

Center for Restorative Justice Annual Report for 2022

The Center for Restorative Justice (CRJ) has been serving Bennington County as its community justice agency since 1982. Each year, the agency continues to grow and expand to meet the ever-changing needs of the community. CRJ is touted by state leaders as Vermont's model community justice agency.

Due to CRJ's partnership with towns like yours, we are able to help more people to set their lives in the right direction, help more victims of crime heal from the harm that was caused, and to help make our community a safer place to live.

CRJ, a non-profit organization, offers programs and services to all residents of Bennington County; most all programs are free and those with a fee (i.e. Court Diversion) offer a sliding fee scale based on income. All CRJ programs are based on the principles of restorative justice, a philosophy of justice that focuses on the people and communities harmed by crime. A total of 1,801 Bennington County individuals were served through one of CRJ's many programs this past year. Highlights from this past year include:

- 76 students struggling with truancy issues were supported to re-engage and attend school regularly
- 98 young people with civil alcohol and marijuana possession violations completed CRJ's Youth Substance Abuse Safety Program
- 150 adults facing charges in criminal court completed the Court Diversion Program, a restorative program holding those who harmed accountable to their victim(s) and community, and had their charges dismissed
- 82 people completed CRJ's Victim Impact/DRIVE classes; classes focus on the immense impact poor decisions have when getting behind the wheel
- 36 individuals were helped to file petitions to get their past criminal records expunged
- 432 teens accessed Threads, CRJ's free clothing boutique run by teens exclusively for teens.
- 112 individuals were helped to get their driver's license reinstated and legally back on the road
- 391 individuals were assisted who did not fit into one of CRJ's pre-defined programs. CRJ turns no one away simply because we do not have a specific program for them; CRJ is committed to connecting our community members with needed supports such as emergency housing, mental health counseling, substance use support services, reentry supports, accessing health insurance, etc.

The work of CRJ could not be done without the dedication of our 36 restorative panel volunteers, 9 community volunteers who sit on CRJ's governing Board, and 10 dedicated staff members.

CRJ receives support through state grants, local contracts, private donations and funding from towns such as yours. Together through our partnership, our community is strengthened as we create opportunities to help empower people to get their lives back on track.

Thank you very much for your continued support.

Respectfully Submitted,
Leitha Cipriano, Executive Director
Center for Restorative Justice