

# Community Justice Boards

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# OUTLINE

- Early Intervention for at risk juveniles
- Applying Restorative Justice
- Details of Yuma County Program
- Community Volunteers
- Individual Attention



# What are Community Justice Boards?

- **Volunteers from your community** who meet face to face in conferences with the victim, juvenile and parents or guardians.
- These community members decide what consequences the juvenile will face.



# Community Justice Boards

- Law

§ ARS 8-321

(C) "...the county attorney has sole discretion to decide whether to divert or defer prosecution of a juvenile offender...directly to a community based alternative program."



# Community Justice Boards

## Purpose:

- To give the victim a voice and, to the extent possible, allow a juvenile to make amends to those who were harmed
- To enable the juvenile to make better choices



# Community Justice Boards



Early intervention for young juveniles who are in trouble with the law for the first time

*We can make a difference one child at a time!*



# Community Justice Boards

Planting the seeds ...



# Challenges Faced by Juveniles Today

- Drug Abuse
- Assault / Rape
- Robbery
- Violence at Home
- Homicide
- Suicide
- Alcohol Abuse/Underage Drinking
- Gangs
- Teen Pregnancy / STDs





# Risk factors:

- Bad Companions
- Drug/ Alcohol availability
- Lack of education  
( ditching school , learning difficulties )
- Low self-esteem
- Parents with DV, drug or alcohol problems
- Absent parent(s)
- Lack of positive activities/interests



# Law breaking often starts with

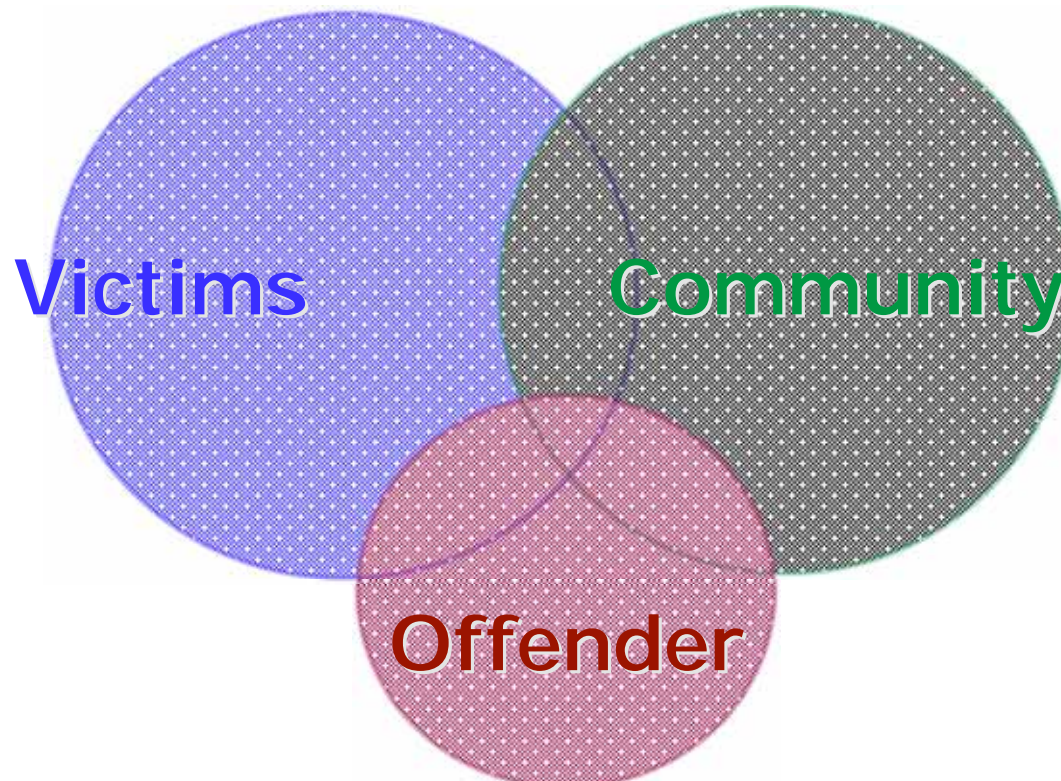
- Truancy
- Tobacco
- Runaway
- Curfew
- Fighting
- Gang threats
- Shoplifting
- Theft
- Damaging others' property
- Alcohol or Marijuana abuse
- Bringing weapon to school



# Restorative Justice is a balanced approach...



Balanced attention to the needs of:



# What is Restorative Justice?

## Imposed vs. Restorative Justice

### Imposed/ Retributive Justice:

Focus on the state – crime is an offense against the state.

Imposes punishment on the offender while giving the victim at best indirect recognition.

Embraces a model of justice which is "pre-occupied with the past to the detriment of the future".

### Restorative justice:

(1) Repair harm to victims, family & community

(2) Accountability & amends by offenders

Bring both victim & offender back into the community



# BALANCED APPROACH TO JUVENILE JUSTICE

- APRI (American Prosecutors' Research Institute):
- **Three (3) Goals:**
- Community Safety
- Offender Accountability
- Competency Development



# Balanced/Restorative Juvenile Justice

- Crime is harm, not just the breaking of the law
- Crime hurts individual **victims**, **communities**, and juvenile **offenders** (and their **families**) and it creates an obligation to make things right



# Balanced/Restorative Juvenile Justice

- All parties should be a part of the response to a juvenile's crime, including the victim if he or she wishes, the community and the offender, and the families affected.



# Balanced/Restorative Juvenile Justice

- The **victim's perspective** is central to deciding how to repair the harm caused by the crime
- Accountability means accepting responsibility coupled with action to repair the harm done
- Crime control cannot be achieved without active **involvement of the community**





# Restorative Justice:

- Community Justice Board (CJB) volunteers apply the principles of Balanced & Restorative Juvenile Justice

- Each Conference gives victims, children, parents & community an opportunity to be heard



# CJB Volunteers:

- Make decisions about **remedies & consequences**
- **Restore relationships** within the community by
  - 1. Giving the juvenile, the parents and the victim
    - **sense of belonging & being cared for**
    - 2. Holding the juvenile **accountable.**



# Collaboration

*Working as a team toward a common goal!*

- The County Attorney:
- Coordinates Program
- Recruits & trains volunteers



# Collaboration

## CJB Members provide:

- Time and energy
- Knowledge
- Problem solving
- Consequences that fit individual needs of juvenile, family and victim
- Positive and caring attitude



# Collaboration with Juvenile Court:

- **Juv. Ct. Diversion Officers screen and refer juveniles to CJB.**
- **Explain the program to juvenile and parent/guardian at intake interview**
- **The juvenile signs admission of guilt**
- **Advice and information for CJBs (Juvenile Diversion Officer attends every CJB Conference)**



# For a juvenile to be considered for CJB

- Admission of guilt – ARS 8-321 (H) & (P)
- Voluntary participation by juvenile and parent/guardian – ARS 8-321(H)
- No deep therapeutic needs (severe family and/or mental health problems)
- First offender
- No serious physical injury to victim
- Small dollar amount of restitution if any



# Examples of Charges

- Shoplifting
- Simple Assault
- Disorderly Conduct
- Graffiti
- Theft
- Threats
- Criminal Damage
- Alcohol Charges
- Curfew violations
- Truancy
- Bringing weapon to school
- Endangerment



# PREPARATION FOR FIRST CONFERENCE

- Date/time/place set by Program staff in consultation with CJB Chair
- Conferences take place at 5:30 pm, M-Th, to minimize loss of school/work time for juvenile/family/victim & volunteers





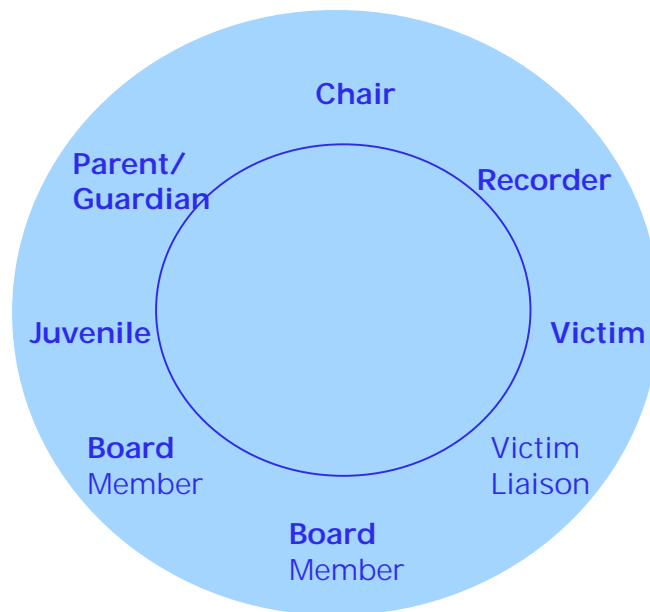
# Victim Preparation

- Victim is contacted by trained CJB volunteer or staff.
- If victim agrees, CJB Volunteer and Program staff member meet with victim at time/place chosen by victim
- The CJB process is explained, including what will happen at each Conference.
- The victim's needs are ascertained
- The victim is invited to attend the Conferences.



# Conducting The Conference

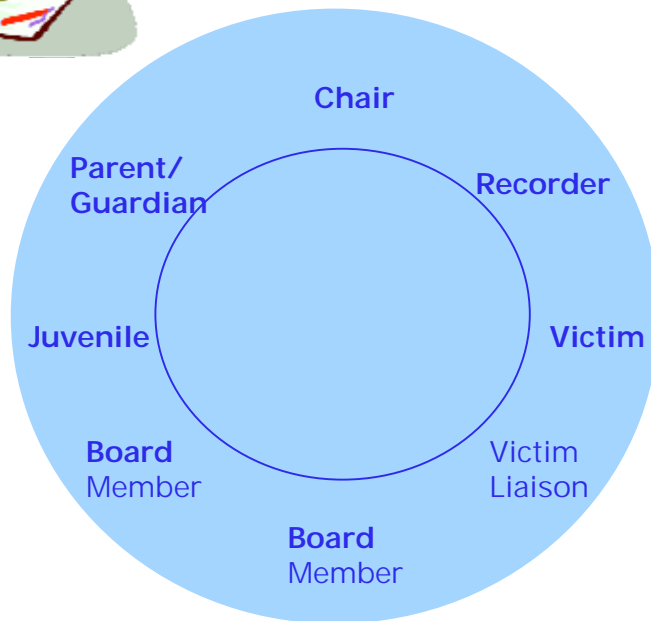
- Greet participants; establish positive, caring mood
- Ensure victim is comfortable



- Seat participants and gallery observers
- Chair determines participants
- Other attendees sit in gallery
- Only participants engage in questioning of child and parent



# Conducting the Conference



## ● Introductions

- Chair & Board members
- Victim
- Juvenile & family
- Gallery observers



# Chair's Opening Statement

- **Purpose of Community Justice Board:**
  - Board members are all volunteers giving their time for free
  - To help the victim, the juvenile & the juvenile's family
  - To enable the child to make amends to victim and others wronged, including family & community
  - To help the juvenile learn: about future consequences, new skills, learn positive things about themselves, learn about community resources;
  - To address problems and needs (tutoring, counselling)
  - Community importance: to repair the harm of crime and to help the child to learn so that the child does not ever again get in trouble with the law



# Non-Board members who assist at each Conference

- Program Coordinator (Mary White)
- Assistant Coordinator (Jessica Rodriguez)
- Juvenile Court Diversion Officer

# Conducting the First Conference

(1) Admission of charges

(2) Personal statement

- Juvenile
- Parent/Guardian
- Victim or Victim Liaison  
(victim is given choice on whether to speak first or after juvenile & parent)

(3) The Board asks questions designed to about the child & family and what led up to the incident

- Individual (child's needs, strengths & interests)
- Home and Family
- School
- Community
- Peers



# Get to know the child & family

- The Board should ask questions in a friendly and caring way.
- They are getting to know the child – to discover needs, strengths & interests
- They are finding out what is going on within the family



# Tips for Questioning

- Open ended questions  
*(do not suggest the answer)*
- **Silence is OK.** After asking a question, wait, give the child a chance to think.
- Respect = Respect. If you give respect, you will receive it.

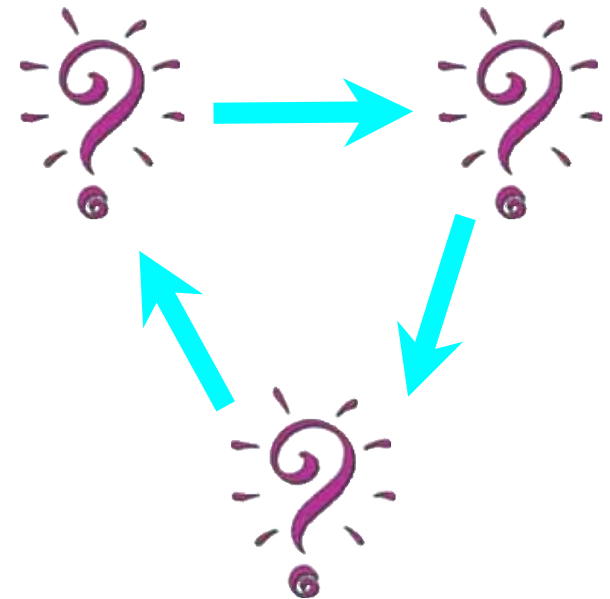




# Tips for Questioning

- Ask, what do you like to do?  
**Not** -- What are you good at?
- “Circle” format for questioning is often best:

Chair allows each Bd member to ask questions in turn, without interruption from other Bd members



# Consequencing Phase

- **Suggestion of consequences**
- Juvenile, Parent/Guardian, Victim or Victim Liaison
- Juvenile & family are requested to wait outside (This is voluntary – if they wish, they can remain to participate in discussion but waiting outside is recommended)
- Victim is invited to remain in the room and participate with the Board in “brainstorming” as to Consequences



# Board (& victim) consider and discuss all information

- **Board determines consequences**
  - **Be creative! We want to get the child to think.**
  - **To understand impact of the incident**
  - **To recognize & address problems they may have**
  - **To learn to make better choices**
  - **To see their own strengths/self worth.**



# How does the juvenile learn to make better choices?

- ◌ **Understanding** what caused the problem and the impact on the victim.
- ◌ **Building self esteem**
- **Learning life skills:** education, job training, positive activities, counselling and more
- **Restore relationships** (family/community)



# Consequence Agreement

- Recorder writes this up at the Conference
- To be explained to child & parent(s)
- To be signed by child, parent & Chair



# Tools we employ to teach juveniles resiliency

• What are the consequences that the Community Justice Boards can use?

Consequences are the opportunities that the CJB can offer the juvenile

- \* To make things right with the victim and community
- \* To understand impact of the incident
- \* To recognize & address problems they may have
- \* To learn to make better choices
- \* To see their own strengths/self worth.



# Build competencies in the juvenile:

- Hold young lawbreakers accountable in a positive way to teach responsibility for their actions
- Self esteem
- Problem solving skills
- Life skills such as GED, school completion, job training



# Examples of Consequences

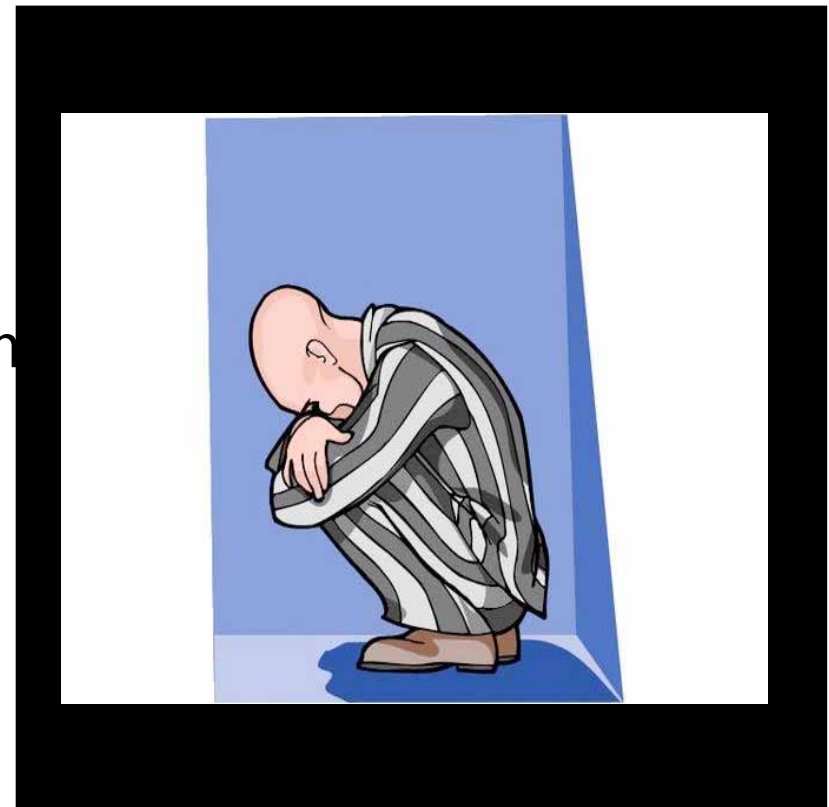
- **Apology letter to victim (mandatory)**
- **Restitution (if juvenile has or can get a job)**
- **Personalized project to make amends to victim:**
  - \* **Art/craft gift for victim**
  - \* **Community service for organization recommended by the victim**





# Learn the consequences of crime:

- Report on how a criminal record can make it hard to get the job you want
- Interview with attorney to learn the possible sentences if convicted as an adult
- Tour of adult jail or juvenile detention center



# Make amends to family & community:

- Make amends to family
- Apology letter to parents/family
- Report to Board on something nice you can do for your mother/father/sibling
- Project to help teach others such as create a poster or song lyrics
- Community Service (at a school, non-profit or other approved & safe location)



# Learn to make better choices

## Report or essay (to get the child to think):

- What can happen if you get into a car where the driver has been drinking
- Dangers of being in a gang
- Bad things that can happen if you bring a knife to school
- What to do if someone wants to fight you
- Where I want to be in five/10 years
- Why I am important – Five things that are good about me
- Essay on the good things about each family member



# Build **life** **skills**/competencies:

- Education and career planning
  - Family or individual counseling
  - Sign up for tutoring to get help with school
  - Bring up grades/attend school
  - Sign up for GED classes



# Concluding The Conference

- Escort juvenile & family back to room
- Review Consequences with juvenile & family
- Address any concerns regarding consequences
- Sign Consequence Agreement
  - Juvenile, Parent/Guardian, Chair
- Closing statement by Chair



# Concluding The Conference

- **Positive send-off** for juvenile, family, & victim by all Board members.
- Some Boards have **each member speak in turn**, to each give a positive comment to the child & parent.



# Follow-Up Conferences

- Dates/Times set at Family Conference and recorded on Consequence Agreement
  - Victim is invited
- Monitor progress
- Provide feedback & encouragement
- Maintain standards of excellence



# FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE

- Child & family bring in **completed Consequences/documentation**
- **Show progress** on Consequences not yet completed
- Child must **stand and read aloud** all apology letters, essays & reports





# Victims

- The victim is invited to each Follow-Up Conference
- If the victim chose not to attend or send input at the First Conf, the victim may address the juvenile and/or send input to a Follow-Up Conf.



# FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE

- Child and family are asked to wait outside while the Board deliberates as to their progress. (The victim may stay for this deliberation.)
- The Board may modify or add Consequences



# Modified/Added Consequences:

- Example:
  - Juvenile was required to do a job search.
  - He found a job and earned some money but spent it all on himself instead of helping Mom with Juv Ct Fees.
  - The Board may require him to earn some more money and pay back his Mom before graduating him.



# Modified/Added Consequences

- **More examples:**
  - At a Follow-Up Conference, the Board realized that the juvenile had a serious problem with anger.
  - Anger Management Counselling was required.



# FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE

- *Each Conference should end with a Positive Send-Off*
- Find something encouraging or good to say.



# FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE

It is important to  
**hold juveniles accountable.**

It is equally important to  
**instill in them a sense of  
community and belonging.**



# Final Conference

- Review remaining consequences / assess overall performance

- Celebrate Success!!

- Certificate of Achievement (documents successful completion with police report/case #)
- Certificate for self-esteem (positive meanings of child's name & birthday)
- Invite juvenile to continue community participation
- Parent/guardian – potential CJB member??



# Evaluations

- Evaluation surveys are mailed to juvenile, parents and victim
- Telephone contact with parent by Program coordinator/staff re: evaluation
- **If a juvenile is non-compliant, the case is returned to the Juvenile Court and reviewed by the Juvenile Prosecutor for filing of charges**





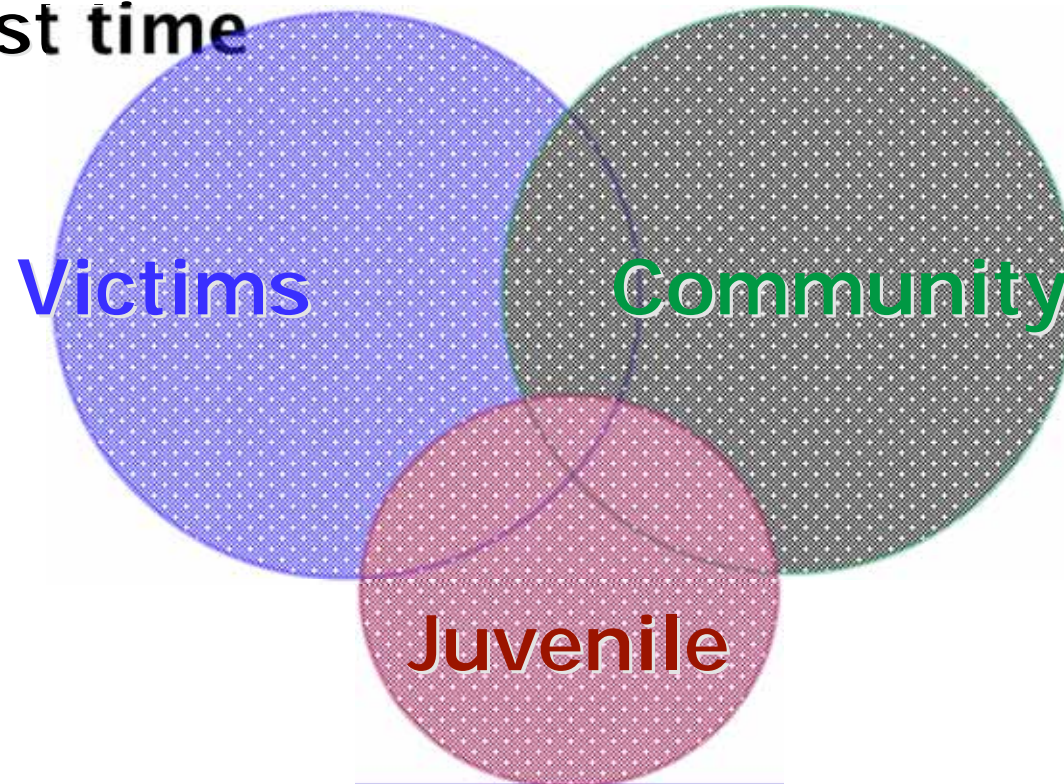
# Program Evaluation & Developme

- Monthly recidivism checks
- Analysis of each incident of recidivism
- Monthly Reports
- Annual Report
- Annual public "Retreat" to review each year's progress
- Quarterly meetings of Community Justice Board Advisory Committee (Board Chairs, Co-Chairs & Program Staff)
- Attendance of every CJB Conference by Program Coordinator or staff



# Community Justice Boards apply Restorative Justice

- Community Justice Boards apply Restorative Justice to juveniles who are in trouble with the law for the first time



# Community Justice Boards

- Repair the harm done to the community
- Give the juvenile, family & victim a sense of belonging to a caring community
- Enhance public safety by keeping the child from returning to crime
- Involve community members in applying criminal justice



# Crime Prevention:

- People who finish school, hold a job and have good life skills are far less likely to commit crimes or become involved with substance abuse.
- Juveniles who learn self-esteem & how to make better choices will become law abiding adults



# For a better world



# Yuma County Attorney's Office

## Community Justice Board Program

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More program information:  
[www.co.yuma.az.us/atty](http://www.co.yuma.az.us/atty)  
[www.snap211.com](http://www.snap211.com)

Jon R. Smith  
Yuma County Attorney



# Sources (chronological)

1st: Community Justice Boards  
Program Pima County Attorney's Office  
Tucson, Arizona

2<sup>nd</sup>: Arizona National Guard Drug  
Demand Reduction Team

3<sup>rd</sup>: Leslyne Jackson, experienced  
volunteer from New Zealand  
Restorative Justice Programs.

4th: Center for Restorative Justice &  
Peacemaking, School of Social  
Work, University of Minnesota, St.  
Paul, MN, Mark Umbreit, Director,  
[www.rjp.umn.edu](http://www.rjp.umn.edu)

5<sup>th</sup>: Victim-Offender Reconciliation  
Program Information & Resource  
Center, Asheville, N.C., Marty Price,  
J.D. Director, [www.vorp.com](http://www.vorp.com)

6<sup>th</sup>: [Guide](#) to Developing and  
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2006



# Advantages of involving community volunteers

- **Community participation in the juvenile justice system**
- **Give the juvenile, family & victim a sense of belonging to a caring community**
- **Involve community members in applying criminal justice**
- **Large pool of volunteers & public recruitment makes community aware of Restorative Justice**





## Trained volunteers add to the family group conference:

- Victim liaison to support/assist victim
- Community volunteers also support/assist both juvenile & parent in positive way
- Trained volunteers know how to ask questions, to follow outline of conference, to craft appropriate consequences
- Knowledge of community resources

Volunteers help the juvenile to understand how the crime/act affects the community neighborhood

- This helps the juvenile to realize that there are no “victimless” crimes

# Who can start & coordinate a CJB program?

- County Attorney (District Attorney, County Prosecutor, etc.)
- Juvenile Court (Diversion or after a court finding of guilt)
- Law enforcement agency (Police Dept, Sheriff's Office, etc.)
- Schools

# Anyone else?

- Adult Probation Departments (Post-conviction)
- Non-profits who can partner with any of these agencies/departments
- Maybe more.....