

Justiceworks•Journal

Fostering Restorative Justice for Portage County

03/25/12

Justiceworks Invites the Public to GET SMART ON CRIME: COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS, A Community's Response for Justice

Please join the Justiceworks Board of Directors and Voting Membership on **Wednesday, April 25, Portage County Public Library, 1001 Main Street, Stevens Point, beginning at 4:30 p.m. with the annual meeting for the Justiceworks voting membership and continuing at 5:00 p.m. with the community presentation: *Get Smart on Crime: Community Solutions.***

Our community presentation will feature keynote speakers
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The presentation will also include personal stories from Justiceworks' service recipients and information on how we can support local justice solutions that help reduce the need for jail expansion in Portage County. Refreshments will be provided. Please plan to attend. We look forward to seeing you there!

***Heart and Soul of Justiceworks' Success
Announces Her Departure. See her Farewell Inside.***

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS CHOOSES PORTAGE COUNTY AS ITS PREFERRED SITE FOR A COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PILOT PROGRAM

2012 ushered in a new wave of hope for a restorative justice future in Portage County with the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections' invitation to Portage County to partner in developing a corrections/reentry program model in Stevens Point. Based on Portage County's collaborative efforts to offer evidence-based, effective alternatives to the traditional justice system, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections recently approved funding for a community corrections center located in Stevens Point to serve as a correctional model for the state of Wisconsin. In a letter to Portage County, the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections identified Portage County as a leader in justice programs, listing Portage County's many innovative, evidence-based initiatives: the Portage House, Justiceworks' offender mentoring and community reentry programs, Day Report, the Oxford Sobriety Houses, the collaborative working model of the Justice Coalition, and the County's data-driven, evidence-based approach to assessing and reducing offender risks. The DOC identified Portage County as having a "strong and vibrant history of being leaders in justice programs" and, as such, "a logical choice for developing a community cognitive services program."

VOLUNTEERS IN PROBATION AND DEFERRED PROSECUTION PROGRAM RUNNING STRONG

Justiceworks' Volunteers in Probation and Deferred Prosecution Programs are currently admitting new referrals. For a brief period of time, both programs did not accept new referrals due to program overload. With secured funding for both these programs, we can continue to meet the need for alternative sentencing and diversion programs in Portage County. Currently, Justiceworks staff and board members are working with Portage County volunteers from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and the Department of Corrections to gather empirical data to demonstrate program effectiveness and cost savings. Additionally, Justiceworks continues to work with Portage County leadership to review justice programming needs in our community.

***LUSTICEWORKS THANKS COMMUNITY
SPONSORS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL MARTIN
LUTHER KING, JR. EVENT***

Theatre, music, interactive dialogue and refreshments marked Justiceworks' 2012 community recognition of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday in Stevens Point. The keynote performer, UW-Madison Theatre and Drama Professor Patrick Sims, performed a dramatic excerpt from his original play on events surrounding the life of lynching survivor and civil rights activist, James Cameron, a former native of Wisconsin. The performance delivered a historical message of forgiveness and reconciliation. Musical guests included the Stevens Point Area Senior High School Concert Choir and Monteverdi Master Chorale. Also honored at the program was community member, Patti Cahill, the 2012 John Klismet Justice Volunteer award winner. Patti was recognized for her work in opening the Riverside House, a sobriety residence for men in recovery, in Stevens Point. The program was free and open to all community members, made possible through generous contributions from the Baha'i Faith, Frame Presbyterian Church, Newman University Parish, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Saint Bronislava Catholic Church, Saint Stanislaus Catholic Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Paul's Methodist Church, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Stevens Point Quaker Meeting, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, UWSP Multicultural Affairs, and the UWSP



Islamic Student Association.

Photo by Stevens Point Journal

Justiceworks extends its thanks and appreciation to the SPASH and Monteverdi Master Chorale choir members, SPASH student stage technicians, and Comfort Suites Hotel for in-kind contributions to the event.

“I had a great mentor that helped me through the program and was there for me when I needed her. She has helped me learn who I really am and always encouraged me in all aspects of my life. I may have dug myself a hole, but with this program, I am slowly making my way out. With VIP, I know that there is always somewhere I can turn to for the help I need. VIP is definitely a life changing experience.”

Volunteers in Probation program participant

“This past month has been a generous one for me, not to mention fast! My recovery has strengthened this past month. Every day my spirituality grows. I have been more honest with myself. Things I didn’t even know I was lying to myself about I am now coming to see. What a gift to have. I still have twelve hours of community service to finish up. School, studying, homework, my relationship which is growing so well and work have all been my priorities but I must put my recovery first or all of those things will be no more. I will get those hours in but you can’t let me go until I have them all completed so ha! Thank you for helping me get my life back. I couldn’t have asked for a better gift.”

Volunteers in Probation program participant

“Meetings with my mentor are going great. I feel like I finally understand some of the things that would trigger reactions and am coping with them well. All and all, everything is going well and I feel the best I’ve felt in a long time.”

Volunteers in Probation program participant

“The Family Law Information Center was very helpful to us...their efforts helped keep our divorce amicable. Please accept our heartfelt gratitude.”

Family Law Information Center service recipient

“Everybody wins with this program.”

Police Volunteer with the Make It Right Restitution Program

“I wish I had something like this when I was young. This really helps.

Parent of youth offender in the Restorative Conferencing for Youth program

“It meant a lot of me and makes it easier to do the right thing when I know I have my mentor and the rest of the team behind me.”

TEAM Reentry program participant

Your contributions make a difference in the lives of others. If you have contributed your time as a volunteer with a Justiceworks' service program, served as a volunteer voting member or member of the Board of Directors, or made a financial donation to a Justiceworks' fundraiser or community education event, you have enabled our non-profit community-based justice organization to offer support to those in need. In turn, with restorative justice outcomes, we all benefit from a safer, healthier community. The following are testimonials from various service recipients in Justiceworks' victim- and offender-based programs:

"I would like to speak on behalf of the Volunteers in Probation program. As a "member" I have learned to stay clean with the tools the VIP program has given me. I use them everyday—if I don't, they will rust! As an addict, I tried to cry my way out of things and smile faking my way through this. They didn't fall for it though. The Volunteers in Probation staff really saw through my bull. Instead of throwing me in jail which would have made no change in me, they punished me by giving me UAs (alcohol and drug detection tests) and made sure I had the help needed to stay clean. They have fully supported me when I wasn't supporting myself. Instead I found Narcotics Anonymous and have all the tools to stay clean. Thank you."

Volunteers in Probation program participant

"I was skeptical at first as to how this program was going to work and as to whether I was going to be treated like a criminal. However, it has become completely the opposite. I have been treated with respect and dignity though out and for that I am much appreciative. Getting together and talking (with my mentor) on a regular basis has helped me vent my feelings while still staying focused on my goals in life without forgetting how I put myself in this situation. It has helped me find other things to do in my spare time that would not put me in the position to make another mistake. I would recommend this program to anyone who has made a mistake and expresses the remorse and is committed to changing for the better. This program will help to benefit one's life far more than jail or fines would ever do. I would like to thank (the Justiceworks staff and mentor) for their wonderful support and the court for allowing me to take part in this program and giving me another chance. Also to all who created this program and had anything to do with it."

Volunteers in Probation program participant

TEAM PROGRAM PARTICIPANT GIVES BACK TO REENTRY PROGRAM

The TEAM reentry program offers a range of currently unavailable reentry services to offenders in Portage County, WI in an effort to reduce the high rate of local recidivism. Its primary service is to provide offenders with individualized, relationship-based support in the form of one-on-one mentoring. The program encourages long-lasting personal changes in perspective and lifestyle to former offenders through the guidance of fellow community members. With its emphasis on employability, TEAM works with local businesses to provide instruction in such professional areas such as business writing, public speaking, employment interviewing, personal financial responsibility, and work ethics. TEAM also streamlines existing reentry services for offenders helping them access mental health, transportation, employment, housing, and substance abuse treatment. The program has admitted 26 individuals into the reentry program since it opened its doors in 2011.

As a testament to the program and staff, a former offender wrote this letter to TEAM Program Coordinator, Ron Carlson, to express his thanks and to give back to others:

Mr. Carlson,

“I wanted to write you letting you know how much I appreciate what you and the staff at Justiceworks has done in helping me to a better path in my life’s journey. I look back at my past struggles and realize I never looked to others for help and that only helped lead to my downfall and making a lot of poor choices. I know I had to put in my fair share of effort in finding employment, but the words of wisdom, the mock interview to polish my interview skills, the numerous calls to just see how I’m doing, and the care and compassion can never have enough “thank yous” said...Ron, you have not only been a great person to talk to for advice on jobs and

inspiring me to keep pushing myself to better things, but you have also been one of my most positive people I can call a friend. You always show concern on how I am doing, wondering if there is anything you can help with. I will never forget that, and it only inspires me to want to give back and help others also. It was “Be Kind to Others” yesterday and I thought one way to give back is by donating this gift card. It helped me when I was there once and feel it is time to give back to



Photo by Stevens Point Journal

you guys for everything you have done for me. I don't know how often you hear how much help you are to someone like me trying to start fresh, but it does. I am so thankful for Justiceworks and the people there! “

COMING UP :

- Family Law Information Center Volunteer Meeting, FLIC Room, Portage County Courthouse, 2nd Floor, Tuesday, April 3
- Volunteers in Probation/TEAM Mentor Meeting, Aging and Disability Resource Center, Room F, 2nd Floor, Wednesday, April 10
- Justiceworks 2012 Annual Meeting and Public Presentation: *Get Smart on Crime: Community Solutions*, Wednesday, April 25, Portage County Public Library, 7:20 p.m. Justiceworks annual business meeting for voting members; 5:50 p.m. public presentation
- 6th Annual Wisconsin Restorative Justice Coalition/Wisconsin Association of Restitution Programs (WRJC/WARP) Restorative Justice Conference, May 3-4, Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells

THANK YOU TO FAMILY LAW INFORMATION CENTER STUDENT INTERN KIM FIORE

Kim Fiore volunteered in the Family Law Information Center (FLIC) during the past year and recently completed her paralegal internship training at the pro se center. During her time at the FLIC, Kim assisted individuals struggling with family law issues,



unrepresented in the legal system, on a day-to-day basis. During her internship with the FLIC, Kim also compiled demographic data to help us further understand the needs of pro se litigants. We thank Kim for her volunteer work with our organization and wish her good luck with future professional and volunteer endeavors.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE BOOK REVIEWS

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

In this stunning and incisive critique, civil rights lawyer-turned-legal scholar Michelle Alexander argues that we have not ended racial caste in America: we have simply redesigned it. Alexander shows that, by targeting black men through the War of Drugs and decimating communities of color, the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control... Alexander challenges the civil rights community, and all of us, to place mass incarceration at the forefront of a new movement for racial justice in America.

“A powerful analysis of why and how mass incarceration is happening in America, *The New Jim Crow* should be required reading for anyone working for real change in the criminal justice system.” Ronald E.

Hampton, Executive Director, National Black Police Association.

The Little Book of Restorative Justice by Howard Zehr. Reviewed by Justiceworks' volunteer Michael Foret

Our criminal justice (CJ) system is very good at punishing people, but not very good at mitigating the harm caused by crime, or healing its many wounded, which may even include the perpetrator. Is there a way to do both? In the criminal justice system, sadly, there is not. But there is another way to do justice, if we choose to: *restorative justice* (RJ). With a restorative justice system, a community can come together in ways that promote healing, understanding, and even reconciliation. Unlike CJ, which officially and practically brings together only the state and the accused, RJ also tries to include victims and other members of a community with a stake in the outcome of the proceedings, who are known as stakeholders.

Author Howard Zehr, pioneers this new way of addressing brokenness in our communities at every level, from families and neighborhoods to cities, states, nations and even the entire world. Zehr wrote to explain RJ briefly, providing an overview only. He focuses especially on the philosophical principles involved, and states clearly in the beginning what it is not before devoting two chapters to “Restorative Principles” and “Restorative Practices.”

Zehr says that RJ boils down to a set of questions to ask when wrong occurs. They include: who was hurt; what are their needs; whose obligations are those; who has a stake in this situation; what is the appropriate process to involve stakeholders in the effort to put things right? Answering these questions will vary greatly depending on the crime involved. Not all crimes or criminals can be dealt with through RJ.

Howard Zehr does not present RJ as any kind of panacea. He is convinced that if more people learned about it and applied it when and where appropriate, it could do a great deal of positive good for individuals, communities, and society as a whole. The very brief endnotes and selected bibliography will help interested readers learn more. This is a good and inexpensive book for anyone who has not heard of RJ before, understands that our justice system is broken, but still believes in “justice for all.”

Executive Director's Farewell

During my tenure as first executive director of Justiceworks, Ltd., our community benefited from implementation of new, innovative forms of justice. These restorative forms of justice include alternative sentencing, diversion, and reentry programs; victim-offender conferencing and mediation programs; a legal information assistance center; Oxford Houses for men and women in recovery; and community education forums, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration and topical justice-related symposiums. It was an honor and a privilege for me to work on these initiatives together with the Justiceworks staff and Board of Directors, community volunteers, and partner agencies. My experience taught me that we all have a stake in justice-related outcomes for our community and, working together, we can make a measurable difference.

I am retiring from the non-profit sector, but I look forward to serving as a volunteer in Justiceworks' community initiatives in the future. I am very optimistic for Justiceworks' continued development as I leave the organization in the very capable hands of dedicated staff and volunteers. I am also very encouraged by the fact that our mission is now being realized by the State of Wisconsin Department of Correction through its identification of Portage County as a leader in justice programs and logical choice for a new, innovative community corrections center; a model center dedicated to reducing recidivism through evidence-based justice strategies.

We need volunteers who are committed to ensuring a fair and balanced justice system for all community members. If these principles are important to you, please attend the Justiceworks community presentation, *Get Smart on Crime: Community Solutions* on Wednesday, April 25, Portage County Library Pinery Room at 5:00 p.m. to learn more about our restorative mission and what you can do to help.

All my best,

Katherine Munck

JJ JUSTICEWORKS•JOURNAL

A quarterly newsletter published by Justiceworks, Ltd, a non-profit community justice organization dedicated to advancing policies and practices of justice that create right relationships in the communities of Portage County. Volunteer task forces of Justiceworks consider issues of mentoring, victim/offender conferencing, substance-free housing, and access to justice. Justiceworks has received grants from the State Bar of Wisconsin, the Community Foundation, the Department of Justice, St. Bronislava Church, the Polish Legion of American Veterans, and the Wisconsin Humanities Board. Developing community involvement in the justice system requires substantial assistance and commitment. To join the effort please return the registration below with your pledge. All contributions are tax deductible as Justiceworks is a tax exempt organization under Sec. 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Justiceworks, 1547 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No. _____ email _____

Donation \$ _____

quote for a quarter:

"The world is a dangerous place to live;
not because of the people who are evil,
but because of the people
who don't do anything about it ."

Albert Einstein

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**1547 STRONGS AVENUE
STEVENS POINT WI 54481**

Fostering forms of justice that strengthen and heal communities