

Center for Restorative Justice

2019 Annual Report

Serving all of Bennington County using restorative justice principles as our guide, the Center for Restorative Justice (CRJ) is a true community agency helping both young people as well as adults to take an active role to repair the harm they caused, give back to their community and learn new ways to be a positive, contributing community member. With your town's support, this past year:

- 45 community members volunteered their time and talents sitting on one of eight monthly restorative justice panels and CRJ's governing Board.
- CRJ collected over \$6,500 in donations from clients and distributed funds out to various charities and non-profit groups throughout Bennington County.
- Over \$10,000 in restitution was collected by CRJ and given back to victims of crime.
- Over 1,400 individuals went through one of CRJ's many programs. Specific examples include:
 - 74 students received truancy and restorative justice programming in schools
 - 288 young people and adults participated in CRJ's Court Diversion Program and had their charges dismissed after making amends and repairing harm caused
 - 196 individuals were assisted to get their driver's license reinstated and, in many cases, had their fines significantly reduced
 - 213 youth were served through one of CRJ's Juvenile Restorative Programs such as Community Support and Supervision, Afterschool Programming and Mentoring.
 - 32 individuals returning to the community from incarceration were served through one of CRJ's many Community Reentry Programs

CRJ was able to bring on several new programs this past year:

- CRJ's afterschool program evolved from only one day a week to everyday afterschool (except Fridays) giving at-risk teens a supervised, substance-free place to hang out after school.
- A week-long summer program called the Youth Empowerment Program was offered to 10 at-risk youth allowing them to experience opportunities focused on building self-esteem, teamwork and leadership skills.
- CRJ's new Mediation Services assisted in resolving numerous neighbor disputes, helping keep these cases out of the court system.
- CRJ provided Expungement Petition Assistance to 23 people, helping to file petitions with the court to have their records expunged.
- CRJ's DRIVe (Driving Responsibly in Vermont) Program provided 102 people with victim impact classes revealing how their criminal driving violations have impacted others and the community as a whole.

Town support is greatly appreciated and is invaluable in helping CRJ continue to expand its programming and to reach as many people as possible. Your continued support has helped individuals to get their lives on the right track, helped empower victims to have a voice in the justice process, and helped restore and strengthen our communities.

Leitha Cipriano, Executive Director
Center for Restorative Justice