

## **CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

Restorative Justice is a form of community justice; it is a framework by which a community can respond to crime. It holds offenders accountable and places emphasis on repairing the harm done to the victim and the community. This is the framework by which the Center for Restorative Justice (CRJ) bases its programs.

In Bennington County, CRJ works in partnership with the courts, State's Attorney's Office, Department of Children and Families, and schools to deliver programs using restorative justice principles. CRJ's Court Diversion Program, Kids Are Our Strength Program, Pre-Charge Alternative Program, and the Juvenile Restorative Probation Project are all programs that embrace this philosophy. The Restorative Justice philosophy aims to involve the community in the process of holding offenders accountable and providing victims with the opportunity to express their feelings about the harm that has been done to them. Victims are encouraged to contribute their views about what is required to put things right, and to hold the offender accountable for repairing the harm caused and help him/her gain the skills necessary to move forward and be a productive member of our society

This past year, CRJ was able to execute effective restorative justice programs due to many partners and supporters. This past year, 42 CRJ Volunteers gave over 1,200 hours of their time and talents serving on diversion boards and restorative panels. Nearly \$10,000 was allocated to CRJ by generous citizens in 14 Bennington County Towns. Over \$7,000 in donations was collected from CRJ clients this past year and given back to the community. Over \$6,000 was collected in restitution and returned to victims. 37 community groups and agencies partnered with CRJ to host community service sites and mentor our youth.

Five hundred thirty-three youths and adults were served through CRJ programs this past year. In turn, CRJ clients gave back to their communities, volunteering over 2,800 hours of their time helping out at various groups and agencies throughout the community.

It is due to partnerships, such as your town support, that we are able to continue the important work that we do. Thank you very much for your partnership and support.

Respectfully submitted

Leitha Cipriano, Executive Director