

NEWSLETTER

Restorative Justice in our community, by our community, for our community.

FALL 2016 EDITION



Lanark County
Community Justice Program

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Fall is in the air, and with that comes exciting times here at Lanark County Community Justice. Last week, we welcomed our new Executive Director, Sarah Bingham, to our team as we bid a fond farewell to Beth Peterkin. We wish Beth all the best in her move and in her retirement.

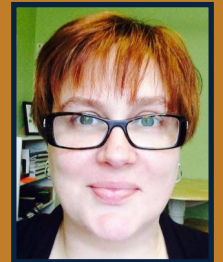
The board of directors has reconvened after the summer holidays, and is back in meetings this week. Our Community Animator, Andrew, is making serious headway on the BE STRONG (*Building, Encouraging and Supporting Trusting Relationships On Neutral Ground*) Project and is excited to commence his work in all of the schools and youth centers in Lanark County.

We also welcomed Algonquin College placement student, Erin Johnston. Erin will be with us until April 2017 and will be assisting the staff on several projects as she builds on her learning in the Social Service Worker program.

Our facilitators and volunteers continue to demonstrate their commitment to helping others and making our community a better place by practicing restorative approaches with considerable skill.

Get to know our new Executive Director

Originally from Northern Ontario then Ottawa, I have been a long time Lanark County resident, moving here in 1999 with my husband. We are raising our two children in Carleton Place and quite appreciate the many joys of living in small town Canada.



Sarah Bingham

I left the private sector years ago, having worked for two multi-national corporations, to follow a more purpose-driven path. I have a clear vision of working collaboratively with community partners to create safety, inclusion, equality and dignity for everyone. I am a passionately engaged advocate to see positive, lasting change.

I have many years of social service experience, having worked in shelters for abused women here in Lanark County and in Calgary, as well as a shelter for homeless youth in downtown Calgary. I have a degree from Carleton University in Political Science and have attended countless additional trainings and workshops- I am as passionate about learning as I am about the power of restorative approaches!

I have a background in crisis counselling, public education, curriculum building, research, program evaluation, child and youth work, facilitation, fundraising, grant-writing and project management. My specialty is building community capacity to prevent and respond to violence, crime and harm of all sorts as well as promoting healthy relationships and stronger communities.

In my spare time I am a voracious reader, member of the Lanark County Live Poets Society (aka LiPS), love camping, my bullmastiffs, Motown music and spending time having fun with my family. I'm very proud to be leading the team here at LCCJP.



BE STRONG Update

School and Youth Centre Program *Building, Encouraging and Supporting Trusting Relationships On Neutral Ground*

Our Introductory Restorative Circle training held on August 25th was attended by a rich mix of participants: new volunteers, team leaders, and teachers.

There were two components to this training; the first part of the day was devoted to presentations about restorative justice and the LCCJP. It also included a presentation by Constables Greg Streng and Dave Bird about OPP Kids. The balance of the day was devoted to learning about the structure and value of the circle process through a series of circle activities.

On September 1st, Brian Peters and Andrew Lynch facilitated a Proactive Circles demonstration at Notre Dame Catholic High School for 50 teachers.

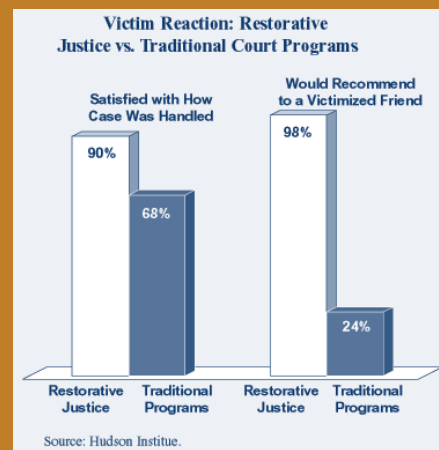
The demonstration circle included students, teachers and Brian and Andrew as co-facilitators. They ran through a series of circles, explaining the processes as they proceeded.

Upcoming Events:

- Sister in Spirit Vigil
Tuesday, Oct. 4th @ 5:30
Location: Lanark County Women's Monument at the Crystal Palace in Perth
- Facilitators Meeting
Tuesday, Oct. 11 @ 6:30
Location: United Way office in Carleton Place which is located at 15 Bates Dr. (industrial section behind the Brick)
- Board of Directors Meet
Tuesday Oct. 25 @ 5:30 Algonquin College Board Room
- International Restorative Justice Week
November 20-27th 2016
Learn more at www.commjustice.org

Did you Know?

- Canadian youth aged 12-17 were more than twice as likely to be accused of a police-reported crime in 2014 than people aged 25 years and older.
- About 1/5 of police-reported violent crimes involving youth occur at school. Cannabis possession and common assault were the most frequent offences.
- Restorative Justice Forums are empowering to victims and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.



What are Restorative Practices?

Address & discuss the needs of the school community

Build healthy relationships between educators & students

Reduce, prevent, & improve harmful behavior.

Repair harm & restore positive relationships

Resolve conflict, hold individuals & groups accountable



B, a Lanark County youth, first came to us after being arrested for vandalizing a neighbour's property. Rather than go through criminal court, B was given the choice to participate in a restorative justice forum to hear how his behaviour had impacted the neighbour. He was given the chance to make amends for the harm he had caused and repair his relationship with his neighbour, rather than face a simple punishment.

B chose to make amends and do what he could to fix his mistakes. While completing the community service portion of his agreement to make amends at a local facility, B met another youth with a shared passion; the love of BMX biking bonded the two boys.

This experience opened the door for B to become connected with others and ultimately to feel like he was a part of his community. Upon noticing that there was a lack of places to practice their skills in the community, the boys took the initiative to rectify the issue. Recently, B and his new friend held a fundraiser to build a BMX park that everyone in the community can use.

As a result of the opportunity awarded to him by Lanark County Community Justice, B was able to: take responsibility for his wrongdoing; become connected to others in his community; make amends to his neighbour; and give back to that very same community. B is now engaged in the community, makes responsible choices and is able to put his mistakes behind him.

In the News..

Restorative Justice: Why Do We Need it?

There's an alternative to our current criminal justice system.



'I needed my voice to be heard': readers on restorative justice

From Victims to facilitators, here's what some of our readers said about their experience

September 7, 2016 by [Rachel Obordo](#) and [Guardian readers](#)



Thank You to Our Partners:



We are a registered community charity and we rely on your donations and the generosity of our funders to do the important work of creating stronger communities and healthy relationships throughout Lanark County. With your help we can build communities that value justice, equality and compassion. Please visit us at www.commjustice.org to learn more.



Testimonials

"I am extremely sorry for my actions and disrespect, especially towards the police officer and the rest of the community. My actions affected the fire department and their families. Also I'm very sorry to anyone who was scared or shocked as I have been in shocking and life changing moments as well." *~From an adult accused person*

"As the accused's mother, I wish to express my great appreciation for my son having the opportunity to hear from others involved in the crime and understand how broadly his actions affected people in the community." *~From the mother of an accused*

"I came in here feeling a lot of anger and resistance to the whole process but my anger disappeared and I feel a lot better and hope we continue to heal" *~From a victim participating in a community justice forum.*

What's New?

On Tuesday September 27, we were honoured to be a part of the Journey To Truth and Reconciliation Day at Camp Merrywood with our many community partners. As we look to the Call to Actions outlined in the report, we see so much hope that the scars of residential schools and discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in Canada will someday be healed and we can all be a part of restoring those relationships and make amends for harms done.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Our new BE STRONG school and youth centre project needs your

Hi,

My name is Erin Johnston, and I am a 2nd year Social Service Worker student at Algonquin College in Perth. As part of my program, I will be spending three days a week working at LCCJP to promote and implement restorative practices in Lanark County.

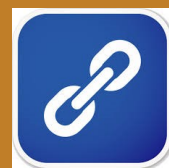


Since relocating here 3 years ago, I have gained valuable volunteer experience at Lanark Highlands Youth Center and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lanark County. I am passionate about working with children and youth, and plan to further my education at the University of Victoria in the Child and Youth Care program.

I live in McDonald's Corners with my husband Gord, our yellow Lab Berkley, and our cat, Simon. I am an active member of Asbury Free Methodist Church in Perth, and enjoy camping, reading, and spending time with friends and family.

help! If you care about youth and helping them build strong communication skills, empathy and resiliency, we have the volunteer job for you. Call us at 613-264-1558.

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