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Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan

Central Michigan Restorative Justice Initiative

When we talk about the effect Restorative Justice has on those involved in an intervention, it is often difficult to capture exactly what it means to each participant. Of course data can represent the numbers behind a circle or conference, but this fails to express the emotions or thoughts that make the interventions so powerful. This is why we rely on anecdotes and stories, or survey comments to reinforce the impact Restorative Justice can have.

One such story was recently shared with us by a parent who sought out Restorative Justice in response to an incident she was directly involved with. We felt it was important to share this account of her experience, in the hopes it puts into words why we love our jobs so much! The account features one of our practitioners, Ashley LaCasse. Great work Ashley, and all of our other practitioners, for working hard to facilitate experiences like this every day!



As a parent volunteer at her son's middle school, LaVendee Fulton worked many hours at the Parent Council Book Fair early in the year. When two young women became belligerent and tried to walk out without paying for their books, LaVendee was put in the uncomfortable position of having to confront her son's classmates. Forced to refer the incident to the school principal, LaVendee asked for a chance to meet with the young women in a Restorative Justice Circle. She describes the outcome below.

I participated in a peace circle this afternoon with Restorative Justice Practitioner, Ashley LaCasse and two young women as a follow-up to our interaction last Monday at book fair after school. I had volunteered to work at the book fair and these young women wanted to take a book without paying for it. We had a confrontation that left me angry, hurt and uncertain about volunteering in the future.

I wanted to say that I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to meet with and have closure with both girls, who agreed to meet and participate in the process. When we first sat down, one of the girls would hardly make eye contact with me and both girls kept asking what they had done wrong ("we never do anything wrong!"). Ashley reviewed the process with them privately (I was outside) then when they agreed to participate, called me in. At the end, both young women and I had a chance to hear our shared experience from different views and learn how we had affected one another. When we left, they were laughing and seemed much more relaxed.

(RJ Story, con't.)

Ashley's facilitation provided for the girl's understanding of the impact their behavior appeared to have on others, but more importantly, she respectfully and patiently validated the girls' experiences as well. I am so impressed, and feel this experience was so much more meaningful to me as a parent volunteer than simply hearing a week later that the girls were levied consequences in some other way.

I know this may not be the same for all parents or staff, but I was glad to take the time to be heard and to listen to the girls so we could hopefully come to a better understanding of what we experienced. I felt we did. I was able to be honest (I told them I did not like how they talked to me) and they were honest as well. What a great opportunity for us to learn, and to come away better off for our meeting! In the words of one young woman, "I'm glad I talked here. I didn't know she was mad at me. I feel better."

So thanks, Ashley. I am so proud of my child's school and this Restorative Justice process that values and respects kids and adults alike. Very cool.

-- La Vendee Fulton

Upcoming Training Opportunity:

January 14 - 15, 2010 - Conferencing
January 21, 2010 - Circles

March 2 - 3, 2010 - Conferencing
March 9, 2010 - Circles

- **Conferencing** is a 2-day training that provides a strong introduction to RJ principals and experience-based training. **Conferencing training fee per person is \$100.** This includes two full days of training, lunch and light refreshments on-site plus the above-mentioned benefits.
- **Circles** is a one day training that provides an introduction to the history, fundamentals and practice of Circles. It combines lecture and first-hand experience to prepare attendees to use Circles in their everyday lives. **Circles training fee per person is \$50** for a one day training that includes lunch, refreshments and supporting materials mentioned above.

Location:

Russ Maples Conference Center at Hill Center
5815 Wise Road, Lansing, MI 48911

For more information, contact us at centralmichiganrj@gmail.com or (517) 755-2814, or to register, download a training flyer at centralmichiganrestorativejustice.com

Contact Information



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