

Juvenile Restorative Justice Fact Sheet
163 West Short Street, 4th Floor
Lexington, KY 40507

Administrative

Since January, 2010, Juvenile Restorative Justice(JRJ) is structured as a Subcommittee of the Model Court Program, who oversees the implementation of the Restorative Justice practice in the court system. It addresses juveniles who commit public offenses or who are beyond control of their families or schools. The Subcommittee involves community stakeholders. The overall Model Court Program is headed by Family Court Judge Lucinda Masterton who made it possible initially for JRJ to serve the court system.

These cases are referred by the Court Designated Worker Office or the family and district court judges where victim-offender mediation, family conferencing, and circles are facilitated. In addition, there are follow up services that are provided to address the underlying dynamics of a family experiencing problems to assist them in achieving success.

The Department of Family and Juvenile Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts(AOC) provides an office and two conference rooms for JRJ. In addition, JRJ has a collaborative relationship with the University of Kentucky College of Social Work and with the Center for Human Entrepreneurial Solutions Group(CHES), a private non-profit.

Staff

Volunteers are the staff of JRJ that include professional social workers, mediators, attorneys, school teachers, college interns and others of varying disciplines and experiences. They play different roles and provide various creative resources needed such as mediation, casework services, transportation, parent support, and case aides. An administrative team of volunteer coordinators meet regularly to develop the services of JRJ.

Mental Health

Many of the juveniles that JRJ works with have serious mental health problems such as attention deficit disorders, illegal drugs, domestic violence in their families, suicide attempts, oppositional behavior, anxiety disorders, and other problems. JRJ tries to meet the immediate crisis as well as the ongoing needs to get them into the appropriate resources.

These resources could include psycho-social assessments, and wrap around services where a mental health worker visits the home regularly to deal with problems. A cornerstone of JRJ is convening family conferences with community representatives, family, and juvenile to develop a holistic plan for the juvenile.

Schools

JRJ works with middle and high schools in Lexington on a case by case basis. Most of the juveniles are smart but are truant, failing, struggling with mental health and family problems, needing a special education plan, being bullied or need an individualized plan to succeed in school. JRJ has helped a number graduate from high school by referral to specialized

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therapeutic or academic programs. JRJ often convenes school conferences with teachers, and counselor and with the student and their parent to address academic and behavior problems.

In February, 2012, JRJ is piloting a new mediation program called "Restorative Solutions" with five middle schools-Bryan Station, Edythe Hayes, Leestown Middle, Lexington Traditional Magnet, and Morton. Trained Restorative Justice mediators will provide co-mediation services for bullying, beyond control of the school, and other kinds of serious conflicts.

Funding

Presently, JRJ does not have funding for any staff-it is all volunteer. Toyota Manufacturing of Kentucky has awarded JRJ with a grant to do a one day conference for 100 stakeholders in Kentucky on April 18, 2012. Mark Yantzi, from Canada who is the worldwide co-founder of the present Restorative Justice will be the key note speaker.

Religious Congregations

Building United Interfaith Lexington through Direct Action(BUILD) is a coalition of 17 churches that is supporting JRJ. BUILD in January, 2010 publicly endorsed JRJ with the four family court judges. In addition, these churches provide a list serve of about 100 email addresses where needs of the juveniles and families are sent out.

Kabby Akers established a program at Mary Queen of Holy Rosary called Make a Difference(MAD) that provides resources to the juvenile and their families and is a separate organization that JRJ refers to. MAD also has started a Mom's Circle that meets four times a year for social networking, meal, and friendship. MAD provides emergency resources for our families such as rent, utility, Kroger food vouchers and other resources.

Services

- From January, 2010 to November, 2011 , JRJ has mediated 73 public offense cases and 115 beyond control cases in the CDW Office giving a total of 187 cases with 81 % resolved, 9% partially resolved, and 10 % unresolved. Forty-five of these cases were provided with follow up case management services. These CDW cases have been voluntarily mediated since 2008.
- During this same time period, 54 cases were referred to JRJ from court. Of these cases, 68.5 represented minority youth. This data is presented being evaluated by two UK College of Social Work doctoral students. This work has prevented youth from going to the Cabinet of Health and Family Services, getting the cases dismissed from court with holistic Restorative Justice case planning services.
- With JRJ volunteers being in a non-authoritarian role, coming from outside the system, and being accessible through cell phones; trust is quickly developed. There can be home visits, and referral to existing community resources.
- There is ongoing communication with parents, juvenile and those working with the individual family such as mental health and school representatives.
- JRJ works with the court system with both the prosecutors and defense attorneys, is present in court, and informs judges of the progress being made.
- JRJ has identified unmet needs in the community that has led to systemic changes.

For more information, contact Linda Harvey, Director of JRJ at 859-333-8593 or juvenile.rj@earthlink.net