The June event, co-sponsored by C4RJ and the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, will offer a keynote by Zehr and workshops on restorative justice in schools, faith communities, and criminal justice, among others. Zehr will also sign books and exhibit his acclaimed photography. He has said, "I have a dream...that when we talk about justice, we will no longer have to prefix it with words such as 'restorative'...it will be understood that true justice is about restoration and about transformation." Visit www.macucc.org/rjevent for details and to register.



Victim comes out a “Winner” *continued from page 1*

agreement. John would write a letter of apology and he would work on a community project with Mr. King, a project that would use John's skills and curiosity about tools. John also agreed to work with C4RJ volunteers on exercises to develop judgment. He also agreed to meet with a police officer to talk about safety.

In a few short months, John worked from time to time with Mr. King. Mr. King said he kept John's apology letter in a special place, because he treasured it. Recently, he said, “John's become an integral part of my life and business. I'm the winner here. The process brought us a great relationship.”

PARTNERING WITH C4RJ

Household Goods Recycling

By Jo-Ann Berry, Volunteer Coordinator, HGRM

Many C4RJ cases result in offenders pledging community service to “build up” what was broken down with the crime. Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts (HGRM), located in Acton, is one place where amends are made.

Our partnership with C4RJ benefits both agencies in several ways. HGRM accepts donated furniture and household items and distributes them free to people in need. We depend on volunteers to load vehicles, enter computer data, schedule appointments, and repair furniture.

When people referred through C4RJ first come to us, they are often hesitant. Within one shift, they see that their efforts are helping others. Over time, they gain a sense of accomplishment and realize that though a community may appear affluent, many people are still in need. We look forward to continuing our partnership with C4RJ. For more information about HGRM, or to volunteer, contact Jo-Ann Berry at Joann.Berry@hgrm.org.



How you can help

We love sharing our work with you through *The Talking Piece*, e-blasts, and newspapers. C4RJ serves regional communities, and referrals keep growing. Your support helps us meet the needs of those affected by crime. You might also consider providing:

- Frequent flyer miles for staff conferences
- Sponsorship of *The Talking Piece* quarterly newsletter
- Support costs for a guest speaker
- Financial support to fund research
- Earmarked support to victims and offenders who need counseling or other services

Let us know how you would like to help. Visit our website at www.c4rj.com/giving.php or contact Executive Director Jennifer Larson Sawin at 978.318.3447 or jlarsonsawin@c4rj.com.

Bidding for Justice: C4RJ Auction

You may not hear an auctioneer's trill but you can still bid with your mouse button. C4RJ will be launching a **benefit online auction to support our mission, May 20–June 3, 2012** through Bidding for Good. Visit www.biddingforgood.com/c4rj to register as a bidder and to learn about some of the items up for grabs. Red Sox vs. Yankees tickets, Sunday brunch for two at the Harvard Faculty Club, Nantucket vacation home one-week rental, golf outings, fitness club memberships, rides in police cruisers to school. And much more to come! Register early so you don't miss out. And join the effort to rack up more tantalizing items by emailing info@c4rj.com with your ideas and offers.

A PARTNERSHIP TO LAST

Police Chief John M. Kelly

At the conclusion of a particularly meaningful case, Chief Kelly of the Littleton Police Department said:

“We truly enjoy working with C4RJ and we believe in its tenets completely. It is a sincere pleasure to engage your services in finding a productive outcome to harm within our community. This is one of the best partnerships that we have and we look forward to continuing with it!”

All Hail to e-Subscribers

Thanks to all of you who've opted to receive our newsletter electronically (see our home-page, www.c4rj.com, if you're interested in making the switch!). E-subscriptions help us save on printing and postage costs. Better yet, forwarding to your friends and family is a lot easier. Be sure that you list us as an approved sender so we don't get relegated to your spam or bulk mail folders.





COMMUNITIES FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE


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 Printed on recycled paper

About C4RJ

Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ) is a community-police partnership that offers restorative justice to those affected by crime. Restorative justice recognizes that crime is a violation of people and relationships, not just a violation of law. Police refer cases to us. In the aftermath of wrongdoing, our “circle” process includes in the decision-making those affected by crime: victims, offenders, loved ones, supporters, community members, and law enforcement officials.

This newsletter, *The Talking Piece*, is named for an object (often a river stone) passed around the circle to engage individuals in the deliberations. The person holding the talking piece speaks while others listen. With this newsletter, we are passing the talking piece to you and would love to hear your views on our work. Contact us at info@c4rj.com or by calling 978.318.3447 to relay your thoughts.

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