



# THE TALKING PIECE

## IT'S ALL IN OUR NAME

### The Power of Community

Jennifer Larson Sawin, Executive Director

I distinctly remember interviewing for this job four years ago. At the end, someone asked if I had questions. I did. "How many volunteers do you have?" The answer: 80. "You mean 18?" No, 80. I was astounded. Elsewhere, sister programs struggle to find volunteers so they hire professional staff. And anyone who's worked at a nonprofit knows that more staff = more overhead = a bigger effort to make the budget. And that's aside from the struggle for community buy-in.

Yes, our founders were wise in choosing our name. We're not "Professionals for Restorative Justice" or "Experts for Restorative Justice." True to the values of this field, we are Communities for Restorative Justice. Regular people who are sometimes fragile but more often strong. We are parents, uncles, significant others, sisters. It's not our credentials that make us who we are. It's our relationships and commitment to the mission and our neighbors.

Our volunteer ranks are now 100, not including our volunteer board. In this *Talking Piece*, you'll learn how we are serving those affected by harm. Whether it's inviting a luminary to speak, rallying with a fundraiser, tending to those on a specific case, or pitching in on an initiative with schools. Thank you!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### National Expert on Bullying Prevention Coming this November

For several years, schools have sought help from C4RJ to offer a process where harm has taken place but no crime has been committed. This spring, C4RJ collaborated with Suffolk University's Center for Restorative Justice to explore building capacity for restorative practices in schools. In June, we convened a focus group of 25 regional school administrators, teachers, and counselors from 15 districts and we heard a resounding



**Schools are eager for creative ways to respond to harm and cultivate community.**

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### C4RJ's latest Fun-raiser Wins Big

Jeff Campbell, C4RJ Development Chair

May 20 kicked off C4RJ's first foray into the world of online auction fundraising. When the virtual gavel came down at 11 p.m. on June 3, we had raised \$10,000, 30% above our goal. Funds will support our mission to serve those affected by crime. More than 120 registered users from 57 communities in 13 states participated, bidding on more than 80 items that included vacation getaways, golf outings, fitness club memberships, Red Sox tickets, and gift certificates for massage, ice cream, restaurants and more. One third of bidders live beyond communities served by C4RJ.

What did we learn from this effort? That community support for C4RJ is alive and growing, that fundraising can be fun, and that our board and volunteers work hard to make things happen.

Our auction was possible thanks to the donations of individuals and area business owners. We are deeply grateful! And we thank our adventuresome bidders! This was our first online auction; it won't be our last.

## Bullying Prevention *continued from page 1*

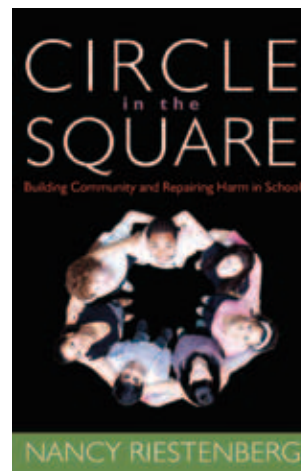
request: more information and training!

To respond, we have invited a national expert in bullying prevention and restorative practices for two events. Nancy Riesterberg is the engaging author of *Circle in the Square: Building Community and Repairing Harm in Schools*, has conducted scores of trainings and consulted with dozens of school systems in the U.S. So mark your calendars! We'll host a free community forum on **Friday November 9, 7–9 p.m.** at RJ Grey Middle School Auditorium in Acton MA.

Nancy will offer a keynote on the topic of restorative practices and their application in instances of bullying and in cultivating a respectful learning environment; a panel will respond. On **Saturday November 10, 9a.m.–4 p.m.**, Nancy will also offer a training on restorative practices for school personnel. Both events require advance registration to aid in our planning; the Saturday

training costs \$75 and CEUs are available but spots are very limited so sign up early! See [www.c4rj.com](http://www.c4rj.com) for details, to register, and to download a flyer to distribute among friends and co-workers.

Restorative practices are what's happening in schools across the nation. Come learn how we as teachers, administrators, staff, parents, students, counselors and community members can create safe, wise, responsive schools for all our children. Many thanks to the Acton-Boxborough United Way, CHNA 15, and the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest for helping to make these events possible!



Nancy's latest book, *Circle in the Square: Building Community and Repairing Harm in Schools* is becoming a must-have text for educators interested in restorative practices.

**“Human beings are hardwired to be in relationships, and we are hardwired to learn. Either we offer our children healthy relationships...or they will seek relationships with others... and learn perhaps more painful, less life-affirming lessons. I believe that if students are safe and healthy, they will learn.”**

— Nancy Riesterberg, *Circle in the Square*

## Shout-Outs and High-Fives

**W**e'd like to give a *big thank you* to the following folks who have helped us further our mission in recent months. (Note: C4RJ volunteers are assigned to teams; each team has a color and is mentioned where relevant).

- All our FY13 grantors: **Acton-Boxborough United Way** and **CHNA 15** for supporting the development of a C4RJ video; the **Sudbury Foundation** for strengthening our IT, and **First Parish Concord** for supporting our mission.
- **Judy Walpole** and **Rev. Dr. John Lombard** of TriCon for hosting our Howard Zehr event (see pg. 3).
- **Bob McGowan** (Green), **Jon Byrd** (Red), **Bonnie Lobel** (Gold) for helping train new C4RJ volunteer recruits this spring.
- **Bev Haas** (Green) for penning grants this spring.
- **Bonnie Lobel** (Gold) for being an all-round life-saver with outreach research, improving the format of our training manuals, helping with our auction, and more!
- **Beth Railsback**, C4RJ Board member, for keeping us on track with our year-end financials.
- **Kate Reid** and **Paula Von Kleydorff** for putting in many dedicated hours as Case Coordinators for the Red Team.
- Thespians in a C4RJ documentary by members of a BU film class: **Blair Robertson** (Red), **Nikki Spencer** (Floater), **Sally Bull** (Silver), **Wade Rubinstein** (Gold), **Barbara Rich** (Green) and **Sgt. Matt Pinard** (Littleton PD).
- **Jillian Furman**, UMass-Boston grad student, for her cost-analysis of restorative justice vs. criminal justice.
- **Betsey Wood** (Gold), **Candace Julian** (Gold), **Erica Bronstein**, **Paul Bracy**, and **Carolyn Boyes Watson** (Suffolk Univ.) for organizing the restorative practices focus group in June. And to CCHS Principal **Peter Badalement** for hosting!
- The entire **MACUCC Restorative Justice Task Team** for helping pull off the Howard Zehr event!
- Our stellar auction committee: **Sue Curtin**, **Pete Funkhouser**, **Jeff Campbell**, **Lauren Rosenzweig-Morton**, **Barbara Howland**, **Kate Carr**, and **Kate Stout**.





Howard Zehr meets a group from Restorative Justice Project of the Midcoast (Maine): from left to right, KT Crossman, Wendy Watson, Zehr, Sarah Mattox, and Margaret Micholichuk.



Rev. Barbara Smith-Moran takes in Zehr's portraits featuring children of prisoners.



Early birds get front row seats to hear Zehr's keynote.

## "Mosquito Man" Howard Zehr Creates a Buzz



Zehr, Jennifer Larson Sawin (C4RJ Executive Director) and Chief Len Wetherbee (C4RJ co-founder) gather for informal debriefing after the event.

The grandfather of restorative justice, Howard Zehr, visited recently to speak about "The Promise and Challenge of Restorative Justice." The June 2 event was co-sponsored by C4RJ and the Mass Conference United Church of Christ (MACUCC) and held at Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord.

Zehr noted that, although the field of restorative justice is growing, hurdles are also mounting. As communities embrace restorative justice, he posed, how can we earnestly apply the principles and not just borrow the term for practices that are decidedly *not* restorative? This prompted many great discussions among over 100 participants who attended.

In introducing Zehr, C4RJ Executive Director Jennifer Larson Sawin referred to him as a mosquito, referencing a southern African proverb: "If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven't spent a night with a mosquito." She marveled at the impact of one person and said that Zehr has persistently buzzed in the ears of people around the world about the principles of restorative justice. Evaluation comments were wide-ranging and complimentary. Sarah Mattox of the RJ Project of Midcoast (Maine) reflected, "Going to the source feels

key. Zehr was the compassionate, accessible, and articulate individual I hoped he would be." Many suggested a longer format in the future to permit more workshops.

The day offered eight workshops with local RJ leaders at the helm including Judge Jay D. Blitzman (Lowell Juvenile Court), Chief Len Wetherbee (C4RJ co-founder), Janet Connors (JustCircles), and Victor Jose Santana (ROCA), among others. Topics included restorative justice from a victim perspective, as well as applications in schools, courts, communities, and faith settings. Two of Zehr's photographic exhibits were also on display, "When A Parent is in Prison" and "Ladder Without Rungs" which featured portraits and stories of children of prisoners and victims of severe violence, respectively. We promise more such events in the future!

**Are you in the picture? Find and help tag photos of the event on our Facebook page!**

**facebook.com/  
CommunitiesForRestorativeJustice**



## 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 and volunteers to attend 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](http://www.c4rj.com/giving.php) or contact Executive Director Jennifer Larson Sawin at 978.318.3447 or [jlarsonsawin@c4rj.com](mailto:jlarsonsawin@c4rj.com).







# COMMUNITIES FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

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## 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](mailto:info@c4rj.com) or by calling 978.318.3447 to relay your thoughts.

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