

# **Peoria County Balanced and Restorative Justice**

## A Transition Update

Illinois Models for Change

Community Based Alternatives Demonstration Sites

National Center for Juvenile Justice

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Illinois Models for Change

Community Based Alternatives Demonstration Sites

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September 30, 2010

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## Report Overview (National Center for Juvenile Justice)

Over the past two years a prominent provider of community based alternatives for youths, *Children's Home Association of Illinois* has worked in Peoria County, Illinois to advance change as a Models for Change demonstration project. The project is managed through collaboration between the Peoria County Juvenile Justice Council and the Children's Home to expand diversion of youths from formal court involvement with a continuum of Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) programming in the schools and in the community. The project demonstrates how a community service provider with connections to schools, churches, police and neighborhood networks of volunteers can mobilize diversion resources and manage them under the supervision of a local juvenile justice governance body. Throughout its evolution the Peoria BARJ project has encountered barriers to diversion programming from a local juvenile justice system aligned toward formal responses; yet has developed solutions to make significant in-roads through non-traditional partnerships.

Project planning began by utilizing the technical assistance resources of the MacArthur Foundation's national Models for Change initiative to engage stakeholders in the Peoria County Juvenile Justice Council and recruit and train additional schools and community advocates in Restorative Justice. Peoria's work grew out of data-driven DMC reduction strategies orchestrated by the W. Haywood Burns Institute and is notable among the 5 Illinois Models for Change demonstration sites in that regard. Peoria also works closely with a Models for Change state level grantee, the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Project (I-BARJ-P), and benefits from their training resources on a continuous basis. In the summer of 2008, the project returned student and teacher survey results that helped the Children's Home alternative education program integrate restorative justice programming into its performance based logic model. This achievement helped to engage school resources for more in-depth and sophisticated data collection on school behavior indicators. Finally, the project's staff and resources have been called into action on several occasions to act as in-county and even in-state experts on diversion with restorative programming. These calls have been as diverse as helping to resolve tension in a prominent city high school closing, student transfer to a new school and to helping resolve and reduce tension in the aftermath of group violence and disruption in an area alternative school.

As the Peoria BARJ project worked in schools, much was learned about working with police and school officials to reduce the likelihood that youth will penetrate the formal juvenile justice system. The implementation experience, as well as the evolution of programming and the lessons learned are shared in the Project Summary Narrative of this report prepared by Children's Home staff, Lori Brown and Holly Snyder. Their narrative provides a comprehensive history of how the Peoria BARJ service continuum expanded from *Peace Circles and then Peer Jury* applied in school settings and subsequently moved out of the school setting to work with Police on diversion through *Community Peace Conferences*. The program is currently modeling three BARJ options in an urban environment with some of the highest petition and commitment rates in the state. In the process, they are developing the tools required to implement BARJ programs and document their impact.

The model developing in Peoria Models for Change has the potential to advance diversion in environments where the juvenile justice stakeholders are supportive of reform efforts but not aligned in a manner that supports them actually implementing and running the programs.

The project is currently at a transition stage where strong footholds are established but always subject to disruption in a chaotic environment outside the sphere of the juvenile court and juvenile probation influence. **Opportunities exist to refine and package the Peoria experience**, including their data collection strategies, and bring them to other Illinois communities interested in the BARJ philosophy. This model can further standardize data collection for key BARJ programmatic responses and build a stronger foundation of evidence to address program fidelity concerns for additional locations in Peoria and other counties in conjunction with I-BARJ-P.

In addition to telling the story, this report also presents data analyzed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ). Findings summarized in the reports include promising findings related to the impact of Peace Circles, including:

- The far-reaching nature of the intervention to model change on a daily basis in a school setting
- Qualitative data gathered each school year of the project from both students and teachers, which describe the impact of Circles in schools as positive on 5 measures
- Some indication in the qualitative survey data that PCs may be well suited for helping Black youths succeed in school ( a higher proportion of Black youths than White youths responded favorably about the impact of Peace Circles)
- School indicator data that shows a 33% reduction in restraints of youth in an alternative school setting and more modest decreases in removals and absences
- Impact on standardized behavior scores for youths pre and post implementation (scores increased in all domains).

Both the process and initial outcome data gathered during the project are encouraging with regard to the value of Peace Circles applied in the schools and a data collection framework is in place to develop more sophisticated evidence in staged expansions into other communities. More work is needed to explore the benefits of Peer Jury and the nascent Community Peace Conference efforts. In the coming months the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Children and Family Research Center is working with NCJJ consultants to further refine the data collection modeled in the Children's Home alternative school environment and expand it to the Manual Academy Middle School program and to improve the data for Peer Jury and the new Community Peace Conference effort.

Finally, this compilation assembles most of the tools and products developed by this initiative for other sites to consider when emulating the changes modeled by the Peoria BARJ projects. The goal of this report is to memorialize the advancements made to date in the project. It provides some insights into its activities and performance and the tools used for implementation, as well as for consideration of ongoing refinement and expansion in Peoria County, and potential replication elsewhere.

# **JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL**

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## **OF PEORIA COUNTY**

### **NARRATIVE SUMMARY**

#### **BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

#### **PEACEMAKING CIRCLES – PEER JURY – COMMUNITY PEACE CONFERENCE**

### **NARRATIVE / MEMORIALIZATION**

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#### **History/Original Vision for Initiative**

In 2008 Peoria County began a second round of Models for change funding from the MacArthur Foundation. During this two-year cycle of grant funds our plan was to build upon the relationships developed, lessons learned and data gathered during our previous years of system reform work. Our Models for Change grant allowed us to develop a more integrated response which emphasized the use of community-based alternatives to reduce delinquency, enhance public safety and contribute to positive outcomes for youth, families, and the community. To accomplish this, one of our goals was to increase the use of Balanced and Restorative Justice Practices, and incorporate the Restorative Justice Philosophy into juvenile justice policy and practice.

Our current efforts to implement the Balanced and Restorative Justice Practices of Peacemaking Circles, Peer Jury, and Peace Conferencing, are the result of work that began eight years ago by the Juvenile Justice Council of Peoria County. The foundation for our Models for Change work in this goal area was established by data gathered and recommendations made from our Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Project.

In 2002 Peoria County received Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission funding for the DMC Project which implemented the Burns Institute Process for reducing the disproportionate number of minority youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Disparity reduction was to be achieved through collecting and analyzing relevant data pertaining to youth involvement in the justice process, both qualitative and quantitative. Additionally, the project required analysis of the detention population focusing upon those neighborhoods from which numerous youth entered the detention population. This race, ethnicity, gender, geography and offence data gave us a picture of who was in detention, allowed us to create area maps, and helped determine our geographical area of focus. Specifically, the Juvenile Justice Council agreed to focus our future data collection efforts and recommendations for change on the South Side of Peoria, as this area was a high contributor of African American youth to the detention facility.

Our DMC data collection efforts continued with Peoria Police arrest data, reviewing street crime then drilling down arrests block by block (in the identified high risk areas) to determine high crime locations where recommendations for change could occur. This gave us our first indication that we should focus on schools, as the street with the second highest amount of arrests was Griswold Avenue, where the majority of arrests occurred in the 800 block; the location of Manual High School.

To our benefit, Peoria Public School District #150 (which includes Manual) was an active participant with the Juvenile Justice Council from the beginning of our DMC reduction effort. During conversations with our Assistant Superintendent of Schools, we learned of her concern regarding the number of fights in schools and the circumstances that provoke them.

To obtain answers about fighting as well as information about youth's perceptions of safety and community, Peoria Public Schools allowed us to administer a survey to 470 students at three schools on the South Side of Peoria in September of 2003. These schools were chosen because they are located in our DMC target area. Their catchments covered the areas of the city with the highest crime rates, highest poverty rates, and highest concentration of African-Americans.

Students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Trewyn and Blaine-Sumner Middle Schools and freshman at Manual High School then completed a questionnaire measuring youth perceptions of safety in both the neighborhood and school, perception of the school climate, and risky behavior tendencies. The sample was 78% African-American and 52% male, with ages ranging between 10-16 years old. Results of the survey were tabulated by Eric Hadley-Ives, professor of social work, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Of particular interest, nearly half (46%) of the 470 students reported they would use violence as an approach to deal with anger toward someone. This data raised concerns about students' inability to get along and appropriately resolve conflict. Given the reported prevalence of neighborhood exposure to violence and willingness to use fighting as a response when the children feel angry toward someone, we believed that adults who work with these children have a responsibility to help rebuild the children's perceptions and help them to form healthy response strategies.

Additionally, in December of 2003 the Superintendents office allowed us to follow up on the survey with focus groups and arranged a meeting for us with the Chief of the school-based police officers. It was during this meeting that we discussed the school officer's role in student fights and learned of the existence of an unwritten rule within the school that when teachers wanted an unruly youth to be removed, the officers would charge that youth with Aggravated Battery to School Personnel. In Peoria County a charge of Aggravated Battery to School Personnel is an automatic hold in the Juvenile Detention Center. This new information regarding arrests was pertinent to our DMC reduction efforts as it showed a direct link between school misbehavior and secure detention admissions; the proverbial "school to prison pipeline."

Disproportionality is about unfair and unequal treatment. This misuse of power wasn't being used disproportionately by the school, but the schools in which the misuse of power took place were schools with a predominately black population. Therefore, correcting this abuse of power would not only restore confidence in the school officials, but could also reduce detention admissions as well as reduce disproportionality in Peoria County. To accomplish this, we had to understand what led school officials to utilize secure detention as a first option instead of a last option in dealing with misconduct.

In 2004, conversations with our Juvenile Detention Superintendent highlighted his concerns about the high number of youth who enter secure detention yet are released within 40 hours. In

the months of September through December 2003 approximately 50% of the youth left the detention facility within this time frame. Because this is a large number of detention referrals, the Council felt it was important to look further into these cases to better understand their circumstances. Having this large percentage of cases leave detention within 40 hours raises the question of whether they needed to be in detention to begin with.

2004 data showed that 44% of admissions to our Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) were released at or before their detention hearing. Of those youth 78% were African American and the top offense of that group was Aggravated Battery, of which 49% occurred at a District #150 school. The majority of these type of detention referrals came from Manual High School and 11 out of 13 were black youth.

Through collaboration with the Peoria Police Department and the Peoria County State's Attorney's Office, we reviewed police arrest reports and were able to discern the subjective nature of this critical decision-point. It turned out that a wide range of behaviors among students, teachers, and school police led to the charge of Aggravated Battery to School Personnel. Some of the police reports showed unequal charging of youth sent to juvenile detention.

Given, all we had learned up to this point, we realized the need to repair harm done to relationships within the school, create a peaceful learning environment, and reduce the over-reliance of juvenile detention as a discipline option. How to accomplish these goals was a question we had no answer to until a chance meeting in Chicago in September of 2004. During a presentation of our DMC Project efforts where the link between school misconduct and secure detention admissions was reviewed, a member of the panel explained that although we had been discussing problems that exist in the juvenile justice system, he was about to discuss the solution; Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ). He explained the BARJ philosophy and how its practices could be used within the school setting as well.

After the BARJ presentation one of the audience members (Jessica Ashley) expressed her interest in helping us begin the restorative practice of a Youth Court at Manual High School as she was a past graduate and was employed with Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office as a youth court liaison. It was on that day in Chicago that our journey to implement Balanced and Restorative Justice Practices in Peoria began.

A month later we began discussions with the Assistant Principal at Manual High School around DMC, data, and promoting Restorative Justice and Youth Courts. It was during these discussions that she expressed her desire for programs like this to be implemented in her school to improve relationships between teachers and students. The Assistant Principal revealed hostilities that existed not only between students, but between teachers and students, even disclosing the fact that the President of the teachers union had instructed teachers on what language to use to ensure that the charge of Aggravated Battery to School Personnel would stick, allowing the youth to be removed from school and placed in juvenile detention.

From our point of view it appeared as though there was a lack of discipline options and teachers who were frustrated with students just wanted the problems to go away, therefore a referral to



lockup met their needs. This way of thinking was contrary to what we were trying to accomplish with our juvenile justice reform efforts. As for the students, through surveys and focus groups we learned that they had fears around kidnapping, rape, and gangs. Student's also revealed dangers that existed in their neighborhood. Survey responses reflected student concerns about not feeling safe on their way to school. With this in mind it was clear that students might not be in the right frame of mind to learn. Given all we learned it seemed clear that students needed a positive forum, like Peace Circles, to express themselves, and which would reduce the likelihood of acting out negatively at school. Circles could provide a safe setting to discuss their concerns and receive support from both teachers and students. This, in turn, could reduce the number of violent responses to anger and reduce the number of discipline referrals and detention admissions.

It was at this time, November of 2004 that our relationship began with the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Initiative. Sally Wolf, along with Restorative Justice Practitioners from across Illinois met with us, shared their knowledge, and gave us direction on how to proceed in building restorative justice programs for schools. Our initial goal was to implement programming that would mend school relationships and reduce detention use for "aggravated battery" charges that resulted from kid-teacher, non-violent incidents.

Early in 2005 an opportunity came for us to work with Trewyn Middle School when they asked for help in revamping their discipline policy. We took that opportunity to discuss the relationship between school misconduct and secure detention admissions, disproportionality, and the Restorative Justice Philosophy. Trewyn administration was very interested in learning more, so in April of 2005, practitioners from the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Initiative came and gave a presentation to all Trewyn faculty and staff.

After the training we held a Circle with the participants to discuss their needs and opinions about discipline issues. Together we decided that Peacemaking Circles would be the Restorative Justice practice that would be most appropriate. We chose Peacemaking Circles as we knew Circles could build and repair relationships, create a peaceful atmosphere and provide a safe environment for youth to share what's important to them and gain connectedness with other students and teachers at school.

The Trewyn discipline committee decided to pursue BARJ training in an effort to implement programming for the 2005/06 school year. Although that was the goal, Circles did not begin the next school year as funding and time issues proved to be significant challenges for us as we tried to put training in place.

In addition to our efforts to implement Peacemaking Circles at Trewyn, we also explored Youth Court. In June of 2005 we were invited by the Illinois Attorney General's Office to attend a Youth Court Summit in Galesburg, Illinois.

Although some of the program names are used interchangeably, Youth Courts operate in a number of different ways. We felt Peer Jury was the form of youth court that was more restorative in its set up and operation. Instead of having a Youth Court where kids take on the role of judge and attorney to hear a case, we wanted students to sit in circle to hear cases, a

position that shows equality. With this approach everyone affected by an incident has a chance to speak and to be an active listener. It is a process of healing and learning which involves face to face resolution to address student's conduct with the youth rather than to/for the youth.

At this juncture, we conducted a Peer Jury informational meeting. Forty selected community members were invited to learn more about Peer Jury and were offered the opportunity to participate in the development of this practice. A sub-committee of seventeen members was formed and worked over the summer and fall to develop a work plan for the project with the goal of implementing Peer Jury at Manual High School. The sub-committee had representation from the Peoria Police Department, Community Agencies, Parents, and representatives from Peoria Public Schools. We also included David Kidd, the Peer Jury Coordinator in Decatur, Illinois, as a guest speaker to share information related to why and how they formed the Macon County Peer Jury program. David was able to provide valuable guidance for our group.

By October 2005 much progress had been made in the development of the Peer Jury Program but our plans hit a road block with the State's Attorney's Office. The Peer Jury Program was developed with the goal of serving both civil cases as well as criminal cases. Several jurisdictions in Illinois had Peer Juries that handled criminal cases. Our original idea was to develop a Peer Jury that would hear only civil issues resulting from negative behaviors at school. But the BARJ sub-committee felt strongly that some criminal cases should also be addressed by the Peer Jury believing that programming which incorporates the BARJ philosophy might also be an option to address the youth charged with aggravated battery being referred from schools. However, the Peoria County State's Attorney's Office felt differently stating the State's Attorney did not agree with Peer Jury and that no referrals to Peer Jury would come from their office.

Once that avenue was closed off, we shifted our efforts and collaborated solely with District #150 Administration in planning the future of BARJ. We believed there would be a benefit in hearing school cases of misconduct, reaching students at school before they were involved with police and/or court. Refocusing our efforts in this way would also alleviate concerns of the State's Attorney's Office. Our Juvenile Justice Council Member, Chief Judge John Barra, voiced his support of administering BARJ programming in schools, especially since the District had asked for our help. Judge Barra explained the importance of making the distinction between judgment and discipline. He stated that the Court is in charge of judgment and the District is responsible for school discipline.

Although our interest in Peer Jury as a school discipline option continued, our efforts stalled after the State's Attorney's Office chose not to participate. It was at that time that we placed Peer Jury on hold and focused our efforts on Peacemaking Circles.

In November of 2005 stakeholders met with education officials (School Superintendent and Chief of School based police officers) and shared everything that had been learned, including: JDC admission data, arrest reports, and information related to "unfair" charging practices. School officials came to the realization that something needed to be handled differently including addressing a school discipline protocol that was not adhered to. Once the School District enforced their discipline policy, African American youth charged with aggravated battery to school personnel dropped by 43 percent. In the 2005 school year, 32 African American

youth were admitted to the Peoria County Juvenile Detention Center on this charge compared with 56 admissions in 2004.

By 2006 we thought we had found a potential funding source for Peacemaking Circles and Peer Jury training when the MacArthur Foundation's initial Models for Change grant was made available. Unfortunately, at that time, although the RFP referred to BARJ-like activities, the Foundation funds were more directed toward intervention efforts.

Our search for training dollars continued and nearly a year after the decision was made to implement Peacemaking Circles; we secured funding from Peoria Public Schools through the use of Title I funds to support teacher's attendance at Peace Circle training.

Michelle Carmichael was a school insider who understood that in order to promote Restorative Justice and Peer Jury we needed to change our language to reduce confusion as the two systems of school and juvenile justice attempted to partner. For example, we used the term alternative discipline option, describing Peer Jury as a different way of handling misconduct. She explained to us that in the school setting, the word alternative means referring a youth to a specialized school. Therefore teachers may think we are promoting a discipline option to be used somewhere other than a mainstream school. Michelle also led us to Title I funds that could be used at the schools in our target area. However, the funders wanted BARJ programming to begin at the high school, rather than middle school level. Their reasoning was that programming which begins in the high school is an easier sell to middle schools rather than trying to sell a middle school program to a high school.

Thus, in March of 2006 we submitted a proposal to District #150 to develop and implement the two Balanced and Restorative Justice practices. Both Peacemaking Circles and Peer Jury would be implemented as pilot programming at Woodruff and Manual high schools with the intention of expanding to their feeder middle schools over the next two years. In addition to Title I funds, the Children's Home Association of Illinois became a partner in this effort and agreed to provide partial funding for the initial training.

Peacemaking Circles training was considered professional development for the teachers and began at Manual High School in May of 2006. We engaged four other schools in the process and trained them during the summer, offering technical assistance to them during the year. Those schools included Trewyn Middle School, Trewyn Day Treatment School, Transition to Success, and Greeley Alternative School.

Six total Circle trainings were held in 2006 with the help of Sally Wolf (Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Project) and a few other Circle Keepers. The training was condensed from four 8-hour days to three, which saved money and reduced the time commitment, two issues that had previously been a challenge for us. Eighty-seven teachers and staff invested a total of 2,088 professional development hours in this Balanced and Restorative Justice training and invested a total of 2,088 professional development hours toward the betterment of their students.

When trying to implement Peace Circles we faced some obstacles: 1- We had to convince teachers and administrators that Circles could be used as a tool and incorporated during their day

and not an extra burden. 2- The Restorative Justice themes of being inclusive and building relationships first then addressing issues second was contrary to those who viewed it inappropriate for a teacher to share information about themselves with students. What helped us work around these issues was the positive feedback from those who had attended the training and experienced the benefits of Circles first hand. The very first group of Manual staff to be trained was hand picked by the Principal. She selected people who would be open to learning a new approach. Once those teachers and staff had positive experiences they recommended the next group of staff to attend and encouraged them to give it a try.

Peacemaking Circles were implemented during the 2006/07 school year. Circles were not mandatory but teachers were encouraged to use this tool with students especially during home room. An additional benefit of Circles was that both Trewyn Middle School and Manual High School requested and experienced staff circles. The feedback on this from teachers and administrators was quite positive. Circles continued into the 2007/08 school year.

At the end of the school year a teacher at Manual shared a poignant story about one of the students in her classroom. The class held Circles daily during homeroom and once per week would eat breakfast together as a group. Once they began this tradition, one of her male students made the comment saying, *"this is the first time I sat down and had breakfast with my family"*

BARJ practices involve changing relationships by engaging people: doing things with them, rather than to them or for them. It is the relationships, not specific strategies, which bring about meaningful change and BARJ creates positive relationships among staff and students. The comment made by that young man shows the level of relationship and connection which developed through Circles. We know that people are less likely to offend against someone they have a positive connection with. Developing this classroom relationship can also make it more likely that the student will attend that class.

In 2008, the Macarthur Foundation provided a second opportunity for Models for Change grant funding. This time BARJ was a priority area for community intervention and national experts would be a resource made available for us to better implement system change in a variety of areas.

Peoria County had a strong desire to increase the use of BARJ practices. Unfortunately we experienced obstacles that were outside of our control. After failing to meet academic standards for several years in a row the entire administrative team at Manual High School was removed and an entire restructuring of the school curriculum and staff took place. We thus lost the majority of teachers who had been trained in Circles. Additionally changes were made at both Trewyn and the Transition to Success Program.

Because of all these changes we began to focus our attention on the Peer Jury program. In the spring of 2008, the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Initiative sent out a news video of youth at Dyett High School in Chicago participating in a successful Peer Jury program. We sent this video to our High School Principals offering them any support necessary to implement Peer Jury in their school. We knew from past experience that implementing a school based Peer Jury

was an easier sell to our State's Attorney's Office than our initial proposal of a justice system diversion Peer Jury program.

To our delight the new Principal at Manual High School asked for our help in implementing Peer Jury after viewing the Dyett High School video. Her goal was to use this practice as a discipline option and wanted the program to be up and running by the beginning of the 2008/09 school year.

At the same time we received the Peer Jury request from Manual (Summer 2008) we were approached by Kiefer Academy requesting our help in implementing Peacemaking Circles. Kiefer Academy is a K-12 school for children and youth experiencing special learning problems coupled with emotional and/or behavioral disturbances. Kiefer staff were exploring ways to address student conduct at their school and reduce problem behavior that had led to police calls in the past. They believed Circles could help advance reforms, and required all Kiefer teachers and staff to be trained.

Despite our previous frustrations in training teachers in Circles, we knew that the Kiefer request was solid and could lead to school programming. The Kiefer Administrators were unanimously in support of Circles, they demonstrated the will to support and implement this practice, and mobility of teachers was not a concern as Kiefer did not have much turnover, with the majority of staff being in place for years. Additionally, because Kiefer is a private school we would not have to deal with the teacher union issues around overtime.

An additional benefit was that the school was located on the campus of the Children's Home Association of Illinois in Peoria, which is the fiscal agent for the MfC driven local juvenile justice reform efforts. This would also allow access to data for tracking of Circles and behavior improvements.

To accomplish all the work the BARJ implementation would entail we utilized our MfC grant dollars to hire a Restorative Justice Coordinator who would oversee all BARJ efforts including training and technical assistance. Once the RJ Coordinator was in place we collaborated with two other MacArthur Foundation Grantee's, the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Project and the Community Justice for Youth Institute to train Kiefer staff in Peacemaking Circles and Manual students in Peer Jury. The three day Circles training and the two day Peer Jury training happened during the same week in August of 2008.

By the end of 2008 we had conducted seven Circles trainings for 149 teachers and staff in Peoria, benefiting students at six schools. Manual High School had 12 trained Peer Jurors who facilitated the restorative justice program under the leadership of our RJ Coordinator. Our school based BARJ efforts were going so well that we decided to explore how we might be able to expand our use of BARJ into the Peoria Community

In 2009 the Juvenile Justice Council was offered the opportunity to collaborate with a community activist group; the Covenant with Black America (CWBA). The Covenant is a local affiliate of a national movement to address issues of importance to the African American

community. The CWBA Social Justice subcommittee was interested in addressing the overrepresentation of minority youth involved with the juvenile justice system.

The Covenant group had a vision to implement a restorative youth program, Community Peace Conference that sought to reduce crime in Peoria and decrease the likelihood of repeat involvement of youth with the justice system. They felt a partnership with the Council could help the success of their new program. This alternative approach to dealing with youthful offenders between the ages of 10-17 is an effort to divert youth from the formal justice system. The Council saw the benefits of this program which we all knew could make a positive difference in the lives of our youth.

This was a potentially winning partnership for all involved. Youth of our community would be offered a meaningful opportunity to repair harm they had caused, community members would be engaged in the justice process and the Juvenile Justice Council could increase the use of BARJ through this community based, system reform effort.

The Community Peace Conference became a partnership between the Covenant with Black America, the Peoria Police Department, the Juvenile Justice Council and the Models for Change Initiative. This court diversion program hears Formal Station Adjustment cases referred by the Peoria Police Department. The group is composed of trained community volunteers and utilizes the restorative justice philosophy of acknowledging that crime causes harm to people, therefore obligations to repair that harm exist. Together with the victim and offender, the case is heard, needs are identified and agreements toward repair are developed. The Community Peace Conference members do not decide the guilt or innocence of the youth. CPC is intended to provide a community response to an admitted crime, not a community trial.

With help from the Illinois Balance and Restorative Justice Project (IBARJP) in June of 2009, we provided 16 hours of training to 15 Peace Conference volunteer facilitators; preparing them to engage offenders and victims in the process of Peace Conferencing. We also identified 40 additional community members to potentially participate in the next round of training.

Initially we planned to receive Peace Conference referrals from both the local Police and State's Attorney's Office, but once we reviewed arrest data, we realized that referrals from the police alone would keep us quite busy as there were 200+ cases during a 3-month period that would be eligible for the CPC.

It took a year from the time we trained our volunteers to when the program actually began its trial phase due to difficulties coming to an agreement with the State's Attorneys Office. We were in the process of developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would outline the responsibilities of each partner involved in this court diversion program but had difficulty getting a response from the State's Attorney. After months of delay in getting results, we contacted Illinois State Representative Jehan Gordon who intervened and stimulated a phone call from our State's Attorney. We then received clarification on his position of not needing to sign the MOU as this was solely a police discretion situation. Once we received the state's attorney clarification we moved forward hiring a Liaison for the Community Peace Conference in March of 2010. We began a pilot of the program in June of 2010 and have met four times, offering case

resolution to 6 youth. The cases involved retail theft, which in Peoria County is consistently the highest of all juvenile arrest offenses. In two of the cases the victims were present and were allowed to participate. Victims, respondents, and parents report satisfaction with the conferences and felt there was a positive impact.

## Lessons Learned

Our effort to implement BARJ in schools and the community has taken several years to get three integral practices (Circles, Peer Jury and the Community Peace Conference) up and running. Not everyone was supportive of BARJ, including: some Juvenile Justice Council members, teachers, and administrators. Had we not been tenacious in our efforts to see this through we would have given up at the first road block. Another lesson learned through our efforts to implement Restorative Justice is that there must be an “internal champion” willing to voice their conviction when opposition exists; a person who moves forward with what they feel is right despite barriers and resistance.

Non-traditional partners and new relationships have also helped overcome initial hurdles, particularly related to gathering initial data for planning an intervention (ex. Community Peace Conferences). The Peoria Police and the administration at the Kiefer School are two key partners that have helped to bridge initial gaps in knowledge concerning a target population that could benefit from new or additional BARJ diversion services.

Further, the programming area that has gained the most traction with data collection (Peace Circles at Kiefer School) has benefited from an internal data champion at the school to work with Children’s Home project staff, consultants and researchers to incrementally advance data collection from qualitative information to more sophisticated quantitative measures. The products of this commitment to data at Kiefer School are explored in the data appendix of this report.

## Moving Forward

It was this second round of Models for Change funding that really impacted our system reform efforts. With Models for Change, we now have access to the National Resource Bank consultants who are available to us for planning and evaluation of all our efforts including BARJ. We are especially appreciative of our consultants with the National Center for Juvenile Justice, Stu Berry and Hunter Hurst. Without them we would not have progressed in our MfC efforts the way we have.

Both Stu and Hunter have devoted quality time with us, providing much needed structure through the development of our work plans which really has sharpened our focus and held us more accountable to the work and to each other. Since their involvement our project is no longer on the shoulders of a few, but in the hands of many who are devoted to these efforts. Our efforts truly have been collaborative with a renewed sense of shared responsibility for getting the work done, which makes sustainability more likely.

Stu and Hunter have given us guidance in areas of uncertainty and direction toward removing and/or stepping over obstacles that have been unique to our community. We truly value their expertise in the juvenile justice system and system reform and have been enlightened by the national perspective they are able to provide. Stu has kept us focused and on track, sorting out our confusion with his insightful feedback. Hunter has worked hard on data and evaluation picking up our slack in this area. His ability to break down for us the foreign language known as data has enabled us to understand why evaluation is important and taught us how to get the work done.

## **Current Status Updates: BARJ Programming Elements in Peoria**

### Peer Jury

With the data on the number of students being charged with aggravated battery charges on school personnel we offered Manual High School Peer Jury as an alternative to standard discipline (typically out of school suspension or juvenile court filing). Before the 2008/2009 school year began, with the help of Sally Wolf (IBARJP), we trained 12 students over a 2 day period on restorative justice philosophies and practices. We also engaged the principal and assistant principal in our training. The peer jury program was listed as a method of discipline in the 2008/2009 parent/student handbook. If a student was sent to the Deans office for a level one or two offense, the Dean had the option to offer the student the chance to have their case heard by the peer jurors instead of possible suspension. This option was only offered to students who admitted their guilt and took responsibility for their actions. A special “Peace Room” was set up for the purpose of hearing cases and honoring confidentiality. The peer jury advisor worked directly with the Dean of Students to assess the appropriateness of the referrals. The peer jurors began hearing cases in Oct 2009 and heard a total of 77 cases that year. Of those 77 cases, only 6 cases were referred back to the Dean. On one particular day the peer jurors were able to prevent 4 suspensions and still hold their peers accountable for their behaviors.

The school allowed us to conduct peer jury during the school day. Originally we planned to hear cases before and after school. But because we had difficulty getting referred students to come early or stay after, the school allowed us to conduct Peer Jury during the school day. This increased the availability of both respondents and jurors. Peer jury was held 3 days a week so that there would not be a long period of time between when the incident happened and the hearing of the case. The peer jurors alternated when they attended so that they would not miss a lot of academic time. The adult advisor kept in close contact with the peer juror’s teachers to assure they were still maintaining their grades. The peer jury cases were heard in a circle format. This allowed for a safe environment in which everyone had a chance to speak and be heard. On an average there were 4 peer jurors present to hear a case.

To help ensure the success of this program, the adult advisor attended teacher meetings to explain the peer jury program. All teachers in grades 9 – 12 were educated about the peer jury program before the program began. The adult advisor and the peer jurors were also allowed to present the program to every classroom to educate the students on the school’s new discipline option.



For the initiative to succeed, it was critical to form a relationship with the Dean of Students. Weekly contact and open communication was essential. The Principal, Assistant Principal and Dean were all active in the implementation of this program. The “champion” in this school was the Dean of Students who made the referrals and followed up with the referred students who did not comply with the agreement established by the peer jurors. When the peer jurors first began hearing cases, the Dean referred “low level” cases such as; electronic usage, disrespect to teacher, unexcused absences, etc.... By the end of the year the peer jurors were regularly hearing difficult and challenging cases such as; fighting, truancy, destruction of property and verbal threats.

The students selected to become peer jurors were active from the beginning of the process. They came up with the name for the peer jury program, MANYO and agreed upon the mission and purpose of the program. An excerpt from the MANYO training material that we use to train other schools and personnel about the Manual Peer Jury Program is included as an appendix to this report.

Manual High School went through a total restructuring process in the 2009-2010 academic year. Instead of having one Dean of Students they had three Academy Leaders. This meant that instead of receiving referrals from just one person, the peer jury advisor was receiving referrals from three different people. The Dean of Students from the previous year was one of the Academy Leaders, so peer jury training began with the other two Academy Leaders. The school was in chaos and it became extremely difficult to get the program up and running. Several meetings took place between the Assistant Principal and the peer jury advisor in an attempt to implement the program. It was not until late November that the cases began to be referred. The one Academy Leader that was formerly the Dean was consistent with her referrals. The other two Leaders were not. Subsequently, only a total of 42 cases were heard in this academic year. Of those 42 none were referred back to the Academy Leaders. All referred students complied with their agreements.

In the 2008-2009 academic year we attempted to have the school provide 2 or 3 adults to become trained in restorative justice practices and assume the responsibility of becoming the peer jury adult advisor. Partly due to financial restraints, staff turnover and other contributing factors this has not occurred. The administration at Manual fully supports our efforts and continues to work openly with us. The peer jury program offers the students and staff a positive alternative to discipline. Many of the referred students have requested to become peer jurors themselves after experiencing the process. Six new peer jurors began training in 2010 to replace the graduating seniors. We are scheduled to begin hearing cases again in September. Manual has gone through another restructuring process that will begin this school year.

The data collected for this program is entered on a spreadsheet. It includes students name, age, race, date of birth, year in school, offense, referring teacher, agreement reached and status of the completion of the agreement. All this information is then forwarded to Hunter Hurst (NCJJ) to compile. When we first started collecting data we attempted to compare it with the juvenile

probation department to see if any of the referred students were put on probation after attending Peer Jury. We received information back on several comparisons that showed no student was put on probation after going through the peer jury program. This effort at accessing follow up court outcome data has been put on hold due to a change in administration of our juvenile probation office. At the end of the 2009/10 school year we developed a student and teacher survey that will be used in the 2010/11 school year. We are also in the process of developing a parent survey and protocol for distribution. It has been extremely difficult to get data information from the school. We continue to try to work with the district to get more access to the data.

Due to the success of Peer Jury at Manual High School, we were approached in January 2010 by the Principal of the Manual 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy to begin a Peer Jury Program for their students. Twenty three students were selected by the principal, school counselor and teachers to become trained peer jurors. These students along with the counselor were trained in restorative justice philosophies and practices for a total of 12 hours. The Manual High School Peer Jurors were involved in providing some of this training. The 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were also allowed to observe cases being heard in the Manual High School Peer Jury Program. This training took place over a 4 day period during the regularly scheduled school day. The entire staff was also educated on restorative justice philosophies and the peer jury practice by the adult advisor. The peer jurors and adult advisor then went to every classroom and talked to all the students about this new discipline process; using role plays to show students what to expect if they were referred to the Peer Jury Program. A total of 15 cases were heard between February and the end of April 2010. Peer Jury was held once a week, in circle format, during the school day. *All referred students complied with their agreements and no one was referred back to the Principal for further interventions.*

The principal of the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy was the primary person making the referral to the peer jury program. The school counselor and principal were the two “champions” in this school. At the end of the academic year, the Principal approached us with the request to have all the teachers trained in Peace Circles. We are currently working with the Principal to provide circle training this school year to all the teachers. The Principal would like to see as many restorative justice practices as possible implemented in this school.

The MacArthur Foundation had a video produced highlighting the Peoria BARJ efforts at Manual High School and Manual 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy.

## Peace Circles

Peace Circles have become an integral part of the learning environment at the Kiefer School; an NCA-accredited, ISBE-approved private school for children and youth experiencing special learning problems coupled with emotional and/or behavioral disturbances. After public school personnel identify students in need of services, a referral can be arranged through special education coordinators. The student population is composed of children with primary handicapping conditions of emotional disability, cognitive disability, learning disability, autism, other health-impaired conditions and traumatic brain injury, Children and youth 3-22 years of age with a functional IQ of 50 or above are those usually referred to Kiefer School. With a

population of 130 students served in 17 classrooms, Kiefer School provides education services to students who live within a 50-mile radius of Peoria on a day treatment basis. Each classroom is staffed with a certified teacher and a teaching assistant.

Before the start of the 2008 – 2009 school year at Kiefer School with help from the IBARJI we trained over 60 teachers and staff (aides, counselors, behavioral assistants, administrative staff) in peace keeping circles. After the training, Kiefer teachers and staff were encouraged to apply the circle process in their classrooms. It was not mandatory but highly encouraged.

During the 2008 – 2009 school year were provided ongoing technical assistance to the Kiefer staff. We were fortunate to identify a “champion” in Kiefer School in Michelle Southey; a behavioral management specialist supervisor who works closely with the teachers/aides and the counselors in the school. Michelle grasped the benefit of using circles with this population, promoted the use of it and became our liaison and our “data specialist”. With Michelle’s and the help of Hunter Hurst we developed a teacher and student survey for completion in the spring of 2009.

Several huge changes occurred affecting the Kiefer Peace Circle program during the 2009 – 2010 school year. Before the school year started we had a refresher circles training with the help of Sally Wolf. The administration at Kiefer School, with Michelle’s prompting, added peace circles to their logic model and program outcomes. They felt that circles could be an intervention used to help decrease classroom removals, physical restraints, and increase positive relationship building skills. It was at this time that the Kiefer teachers were mandated to use circles at least 2 times per week. In order to start collecting more data for the effectiveness of peace circles Michelle, Hunter and Holly then developed a teacher’s log to be filled out every time a teacher held a circle. Michelle was instrumental in once again getting the teacher and student surveys completed in the spring of 2010. Michelle, Hunter and Holly have now developed a parent survey which will be dispersed to all Kiefer parents in September 2010. We are interested in tracking whether parents are knowledgeable about the circle process and if they see any effects with their children.

Brenda Desilets our Children’s Home Data Coordinator has also been instrumental in helping to set up a tracking and data system. Information is entered into the Children’s Home data base (TIER) system which can then be easily accessed for detailed data reports.

Teachers at the Kiefer School are using circles in a variety of ways. There is one classroom where the room is set up in a circle, the students are taught in circle, they use circles on a daily basis and they even have a stationary center piece that the students take pride in and protect. Some use it as a daily check-in/check-out, some use it when crisis situations arise, some use it when a student is having a hard day or something happened in their family, some use it for weekly goal setting, while others use it for relationship building. We continue to provide technical assistance to the Kiefer staff throughout the year. In September 2010 we trained the new teachers/aides not previously exposed to Circles.

Circles at Kiefer have had a positive impact on relationships between students and teachers and students and their peers. This success experienced at Kiefer can be translated to other schools with this balanced and restorative justice practice.

We were recently contacted, in late 2009, by a teacher at KCSS (Knoxville Center for Student Success; a “choice” middle school serving grades 5-8) to train and implement a Peer Jury Program. Many of the teachers at KCSS had already participated in Peace Circles training when it was offered in August 2006. We then offered a refresher circle training to all the staff at KCSS. This school bases a lot of its values and discipline on restorative practices. After meeting with the principal and the teacher who made initial contact it was decided that they had so many behavior/relationship problems in the school that the program was on hold until things got under control.

We then were contacted by another 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher requesting our intervention. After meeting with the Principal and teacher it was agreed upon to start holding Peace Circles on a daily basis to help promote relationship building skills as well as accountability for students with out of control behaviors. In late November, Peace Circles were started in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. From November until May, Peace Circles were conducted at least 3 times per week. The classroom teacher and aide participated fully in these circles. The weekly circles were created to provide a safe environment to talk about issues that the students were experiencing both in and out of the classroom setting. These outside issues were negatively affecting students’ daily routine, leading to out of control behaviors in the classroom. Relationships between students and the teacher/aide became more positive, as did relationships between students and their peers. Negative classroom behaviors began to decrease.

On January 22, 2010 we received a call from the Principal at KCSS asking for crisis assistance. A physical fight between 4 girls eventually led to over 35 students becoming involved in a “riot” of sorts. This school only has an enrollment of about 78 students. All 35 students received some sort of consequence ranging from 3-10 day out of school suspension to detentions after school. We met with the principal and developed a crisis plan. First on our agenda was to have an all school parent meeting to address the issues. All teachers and staff were also invited and encouraged to come. Additional community resource people attended including a pastor, a counselor from a local agency, and a community advocate. Our intentions were to get the parents and community together to talk about what we want our school environment to look like and determine what we needed to do to get there. The meeting was held in a “World Café” format with the audience being asked questions and encouraged to share ideas with each other. As a result of this meeting the pastor agreed to follow up and volunteer at the school and the counselor from the local agency provided weekly on-going anger management sessions with the students. Additionally, a parent support group was established to work closely with the school to provide better communication and support between the school and parents and it was agreed that Peace Circles would be conducted with the students to discuss the situation and the effects it had on them. The 4 girls involved in the fight were required to attend a circle together to discuss their re-entry back into the school setting and what had happened. These girls were also involved in circles with their individual classroom so they could hear how their actions affected their peers.

At the end of the school year, the eighth grade students who participated in the weekly classroom peace circles group were given a certificate in recognition of their participation and support of Peace Circles during their graduation ceremony. The current plan for the 2010/2011 academic

year at KCSS is to get the peer jury program up and running and continue with the Peace Circles as a daily/weekly event.

## Other Restorative Efforts

We have worked closely with the Peoria Park District's "ELITE" Youth program. Together we met with the Peoria School District #150 superintendent and other key personnel to discuss utilizing restorative practices in other schools within the district. It was determined by the school board that one of the high schools would be closing for the 2010-2011 year. All the students would be merged into the remaining 3 high schools. This was obviously very upsetting to the students and their families. We offered to hold peace circles between the students, parents and even for the community. The superintendent felt that this was a great idea but not necessary at this time and would not participate in the offer. We then contacted the individual principals at two of the other schools and offered our assistance. One of these schools was Manual High and they were interested in starting something in the fall when school came back into session. The other school, Peoria High School, was interested but felt we should re-contact them this coming fall- which we intend to follow up on. We are also currently talking about implementing Peace Circles with both Manual High and the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy.

We saw such success with the restorative practices we were providing that we began to look at providing services in the Peoria community outside the school setting. A Children's Home board member contacted one of our vice presidents and asked if training could be provided by Children's Home staff to her agency (USDA) on a variety of topics. One of those topics was conflict resolution. We provided 2 sessions focusing on resolving conflict using circles. The training was successful and we were asked to come to USDA offices throughout the state to provide more training and modeling of this practice. The week following this training we were contacted to provide a circle with a USDA office in Champaign, Illinois that was having difficulties with its staff. We did much pre-circle work to determine what the needs were and how to best approach them. We then interviewed each staff member individually before conducting the Peace Circle. We have offered follow up services and have kept in contact with the supervisor who requested our assistance.

In addition to the previously documented "community circles", we have also:

- Been contacted by our own agency, the Children's Home, to conduct circles with departments that were having difficulties and needed to improve communication.
- Been approached by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority to provide 3, day long trainings on peer juries in the school. These trainings were scheduled in 3 different locations in Illinois, Whittington, Peoria, and Matteson.
- With the success of the Manual peer jury program we have provided key information to other school settings, including: crucial information about the obstacles and milestones we had experienced, restorative philosophy and our experience with Peer Juries.

- Provided one day of training, with Sally Wolf, to the administrators, principals and assistant principals of the Rockford School District. They are interested in providing restorative practices in their entire district and asked for assistance and training from us.

In September 2010 the Children's Home and Kiefer School hosted six visitors from Bodo, Norway. The group came to Illinois to study how agencies throughout the state have implemented Restorative Justice to curb school and community violence. The group was interested in our use of Peer Jury and Peace Circles in schools as well as our use of conferencing in the community.

The implementation of restorative justice practices has been an extraordinary opportunity in Peoria. We have seen how restorative practices can be used in a variety of settings and for a variety of reasons. We have provided service in the school setting, the community and to other businesses. Teaching people a different way to communicate and do business provides striking opportunities for community healing, forgiveness and restoration. Restorative practices can be used as an intervention or prevention. It is about a philosophy and practices that can be molded to fit any person's needs rather than trying to make the persons needs fit the practices.

# Process and Outcome Data Appendix

- a. The Early Impact of BARJ Peace Circles in an Alternative School Setting .....21-29
- b. Student and Teacher Qualitative Data Survey Tools (Peace Circles) .....31-32
- c. Current Daily Teacher Tracking Log (Peace Circles) .....33

## Data Summary—Peace Circle and Peer Jury Programming



### The Models for Change Project at the Children’s Home of Illinois, Peoria, IL

The Peoria Models for Change project (Peoria MFC) is building upon a foundation established in previous grant projects to apply Balanced Approach and Restorative Justice (BARJ) programming in the schools. The project narrative of this report provides a detailed history of the effort aimed at diverting youths exhibiting behavioral problems at school from formal involvement with the juvenile justice system and reducing behavioral referrals at school. One of the BARJ program elements successfully implemented in Peoria schools in 2006 and 2007 is the restorative justice practice of Peace Circles (PCs). Peoria MFC expanded PC training in the 2008/09 school year, which involved training 62 additional teachers at two campuses of the Kiefer Behavioral School during August 2008. This data summary presents information gathered in:

- 1) weekly tracking logs completed by teachers concerning the use of PCs at Kiefer in 2008-10
- 2) teacher and student survey results for the 2008-09 PC expansion to Kiefer and the subsequent year of full implementation 2009-10
- 3) school administrative data from Kiefer containing school behavior indicators for youths that were enrolled prior to PCs being implemented in 2007-08 and during the initial implementation and expansion years.

The report concludes with a 1-page summary of Peer Jury process tracking and intermediate results for an expansion of BARJ programming implemented in Manual High School and Middle School (also described at length in the project narrative section of this report).

#### Peace Circle Qualitative Surveys

Nineteen teachers that has been trained to employ PCs and had remained in their position at Kiefer through the 2008/09 school year were individually surveyed using a 2-page written instrument. The survey addressed their use of PCs and the effectiveness of the technique for each of their individual students (please see appendix of this data summary for the survey tools). The teach-

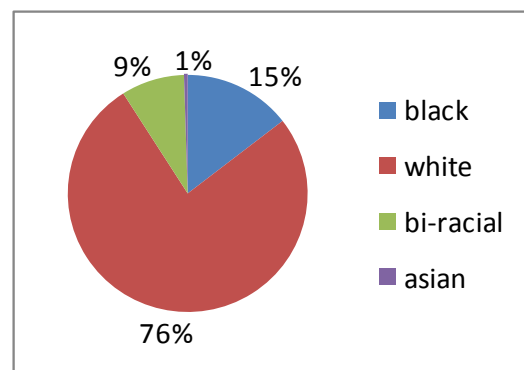
ers were also asked to administer one-page surveys to be completed and returned by each of their students concerning the impact of PCs in their school life. The surveys were administered toward the close of the school year by the Peoria MFC BARJ coordinator after being field tested by teachers at Kiefer. Two of the teachers that might have used PCs indicated that they chose not to. The remaining 17 PC-trained teachers provided survey responses and administered student surveys to their classes in the first run of the surveys. All teachers (22) participated in the subsequent administration of the same survey format in 2009-10

#### Results

The survey response rate for students in the 2008-09 year was 92% with 101 of 109 students submitting complete responses. The response rate increased to 100% of youths providing a response in 2009-10 (100 students).

Kiefer students receiving PC programming in the classroom across the two survey years were primarily in middle school (46%), followed by high school (30%), and K-5 (24%). Most respondents were boys (87%). About three-quarters of the youths surveyed across the two school years were white, 6% of the youths responded they were Latino or Hispanic and 15% were African American or Black, and 9% indicated they are bi-racial (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Race of youth respondents (n=209)





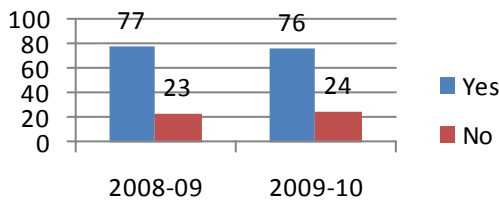
**Student Responses to Five Questions**

Among the student respondents at Kiefer, over three-quarters feel like they get along better with classmates and teachers in both survey years (Figures 2 and 3). During both years about two-thirds of youths responded that the PCs they participated in help them stay out of trouble (Figure 4).

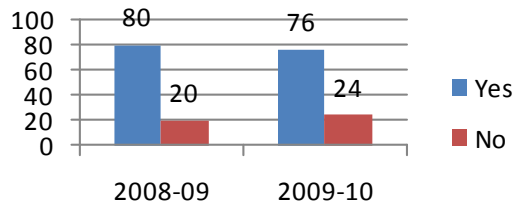
Responses varied between years on other measures. Youths were more likely in the first year of implementation to respond that PCs helped with school work (73% responded yes in 2008-09 in contrast to 56% in 2009-10). (Figure 5). Similarly, fewer youths in 2009-10 attributed PCs as encouraging better school attendance, dropping from 76% responding *yes* in 08-09 to 53% in 2009-10 (Figure 6).

While the perception of respondents dropped in some areas between survey years they remained fairly high overall—above half indicating *yes* the procedure had a positive impact in a particular area. Some of the difference between years on certain questions may be explained by the expansion of the procedure over the two years. In 2008-09 the process was in an early phase. PCs were encouraged by school administrators, but not required. In the following year the Kiefer school adopted restorative justice practices and PCs specifically into its logic model for performance. PCs became mandatory across all classrooms, with teachers logging their activity on a weekly basis. Students, therefore, have a more pronounced exposure to PCs between the two survey years to the point that it is matter of routine in some classrooms. The difference could also be influenced by an initial impact during the initial year for some students in a problem area such as academics and attendance that minimized as the program was sustained and continued.

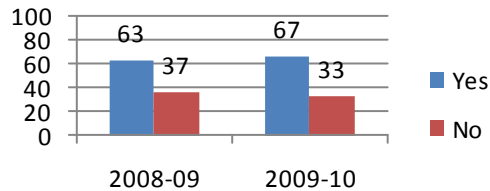
**Fig 2:** Since PCs began I get along better with my classmates (n=109 in 08-09 and 100 in 09-10)



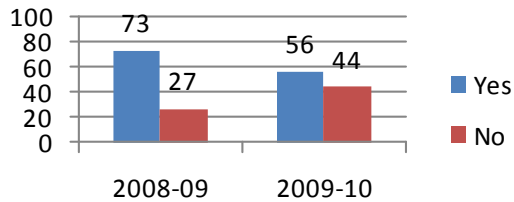
**Fig. 3:** Since PCs began, I get along better with teachers (n=109 in 08-09 and 100 in 09-10)



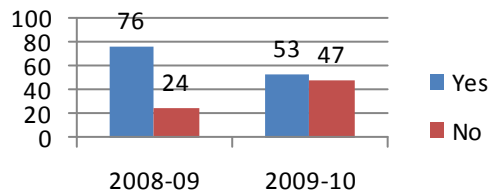
**Fig. 4:** Since PCs began, I have stayed out of trouble (n=109 in 08-09 and 100 in 09-10)



**Fig. 5:** Since Peace Circles began, my school work is better (n=109 in 08-09 and 100 in 09-10)



**Fig. 6** Since Peace Circles began, I come to school more (n=109 in 08-09 and 100 in 09-10)



Differences by race, ethnicity and gender

The impact of Peace Circles for individual students differs by race, with Black youths more likely to report improvements than white youths in all five survey questions (Figure 7). The largest difference in the proportion of youths reporting an impact from PCs by race were for improving school work and coming to school more.

The differences were generally not as pronounced for Latino or Hispanic youths in comparison to non-Latino or Hispanics as they were for black youths (Figure 8). Latinos or Hispanics were less likely than white to report a positive impact from PCs

on getting along with classmates, teachers and generally staying out of trouble. This group of respondents, however, were more likely than white youths to report PCs impacting attendance (19 percentage point difference).

Finally, girls were more likely than boys to indicate that PCs helped them on all measures, with the most pronounced differences (11 percentage points respectively) for staying out of trouble and improving school work (Figure 9).

**Fig 7** Percentage of students reporting *yes* to questions on the student survey by race (n=209)

	Black		White		Pct. Pt. Difference
	%	#	%	#	
Since PCs began I get along better with my classmates	79	22	75	113	4
Since PCs began, I have stayed out of trouble	68	19	64	96	4
Since Peace Circles began, my school work is better	82	23	60	90	22
Since PCs began, I get along better with teachers	86	24	76	115	10
Since Peace Circles began, I come to school more	89	25	57	84	33

**Fig 8:** Percentage of students reporting *yes* to questions on the student survey by race (n=209)

	Latino		Not Latino		Pct. Pt. Difference
	%	#	%	#	
Since PCs began I get along better with my classmates	64	7	77	146	-14
Since PCs began, I have stayed out of trouble	64	7	65	123	-1
Since Peace Circles began, my school work is better	73	8	64	121	8
Since PCs began, I get along better with teachers	73	8	78	148	-6
Since Peace Circles began, I come to school more	82	9	63	116	19

**Fig 9:** Percentage of students reporting *yes* to questions on the student survey by race (n=209)

	Female		Male		Pct. Pt. Difference
	%	#	%	#	
Since PCs began I get along better with my classmates	80	16	76	137	4
Since PCs began, I have stayed out of trouble	75	15	64	115	11
Since Peace Circles began, my school work is better	75	15	64	114	11
Since PCs began, I get along better with teachers	80	16	78	140	2
Since Peace Circles began, I come to school more	70	14	63	111	7

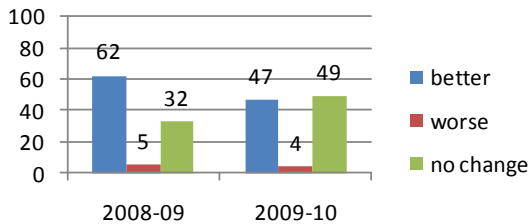
**Teacher Responses to Five Questions**

The 17 Kiefer teachers that applied PC training in their classrooms also provided survey responses with regard to the impact of PCs on 100 *individual* students. Over half of the teachers responded that the PC techniques had improved the student’s relationship with classmates during the first year (62%) (Figure 10). This proportion dropped to 47% in the 2009-10 year. The proportion of teachers viewing PCs as improving their relationship with youths was nearly constant between the two surveys respectively at 60 and 57% in 2008-09 and 2009-10 (Figure 11).

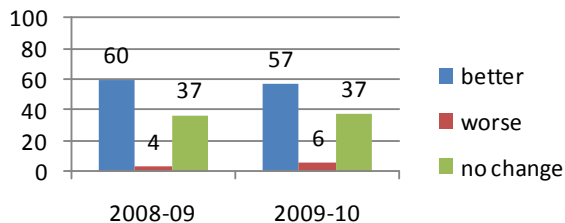
The proportion of teachers responding that PCs positively impacted an individual student’s behavior dropped from 52% in 2008-09 to 46% in 2009-10, with greater proportions indicated *worse* behavior or *no change* (Figure 12).

Similar decreases occurred on the measures of PCs impacting academics (37% indicated better academics in 08-09 and 26% in 2009-10) and attendance (a drop of four percentage points between survey years) (Figures 13 and 14). Attendance, however, was never an item teachers attributed to PCs impacting in the first survey.

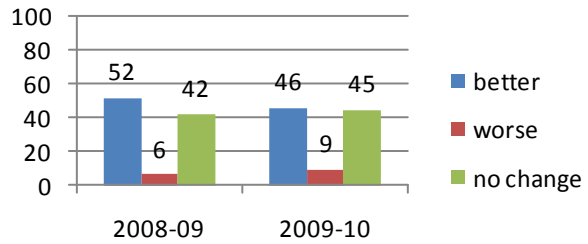
**Fig. 10:** How would you rate this student's relationship to other students (n=114 in 08-09 and 119 in 09-10)



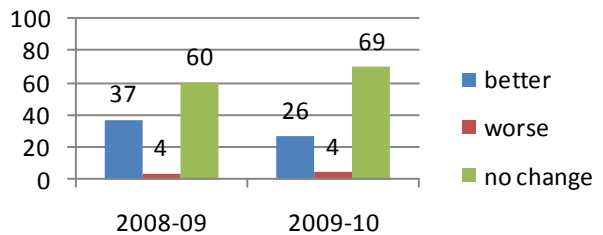
**Fig. 11:** How would you rate the relationship between this student and yourself (n=114 in 08-09 and 119 in 09-10)



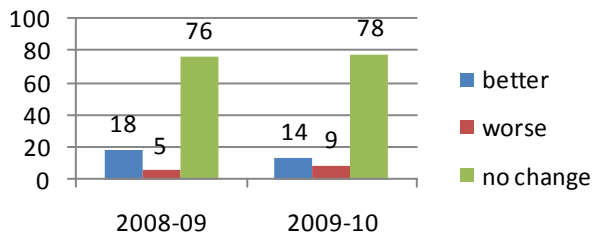
**Fig. 12:** How would you rate this student's school behavior (n=114 in 08-09 and 119 in 09-10)



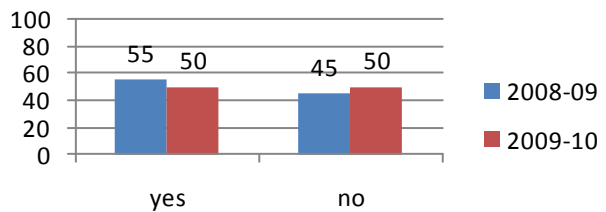
**Fig. 13:** How would you rate this student's academic performance (n=114 in 08-09 and 119 in 09-10)



**Fig. 14:** How would you rate this student's attendance (n=114 in 08-09 and 119 in 09-10)



**Fig. 15:** Did this student benefit from the PC process in a particularly noteworthy way (n=114 in 08-09 and 119 in 09-10)



Teacher Observations on the Impact of PCs

Teachers and students at Kiefer involved in the PC expansion in 2008/09 generally agreed on the value of the process. Teachers, further, are able to comment on the impact of PCs in the classroom for individual student. Please see the following page for a listing of their un-edited comments on how PCs had impacted a youth in a noteworthy way during the 2008/09 school year at Kiefer.

<b>Teacher comments concerning how students benefited from the PC process in a particularly noteworthy way</b>	
"loves circles and always participates"	increase in appropriate conversation with peers
"wonderful tool used when his mother passed away"	initiates circles to problem solve issues amongst staff
allows him to get support from others	learned how to support and be positive to peers
allows him to interact with peers/voice his opinion	less aggressive with peers/more open to staff communication
asks for help more/feels more connected to her peers	likes the activities
begun to open up instead of withdraw and isolate	loves to share/ has made more friends
better communication with peers/teacher	more accepted by his peers since circles started
better interaction with her peers	more accountable for his behavior
better participation/does well with circle guidelines	more appropriate with his peer interactions
circle time is very effective for this student	more co-operative
contributes more in class/talks more	more empathetic/owns behavior
discovered positive areas of interests with peers he wouldn't talk to before	more empathy
empathy for others	more open/insightful to others situations
expresses feelings more appropriately	more sensitive to own behavior & affects on others
expresses feelings more appropriately/uses it as "self-help"	not as antisocial and has formed some friendships
expresses himself better/has been more appropriate	now openly speaks in class-didn't before
feels better about "the break" he knows it's not a punishment	opened up and become a leader to his peers
feels more listened to	peers more accepting of him/better listening and sharing
follows guidelines and participates well	shows more self-control/expressions more appropriate/has roled play with teacher
follows guidelines very well in circles	starting to show patience with his classmates
has developed relationships with peers/staff and more interactive	student often suggests "circle time"
has expressed his feelings better	student refuses to participate in class
he benefits from circles when he attends school	talks and interacts more with peers
he is learning self-control/discusses goals and issues more appropriately	uses his words more/shows more self-control
he likes the activity	uses more self-control

**Daily Teacher Logs of PC Activity**

Starting in the 2009/10 school year, the project asked teachers to keep Peace Circle logs each time a circle was applied. During the school year, 877 Circle events were logged. About one-quarter were logged on the Knoxville campus at Kiefer school (23%) and the other three-quarters (77%) on the Academy campus at Kiefer.

Among teachers, one stood out as logging the most Peace Circles about 19% overall (Fig 16). Two other teachers logged less than ten events during the year. The average number of PC events in the logs was 41 and median number of events was 80, indicating irregular use of the technique across classrooms.

**Fig. 16: Teachers Logging Peace Circles, 2009-10**

Classroom Identifier	Percent	Number
1	7	63
3	5	40
4	5	46
5	4	36
6	19	159
7	1	9
8	1	5
9	5	46
10	0	1
11	2	19
12	7	58
13	5	43
14	1	7
15	0	4
16	4	34
17	3	29
18	6	54
19	7	60
20	8	70
21	2	16
22	6	51
Total	100	850

Teachers logged the type of circle about 96% of the time. The most common type of Circle was a Talking circle (80%) (Figure 17). About three –quarters of circles were logged as this type alone or in combination with

**Fig 17: Type of Peace Circle, 2009-10**

	Percent	Number
talking	80	672
consensus	3	21
healing	2	18
reintegration	1	11
understanding	5	39
support	1	9
other	8	68
Total	100	838

other purposes. The uniformity of the data indicates a need to modify the tracking log going forward to better classify the types of circles.

Teachers also logged participation for each PC on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 indicated low participation by students and 5 as high participation. Eighty-six percent of PCs were scored as having high participation (score of 4 or 5), 10% as average participation and 4% as below average participation by teachers.

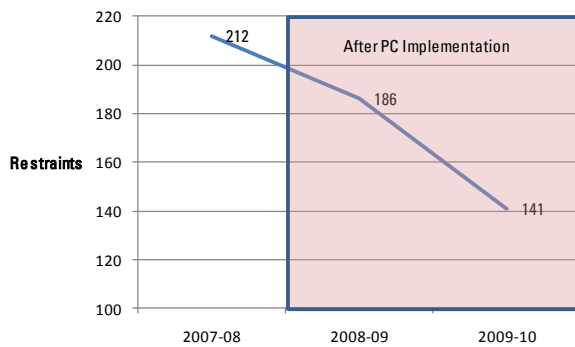
Teachers similarly logged circle effectiveness on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being not effective and 5 being highly effective. The responses were similar to those concerning participation. Specifically, over three quarters of PCs (81%) were rated as above average effectiveness (scored 4 or 5), 15% as average and only 3% were rated by teachers at below average effectiveness (scored as a 1 or 2).

**School Indicator Data**

In addition to tracking weekly use of PCs and gathering qualitative information concerning impact from teachers and students, data collection expanded in 2009-10 in Kiefer to extract a set of behavioral indicators for a cohort of youths that were enrolled prior to the 2008-09 expansion of PCs into Kiefer School and their subsequent evolution in 2009-10. Information is tracked in an administrative database for each student concerning removals, restraints and attendance. The school also gathers information concerning standard behavioral scores measured by the Behavior Evaluation Scale (3rd Ed) (hereinafter BES). The BES is administered at enrollment and at the beginning of each school year.

Fifty-three youths met the criteria of being enrolled both pre and post PC implementation. Among these youths the average number of overall restraints decreased from 212 in 2007-08 when PCs were absent from the school to 141 during the most recent school year (Figure 18). Additionally, the average number of restraints per youth decreased over the same three years from 4.0 to 2.7 and the average duration of overall restraints for youths decreased from 82 minutes to 57 minutes.

**Fig 18:** Annual number of restraints in Kiefer School campuses among youths enrolled pre and post-PC Implementation



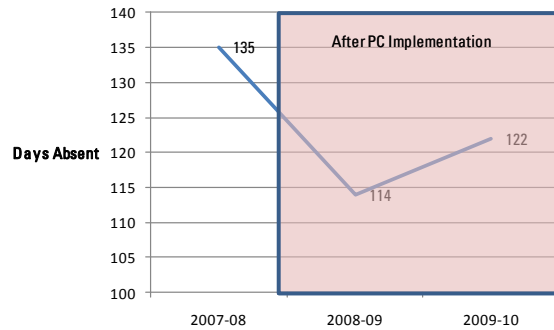
Attendance as measured by days absent, initially decreased 10% when PCs were implemented in 2008-09 but increased slightly during the past school year (Figure 19).

The average days absent for youths in the study cohort decreased from 23.2 days per school year in 2007-08 to 21.6 in 2009-10., and the median days absent decreased from 12 days in pre-PC implementation to 11 days in both 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years.

The administrative data for this analysis were manually augmented with classroom removal information. Unfortunately only post-PC implementation years are available (no 2007-08 removal data was logged). When only considering the past two school years, the overall number of removals decreased 27% from 536 in 2008-09 to 389 in 2009-10 when PCs were more fully integrated in the Kiefer schools.

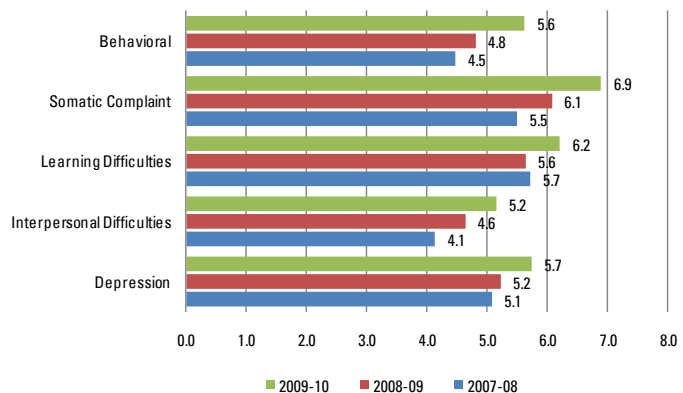
Finally, the BES standardized behavioral testing applied by the Kiefer School is summarized across five subscale domains in a global standardized score called a quotient. The higher the quotient the better the behavioral score. The

**Fig. 19:** Annual number of absent days in Kiefer School campuses among youths enrolled pre and post-PC Implementation



average BES quotient scores have increased nearly one point for youths that were enrolled pre and post PCs from 77.7 to 80.6. The median score has similarly increased from 77 to 79 (see Fig 20, note 1). Scores for youths across the five BES subscale domains increased pre and post PC implementation about 25% in 3 of the 5 domains (Figure 20). A higher score indicates less trouble, suggesting that the implementation of PCs corresponded (but may not have caused) improvements among this cohort of students (see Fig 20, note2)

**Fig. 20:** Average Scores by BES subscale domains for youths enrolled Kiefer pre and post- PC implementation (n=53).



**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> The quotient score is a standard score with a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15. Quotients ranging from 85 to 115 are considered statistically within the normal range of behavior (within one standard deviation below or above the mean. (BES-3:L SV Scoring Manual).

<sup>2</sup> Subscale standard scores represent a mean of 10 and standard deviation of 3. Standard scores below 7 or above 13 are more than one standard deviation from the mean and considered statistically atypical (BES-3:L SV Scoring Manual).

**Peer Jury Results**

Process and intermediate outcome data are much more limited for Peer Jury programming in Peoria than for Peace Circles. Efforts are underway in the current school year to emulate the qualitative data collection method applied in PCs and advance toward school indicator data. The environment, however, is much more difficult to manage and engage in a large public school system in contrast to the opportunities that presented at the Children’s Home’s own alternative school campus.

During 2008-09 and 2009-10 Peer Jury Client tracking was recorded an Excel and cover the following primary items of information:

- ◆ basic demographics for race, age, gender and grade
- ◆ referral reason
- ◆ Peer Jury date
- ◆ Peer Jury result

During the 2008-09 school year the program was administered from approximately 7,000 discipline referrals at Manual High School. The program accepted 77 cases, held a Peer Jury on all 77. Among those events 6 of the 77 cases resulted in a referral back to the Dean for further disciplinary action.

In the most recent completed school year, 2009-10, the program expanded to the Manual Middle School Academy of 7th and 8th graders, but received fewer overall referrals due to changes in the High School program. The difference is attributed to a change in administrative staff screening and managing discipline referrals and the time it took to acclimate new administrators to the referral process. Accordingly, during the school year 43 Peer Juries were held for High School age referrals, down from 77 the previous year, and 13 at the new program in the Academy. Referrals reasons were

primarily for acts of classroom insubordination and defiance toward authority figures (Figure 21). Behaviors ranged from inappropriate language to inappropriate use of electronic devices or actually walking out of a classroom. Classroom insubordination was followed by referral reasons for fighting (14%) and intimidation of a peer or authority figure (14%) typically teachers. No youth were referred back to the Dean for further disciplinary action during the 2009-10 school year.

The Peer Jury results most often involved a supervised meeting or conference with the victim of the infraction in 79% or 44 of the 56 overall High School and Middle School instances or a formal apology to the victim of the infraction 21% or 12 of the 56 instances. The requirements for a formal apology or a meeting were always matched with a combination of additional consequences such as a brief period of after school detention, a writing assignment or a requirement tailored to the referral reason such as surrendering a personal cell phone at the start of class for a period of time or writing and submitting an essay concerning anger management.

**Fig 21:** Peer Jury Referral Reasons, 2009/10 School Year

	%	#
insubordination	41	67%
intimidation	6	14%
fighting	7	14%
skipping class	2	5%
	56	100%

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## Conclusion

Over the past two years, the Peoria MFC project succeeded in developing an early data collection structure for its PC programs in the schools. The model was developed in an environment that the Children's Home could engage and control—their own Alternative School campus (Kiefer School). A critical step in the process was gradually advancing data in a manageable way the provided results to school administrators early in the project. The effort to gather qualitative information concerning how PCs were applied and the impressions of both students and teachers concerning the value of PCs helped advance an expansion of data collection commitments by school officials during the second year. Using existing automated management information resources, the project was able to identify a cohort of youths in administrative data who attended the school both before and after the process was implemented and draw out indicators concerning behavior changes over time. The initial results summarized on page 7 of this report suggest favorable outcomes that align with the timeframe that PCs were put into place, but more can be done in subsequent phases to at minimum compare changes among a cohort of youths pre and post implementation to overall changes in the same indicators across all students during that time frame.

Most recently, the project has made a connection with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Children and Family Research Center to further advance the data collection by tying the data sets together with classroom identifiers. Additional data collection efforts include the development of parents surveys to gather additional qualitative information, a more sophisticated weekly tracking log for PC utilization and the gradual advancement of the current structures developed at the Kiefer School to a public school environment where administrators are engaged and willing to facilitate data collection efforts.

With this support, the Peoria MFC project is currently poised with a set of long term research questions emerging from the early data in the project, including:

- ◆ reduce violence and improve relationships and communication in classrooms
- ◆ keep youths in school and out of secure detention
- ◆ impact future juvenile justice outcomes

- ◆ reduce Disproportionate Minority Confinement
- ◆ improve school performance
- ◆ improve teacher performance and job satisfaction
- ◆ have differential impact depending on the school setting and demographics.

Aligned with the foregoing long term research questions are additional opportunities to tailor an evaluation research design where other Illinois school districts have expressed interest and a commitment to PCs (ex. Rockford School District). In some instances the qualitative evidence is compelling enough to encourage a rush toward district-wide implementation. Care should be taken where new project opportunities exist to build-in the current research support and increase the evidence that PCs can help youths stay in school and out of the juvenile justice system.



## **Appendix: Teacher and Student Survey Instruments and PC Tracking Log**

## **Appendix: Teacher and Student Survey Instruments and PC Tracking Log**

**JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL**

**OF PEORIA COUNTY**

May 2010

**PEACEMAKING CIRCLES  
STUDENT SURVEY**

**Name:**

**School:**

Tell us what you think by completing our survey. The purpose of this survey is to see if Peacemaking Circles have helped you in any way. Your answers will be confidential (private). We will not tell anyone what you personally have said, but will combine all the survey's together to gain information.

**Answer these questions about yourself:**

**Which grade are you in?** \_\_\_\_\_ (Please write grade level)

**Are you a girl or boy?** Girl Boy (Circle one)

**Are you Hispanic/Latino?** Yes No (Circle one)

**What is your Race?** Black White Bi-racial (two races together) Asian Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Circle one)

**PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF (check YES or NO):**

1. Peace Circles help me get along better with my classmates.

- Yes
- No

2. Peace Circles help me stay out of trouble.

- Yes
- No

3. Peace Circles have helped me improve my school work.

- Yes
- No

4. Peace Circles help me get along with my teachers better.

- Yes
- No

5. Since Peace Circles began, I come to school more.

- Yes
- No

# JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL

OF PEORIA COUNTY

May 2010

## **PEACEMAKING CIRCLES** **TEACHER SURVEY**

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

School:      Kiefer Academy      Kiefer Knoxville  
( please circle one)

Please tell us your perception of this student's progress. In thinking about the student listed above, how do you think the areas listed below have been affected by their participation in Circles?

### **Since the implementation of Peace Circles:**

1. How would you rate this student's **relationship with other students?**

- Better
- Worse
- No Change

2. How would you rate this student's **school behavior?**

- Better
- Worse
- No Change

3. How would you rate this student's **academic performance?**

- Better
- Worse
- No Change

4. How would you rate **the relationship between this student and yourself?**

- Better
- Worse
- No Change

5. How would you rate this student's **attendance?**

- Better
- Worse
- No Change

6. Did this student benefit from the Peace Circle process in a particularly noteworthy way?    Yes    No

If yes, please describe how:

1) # of Students present in class when the Circle started \_\_\_\_\_

2) # of Students that participated \_\_\_\_\_

3) Reason for the Peace Circle. (Circle the best single response)

1. Check-in/Check-out
2. Goal Setting
3. Traumatic incident
4. Behavioral problem(s)
5. Problem solving
6. Other Specify \_\_\_\_\_

4) Type of Peace Circle. (Circle the best single response)

1. Talking
2. Consensus
3. Healing
4. Reintegration
5. Understanding
6. Support
7. Other Specify \_\_\_\_\_

5) Was the Peace Circle effective? (Circle the best single response)

1. Yes
2. No
3. Somewhat

6) Result (Circle the best single response)

1. Students **reflected on** or **responded to** a topic
2. Students **created** a topic
3. Students learned how to **cope** with feelings
4. Conflict was **resolved**
5. Better student **engagement** (broader social interaction and communication)
6. Other Specify \_\_\_\_\_

7) What was the topic? \_\_\_\_\_

(Examples: trust, rules, empathy, activities of daily living, behavior, peer pressure, alcohol/drugs, etc.)

8) Brief narrative: (please use back for additional space)

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# Product Appendix

## Peacemaking Circles

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Client and System Conditions	Program Components	Activities	Immediate Outcomes	Immediate Outcomes
<p>1.1 Need for educational service alternatives for children from schools within a 50-mile radius of Peoria who have severe behavioral or emotional conditions.</p>	<p>2.1 Educational Services Academy campus students, 3-21 yrs. – 148 students</p>	<p>3.1a Academic teaching provided in the classroom 6 hours/day, Mon-Fri through the calendar year  3.1b 1-on-1 individualized instruction as needed  3.1c Vocational skills  3.1d Transition activities</p>	<p>4.1a 50% of discharged students will function in a less restrictive environment (LRE) or have a planful discharge.  4.1b 75% of students have shown improvement in academic levels (grade gains) as measured on the Woodcock Johnson  4.1c Students will meet 60% of their individual academic objectives that are addressed in the classroom</p>	
<p>1.2 Need for educational services, which include clinical/therapeutic interventions for addressing behavior problems as they occur in the classroom.</p>	<p>2.2 Therapeutic Intervention in the classroom as mandated on the IEP.</p>	<p>3.2a Speech therapy  3.2b Occupational therapy  3.2c Anger management/Coping skills  3.2d Aggression replacement training  3.2e Individual counseling - once weekly  3.2f Group counseling - once weekly  3.2g Psychiatric consultation as needed  3.2h Work with home, school, foster care, DCFS, hospitals, psychiatrists.  3.2.i Peacekeeping circles</p>	<p>4.2a 75% of students have demonstrated improvement in their behaviors as measured on the BES.  4.2b Reduce restraints by 10%.  4.2c Limit classroom removals to 5 times per month.</p>	

<p>1.3 Need for consistent, ongoing educational and therapeutic services for 3-21 year olds (provided during the school year and through the summer).</p>	<p>2.3a In-Person Parent Contact 2.3b Improved school attendance</p>	<p>3.3 Parent empowerment groups, conferences, open houses, classroom visits, clinical meetings and psychiatric appointments, etc.</p>	<p>4.3a During the regular school year, an average of 70% of parents whose child(ren) attend Kiefer School will have in person contact with school personnel on a monthly basis.</p> <p>4.3c Students maintained attendance at 90% on both campuses.</p>	
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**Peacemaking Circles Training**  
**August 18, 19, 20, 2008**  
**8:00 – 4:00**

**AGENDA**

**Introductions**

**Overview**

**Experiential Learning**

**Wrap up/Evaluation**

Peacemaking circles provide a process for bringing people together as equals to talk about very difficult issues and painful experiences in an atmosphere of respect and concern for everyone. Peacemaking circles create a space in which all people, regardless of their role, can reach out to one another as equals and recognize their mutual interdependence in the struggle to live in a good way and to help one another through the difficult spots in life.

Peacemaking Circles training is experiential. During three - eight hour sessions, educators will participate in Peacemaking Circles. During this professional development activity, teachers and staff will learn about and discuss Restorative Justice Philosophy and practices. Teachers and staff will observe the Circle process and learn how to conduct a Circle. Once training is complete teachers and staff will be able to apply what was learned in their classrooms with students.

Participants will learn about diversity, effective communication skills, how to build a peaceful learning environment, and how to form collaborative relationships.

Sponsored by the Children's Home Association of Illinois

## **Key Concepts of Peacemaking Circles**

- Circles are based on an assumption of positive potential – that something good can always come out of whatever situation we are in.
- Circles assume that not one of us has the whole picture – that it is only by sharing all of our perspectives that we can come closer to a complete picture.
- Circles assume that we are unlikely to tell our deepest truths unless we feel respected and safe, therefore, circles attempt to create safe spaces.
- Circles make possible respectful and reflective dialog even in very emotional situations.
- Circles allow people to be who they would like to be in their best inclination.
- Circles use storytelling to learn more about each other and us.
- Circles are an intentional space and need to be created intentionally.
- Circles are fundamentally democratic – allowing equal space for all participants to speak and to have voice in any decisions made.
- Circles allow us to balance ancient wisdom about being in community with modern wisdom about honoring individual needs, interests and differences.

### **In schools Circles can be used to:**

- Uncover problems or concerns of students that might interfere with learning at an early stage
- Resolve conflicts
- Build relationships in the classroom
- Promote discussions in which everyone participates
- Develop shared agreements
- Build group problem solving capacity
- Assess student level of understanding and engagement with a topic
- Enhance speaking and listening skills
- Listen with respect – actively listen with your heart and body
- Stay in circle- respect for circle calls upon people to stay in the circle while the circle works to find resolution to issues raised

Circle participants, to meet the needs of the situation, may create additional guidelines.

Guidelines institute a covenant defining how people will interact and share space and time as a group.

Circles consciously engage all aspects of human experience – spiritual, emotional, physical and mental. Ceremony and ritual are used in the opening and closing of a circle to mark the space of circle as a sacred space in which participants will be present with one another in a different way than in an ordinary meeting.

While the design, procedures and participants vary greatly from one circle to another, there are some fundamental principles common to all circles.

### **Practices and principles common to all circles:**

#### **Participants:**

- 1) Act on personal values
- 2) Direct participation
- 3) Voluntary involvement
- 4) Respect for all and all things
- 5) Self design
- 6) Equal opportunity to participate
- 7) Shared vision

#### **Process:**

- 1) Inclusive of all interests
- 2) Easily accessible to all
- 3) Flexible to accommodate each case
- 4) Holistic approach
- 5) Spiritual experiences respected
- 6) Consensus outcomes
- 7) Accountability to others and to process

In the circle process social institutions play important roles, but the process is centered on the community context of the situation. The circle throws a wide net to capture possible points of support or assistance and to gather all relevant knowledge. Potential contributions are expected even from those who are part of the problem. Multiple issues are dealt with at once. Circles recognize that the issues interact with one another and cannot be effectively dealt with in isolation. Circles promote mutual responsibility, the recognition that individual well-being depends upon the well being of all.

Excerpted from: “Establishing shared responsibility for child welfare through peacemaking circles” by Kay Pranis and Barry Stuart in Family Group Conferences, edited by Burford and Hudson.

## Peacemaking Circle Process

Peacemaking circles provide a process for bringing people together as equals to talk about very difficult issues and painful experiences in an atmosphere of respect and concern for everyone. Peacemaking circles create a space in which all people, regardless of their role, can reach out to one another as equals and recognize their mutual interdependence in the struggle to live in a good way and to help one another through the difficult spots in life.

Peacemaking circles are built on the tradition of talking circles, common among indigenous people of North America, in which a talking piece, passed from person to person consecutively around the circle, regulates the dialog. The person holding the talking piece has the undivided attention of everyone else in the circle and can speak without interruption. The use of the talking piece allows for full expression of emotions, deeper listening, thoughtful reflection, and an unrushed pace. Additionally, the talking piece creates space for people who find it difficult to speak in a group. Drawing on both traditional wisdom and contemporary knowledge, the circle process also incorporates elements of modern peacemaking and consensus building processes.

Participants are seated in a circle of chairs with no tables. Sometimes objects with meaning to the group are placed in the center as a focal point to remind participants of shared values and common ground. The physical format of the circle symbolizes shared leadership, equality, connection and inclusion. It also promotes focus, accountability and participation from all.

### **The circle process typically involves four stages:**

- ❖ **ACCEPTANCE** – The community and the immediately affected parties determine whether the circle process is appropriate for the situation.
- ❖ **PREPARATION** – Separate circles for various interests (family, social workers) are held to explore issues and concerns and prepare all parties to participate effectively. Thorough preparation is critical to the overall effectiveness of the circle process. Preparations include identifying possible supporters in the natural network of the family to participate in the process.
- ❖ **GATHERING** – All parties are brought together to express feelings and concerns and to develop mutually acceptable solutions to the identified issue.
- ❖ **FOLLOW-UP** – Regular communication and check-ins are used to assess progress and adjust agreements as conditions change.

### **At any stage multiple circles may be held to complete the tasks of the stage.**

Circles are facilitated by keepers who are responsible for setting a tone of respect and hope that supports and honors every participant. All circles are guided by the following commitments made by participants:

- ❖ **What comes out in circle stays in circle** – personal information shared in circle is kept confidential except when safety would be compromised.
- ❖ **Speak with respect** – speak only when you have the talking piece/ speak in a good way about good and difficult feelings/ leave time for others to speak.

## Peacemaking Circles Format

### Value of circle format for discussion, brainstorming or problem solving

1. **Shared leadership and equality** – Placing everyone in a circle minimizes structural distinctions between “teacher” and “learner” and sets a tone of equal participation and equal capacity to teach and learn among all participants.
2. **Visual contact among all participants at all times** – In a circle no one is looking at anyone else’s back. It is easier to listen and hear when there are direct sight and sound lines among participants.
3. **Focus** – The structure of the circle focuses attention on the participants and task of the circle and reduces distractions.
4. **Connection** – The circle links all participants with one another encouraging a sense of shared effort or common purpose.
5. **Respect/accountability** – Because everyone in a circle can see everyone else, disrespectful behavior such as side conversations or demeaning non-verbal actions are discouraged. If it happens it becomes obvious to everyone in the circle.
6. **Input and participation from all** – Use of the technique of going around the circle providing each person with a chance to speak ensures that everyone has an opportunity to be heard and reduces domination of discussion by a small number of people.
7. **Inclusion** – In a circle no one feels isolated or left out.

### Advantages of the Talking Piece:

The use of the talking piece helps to manage discussion of very emotional issues. Emotions can be expressed without the emotions taking over the dialog. Because participants must wait for the talking piece to speak, they cannot respond without thinking. Because the talking piece must go around the full circle, it prevents two individuals from getting into a back and forth emotional exchange. If the words of one participant anger another, multiple members of the circle may address the issues raised before the talking piece reaches the angry participant, thus relieving the angry participant from a sense of needing to defend him/herself alone.

## **Peacemaking Circles**

### **The Talking Piece**

The talking piece creates space for the contributions of quiet people who might otherwise not assert themselves to claim room in the dialog. These people often have valuable insights which are lost in an open dialog process.

The talking piece spreads responsibility for peacemaking to all participants. In traditional mediation, participants expect the mediator to control the dialog. In the circle process the keeper does not interrupt the flow of the talking piece, thus every participant carries responsibility to address conflict which may be arising between some participants in the circle.

The talking piece promotes better listening. Participants listen better when they know that they will not have an opportunity to speak until the talking piece reaches them. In open dialog we often stop listening and begin formulating our response before a speaker is finished because we need to rush into an opening in the dialog.

The talking piece encourages the use of silence in the process.

The talking piece reinforces the principle of equality in the circle because it provides equal opportunity to all to participate and presumes equal capacity for contributions from all participants.

### **Role of the Keeper**

- Create an atmosphere of respect and safety for all.
- Create a tone of hope and optimism for constructive solutions.
- Guide the process to remain true to underlying values.
- Articulate the progress and accomplishments of the circle as it proceeds.
- Clarify unresolved issues to focus the circle's energy.
- Participate as a community member.



## Applications of Peacemaking Circles

- Child abuse and neglect cases to develop support systems for the family and to develop a plan for the family which keeps the child safe
- Staff renewal and team building, to refocus on underlying values, share challenges, support one another
- Discrimination, complaints, grievances and interpersonal conflicts within the workplace
- Neighborhood tensions
- Classroom management and school discipline
- Building mission statements and strategic plans within institutions
- Resolving conflicts within voluntary and professional groups
- Developing education plans for special education students
- Brainstorming to build solutions for public issues
- Family conflicts
- Support and assistance for victims of crime
- Juvenile and adult sentencing
- Reintegrating inmates into communities upon leaving prison
- Environmental and planning disputes
- New program development in an agency
- Dialog between immigrant communities and local government
- Dialog between rival gangs
- Workshops, classes and trainings

## Circle Applications in the Classroom

### To Begin:

- \* Morning meeting
- \* Check-in: how was your night, what's going on in your life, go over schedule for the day
- \* To create classroom beliefs, rules, expectations
- \* Getting to know each other: name games, sharing, something no one knows about you

### Anytime:

- \* To teach character/values: perseverance, respect, courage, honesty, accountability, responsibility, compassion, excellence, reverence, authenticity, random acts of kindness, people who have the value, or how to demonstrate the value
- \* Behavior issues: teasing, stealing, fighting, threats, problems on the playground or in halls
- \* Sharing (show and tell): a birthday present, an item from home
- \* Brainstorming ideas: ideas for creative writing, how to spend class money, where to go on field trips, class projects, research paper topic, planning music program
- \* Fun, cooperative activity: group activities, telling jokes
- \* Story telling, ghost stories
- \* Reviewing: unit, quiz, test, term/quarter, for fun
- \* Evaluation: field trips, assemblies, books, units, projects, effort, job performance
- \* Goal setting: for project, subject, unit, test, behavior
- \* Classmate is an outcast, how can we help and/or get to know him/her
- \* To find out why/how  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the class bombed the test
- \* To debrief what did and did not go well in their cooperative group or any situation
- \* Student led circles: in class, with younger students, in the evening to teach parents
- \* Student chosen discussion topics
- \* Team meetings
- \* Staff meetings
- \* Your own family

### To Close


- \* To share something good that happened to them that day
- \* Recognition at end of quarter/term: sharing something they are proud of, celebration of improvements
- \* Thank you circle: thank someone who helped you or did something nice for you that day
- \* To debrief the day
- \* End of school year: highlights, what would you do different





## Circle Ideas to End Your Day

- ❖ Share one thing you learned today.
- ❖ Thank someone who helped you today.
- ❖ Share the best/worst part of your day.
- ❖ Share what your talent is.
- ❖ Tell something about yourself that no one else knows.
- ❖ Share your favorite sport, food, color, subject, season, part of the day, game, book
- ❖ Share something exciting that is going to happen in your life.
- ❖ Share what you are going to do when you get home.
- ❖ What do you hope doesn't happen again tomorrow?
- ❖ Share what we should/should not do to each other.
- ❖ If you could color your day what color would it be and why?
- ❖ Share how your day was. Was it normal, better or worse than normal?
- ❖ Tell about what you collect.
- ❖ Share about problems the class had today.
- ❖ Apologize to someone in class.
- ❖ What is the best thing here at school?
- ❖ Who was the nicest to you today?
- ❖ Compliment the person sitting to your left in the circle.
- ❖ How can you make your next day better?
- ❖ Review what homework needs to be done.
- ❖ What happened today?
- ❖ Practice math facts.
- ❖ Share when your birthday is.
- ❖ What happened over the weekend?
- ❖ How did you feel today? Did your feelings change during the day? Why?
- ❖ How have you helped someone today?
- ❖ What did you do at recess today?
- ❖ How do you feel about being yourself?
- ❖ Tell jokes.
- ❖ Share something funny that happened today.
- ❖ Rate the day.
- ❖ What is something you wish you could do over today?



# Keeping Communities Safe with Balanced and Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is NOT a program.....  
It's a philosophy, a different way of  
responding to crime.



***In our current justice system, when a crime occurs, the questions asked are:***

1. Who committed the crime?
2. What laws were broken?
3. How will we punish the offender?

***Restorative Justice views crime through a different lens***



- Crime is more than lawbreaking.
- If crime is more than lawbreaking, justice must require more than punishing or treating the offender.
- Crime is a wound that injures victims, communities and offenders; therefore, the justice process should heal and repair the injuries of all stakeholders.
- Crime damages people and relationships. Justice should be about repairing the harm.

***With restorative justice, when a crime occurs, the questions asked are:***

1. What is the harm?
2. What needs to be done to repair the harm?
3. Who is responsible for this repair?

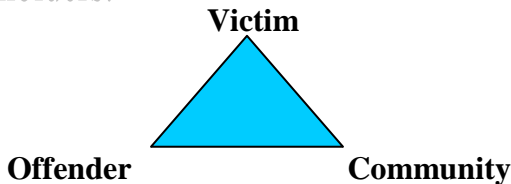
## Principles:

#1 = *Repair the harm*

#2 = *Involve stakeholders in the justice process*

#3 = *Redefine roles and responsibilities of government and community*

## Stakeholders:



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***BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE***  
*is an application of restorative justice to be used with youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system.*

## Goals:

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

The offender must repair the harm to individual victims and the community.

### **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

The school and outside community are protected and involved in the agreement.

### **COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT**

Offenders are given opportunities to increase their skills making them more capable.

## **Restorative justice seeps into Illinois programs**

Sunday, August 27, 2006

**BY PAM ADAMS**

OF THE JOURNAL STAR

The philosophy of restorative justice has seeped into a number of central Illinois programs through the years.

The granddaddy, Woodford County's Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program, shut down last year after operating more than 14 years.

Volunteer mediators guided meetings between victims and offenders in juvenile and criminal misdemeanor cases. The cases were referred by Woodford County's probation department.

Victims were becoming less willing to participate, and the bank of volunteer mediators was getting harder to replace, says the Rev. Don Littlejohn, a former Eureka College professor who helped found the program.

Knox County's teen court program, a community-based alternative to formal juvenile court proceedings, allows teens to act as prosecutors, defense attorneys, clerks, bailiffs and jurors in juvenile cases involving first-time offenders charged with misdemeanors. It was the first peer jury in the state.

In Peoria, teachers at Manual and Woodruff high schools underwent "peace circles" training earlier this year. Circles, adapted from American Indian cultures, are similar to mediation between victims and offenders.

However, others affected by the infraction take part in a "talking circle" designed to resolve problems and restore peace. The process also is used in juvenile court systems.

"Circles are very democratic; everyone is equal," says Sally Wolf, trainer and consultant with the Illinois Restorative Justice Initiative.

Everyone involved reaches an agreement about standards for conduct and/or how to deal with problems.

There are several other examples of restorative-based practices - and a variety of avenues to implement them.

"There are places where it's run by probation departments; in other places it's run by community groups," Wolf says. "In some places you can't get the police or probation departments to even look at it; other places, they're the ones who want to do it."

Local politics and funding can also be decisive factors in whether or not areas embrace restorative justice formally.

"It's a tough balancing act," says 10th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge John Barra.

However, he admits that drug court, which incorporates aspects of restorative justice, has given him some of the most rewarding moments of his legal career.

"Having been a prosecutor all my life, I thought I wouldn't be able to do it," he says. "It's not in my nature to hug someone who's done well, or even talk to them on a one-to-one basis."

### **Background:**

Our room consists of 9 students with behavioral, emotional, academic, and mental health needs. There are several students in the room that reside at the Children's Home in the residential program and a few are on probation. There are 2 teachers and the students receive group and individual clinical time on a weekly basis.

### **Circles:**

After going to the circles training in August of 2008, Mr. S. and I implemented the circles into our classroom. In accordance with the medicine wheel and the 4 areas of the circle it did take a great deal of "getting acquainted" type circles before the group started to have a comfort level. We had to set boundaries and guidelines that the students developed.

The idea that the students had a say in our rules and a voice to be heard was very empowering for our room. The students were not used to being "heard". The talking piece added to the empowerment of their voice.

As the school year has progressed and we have experienced field trips, successes, conflicts, joys and sorrows the students have moved to a level of trust and co-operation that I have not seen in many years or in any other classroom. The student's behavioral stats also mirror the level of trust and co-operation. The students know when we are having a hard time. We will then stop everything as a group and have a circle. There are even signs of relationship building and this has had a ripple effect.

### **Data:**

- Our stats indicate a decrease in removals to ISR (isolation room) for physical and out of control behaviors.
- Students have fewer days on "loss privileges".
- Crisis between student peers are discussed and the students each get to be heard with their peers involved to give advice and consequences.
- The students resolve their conflicts much quicker and are co-operatively playing games together and helping each other during academics.
- The students who are here from the residential program and have been in the classroom for a longer period of time seem to be more open to the circles discussions and their stats show the most improvement (ie...increased positive peer interaction, fewer physical restraints and fewer classroom removals).

Any questions or comments feel free to stop by our class or call 687-7753, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Academy Campus.

**Submitted by:** Dawn McNamara and Charles Sotiriou  
**Kiefer School**

## **Circles:**

We use “Circles” on a regular basis. We have the classroom arranged in a circle, which seems to have helped to relieve student anxiety. Students don’t have to worry about what the person behind them is doing. In a circle configuration, students have their backs to no one and that helps to ease peer issues.

On Monday we use circles to check in from the weekend, set goals and state how they feel the day will go and what students will do to ensure they’ll have a good day. On Fridays we use circles to check in on the progress towards goals set on Monday, what students are planning to do for the weekend, and students are allowed to share an item they have brought in from home that is of “value” to them. Our daily ART lessons are presented in a circle format. As is the weekly group session with the classroom clinician.

I believe that circles have helped students and staff to build community in our classroom. Circles have also helped to make classroom management an easier task. Students have taken ownership of the center piece and we occasionally add to it with student generated projects. The circles concept makes it easier to welcome new students to our classroom.

**Submitted by:** Wagner/Gourdier  
**High School teachers at Kiefer School**



## Circles

Circle time in my room has just evolved over the last couple of weeks. When I began teaching about a month ago, the student communications evolved around a hierarchy of **belittling, cuss words** or **threatening each other**. **RESPECT** for property or each other was not apparent on any level. Circles had to evolve very slowly. We first started circle time in the morning by having a 5 minute discussions just learning how to use a talking piece and common courtesy to each other. The students were not ready to sit in a group or circle. Over time students preferred to use a talking piece to talk; having 15 minutes deeper discussions and some students who **refused** at first finally **opened up!**

After 3 weeks we have started to sit in the room in circle fashion. There is less “picking at each other” and more cooperative communication among **all** the students. We can now discuss what bothers some students in the open instead of letting the students keep it inside. A student who felt he was being picked on is now more at ease with his peers. We are to some extent a cohesive unit which may need more glue to hold us together on some days more than on others.

**Submitted by:** Moehn/Hansen  
**Kiefer School Teachers**

# Peer Jury

Contact info:  
Holly Snyder  
Children's Home  
687-7525

## *INFO YOU SHOULD KNOW:*

- Peer Jurors are students trained to analyze the facts of a referred student's case, ask questions, and decide upon appropriate consequences to school disciplinary issues.
- Peer Jurors actively seek peace in the school community by providing a peaceful, non-judgmental environment where students and faculty can resolve conflicts and repair harm done to one another.
- Peer Jury is a form of restorative justice that views misconduct as harm in need of repair. It's a discipline option that can respond to crime, misconduct, or other conflicts.
- Peer Jury is a way to handle misbehavior by talking it out instead of kicking kids out.
- Youth are held accountable for their actions and people harmed by misconduct are given a voice in the matter and their needs are taken into consideration.
- Peer Jury provides a positive peer influence that says to the referred student that misconduct is wrong.
- Youth are referred to Peer Jury by the Dean of Students at Manual.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Peer Jury is lead by youth with an adult advisor present.
- Youth receive training to become a Peer Juror. They then hear cases and make decisions on how the referred student can make things right, or repair the harm they caused.
- Peer Jurors take an oath of confidentiality, meaning they will not tell the referred students "business" in the street.
- Consequences can include detention, community service, apology letters, restitution, counseling, or possibly mentoring.
- Upon successful completion of agreed upon consequences, the referred student may be invited to complete training and become a future Peer Juror.
- Peer Jury helps improve the referred student-parent relationship.
- Peer Jury enhances perceptions of justice and improves attitudes toward authority.
- Peer Jury strengthens the referred student's connection to school.

Peer Jury is in its second year at Manual High School. In the first year of operation at Manual, the Peer Jurors who run this successful program heard and resolved 77 cases referred to them by the Dean of Students, even preventing four school suspensions in one day. The MANYO Peer Jury Program is one effort underway to prevent youth involvement with the formal criminal justice system. Its development came from the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Project which seeks to reduce the over-representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system.

The MANYO Peer Jury Program is one effort underway to prevent youth involvement with the formal criminal justice system. It's development came from the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Project which seeks to reduce the over-representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system. The MANYO Peer Jury Program is a collaboration between the Juvenile Justice Council of Peoria County and Manual High School. Funding for this Program is from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundations' Models for Change initiative.

MHS

MANYO Peer Jury

For questions or assistance contact:

Holly Snyder  
Models for Change  
Restorative Justice Coordinator  
Children's Home Association of Illinois  
309-687-7525

MANYO  
Peer Jury

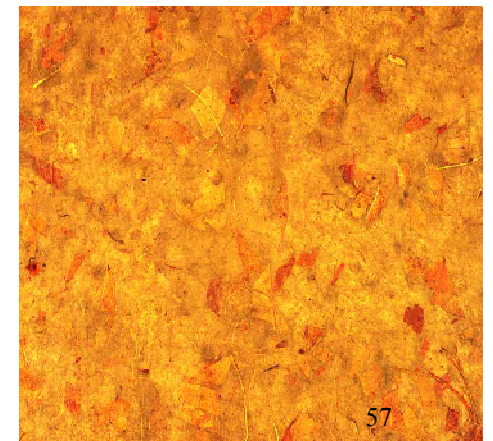
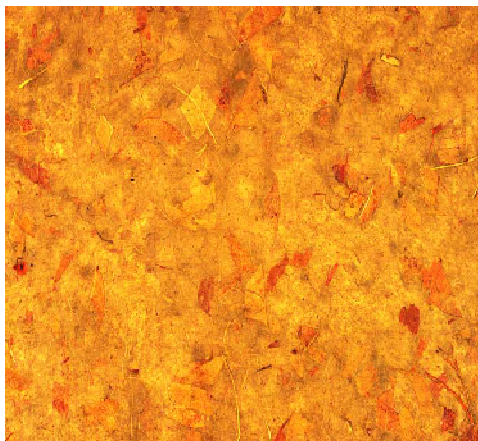
Motivating And Nurturing Youth Opportunities

**M**ANYO Peer Jury is a school-based Balanced and Restorative Justice practice held at Manual High School in Peoria, Illinois. MANYO actively seeks peace in the school community by providing a peaceful, non-judgmental environment where students and faculty can resolve conflicts and repair harm done to one another.



**H**earing cases to resolve conflict is the goal. MANYO Peer Jurors are students trained to analyze the facts of a referred student's case, ask questions, and decide upon appropriate consequences to school disciplinary issues.

**S**uccess!! In the first year of operation at Manual High School, the Jurors who run this successful program heard and resolved 77 cases referred to them by the Dean of Students. MANYO even prevented four suspensions in one day. This program works because these students are leaders and peacemakers!



**M.A.N.Y.O. Peer Jury Program**  
**Motivating and Nurturing Youth Opportunities (MANYO)**

The MANYO Peer Jury Program is a school-based Balanced and Restorative Justice Practice held at Manual High School. These MANYO Peer Jurors are graduates of ELITE (Class of 2008) who have developed their leadership skills and now play an instrumental role in the discipline process at Manual High School. **These students are leaders and peacemakers!**

MANYO Peer Jurors are students trained to analyze the facts of a referred student's case, ask questions, and decide upon appropriate consequences to school disciplinary issues. They actively seek peace in the school community by providing a peaceful, non-judgmental environment where **students and faculty can resolve conflicts and repair harm done to one another**. In this first year of operation at Manual, the Peer Jurors who run this successful program have heard and resolved over 75 cases referred to them by the Dean of Students, even preventing four school suspensions in one day. **This program works because the students are ELITE!**

The MANYO Peer Jury Program is one effort underway to prevent youth involvement with the formal criminal justice system. Its development came from the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Project which seeks to reduce the over-representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system. The MANYO Peer Jury Program is a collaboration between the Juvenile Justice Council of Peoria County and Manual High School.



# Adams: Delivering evenhanded justice to teens

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Pam Adams

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ADVERTISEMENT

By PAM ADAMS

**Journal Star**

*Posted Jun 03, 2009 @ 10:30 PM*

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Grace, a sophomore, starts the process by explaining the ground rules. She says that the bean bag in her hand is the "talking piece." The person holding the bag is the only one who can talk, she says. She passes the bag to the student next to her, each student introduces themselves as the bag goes around the circle.

"Now, do you know why you're here?" Grace asks the two, a girl and boy who have been referred by a Manual High School dean.

Normally, the dean would deal with the boy and girl about their alleged infractions. Apparently it's a case of horseplay that got out of hand. The two continued after a teacher warned them to sit down, and they eventually fell onto the teacher's desk, knocking over several books and breaking the teacher's bookends.

The two sit opposite one another, interspersed between eight other students. They say they understand why they're in the circle. Then each takes a turn explaining their version of the incident.

The others aren't buying their explanations.

"If you knocked the books down, why didn't you pick them up?" Takease asks.

The girl offers a half-hearted explanation.

"But wouldn't it have been easier to pick them up?" Shant'e presses.

Eventually both students admit what they did was wrong, they should've at least picked up the books. Then the real work begins.

"What do you all think should be done to repair the harm?" Tierra wants to know.

Each Monday, Wednesday or Friday over school lunch hours, Manual's nine peer jurors ask students referred to them by the dean's office some version of the same question: What should be done to repair the harm? Not what the punishment should be or how long the punishment should last, but what should be done to repair the harm.

"Repair the harm" is a watch phrase of restorative justice practices, and the peer jury program at Manual, operated by the Children's Home, is an attempt to integrate restorative justice into school discipline policies.

"It is about talking it out, not kicking kids out," says Holly Snyder, restorative justice coordinator at the Children's Home.

Peer juries do not automatically mean restorative justice. But, similar to the restorative philosophy, they don't automatically buy into a one-size-fits-all form of justice that is more prevalent in school discipline and court systems. As opposed to a final authority, a dean or a judge, setting down the final punishment for an offense, a peer jury functioning in restorative mode attempts to reach consensus among all parties involved - victims and offenders - about the best way to repair harm to the victim, the most effective means to hold the offender accountable.

From October until last week, peer jurors heard 77 disciplinary cases involving fellow students. They weren't just easy cases the dean didn't have time to handle. Excessive tardies, abusive language, disrespect, class disruptions and mob action offenses all entered their peace circle at some point during the year.

The mob action, involving a clash between four girls and a boy, was the most serious by far. The victim, offenders and peer jurors agreed the girls should be required to clean up the gym and attend study groups. Jurors went to the study groups with them and followed up to make sure they cleaned the gym.

Every student referred to peer jurors by the dean knows they have options. They can opt out of the peer jury process and let the dean deal with them. And if they agree to peer jury but don't comply with the consequences agreed upon in the peace circle, they can end up back in the dean's office.

Of 77 cases, only six had to be referred back to the dean's office, Snyder says.

It is too soon to gauge the peer jury program's overall effect on decreasing and preventing discipline problems at the school. But peer jurors have a deep bench.

Tierra, Kierra, Grace, April, Justus, Takese, Shant'e, Deketra and LaMar will probably all be back next year. But tonight, they'll be honored at graduation ceremonies for the Peoria Park District's ELITE Program, coordinated by Carl Cannon.

*Pam Adams is a columnist with the Journal Star. Her e-mail address is padams@pjstar.com.*



POLICY GUIDELINE AND PROCEDURE FOR ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE COVENANT WITH BLACK AMERICA (PEORIA, ILLINOIS AFFILIATE), PEORIA POLICE DEPARTMENT, AND THE JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL OF PEORIA COUNTY, ILLINOIS

The Covenant with Black America (hereinafter "CWBA"), the Peoria Police Department (hereinafter "Department"), and the Juvenile Justice Council (hereinafter "JJC"), do hereby agree and establish, the following Policy Guidelines and Procedures for the establishment and maintenance of a Memorandum of Understanding between all parties regarding the Community Peace Conferencing program:

1. The Department will utilize the Community Peace Conferencing program as a diversion program by referring Station Adjustment cases which are low-level in nature. The Community Peace Conference is recognized as a community mediation program as identified by statute 705 ILCS 405/5-310. Eligible cases include those that would otherwise be referred to the State's Attorney's Office for prosecution.
2. The Department agrees to abide by the recommendations of the Community Peace Conferencing program with regard to the successful completion of the agreement developed during the conference. If the youth is successful at completing all stipulations made in the agreement, the case will be closed by the Department and not referred to SAO for Judicial proceedings. However, if the youth is not successful at completing all stipulations made in the agreement, the Department and SAO may pursue formal court processing of the case.
3. Youth who are offered the opportunity to participate in the program must admit responsibility for the offense to be eligible for the program. Admission of involvement in the offense by the youth may be admitted into evidence in future court hearings if remanded back to the Department or SAO for prosecution.
4. All participants in the Community Peace Conferencing program are bound by confidentiality and are required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the conference as stated in 705 ILCS 405/5-310.
5. It is the understanding of all parties that the SAO has confirmed all cases resolved as Station Adjustments are under the direction of the Department and acknowledges the Community Peace Conferencing program process.
6. Both the Community Peace Conferencing program and the Department shall maintain collaboration and information sharing in order to facilitate continuous referrals of approved *station adjustments*. The Department shall release only information needed for the Community Peace Conferencing process.

7. Both the Community Peace Conferencing program and the Department shall keep all such records and information regarding conferences confidential pursuant to the requirements of 705 ILCS 405/5-905 unless directed to disclose such records through a court ordered process.

This Memorandum of Understanding, executed as of this 13<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2010 shall continue in full force and effect unless and until a signatory or their successor in office shall give written notice to the others or their successors in office of their intent to no longer be bound by the Memorandum Of Understanding. This Memorandum of Understanding may be reviewed on an annual basis.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven Settingsgaard  
Chief of Police  
CITY OF PEORIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lori Brown  
Committee Chair  
COVENANT WITH BLACK AMERICA – PEORIA AFFILIATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Gress  
Co-chair  
Juvenile Justice Council of Peoria County

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven Kossman  
Co-chair  
Juvenile Justice Council of Peoria County



## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

2130 N. Knoxville  
Peoria, IL 61603  
309-687-7513 w.  
309-687-7299 fax  
[lbrown@chail.org](mailto:lbrown@chail.org)

**The Community Peace Conference is a diversion program designed to give youth who have committed low-level, offenses an opportunity to right the wrong they have committed. This alternative approach to addressing crime in the Peoria community, will accept referrals from the Peoria Police Department.**

**Upon receiving referrals, the Community Peace Conference (CPC) will:**

1. Police Department will select case(s) to be referred to CPC and complete CPC Referral Form. Form is then sent to CPC Coordinator.
2. Within one week of receiving a referral, the CPC Coordinator will:
  - a. contact the referral source to confirm all information received;
  - b. create a file;
  - c. send out appropriate form letters to victim and respondent
  - d. Coordinator will log time spent on the case.
3. Within one week of sending the introductory letters, CPC Coordinator will contact victim and respondent and begin scheduling pre-conference meetings. Pre-conference meetings are held separately with the victim and with the respondent. Supporters of each individual are included in this meeting and are invited to the actual Conference. The purpose of the pre-conference meeting is to discuss what will occur at the CPC, giving people an idea of what to expect. Benefits of participation will also be discussed.
4. If the victim and offender are willing and appropriate for a conference, the facilitator will finalize arrangements toward scheduling the Peace Conference. The conference should take place within two weeks of the final pre-conference with the offender.
5. At the scheduled Peace Conference, both the victim and respondent tell their experience during the incident. As a group the victim, respondent, and members of the Peace Conference, resolve the issue and build a plan toward repairing the harm caused by the respondent.
6. The facilitators will write out any agreements that are reached by the parties and ask for signatures. The agreement will detail how the respondent will repair harm, and list timeframe in which all conditions are to be completed. A copy of the agreement will be sent to referral source.
7. At the end of the conference a monitor will be assigned to the case to follow up with youth, ensuring agreement is being kept. Monitor will make two contacts per month with the youth. One face to face contact and one contact by phone. Monitor will document and detail each contact made with youth. Monitor documents will be kept on record in case file.

8. A formal report is sent to the referral source at the completion of the agreement. If a youth successfully completes the agreement, the letter will recommend that all charges are dropped against the youth. If the youth is unsuccessful at completing the agreement, the letter will refer the youth back to the referring agent and recommend formal processing of the case.
9. A follow up evaluation will be completed by the victim, offender, and supporters which will allow us to determine the effectiveness of the Peace Conference. Effectiveness will also be measured by the rate of a youth's re-involvement with law enforcement once Peace Conferencing is complete.
10. A closure letter will be sent to the referral source and all parties within two weeks of closing the case.

**Community Peace Conference  
Operations Manual 2010  
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4/28/10

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## **I. Overview**

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### **A. Introduction**

In the Summer of 2010, the Covenant with Black America, Children's Home Association of Illinois and the Peoria Police Department instituted the Community Peace Conference (CPC), a unique program for youthful offenders who admit to committing non-violent, low level offenses. Instead of being referred to court, the youthful offender charged with a non-violent misdemeanor is offered the opportunity to appear before a trained group of community members. Youth who accept and successfully complete the contractual obligations offered through the conference avoid formal case processing and possibly a criminal record. Youth who fail to fulfill his/her obligations are referred back to the Peoria Police Department.

By diverting young people from the formal justice system, the Community Peace Conference offers an inexpensive and effective alternative to juvenile court and gives youth a way to repair the damages caused by their crimes. Unlike traditional methods of intervention in which courts assume the decision-making process, the Community Peace Conference draws the youth's family, victims, and community into the justice process. The CPC is a Balanced and Restorative Justice Practice that enhances public safety and accountability by supporting victims, builds competencies in offenders, and promotes reconciliation between everyone involved. Conferencing provides a swift and meaningful community response to delinquent behavior, aiming to end a minor's illegal activity.

### **B. Operations**

Youthful offenders and their parents attend a Conference composed of their victims and trained, caring volunteers who live in the Peoria community. The youth must admit to involvement in the crime to be eligible for the program. Conference members, including the victim and youth, discuss the case, hearing the point of view of the victim, youth, and community members. The group may also discuss school performance, friends, and home life. All of the information discussed during the Conference is then used to determine the appropriate corrective action, expressed in the terms of a set contract. Examples of corrective steps could include an apology to the victim, restitution, change of activities, community service, or research projects. For instance, a juvenile who vandalized a property may be ordered to spend ten hours in a community clean-up project, and to write an essay about respecting the rights of others.

### **C. Impact**

The Community Peace Conference hopes to divert youth from formal court involvement, reducing the number of cases that currently burden the juvenile court system. Diversion allows police, prosecutors, courts, and probation to concentrate efforts on the more serious

juvenile offenders. Equally important is the fact that youthful offenders and their victims will receive the attention they need and deserve.

The CPC remains committed to supporting individuals within the community that have been hurt by crime. Victims are given an opportunity to participate and are encouraged to attend the Conference where their voice will be heard. The involvement of the victim allows the youth the opportunity to witness the harm crime causes within the community. In the event that a victim is unable to attend the Conference, he/she will be given the option of providing a statement that will be read on their behalf.

Finally, the Community Peace Conference presents an opportunity for the community to actively participate in the juvenile justice process. In effect, the Community Peace Conference represents neighbors helping neighbors to achieve safer communities.

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## **II. Membership**

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### **A. Recruitment of Applicants**

The Community Peace Conference seeks applicants through community organizations, newspapers, and word of mouth. To the maximum extent possible, conference membership reflects the socio-economic, racial, and ethnic make-up of the youth served in the juvenile justice system.

### **B. Application Process**

CPC Members are volunteers with the Children's Home Association of Illinois. Therefore the first step to becoming a CPC Member is to complete an application for the Children's Home which can be obtained at the main office (2130 N. Knoxville in Peoria) or on the website [www.chail.org](http://www.chail.org).

Once the application is completed it is screened by the CPC Liaison and a determination is made whether to interview the applicant.

### **C. Interview Process**

The Conference Liaison will contact the prospective volunteer to arrange an interview. The Liaison and select members of the CPC will interview applicants. If the applicant is selected to become a CPC member, additional paperwork will be completed allowing for a background check to be made. If the applicant is not selected to become a CPC member, a "declination" letter is sent to them.

For selected applicants, once background check is completed and clearance is received, volunteer will be scheduled for Restorative Justice/Conferencing training.

## **D. Background Check**

DCFS Rule 385 requires that Children’s Home of Illinois employees, volunteers, and interns be screened for a history of child abuse or neglect, prior criminal activities, or pending criminal charges. Each selected applicant must complete a DCFS Authorization for Background Check form which is to be sent to DCFS, as well as having them make themselves available at a DCFS designated site at a designated time for fingerprinting. Failure to complete required forms or to appear for fingerprinting appointments can lead to termination of participation. Prior incidents of abuse, neglect, or criminal history documented by the background check will be handled in accordance with rule 385.

Existence of a criminal or DCFS background does not necessarily prevent a person from being cleared to participate. DCFS rules help determine which offenses can be cleared and which cannot.

Additionally, any background information that should have been shared on the application or in an interview that is withheld or presented in a false or misleading manner will result in termination of employment/volunteer status.

## **E. Selection of Facilitator**

The Conference Liaison selects the facilitator for each case heard and will inform those selected prior to the conference date.

## **F. Tenure**

Graduates of the Community Peace Conference training program will maintain their position for at least one year. Upon completion of the first year, a renewal letter is mailed to the member in good standing. Any member who renders exemplary service will receive special recognition, which may include a certificate.

A member who leaves the Community Peace Conference receives a “thank you” letter. A member who fails to attend Conference meetings receives a letter removing him/her from CPC membership.

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## **III. Training**

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### **A. Requirements**

To graduate from the Community Peace Conference Training Program, a trainee must complete Balanced and Restorative Justice training and observe at least two cases, participate in two cases and facilitate two cases. The Conference Liaison will schedule all training as well as document trainee progress.



## **B. Training Sessions**

All conference members will learn the restorative justice philosophy and the balanced approach to working with youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Training will focus on Conferencing and how this BARJ process works.

## **C. Training Cycle**

To keep pace with Conference attrition, classes of new members must be recruited, interviewed, and trained. Training classes are scheduled as necessary.

## **D. Continuing Education and Retention of Members**

Retention and training of experienced members is vital to the viability of the Community Peace Conference. In order to improve members' contracting and resourcing skills, Conference staff will provide a continuing education program. Training may include BARJ philosophy and practice as well as community resources.

Additionally, an annual event will be held to recognize Peacemakers and the Community Peace Conference for all hard work done to improve the lives of youth.

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## **IV. Case Selection Process and Scheduling**

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### **A. Police Screening**

The Peoria Police Department may recommend a non-violent youth for the Conference if the youth has been arrested for a misdemeanor. The Peoria Police Department will complete and send the Community Peace Conference Referral Form, along with a copy of the police report narrative to the Conference Coordinator.

### **B. Conference Liaison Responsibilities**

Within one week of receiving a referral, the Conference Liaison will:

- a) Contact the referral source to confirm all information received;
- b) Create a Conference case file;
- c) Send out appropriate introductory letters to the victim and respondent;
- d) Log time spent on the case.

### **C. Pre-Conference Meetings and Scheduling**

Within one week of sending the introductory letters, the Conference Liaison will contact the victim and respondent and schedule a pre-conference meeting. The pre-conference meetings are held separately with the victim and with the respondent. Supporters of each individual are included in this meeting and are invited to the actual Conference. The

purpose of the pre-conference meeting is to discuss what will occur at the Community Peace conference, giving people an idea of what to expect. Benefits of participation will also be discussed.

If the victim and respondent are willing and appropriate for a Conference, the facilitator will finalize arrangements and schedule the Conference. The Conference should take place within two weeks of the pre-conference meeting.

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## **V. Community Peace Conference**

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### **A. Conference Participants**

1. Victim: The Conference considers the victim's input in the contract terms. It is imperative that the victim be invited to participate in the hearing.
2. Parent: "Parent" can include a responsible adult or another relative.
3. Attorney for Defendant: If an attorney appears with the respondent, s/he will be allowed to observe only! S/he cannot negotiate the contract or participate in questioning or contracting.
4. Media: Any media coverage of Community Peace Conferences must have prior approval from the Covenant with Black America, the Children's Home of Illinois, and the Peoria Police Department.

### **B. Administrative Time**

At the beginning of each Conference session, administrative time is scheduled. During administrative time, the Conference reviews the police paperwork each case scheduled for that night. When the administrative session is completed, the Conference will hear its first case.

The hearing itself is divided into four parts—opening statement, interviews/discussion, agreement (contract), and closing.

### **C. Conference Segments**

#### **1. Opening Statement**

The facilitator of the conference welcomes all participants and proceeds with introductions. The Facilitator will read from a script to prevent unintentionally leaving out information. The opening statement informs everyone of the purpose of the conference, the process of the conference, and discusses confidentiality. An Oath of Confidentiality form is signed by all participants at the beginning of each Conference.

***Please see CPC Script found in CPC Forms section***

## **2. Interviews/Discussion**

At this point, both the victim and respondent will discuss their experiences during the incident. Supporters and community members are also given the opportunity to speak. It is during this period that the victim will describe how he/she has been harmed by the respondent's actions. Additionally, harm will be discussed in relation to all parties involved, including the respondent.

## **3. Agreement/Contract**

After the interview/discussion of the case has been completed, the victim, respondent, and conference members will agree on the terms of a contract. The victim will be given the opportunity to detail the necessary steps to repair any damage caused by the respondent. From all of the collected details a specific, attainable, and measurable contract will be developed.

The members will write out any agreements that are reached by the parties. The agreement will detail how the respondent will repair harm, and list a timeframe in which all conditions are to be completed. A copy of the agreement will be sent to the Peoria Police Department.

A Community Peace Conference member will be assigned as the Monitor of the case to follow up with the youth, ensuring the agreement is being kept. The monitor will make two contacts per month with the youth—one face-to-face contact and one by phone. During these meetings the monitor will encourage the youth, as well as document and detail each contact. All documents will be kept in the respondent's case file.

## **4. Closing**

Participants will be offered one last opportunity to speak. Once finished, the facilitator will thank participants and encourage them to mingle while copies of necessary documents are made. Participants will then sign the agreement and receive a personal copy.

## **D. Other Issues**

### **1. Disclosure of Information**

If a youth is unsuccessful at completing the CPC process, information disclosed by them during the CPC can and may be used against them in a court of law.

### **2. Child Abuse**

All CPC Members are mandated reporters of abuse. If during the Conference it is learned that the youth is dangerous to themselves or anyone else, appropriate steps will be taken to ensure the safety of all involved. Reports may be made to the DCFS Hotline or to the Peoria Police Department.

### **3. Attendance**

If the youth or parent fails to appear for the Conference, the Conference Liaison will investigate and determine whether to send the case back to the Peoria Police Department, or reschedule it for the CPC.

If the victim cannot attend, he/she will be offered the opportunity to write a victim impact statement that will be read at the Conference. The case will then proceed and be heard without the victim present.

### **4. Conduct During Hearing**

Conferences must be conducted in an informal, yet dignified manner. The Facilitator is responsible for ensuring that the members observe proper decorum. If, during the hearing, an argument develops between any of the parties, the Facilitator, in his/her discretion, may separate the parties for questioning/discussion.

### **5. Community Service**

The monitoring member will contact the service agency and arrange a specific contact for the respondent– date, time, location, contact name, and phone number. The monitor will ensure that the respondent and parent(s) understand this information. The monitor will make periodic checks with the agency to check on the juvenile’s attendance and attitude.

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## **VI. Respondent Performance**

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### **A. Agreement Details and Monitoring**

#### **1. Timely Completion**

The monitoring CPC member will be responsible for following up with the respondent to encourage progress toward successful completion of the agreement. He or she will contact the juvenile at least twice per month –one face-to-face contact and one contact by phone. The monitoring member will report to the CPC Liaison on the youth’s progress by completing and updating the Monitor Contact Sheet.

#### **2. Restitution**

The payment of restitution will be handled by the youth delivering a money order to the CPC Liaison. The Liaison will then log the payment and forward it to the victim. The money order must be made payable to the victim.

### **3. Apology to Victim**

If an apology, oral or written, was ordered, the monitoring member will ensure its delivery to the victim. Upon delivery, the monitor will provide an update to the CPC Liaison of completion of this contract element by completing and updating the Monitor Contact Sheet.

### **4. Upon Completion**

A Conference Outcome Report is sent to the Peoria Police Department at the completion of the agreement. This report details progress of the case. If a youth successfully completes the agreement, the report will recommend that all charges be dropped against the youth. In cases where the youth is unsuccessful at completing the terms of the agreement, the report will recommend formal processing of the case.

### **5. Evaluation**

A follow up evaluation will be completed by the victim, respondent, and supporters, which will allow the Conference to determine its' effectiveness. Effectiveness will also be measured by the rate of a youth's future involvement with law enforcement once conferencing is complete.

#### **B. Unsuccessful Completions**

If a youth is not cooperating with the monitoring member or is failing to live up to the terms of the contract, the monitor will bring the matter to the attention of the full Conference prior to the contract completion date. CPC members will then determine the course of action, which could include case termination.

All efforts to encourage completion will be made prior to the stated completion date. Time extensions can be made if circumstances justify doing so. No extensions may be given without prior approval of the Conference Liaison.

If no extension has been approved, and if the youth has not completed all contract terms by the stated completion date, the contract will be ruled breached. The Conference Liaison will notify the youth and the case will be referred back to the Peoria Police Department.

If a youth is rearrested during the contract term, his/her contract is breached, and his/her case will be referred back to the Peoria Police Department.

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## **VII. Duties**

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### **A. Duties of CPC Liaison**

1. Serve as a liaison with the Peoria Police Department and receive referrals.
2. Keep an accurate account of all cases.
3. Ensure that the members are attending Conferences regularly.
4. Ensure that monitoring members are effectively monitoring compliance by any youth assigned to them, and submitting regular status reports.
5. Obtain appropriate conference forms.
6. Notify Conference Members if a conference is cancelled.
7. Ensure that sufficient community service sites are available for referral.
8. Ensure member compliance with dress code and attendance policy.

### **B. Duties of CPC Members**

1. Attend and participate in all Conference sessions.
2. Exhibit appropriate demeanor.
3. Cooperate with fellow Peace Conference Members and staff.
4. Familiarize self with Community Peace Conference procedures.
5. Behave in a manner consistent with that of a representative of his or her community and a role model for the youth of his or her community.
6. Keep an accurate log of all volunteer hours completed through conference attendance or case monitoring.
7. Attend additional training as opportunities arise.

### **C. Duties of CPC Facilitator**

1. Preside over the Conference and be responsible for “effective and efficient” operation of the Conference.
2. Introduce the Conference Members and give the Opening Statement.
3. Read and explain the facts of the case.
4. Ensure that all Conference members participate in discussion and in the development of agreement terms.
5. Ensure that contract terms are tailored to both victim needs and respondent’s strengths/needs, based upon the Conference discussion.
6. Ensure that contract forms are completed correctly.

### **D. Duties of CPC Monitor**

1. Exchange telephone numbers with the respondent at conclusion of the hearing. Members are encouraged to give out their business number.
2. Contact the respondent at least twice per month—once in person and once by phone.
3. Ensure that the respondent completes his/her contract terms on time.  
NOTE: Discretion will be used, should the youth need an extension of time to complete the agreement/contract.
4. Make arrangements for community service to occur and obtain contact person.
5. Complete and Monitor Contact Sheet after each contact and submit to CPC Liaison.
6. Enter appropriate remarks onto the CPC Agreement Form describing why the respondent successfully completed or failed to complete the contract.
7. Regularly update the conference regarding the status of cases he or she is monitoring.

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## **VIII. CPC Forms**

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- A. Referral Form
- B. Letter to Victim
- C. Letter to Respondent
- D. Agreement to Participate
- E. Pre-Conference Agenda for Victim/Offender
- F. CPC Script
- G. Oath of Confidentiality
- H. CPC Agreement Contract
- I. Conference Outcome Form
- J. Conference Summary Data Form
- K. Monitor Contact Sheet
- L. Community Service Hour Log





## REFERRAL FORM

2130 N. Knoxville  
 Peoria, IL 61603  
 309-687-7513 w.  
 309-687-7299 fax  
[lbrown@chail.org](mailto:lbrown@chail.org)

Date of referral \_\_\_\_\_  
 Referring agency \_\_\_\_\_  
 Person referring \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

**CPC case #** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date Rec'd** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of CPC** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date closed** \_\_\_\_\_

### Youth Respondent Information

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Gender Male  Female   
 Hispanic Yes  No   
 Race African American  Asian  Caucasian  Bi-Racial  Other  \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade level \_\_\_\_\_ School name \_\_\_\_\_

### Victim Information

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Gender Male  Female   
 Hispanic Yes  No   
 Race African American  Asian  Caucasian  Bi-Racial  Other  \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is the victim a minor? Yes  No   
 Name of Parent/Guardian if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

### Offense Information PPD Case # \_\_\_\_\_

Was the juvenile petitioned into court for this offense? Yes  No   
 List the offense \_\_\_\_\_ Date of incident \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Was there more than one perpetrator in this incident? Yes  No   
 Did the victim and offender know each other before the crime? Yes  No

If Yes, circle type of relationship: Family / Acquaintance / Stranger



Letter to Victim

2130 N. Knoxville  
Peoria, IL 61603  
309-687-7513 w.  
309-687-7299 fax  
[lbrown@chail.org](mailto:lbrown@chail.org)

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: **Community Peace Conference Program**

Your name has been referred to our Community Peace Conference (CPC) Program as a victim of a crime that happened on \_\_\_\_\_. Our program has received a referral on the offenders responsible for the incident.

In the Community Peace Conference Program, we are available to discuss the case with you, and explore any interest you may have in meeting face-to-face with the offender. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and this service is available at no cost to you.

Many victims find that meeting with their offender(s), outside the criminal justice process, provides a meaningful way to participate in the justice system. You could ask questions and explain how you were affected by what happened. Meeting with victims can help offenders understand how their behavior impacts other people.

Someone from the Community Peace Conference Program will call you in a few days as a follow up to this letter. Meanwhile, if you have questions feel free to call (309) 687-7513. If we are unavailable, please leave a message and we will get back to you.



Letter to Respondent

2130 N. Knoxville  
Peoria, IL 61603  
309-687-7513 w.  
309-687-7299 fax  
[lbrown@chail.org](mailto:lbrown@chail.org)

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: **Community Peace Conference Program**

You have been referred to our Community Peace Conference (CPC) Program by the **Peoria Police Department** regarding an incident you were involved in on \_\_\_\_\_.

The first step is for you to meet with someone from our CPC Program to learn more about the Community Peace Conference and what you can expect during this process. In a few days someone will call you to set up a time to meet with you.

I am enclosing some information about the program for you to review before we call. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please call (309) 687-7513. Please leave a message if we are unavailable, and we will get back to you.



2130 N. Knoxville  
Peoria, IL 61603  
309-687-7513 w.  
309-687-7299 fax  
[lbrown@chail.org](mailto:lbrown@chail.org)

### AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

The Community Peace Conference is a diversion program specifically designed for youthful offenders who admit to committing non-violent, low-level offenses. The purpose of the Community Peace Conference is to direct cases away from the court and provide a forum for respondents (youth who admit guilt) to explain their involvement in the offense. Specially trained community members will hear and help resolve this case and the decision reached is binding. The victim(s) involved in this case may be present during the Conference as he/she is given the opportunity to participate fully in the Community Peace Conference process. Your participation in the Community Peace Conference is completely voluntary.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that my admission of guilt can be admitted into evidence in future court hearings.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I am unsuccessful at completing the CPC Agreement, information I discussed at the CPC can and may be used against me in a court of law.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to have this case handled through the Community Peace Conference as part of the station adjustment process.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the Community Peace Conference is an alternative to another station adjustment process, or referral to juvenile court. Should I choose not to participate, my case will be remanded back to the Peoria Police Department and may be processed as a station adjustment and/or judicial process.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I fail to attend the Community Peace Conference or refuse to cooperate during the Conference, my case will be closed and remanded back to the police department.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the right to be represented by an attorney is given up.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I complete all of the conditions listed in the Community Peace Conference Agreement, the Peoria Police Department will be notified to close my case and no further actions will be taken against me unless new criminal cases are identified.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I fail to complete all of the conditions listed in the Community Peace Conference Agreement by the time frame given, my case may be closed and referred back to the Peoria Police Department and handled at their discretion.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I get arrested during my participation in the Community Peace Conference, my case will be remanded back to the Peoria Police Department for review and/or processing by the Peoria County State's Attorney's Office.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to hold harmless the Community Peace Conference group, its Coordinators, employees and volunteers, duly authorized law enforcement officers in any jurisdiction in Peoria County, the Peoria County State's Attorney's Office, or any community service agency or individuals associated with the Community Peace Conference.

\_\_\_\_\_ I authorize the release of my information to participants in the Community Peace Conference including conference members and support staff.

With my signature, I acknowledge that I have read, or that someone has read and explained to me, the contents of the above mentioned AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY PEACE CONFERENCE. I understand my obligations to the program and will abide by its requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Community Peace Conference Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian



## PRE-CONFERENCE AGENDA FOR VICTIM / OFFENDER

**At the pre-conference meeting with victims AND offenders,  
use the following agenda as a guideline:**

Thank everyone for coming. Introduce everyone present at the pre-conference  
- Name and who they are.

1. Explain how the CPC Program works.
2. Role of CPC Facilitators:
  - To provide support to all parties
  - To keep the environment safe
  - To allow everyone to speak
3. Confidentiality (explain):
  - Information about the victim and respondent, and details of what happened in the conference, will not be released to outside parties, other than the Peoria Police Department or Peoria County State's Attorney's Office, without consent.
  - If the youth who admitted to committing this crime is unsuccessful at completing this process, which includes completing the agreement/contract, information discussed during the conference can and may be used against the youth in a court of law.
  - Peoria Police Department will be advised about extent of participation.
4. **Exceptions**
  - We must report if someone is currently being harmed or is in danger of being harmed.
5. Suggest having ground rules (especially the three standard ones):
  - Don't interrupt when someone is speaking.
  - Nothing intentionally hurtful is allowed.
  - Everyone has a right to not answer questions.

### **VICTIM PRE-CONFERENCE**

Explore why they might participate in CPC:

- What are their expectations?
- Have they had previous conversations or contact with anyone involved in the case?

Ask them to describe what happened.

- Clarify any disputed facts.
- Impact this has had on you/your family.
- How do they want this harm to be repaired?
- Do you need additional support (therapy)?

When thinking about the Conference:

- What do you want to say?
- What questions do you want answered?

### **OFFENDER PRE-CONFERENCE**

Explore why they might participate in CPC:

- What are their expectations?
- Have they had previous conversations or contact with anyone involved in the case?

Ask them to describe what happened.

- Clarify any disputed facts.
- Are they accepting responsibility for their own actions?
- Do they regret or feel bad about the crime they committed?

- Do they want to apologize to the victim?

**End with a thank you** for their participation and give a final opportunity for any other issues or questions.



## Conference Facilitator's Script

### Opening Statement

Welcome and thank you all for coming to this conference. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I, along with \_\_\_\_\_ (co-facilitator), will be facilitating this conference.

Before we begin the conference, I would like to go around the room and allow each participant to introduce themselves and explain how they are involved in this case (Community member, friend/family of victim/respondent). (Start with the person on your left and move clockwise around the circle).

I would like to take a few minutes to explain the process we will be using and the expectations of each of us within this process. Because I want to be very clear, I will read from a script so that there is no way that I unintentionally leave out information that you need to process during the conference.

This conference will focus on.....(nature of offense, date and place it occurred).

We will be exploring how \_\_\_\_\_ (respondent's) behavior has affected \_\_\_\_\_(victim). We will discuss what harm was caused, who else was affected and how we can repair the harm that was caused by this behavior.

We are not here to discuss whether \_\_\_\_\_(respondent-s) is/are a good or bad person. We will be asking \_\_\_\_\_(respondent-s) to explain what he/she did and why he/she did it. Each of you will get a chance to express how you were affected by this incident. Together you will decide how best to repair the harm and prevent this from happening again. Does everyone understand?

This is a voluntary process and I want to remind everyone that you may choose to end your participation at any time. Should \_\_\_\_\_(respondent-s) decide not to participate, this matter will be referred back to the police department.

Our hope is that at the end of the conference, we will reach a consensus on what should be done to repair the harm and reduce the likelihood of \_\_\_\_\_(respondent-s) repeating this harmful behavior.

All participants are expected to treat all other participants with respect, allowing each person to speak uninterrupted for as long as they need to, to express their feelings and thoughts on this incident.

Threatening or abusive language or actions will not be permitted. I will ask questions of each participant in turn and may open the conference up to more direct interaction when I believe it is appropriate or necessary. My role and the role of my co-facilitator, is to facilitate this process while keeping this a safe place for all participants to express themselves regarding the incident. Does everyone understand?

Before we get started, let's talk about confidentiality. I will read the Oath of Confidentiality then pass it around asking you to sign it.

**READ:** Oath of Confidentiality

**OBTAIN:** Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_ (respondent-s) has admitted his/her part in this incident.

Let's discuss the case. \_\_\_\_\_(victim), who do you want to speak first, you or the respondent?

## Interview/Discussion

### 1. Respondent

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name), tell us everything that happened

(After the respondent tells their story, ask questions that will address the following issues, if they were not already covered in their story)

- Why did you do it?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- How did you feel about the incident then?
- How do you feel about it now?
- What have you thought about since the incident?
- Who do you think was affected by your actions and how were they affected?

Thank you.

\*Repeat same questions to additional respondents – ask them to respond in their own words.

I have been listening to you relate what happened, but you have not recognized that your actions have directly affected a number of people, some of whom are here tonight. The fact that all these people have attended tonight must tell you that this crime has affected them as well.

I want you to tell us how your behavior has affected you, your family, your friends, and others. Thank you.

### 2. Victim

Now let's find out from \_\_\_\_\_ (victim-s) in what way he/she has been affected by this crime.

\_\_\_\_\_ (victim) tell us everything that happened

(After the victim tells their story, ask questions that will address the following issues, if they were not already covered in their story)

- How did you react to the crime when it happened?
- Describe your feelings after this crime happened?



- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What have you thought about since the incident?
- What harm was caused by this crime (physical, emotional, financial)?
- What has happened to you since the crime?

Thank you.

\*Repeat same questions to additional victims – ask them to respond in their own words.

### 3. Victim Supporters/Community people

\_\_\_\_\_ (name), you are here to support \_\_\_\_\_ (victim), tell us:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (name), you are here as a community member, tell us:

- What was your reaction/response when you learned of the crime?
- How do you feel about this incident?
- How have you been affected by this crime?
- What do you think are the main issues?
- What do you think about what you have heard during tonight’s conference?

### 4. Offender supporters

\_\_\_\_\_ (name), I recognize this may be hard or uncomfortable for you? But, can you tell us:

- What were your thoughts/reactions upon learning of this crime?
- How do you feel about the incident?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- Is this what you expected from \_\_\_\_\_ (respondent)?
- How did you respond to \_\_\_\_\_ (respondent)?

Thank you.

### Then say to the respondent:

\_\_\_\_\_ (respondent), after hearing what everyone thinks, and how they have been affected, is there anything you want to say to anyone in the group before we go on to the next stage of the conference?

**Agreement**

**1. Victim**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name)

- What would you like to get from tonight’s conference?
- What needs to be done to repair the harm caused?

**2. Respondent**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name)

- Are you okay with these conditions? Do you think that it’s fair?
- Is there anything else you think should be done to repair the harm you caused to \_\_\_\_\_ (victim)?

**3. Supports/Community**

- Is there anything else you think should be done to repair the harm \_\_\_\_\_ (respondent) caused to \_\_\_\_\_ (victim)?
- Do you think the stated conditions are fair?

**4. Facilitators**

\*\*Consider these issues before closing:

- How can we work to prevent this in the future?
- What can we do to teach respondent and what’s needed to keep them from re-offending?
- Are there any other issues that need to be addressed (substance abuse, educational needs, mentoring, jobs, family needs, spiritual needs)

\*\*State all determined conditions for the agreement. Make sure they are specific, attainable and measurable.

I will now pass the talking piece to check with every person in the circle regarding conditions to ensure consensus. Is this agreement truly something you can live with?

What I’m hearing is that everyone is in agreement with this plan. \_\_\_\_\_ (CPC member) will be the case monitor and will check in with \_\_\_\_\_ (respondent) twice a month until agreement is completed. Once all

the conditions in the agreement are completed, a formal letter will be sent to the Peoria Police Department notifying them of this progress and recommending the charges in this case be dropped. However, if the agreement is not successfully completed, this case will be referred back to the Peoria Police Department for formal processing. Additionally \_\_\_\_\_(respondent), if you are rearrested during the term of this contract, your contract is considered broken and your case will be referred back to the police.

If during the period of the agreement you should move or your contact information changes, you must notify the Community Peace Conference Coordinator at the phone number listed on your paperwork.

<b>Closing</b>
----------------

Before we close this conference, is there anything anyone would like to say – something you wanted to say but haven’t had the chance? (If so, let them speak and keep asking this question until everyone has had their say. Once the group is in agreement that everything has been said, begin the formal close below.)

I would like to thank you all for your contributions in dealing with this difficult matter. You are to be congratulated for the way you worked through this issue. I encourage you to continue this process of community interaction as we prepare the written agreement.

My co-facilitator and I will step out to complete the agreement which will take about 10 minutes. Please help yourself to some refreshments and we will return with the agreement for you to sign.



2130 N. Knoxville  
Peoria, IL 61603  
309-687-7513 w.  
309-687-7299 fax  
[lbrown@chail.org](mailto:lbrown@chail.org)

## OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation in the Community Peace Conference is voluntary and confidential. Information about the victim and respondent, and details of what happened in the conference, will not be released to outside parties, other than the Peoria Police Department or Peoria County State’s Attorney’s Office, without consent. However, it will be reported if information revealed during the conference indicates:

- Someone being harmed
- Someone in danger of being harmed

Additionally, if the youth who admitted to committing this crime is unsuccessful at completing this process, which includes completing the agreement/contract, information discussed during the conference can and may be used against the youth in a court of law.

All participants in this Community Peace Conference agree by signing this form that they understand what was just read to them and agree to the following oath of confidentiality:

“I solemnly swear or affirm that I will not divulge to outside parties, either by words or signs, any information about the case which comes to my knowledge in the course of the Community Peace Conference and that I will keep secret all proceedings which may be held in my presence. Further, I understand that if I break confidentiality by telling anyone the names of Community Peace Conference participants or any other specific details of the case which may identify the youth, or any other specific details of the case which may identify the youth, I will no longer be able to serve as a Community Peace Conference member or observer.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Youth/Case Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

-----  
Signature of Respondent (Youth)

-----  
Signature of Parent/guardian

-----  
Signature of Victim

-----  
Signature of conference member

-----  
Signature of conference member

-----  
Signature of conference member

-----  
Signature of conference member

-----  
Signature of conference member



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### AGREEMENT FORM

Name of Referred Youth: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O. B. \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Conference: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Referral: \_\_\_\_\_

**I agree to do the following:**

(for each activity, provide description including length of time, location and any contact person if possible)

Activity	Description	Time Allotment	Notes
1.			
2.			
3.			

This agreement will be completed by (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Follow up monitor: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Agreement Completed</b>	<b>Agreement Incomplete</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print), understand that if I satisfactorily complete this agreement, this case will be closed by the Peoria Police Department. However, if I fail to complete this agreement, my case will be remanded back to the Peoria Police Department and may be referred for formal case processing which may include court involvement and stronger penalties.

\_\_\_\_\_ Youth

\_\_\_\_\_ Community Peace CONFERENCE Member

\_\_\_\_\_ Victim

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_ Community Peace CONFERENCE Member

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian



## Conference Outcome Form

**TO:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RE:** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Respondent first and last name) (Case number)

Thank you for this referral to the Community Peace Conference (CPC). The final disposition of this CPC case is indicated below. For questions, please contact Ruby McLeod at 309-687-7530.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Respondent attended a CPC **Pre-Conference meeting**. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Y or N) (Date)

<b>1.b Result: Successful</b>	<b>Unsuccessful</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Respondent completed pre conference. Final conference is set. <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to locate respondent - case closed - remanded to PPD <input type="checkbox"/> Respondent chose not to participate in pre conference— case closed - remanded to PPD <input type="checkbox"/> Other, Specify _____

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Respondent attended the **Final Conference**. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Y or N) (Date)

<b>2b. Result: Successful</b>	<b>Unsuccessful</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Full conference agreement reached and signed <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Respondent chose not to participate in the final conference— case closed - remanded to PPD <input type="checkbox"/> Partial agreement reached but not resolved— case closed- remanded to PPD <input type="checkbox"/> No agreement reached---case closed - remanded to PPD <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Respondent completed **final CPC Agreement activities**. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Y or N) (Date)

<b>3b. Result: Successful</b>	<b>Unsuccessful</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Successful completion and request no further judicial action by PPD or SAO. <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____	<input type="checkbox"/> PPD authorization to extend agreement for _____ days (not to exceed 120 days total) to assist youth <input type="checkbox"/> This case is being closed with CPC and is now remanded to PPD for their discretion. <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____

**NARRATIVE:**



## Conference Summary Data Form

Name of Respondent:

D.O.B.:

Date Conference was held:

Location of Conference:

If juvenile, were offender's parents present?

Yes

No

Relationship between the victim(s) & offenders prior to incident:

1. Knew each other

Yes

No

2. Related

Yes

No

Was this the first conflict between parties?

Yes

No

Number of participants:

Number of victims:

Number of offenders:

Number of others involved:

Time length of CPC:

Number Community referrals given:

Comments:



## Monitor Contact Sheet

Date of contact \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Respondent \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Monitor \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of time spent on this contact \_\_\_\_\_

*Please record: with whom, a summary of the conversation, decisions made, next steps, needs, etc.*

EMAIL THIS SHEET to: [rmcleod@chail.org](mailto:rmcleod@chail.org) Or return hard copy to Ruby McLeod

**AFTER EACH CONTACT place a hard copy in your file.**



**Community Peace Conference  
Peoria County, Illinois**

**Community Service Hours**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Start time	End Time	Total Time	Verification	
				Youth	Supervisor

**This form must be returned to:**                     **Ruby McLeod**  
    **Community Peace Conference Liaison**

**For questions or concerns contact:**           **309-687-7530**

# CPC Training Tracking Form

**CPC Member Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of BARJ Training** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observe CPC Dates (two required)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Participation CPC Dates (two required)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Facilitation CPC Dates: (two required)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Community Peace Conference Volunteer Job Descriptions**

### **Requirements for all CPC Volunteers**

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must attend the mandatory training session on Restorative Justice and Conferencing
- Must submit to a criminal background check and be free of offenses unacceptable to DCFS
- Must complete training by participating in two Conferences and facilitating two Conferences
- Must be able to maintain the Oath of Confidentiality.
- Must be willing to work as part of a team.
- Must be able to commit to the nights you agree to serve. If you have a conflict which interferes with your ability to serve, you must notify CPC Liaison with at least one week notice. If you miss 3 sessions, you will be dismissed from CPC.

### **Peacemaker Job Description**

A CPC Volunteer is referred to as a Peacemaker. Peacemakers must have completed the mandatory training on Restorative Justice and Conferencing, as well as participated in two Conferences and facilitated two Conferences. Peacemakers participate in Conferences scheduled on their assigned night. They follow the CPC procedures and thoughtfully hear each case. Peacemakers have the opportunity to ask the respondent, parents, and/or victims questions which help to understand the nature of the offense, the character of the respondent, and the harm which has been caused by the offense. Peacemakers come to consensus with the group in determining the outcome of the case. Peacemakers must maintain the Oath of Confidentiality at all times for each case.

### **Facilitators**

The CPC Liaison assigns two Peacemakers to facilitate each conference. The role of the lead Facilitator is to run the Conference by reading the script and maintaining order, all while ensuring peaceful participation by all parties. The co-facilitator also ensures safety and participation but also completes the paperwork which includes the CPC Agreement and the Conference Summary Data Form.

### **Registration Table Assistant**

Assistant would arrive one half hour early to assist Teen Court Coordinator in set-up and registration. During the Court sessions, the Assistant greets all the participants and visitors who arrive for the Teen Court hearing and is responsible for the confidential material and fees collected until clean-up time.

### **Monitor**

The CPC Liaison will assign one of the Peacemakers to be a case Monitor. A Monitor acts as a friendly liaison for the respondent, encouraging and assisting them as they complete the Community Peace Conference Agreement.

### **CPC Liaison**

The Liaison is responsible for coordinating the Conferences. Liaison receives referral from Peoria Police Department, contacts victim and respondent to discuss program, holds pre-conference meeting with both parties and schedules Conferencing. Liaison assigns Conference Facilitators and Monitor for each case. Liaison ensures all paperwork is completed for each case including final reports to police department.