

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ONLINE

www.restorativejustice.org

Update on restorative developments worldwide

April 2010

Following are some of the most-read items from RJOB – [Restorative Justice Online Blog](#) – during March.

News

Asking questions and speaking the truth

In 2006, Kathy Key's husband was killed on his way home from work when his motorcycle was hit by a car. The driver was arrested for driving drunk. Through a restorative justice programme, Kathy met the man responsible for her husband's death. In this two minute interview with BBC, Kathy explains her reasons for participating in the meeting and what she felt the offender got out of the meeting.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/kathykey>

Restorative justice stops fights, keeps kids in schools

from Nelson Garcia's article on 9News.com:

Juan Salazar used to be one of those students who got into trouble for fighting at North High School. Now he uses words instead of fists.

"If someone bumped into me, I started saying something," Salazar, a senior, said. "It always led to a fight."

It also always led to a suspension.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/restorative-justice-stops-fights-keeps-kids-in-schools>

Coffee shop is site of healing

Todd C. Frankel's article in St Louis Post-Dispatch:

He didn't know what to expect. He was sick with dread. His eyes were bloodshot from crying. Aaron Poisson was returning to the Starbucks where two years earlier his actions had killed another man.

He didn't have to be here. He had served his time. Now 21, Poisson spent nine months in jail after pleading guilty of fatally running over Roger Kreutz, a customer trying to stop Poisson as the young man fled this coffee shop off Watson Road with a stolen tip jar containing less than \$5. He says he didn't intend to hurt Kreutz, didn't know until days later what he had done.

Accompanied by his father, Poisson was headed back to the Starbucks, to a ceremony to spread Kreutz's ashes below a memorial tree planted just yards from the fatal scene. Kreutz's extended family and dozens of friends were there. Poisson feared their anger, the hatred.

"But it feels like something I have to do," said Poisson, wearing a sweater and black slacks, as though he were headed to church. "It's something I want to do."

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/coffee-shop-is-site-of-healing>

Giving crime victims the right to meet with their offenders: Virginia legislative developments

by Lisa Rea

Should a crime victim have a right to meet his/her offender? It is very good to see that the Virginia State Legislature is considering the benefits that come with victim offender dialogue and restorative justice programming in general.

According to Associated Press reporter Dena Potter's article in the Washington Examiner the proposed legislation is HB 913, authored by Delegate Robert B. Bell in the Virginia Legislature.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/giving-crime-victims-the-right-to-meet-with-their-offenders-virginia-legislative-developments-1>

Opinion

Greg Wilhoit: The story of an innocent man

by Lisa Rea

I have a friend whose name is Greg Wilhoit. His story is a remarkable one. He is an exoneree who was freed from death row in Oklahoma after having served time for a crime he did not commit. He was convicted and sent to death row for the killing of his wife. The only incriminating "evidence" which convicted Greg Wilhoit was teeth marks found on the victim's body. Dental "experts" said the teeth marks matched Greg's.

His story is on the website of The Journey of Hope: Greg is active with the Journey, as are many exonerees, as he tells his story of America's broken criminal justice system.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/greg-wilhoit-the-story-of-an-innocent-man>

Violent juvenile offenders: Adult time for adult crime?

by Lisa Rea

The topic of what to do with juvenile offenders keeps coming up in the U.S., and elsewhere, in part because we have no consistent response to juvenile crime. The issue of juvenile crime is hot, too, because there are few answers. It is good to see that according to this CNN piece that in the U.S. states are apparently "rethinking adult time for adult crimes" committed by juveniles since sending juveniles to adult prisons just flat out doesn't work. Say what you want about crime rates declining in some areas or in some states, there is limited evidence that the decline in juvenile crime is due to policies that put juveniles together with adult criminals, many of them hardened offenders.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/violent-juvenile-offenders-adult-time-for-adult-crime/?>

After murders, families find a healing path

from the article by Emily Dougherty in Mennonite Weekly Review:

Note: Forgiveness is a controversial and difficult topic for many victims of crime. Nevertheless, there are victims who are able to forgive those who have harmed them severely. They do this for many reasons -- there may be as many reasons as there are victims who forgive.

After restorative encounters, some victims find that they wish to forgive the offender. This is not the goal of restorative justice, however. The value of restorative encounters for victims is to achieve some measure of healing; in some instances that includes forgiveness. The following article is the story of survivors of two brutal murders who have chosen to forgive.

Four sisters — Ruth, Frieda, Bess and Suzy — have lived 40 years without their mother. Helen Klassen, a Sunday school teacher, was murdered March 14, 1969.

Bill Pelke's grandmother, Ruth Pelke, was killed by four teenage girls in Gary who robbed her house May 14, 1985.

These acts of violence devastated two families and, for the Klassen sisters, infected the years of their youth. Their path to adulthood was fraught with struggles of how to heal and when to forgive.

On March 15 at College Mennonite Church, Pelke and three of the Klassen sisters spoke about their evolution from fear and anger to healing and forgiveness. Their stories have been told around the world through Journey of Hope, an organization co-founded by Pelke and led by murder victims' family members, such as the Klassens, who oppose the death penalty.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/after-murders-families-find-a-healing-path>

True community policing means restorative justice

from the entry by Macleay for Oakland Mayor 2010:

Community Policing has become one of those "assumed good things" that we all are supposed to support. But what do we mean by community policing? Does it mean we should be happy with just having a police officer at a community meeting, or on the street? Is a beat cop the whole story? Is there a role for the community beyond being informants?

My view of Community Policing has to do with merging community values and existing statues. Local communities need to be involved in helping community youth become aware and understand what is acceptable and what is not.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/true-community-policing-means-restorative-justice>

Locking up non-violent youths costs millions and does little to reduce crime

from Mark Day and Rebecca Nadin's entry on Left Foot Forward:

Whilst much of our work focuses on unnecessary imprisonment, we also champion alternatives to custody which have the potential to offer young people, and the communities they come from, a better deal. This is where restorative justice, a way of resolving conflict and repairing harm by bringing the offender and the victim together through closely managed 'conferences' or meetings, comes in.

The case for restorative justice, or restorative approaches as it is also known, has been building on the ground for some time now, with many schools and residential children's homes around the country using restorative practices to great effect as an alternative to traditional forms of punishment and conflict resolution.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/locking-up-non-violent-youths-costs-millions-and-does-little-to-reduce-crime>

Practice

The Sanctuary Model: A restorative approach for human services organizations

From the 3 March Restorative Practices E-Forum by Laura Mirsky:

The Sanctuary Model is a non-hierarchical, highly participatory, “trauma-informed and evidence-supported” operating system for human services organizations, which helps them function in a humane, democratic and socially responsible manner and thereby provide effective treatment for clients in a clinical setting. The model is entirely congruent with restorative practices, in that it is about working with people instead of doing things to them or for them.

Not a specific treatment intervention, the Sanctuary Model provides a structure and common language for people in human services fields to communicate and collaborate with each other. Said Dr. Sandra Bloom, developer of the model: “Social workers, psychiatrists and nurses don’t share a common way of working with clients. The Sanctuary Model gets everybody on the same trauma-informed page.”

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/thesanctuarymodel>

When culture and restorative justice values collide: Do you have suggestions?

A request for ideas from Dan Savou of Fiji:

I have tried in the past year to use the talking circle in restorative justice practices with my nieces and nephews and also with my siblings but I am posed with a challenge and that is how do I get people to talk when there is a culture of silence.. The problem I have is that in our Fijian culture, ‘silence’ is the norm.

In Western society it is considered rude to look down when someone is speaking to you while in our Fijian culture it is considered a mark of respect. In the Western culture it is considered normal to have both parties engaged in a typical conversation while in the Fijian culture the older or those who have a higher social standing is the one doing most of the talking. In my context, I am the eldest in my family and my father is also the eldest child, so I hope you can understand my predicament. Most of the time I am the only one doing the talking.

This is what one normally has to deal with in Fijian culture and my request to restorative justice practitioners is ‘are there options available which have worked which can bring people out their shells?’

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/when-culture-and-restorative-justice-values-collide-do-you-have-suggestions>

Can restorative justice become too routine?

by Lynette Parker

I feel a little strange asking this question, especially considering the work of advocates to see restorative justice become more wide spread. But, this is something that I’ve been pondering for a while and even more after seeing a brief news item about a defendant being referred to a pre-sentence restorative process for a “careless driving causing death” charge. The news item is

short and I don't know all the issues surrounding the case, but it gave me pause since the victim who died was the son of the defendant.

I began asking questions about who the victim would be in such a case. As the news item says, the defendant and her family all have to deal with the reality of the loss. While I can see some definite benefits for this family of coming together to discuss the incident and its affects on each of their lives, I also feel for this mother who is "offender" and "victim" at the same time. It just seems that the process will have to be different to respond to the needs of participants.

The real question is, "What's the purpose of the restorative encounter?"

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/tooroutine>

Research

Economic analysis of interventions for young adult offenders

from the report for the Barrow Cadbury Trust by Matrix Evidence:

This report summarises an economic analysis of alternative interventions for young adult offenders. It concludes that, for all offenders aged 18-24 sentenced in a Magistrate's court for a non-violent offence¹ in a given year:

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/economic-analysis-of-interventions-for-young-adult-offenders>

Reviews

Review: What have I done? A victim empathy programme for young people

by Eric Assur

This book is very practice oriented. It looks and feels like a workbook. The accompanying DVD is to help with didactic use with groups of teens. The professionals Wallis acknowledges as having helped him are largely probation or 'youth offending service' professionals in the United Kingdom.

The Canadian, Australian, or United States reader immediately notes that the spelling of the Kings Language is of the British or UK variety. Regardless of spelling, this book is a simple, easy to use workbook to guide the skilled and the not-so-well-informed youth services professional who works with teens who have offended.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/what-have-i-done-a-victim-empathy-programme-for-young-people>

Advocacy

What role should crime victims play in plea bargains?

from Scott Hensen's entry at Grits for Breakfast:

Prosecutors represent the state, not crime victims, and they're charged with seeking justice, not convictions. But the Houston Press published a feature questioning whether prosecutors should

be required to notify crime victims or get their sign-off before entering into a plea deal. The Harris County DA's Office says "There is no obligation to give advance notice to all victims of plea bargains," a policy which has the Mayor's crime victim advocate Andy Kahan hopping mad.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/what-role-should-crime-victims-play-in-plea-bargains>

About RJOB

The purpose of RJOB is to provide timely information about restorative justice news and developments, together with commentary on the use and expansion of restorative justice.
<http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/about-rjob>

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Compiled and edited by Lynette Parker and Dan Van Ness

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