



THE TALKING PIECE

ALL QUIET ON SET!

C4RJ's Video Project Comes to Fruition

I must have just willed myself to forget your faces, get in and out with stuff I could fence." So says Jake, a young man who broke into the home of a family he used to know.

Jake is really **Ryan O'Connor**, an actor who recently participated in a video shoot at the Acton Police Department along with C4RJ volunteers **Candace Julyan** and **Holly Kimball**, Acton PD's **Det. Keith Campbell**, and three other actors. Jake's story is based on an actual nighttime breaking-and-entering case that C4RJ saw a few years ago. The script, written by Chief Case



Geoff Birmingham (left) of Reflection Films keeps an eye on the frame along with his sound technician and videographer.

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ACTIVITY ON THE HILL

Sen. Jamie Eldridge Re-files Restorative Justice Legislation

Thanks to **Sen. Jamie Eldridge** (D., Acton), restorative justice legislation was re-filed in January 2013. S52, "An Act Promoting Restorative Justice Practices", explicitly permits those within the criminal justice system to refer cases to community-based restorative justice agencies like C4RJ. Until now, such referrals have been happening on an ad-hoc basis by police and court personnel who embrace this approach.



Sen. Eldridge (left) announces his intentions to file restorative justice legislation at an event with Howard Zehr (right) in 2009. Standing between them was then-C4RJ board president, Barb Chase.

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Bid for Justice: C4RJ's Second Online Auction

Go ahead—pull out the suitcase and dust off those binoculars. Starting May 18, you'll be able to place a bid for an African safari for two in C4RJ's second annual *Bidding For Justice* online auction. You'd rather raise a cheer in a local sports arena? No problem—we'll have Patriots and Red Sox tickets up for grabs. The bidding runs through June 2.

Auction proceeds will benefit training and expansion of our casework. We'll use the popular BiddingForGood platform, which offers a secure system and access to thousands of bidders in and beyond our region. We'll also feature dinners, concerts, vacation getaways, golf outings, special gifts, and more. Your support will help C4RJ advance its mission of providing restorative justice to all who need it.

How might you help our efforts? Donate items, register to bid, and rally family and friends to do the same. An auction committee meets regularly, so if you have a knack for organizing and promotions, join in! We are also seeking sponsors whose names and logos will be featured in our newsletter and on our program and auction websites. As you spread the word about our auction, take the opportunity to tell the story of C4RJ, too. Visit www.c4rj.com and click on the auction links to learn more. Questions? Contact Auction Chair Jeff Campbell at jcampbell@c4rj.com.

C4RJ's Video Project Comes to Fruition

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Coordinator **Christy Barbee**, is the basis of a forthcoming video depicting C4RJ's circle process and community-police partnership model.

Thanks to grants from the **Concord-Carlisle Community Chest**, **CHNA 15**, the **Acton-Boxborough United Way**, and an **anonymous donor**, we have made great strides with the project over the winter. Many people have asked for it—those who caused harm or were affected by it, police, volunteers, members of the community, donors. People are eager to see our work and we'll soon be able to show it without risking the loss of confidentiality.

Enter stage left **Reflection Films**, a production house based in Arlington MA that specializes in nonprofit video promotions. **Geoff Birmingham** and **Rachel Jellinek** have been holding our hand through scripting, talent selection, and storyboarding. **Chief Bongiorno** (Bedford) has been a supporter of the video effort, saying, "This video project is the missing piece. When completed, it will showcase C4RJ's unique qualities."

Three actors joined O'Connor: **H. Tod Randolph**, **Lorna Nogueira**, and **Rose Fieschko**. They were among 45 actors who auditioned for the parts of offender, offender parent, homeowner, and homeowner's daughter respectively. A big thank you to Acton's **Chief Widmayer**, who gamely agreed to have the Acton PD used for our main film site.

We undertook a second shoot with a variety of people interviewed at the Lincoln Public Library: the victim of an assault, a mother who spoke of her son's mistake and learning, donors reflecting on their reasons for supporting C4RJ, a volunteer investing time, and founders of a local charity outlined how offenders build up the community with service.

We look forward to making this video available on a screen near you this fall. Scenes will also be posted on our website.

Sen. Jamie Eldridge Re-files Restorative Justice Legislation

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Sen. Eldridge announced his intentions to file restorative justice legislation in 2009 and has been working to bring this bill to legislators' attention. "There are multiple benefits of this legislation because it helps offenders break out of the cycle of crime through acts of community service and offers victims' the opportunity to receive an explanation and apology from the offender," said Sen. Eldridge. "Restorative justice programs nationwide have shown great success because offenders are given the opportunity to engage in community-based acts that increase their sense of civic responsibility."

The moment may be ripe for passage of S52. *The Boston Globe* recently published an article, "New report slams Mass. on correction reform" (March 25, 2013) which outlines how a "tough-on-crime" stance is not only ineffective but also costly. The article asserts that reform is badly needed, and a key ingredient will be to build bipartisan coalitions that lay down the "soft-on-crime" smear that can

land politicians on both sides of the aisle in deep water.

David McMahon is the Co-Executive Director of Dismas House, a nonprofit serving ex-offenders in greater Worcester, and Director of Strategic Development for the Worcester Homeless Action Committee. According to David, "This legislation is crucial in order to change the trajectory of those who are on a risky track. Restorative justice could help change this trajectory and offer healing in our communities."

Want to join a coalition of people helping this bill to pass? Community members, school and business leaders, victim advocates, restorative justice practitioners, faith groups, municipal leaders have all demonstrated support. Visit www.facebook.com/GetTheMaRestorativeJusticeBillMoving to stay tuned on developments. Ask your reps to support the bill; find out how to reach them at www.malegislature.gov/people/findmylegislator.

NEW FACES

Bookkeeper and Board Member Join the C4RJ Circle

If you happen to drop by C4RJ, you may see two new faces. In February, we welcomed **Katherine Pouliopolous** to the staff. She'll be putting in a several hours a week keeping our books up to date. Katherine previously served as the Executive Director of the Roudenbush Community Center in Westford. She has a bachelor's degree in finance from Franklin Pierce College and—watch out—she holds a second degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do. We also welcomed **Margot Fleischman**, a new board member from Bedford in February. Margot is a selectman in Bedford and prior to that role, she served for five years on the Bedford Planning Board, and held a variety of other committee appointments. She is an administrator for the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, an internationally-focused, non-profit religious organization. Margot and her husband are the parents of two school-aged children.



Katherine Pouliopolous



Margot Fleischman



Chiefly, A Word or Two: Police Chiefs Reflect on the C4RJ Partnership

Early this year, C4RJ issued annual reports to each partnering police department to reflect on 2012 cases, the achievements and occasional shortcomings of our work. Here's what they said in response.

Chief John Kelly, Littleton PD

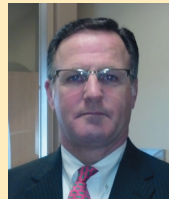
I appreciate the information in your annual report... Littleton PD is committed to using restorative justice in appropriate cases [with] willing participants. It is my hope that our use of your services will grow this year as you clearly present a viable and important option to the criminal justice system. Your organization's work is of great value to our community and for that we are very appreciative.

Chief Robert Bongiorno, Bedford PD

Thank you... Bedford is better served by our continued partnership. You guys rock!

Chief Terrence M. Cunningham, Wellesley PD

It is a pleasure to work with you and your team. [Our first referral in 2012] resulted in the perfect outcome. Thanks for all you do!



John Kelly



Robert Bongiorno



Terrence M. Cunningham

How you can help: A Match Challenge and More!

We love sharing our work with you through *The Talking Piece*, e-blasts, and newspapers. C4RJ now serves 12 regional communities, and referrals keep growing. Your support helps us meet the needs of those affected by crime. You might also consider providing:

- **A donation for our challenge now in effect! Now through April 30, 2013 two anonymous donors will match dollar-for-dollar every donation to C4RJ up to \$6,000. Donate by mail to PO Box 65 Concord, MA 01742 or online at www.c4rj.com/giving.php. Make your gift count twice!**
- Items or a sponsorship for our upcoming online auction (contact jcampbell@c4rj.com)
- 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

Doing the Work Even Better: Training Builds Us Up

Nancy Riestenberg came to the area for a series of events hosted by C4RJ on restorative practices in schools. Nancy is the school climate specialist for the Minnesota Department of Education. In addition to a much-anticipated free community forum at R.J. Grey Middle School in Acton on bullying, she offered day-long training to a group of regional school administrators and teachers. C4RJ has begun offering training to area schools on using restorative practices in classroom climate and disciplinary measures.

Domestic Violence Service Network (DVSN) offered training to C4RJ on **DV awareness** in March 2013. Although C4RJ does not take on cases with domestic violence-related charges, we do encounter situations in which abuse has occurred or is ongoing. We learned that 100 children per day in Massachusetts (1



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in 15 youth) are exposed to domestic violence in their homes. Thanks to **Jacquelin Apsler** and **Allison Tarmy** for a day well spent!

Jump on the Facebook Bandwagon!

So you read our newsletter. Great! Did you know that you can also plug in via our Facebook page too? Visit www.Facebook.com/CommunitiesForRestorativeJustice and "like" us there. We routinely post photos (check out the new albums from our video production and Nancy Riestenberg's visit!), press articles on restorative justice, links to webinars and more.





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 or by calling 978.318.3447 to relay your thoughts.

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