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Restorative Justice Program- 2019 Annual Report

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Restorative Justice (RJ) is an approach to achieving justice by engaging those involved in criminal, non-criminal, interpersonal conflict or disputes in an inclusive and meaningful way. This approach brings healing to parties by creating an environment for conversation about harm, impact, accountability, and reparation of harm. Restorative Justice seeks to support all parties through a philosophy of: Engage, Empower, Support, Restore. It provides opportunities for youth to participate in its education, prevention and mentorship programs.

2019 was an exciting year!

- Received 69 referrals for 82 incidents – that’s a 140% increase from the same period the previous year
- Referrals sources expanded to include Crown, businesses, schools, and self- referrals
- Training of Restorative Action to 2 elementary schools and a high school
- Development of an Environmental Scan for the Coordinated Response to Restorative Justice
- Hired on a one-year contract 2 (job-share) Program Assistants

We are a unique Restorative Justice program; we support needs and healing beyond the Restorative Justice circles with referrals to our education, prevention, and mentorship programs as well as community and agency programs. For example, 100% of youth who wanted mentorship received it; 80% of theft referrals on an RJ agreement participated in the Effects of Shoplifting Program; all who wanted additional support with counselling received it; clients and families were referred to Foundry, Alisa’s Wish Child Youth Advocacy Centre, Community-Based Victim Services, Youth and Family Conflict Intervention program, and counselling. Being a program of Community Services allows for a holistic approach to client support utilizing convenient internal referrals to the other programs within the agency.

Evidence of the effectiveness and success of the program is realized through 90% of youth completing their Restorative Justice Agreement and from participant survey responses; 100% stated they were highly satisfied with the restorative justice circle process and outcome. Keeping well-informed and current of emerging trends and issues, ensures we are utilizing best practice in supporting clients and their needs.

In addition to the regular programming offered, RJ received two (one time) Civil Forfeiture Grants in 2019;

The first grant allowed for the development of:

- an environmental scan of our community’s youth service providers for a coordinated response to Restorative Justice;
- an in-depth assessment tool to facilitate identification of needs for our at-risk “tweens” and youth;
- a review of gaps in service and needs and;

- recommendations for the youth servicing community to enhance information-sharing, communication and access to services.

The second grant brought Restorative Action to School District 42; The “Talking Peace” model completed November 2019 was facilitated to two elementary schools (piloted at: Highland Park and Harry Hogge) and “Conversation Peace” to one high school (piloted at: Westview) also completed in November 2019. The elementary school project provided training to staff and administrators with on-going support from RJ. The high school project provided training to 20 students and 10 staff with on-going support from RJ. This training taught RJ principles, values and the process for students to engage other students in restorative action in their schools when issues arise.

With Talking Peace training there is a high increase of understanding of restorative justice principles and values from the training and the training seemed to shift confidence in staff’s ability to conduct restorative action activities in their classrooms and that the training made a tremendous difference in the way staff will now hold space for difficult conversations in their classrooms and will transform culture in the classrooms.

"All schools should have the Restorative Action curriculum as common language and practice! It’s my go to now!"

With Conversation Peace there was an increase understanding of restorative justice principles and values and a sense of empowerment and community from the students as they were trained and given the tools and skills to be peer facilitators to work with conflict at their school. The Conversation Peace youth trained peer facilitators felt

- the trainings increased their school’s capacity to talk about difficult topics
- their understanding of Restorative Justice principles and values increase significantly
- the trainings gave them the tools and skills to resolved conflict and harm in their school using restorative action

“I feel this will improve our school and that our team will be an amazing asset to Westview”

“I hope this can create that community that our school needs”

“I really think that we learned a lot throughout the training and that this program may really help our school”

Restorative Justice has increased its referral base accepting referrals from a variety of sources including; RCMP; Crown Counsel; School District 42 and; businesses. RJ also accepts referrals from outside of our two communities upon request, with priority given to residents of Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge.

In 2018 Restorative Justice eliminated age restrictions for referrals; the program now works with elementary school students, youth and adults. Further, RJ eliminated barriers to referrals placing a phone call or email directly to the Program Coordinator plus the development of a wallet referral card for police/schools/community has facilitated easy access to program entry.

Cases are generally multi-faceted and can include working with multiple people. Referrals are accepted from a variety of sources; breakdown for 2019 RCMP (77%), School District 42 (9%), Crown (4%) and businesses/other (10%).

In 2019, **69** referrals were made for **82** incidents

Restorative Justice provided services to 215 people impacted by harm:

- 52 youth (aged 12 to 17) who caused harm
- 16 adults who caused harm
- 1 child (11 years old or younger) who caused harm
- 68 people who were harmed
- 51 supporters/family members
- 27 businesses
- 8% of all served resided in Pitt Meadows and 92% were from Maple Ridge

2019 Cases

A look at Restorative Justice referrals for 2019 reveals from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019 69 Referrals were made for 82 incidents, 62 Resided in Maple Ridge; 5 resided in Pitt Meadows; 1 resided in Coquitlam and 1 in Chilliwack. Below is a more in-depth look at the cases:

Incident Type	2019	2018	2017
Assault	12	5	13
Assault causing bodily harm	2		1
Assault with a weapon	0	1	2
Assaulting a Peace Officer	2		
Break and Enter	0	5	
Careless use of a Firearm	1		
Conflict	9	1	
Drunk in public	2		
Extortion	1		
Fraud	1	1	
Harassment	0	3	
Mischief	9	10	1
Neighbourhood Dispute	6		
Possessing Weapon for Dangerous Purpose	3		
Self- Referral (For Assistance)	0		1
Sex Assault	1		
Sexting	2		
Sexting & Distribution of Child Pornography	0	2	
Support services	3		
Taking Motor Vehicle Without Consent	1		
Trespassing	2		
Theft Under \$5000.00	23	5	14
Uttering Threats	2	5	1
Total Number of Cases:	82	38	33

Referral Source	2019	2018	2017
RM RCMP	53	25	25
Crown Counsel	3		1
School District 42	6	6	2
Business/Other	6	1	5
Self/Family	1		

Top 3 incident types in 2019 continue to be Theft Under \$5000 at 28%, Assaults at 17%, and Mischief at 11%. Theft and assault type cases have seen a rise over the previous year as has conflict

Our community partners make referrals to Restorative Justice to facilitate dialogue with the people who have been involved in harmful events in accountability and repairing of harm. It is in these conversations that clients disclose trauma, substance use, anxiety, and depression and unsupported needs. Connecting clients to support services helps address what might be the underlying factors to their harmful actions; the tip of the iceberg brought them to us, connecting to support services helps them with what lies beneath, giving all of us a healthier and safer community.

The program continues to evolve and grow as a core service for those who have been impacted by harmful events in the communities of Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge.

Thank you.