

About CRJ

CRJ is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization located in Missoula Montana since February 2003. Since 2004, CRJ has worked with Missoula Youth Court to deliver Balanced and Restorative Justice Programs to juvenile offenders, their victims, their families, and our Missoula community. In May 2004, CRJ implemented Victim Offender Dialog (VOD) and an alternative process, Accountability Conferences, for youth offenders whose victims did not directly participate in a VOD. In 2008, CRJ implemented a restorative approach to juvenile shoplifting through our Shoplifting Intervention Program. In summer 2010, CRJ and Missoula Youth Court began a small seed program called Balanced and Restorative Justice Mentoring and Reporting Center (BMARC). Since 2011, CRJ has worked to expand BMARC to the academic year.

Mission

Community Restorative Justice strengthens the lives of juvenile offenders, their victims, families, and community by promoting authentic and meaningful accountability and responsibility processes, and life skill development.

Goals and Objectives

Our overriding goal is to support the healing process of victims of juvenile offense, protect the community from additional harm caused by juvenile delinquency, and alter the life trajectories of juvenile-justice-involved youth to not only reduce further delinquent behavior, but to preserve their life chances to prosper as productive and healthy citizens.

Our goals are accomplished through the implementation of balanced and restorative justice programs based on the following values:

1. **Active Participation.** Provide victims, juvenile offenders, and the community with opportunities for input and participation in the justice process and the well being of community members as early and fully as possible.
2. **Responsibility.** Provide opportunities for victims, juvenile offenders, and community members to develop mutually acceptable Accountability Agreements tailored to the offender's obligation to repair the harm to the fullest extent possible.
3. **Support.** Provide victims with services and resources they need as a result of the offense committed against them.

4. Reintegration. The community helps to preserve life chances of juvenile-justice-involved youth through positive relationships, academic supports, and the development of life skills and competencies in an attempt to disrupt the delinquency process and prevent youth from further involvement in the juvenile justice system.

This “balanced approach” outlines public safety, victim assistance, accountability, and competency development. Current CRJ programs include: Victim Offender Dialog (VOD), Accountability Conferences, Shoplifting Intervention Program, and a Balanced and Restorative Justice Mentoring and Reporting Center (BMARC).

Program Components

Victim Offender Dialog (VOD) and Accountability Conferences

Youth referred to VOD or Accountability Conferences participate in individual meetings with a trained and impartial facilitator and extensively cover the following:

- Reasons why the youth carried out the delinquent offense(s).
- Examination of who the youth believes was harmed by their actions and behaviors, and how they feel they can repair the harm(s).
- Examination of how their community and their relationships with family and peers are impacted by delinquency and specifically, their acts.
- Examination of how their choices ultimately hurt their futures.
- Positive problem solving and pro-social skills.

Specific VOD Program Components

1. Victim Centered
2. Dialog Driven
3. Voluntary
4. Authentic and meaningful accountability and responsibility
5. Mutually acceptable accountability agreements – harm repair
6. Individual preparation meetings
7. Life skill Development

VOD Process

After a series of individual preparation meetings, a case facilitator will bring the victim(s), the offender, and participant supporters together in a safe and structured setting. The victim and

offender engage in dialogue about the crime, the aftermath, and the offenders' obligation to repair the harm(s) caused to their victim(s), communities, their families and ultimately themselves. Victims are able to tell their story and explain their experiences, ask questions about the offense and the offender, receive answers, and obtain meaningful and symbolic restoration. At the end of the encounter, the victim(s) and offender sign an Accountability Agreement that documents the offender's obligations to repair the harm to their victim.

Accountability Conference Program Components

1. Victim Centered (indirectly)
2. Voluntary
3. Authentic and meaningful accountability and responsibility
4. Accountability agreement – harm repair
5. Life skill Development

Accountability Conference Process

Accountability Conferences are a unique and innovative approach for youth offenders unable to meet face-to-face with their victim (the victim is not interested in meeting, unable to reach a victim, or the facilitator determines it is not appropriate for a meeting). Through Accountability Conferences our facilitators work with youth to identify some of the possible affects the victim may experience, and how they can indirectly help their victim and community, and how they can prevent further involvement in the system, and increase life skills. Accountability Conferences result in signed Accountability Agreement between the offender and the facilitator and can include restitution to the victim.

Shoplifting Intervention Program ~ a restorative approach to juvenile shoplifting

Our Shoplifting Intervention Program was developed as a result of an identifiable need to intervene in juvenile shoplifting because of the number of youth referrals to our programs but more importantly the long reaching affects of shoplifting on our local stores and their employees, consumers, law enforcement, and families.

Shoplifting Intervention Program Components – youth meet two evenings in a month

1. Self-awareness. Taking responsibility for their behavior.
2. Social awareness. Learning and understanding who the victims of shoplifting are and the potential consequences to the different victim groups.

3. Responsible decision-making, including activities related to personal and family values, pros and cons, and positive problem solving.

Key Program Elements

- Involvement and participation by a parent or legal guardian.
- Victim voice. A volunteer community member comes in and speaks with the youth (store manager, loss prevention officer) about the consequences and affects of shoplifting.
- Community Harm Repair. Facilitators and youth complete a volunteer service activity during the month they are in the program.
- Homework that addresses problem solving, the ripple effects of stealing from a store, and learning from mistakes.

Balanced & Restorative Justice Mentoring and Reporting Center (BMARC)

The first of its kind in Missoula, BMARC development began in 2010 as a small seed summer program under the direction of Missoula Youth Court. The BMARC concept is not new. Many jurisdictions around the country have utilized this design with high levels of success. Consistent with research-based promising and best practices on Balanced and Restorative Justice, Youth Development, and OST programs, reporting centers are an integral part of a coordinated continuum of care in juvenile justice delivery. Services of this sort weave accountability and individualized services that have been shown to help youth improve and succeed academically, develop healthy and positive relationships with adults, develop life skills necessary for well-being and successful transitions to adulthood, thus, reducing further involvement in delinquency and crime.

The primary goal is to reach those youth who persistently and progressively engage in problem behaviors and delinquency with significant impairments in personal development, social functioning, and academic achievement.

Representative components include the following

- 1) Supervision and structure during out-of-school time;
- 2) Academic support and achievement;
- 3) Mentoring relationships with positive adult community members; and,
- 4) Enriching learning opportunities in and with the community.

Specific BMARC Program Components

1. Academic supports at BMARC includes:

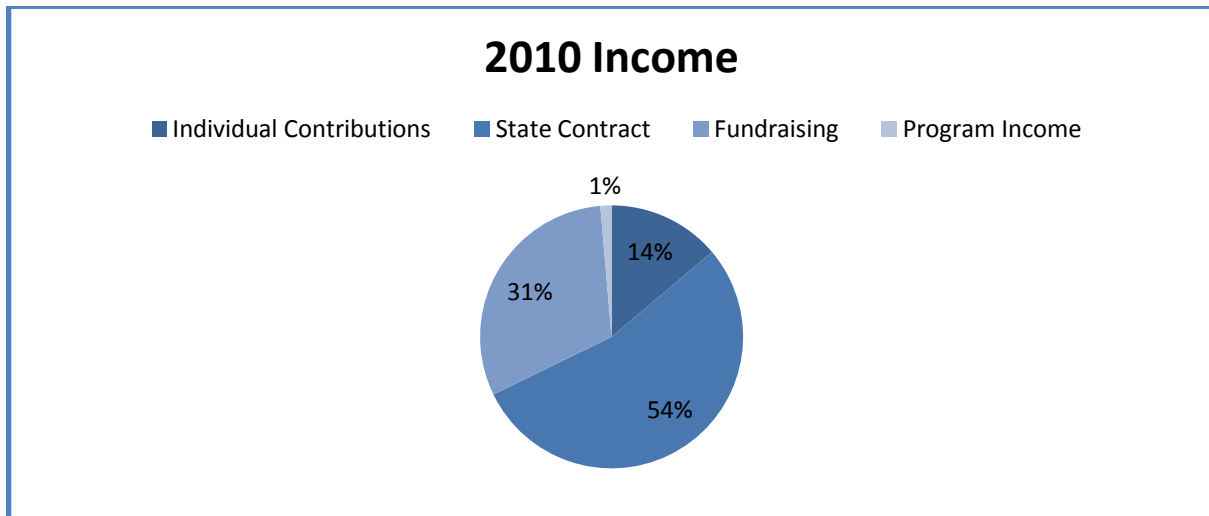
- Behavior and attendance monitoring while at school
- Homework lab and monitoring at the center
- Consistent tutoring at the center
- Career and postsecondary exploration

2. Community engagement at BMARC includes:

- Mentoring relationships
- Life skill training
- Volunteer service activities
- Cultural arts
- Recreation

Funding Sources and amounts

In 2010, we received \$15,120.00 for direct services from our contract with Missoula Youth Court. Our second largest funding sources for 2010 was from individual donations and fundraising events combined to total \$12,523.00 which allowed our staff to administer, manage and develop our programs.



CRJ has in the past been the recipient of the following grants

- Title II Formula Grant 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008.
- Grant from Montana Board of Crime Control in 2009 to sponsor a restorative justice training targeting juvenile justice professionals.
- In 2006, the Administration for Children and Families Office of Community Services awarded grants to experienced community organizations and their partners who serve at-risk youth. Grant objectives included the sustainability and capacity building of services provided. Mountain Home Montana, Inc. received one of three Communities Empowering Youth (CEY) grants given to agencies in Montana. Community Restorative Justice (CRJ) was one of the partner agencies.
- From 2005 to 2010, \$67,255.50 in private foundation grants.

Referral Process, Offenses, Program Performances

Referral Process

Missoula Youth Probation refers 99% of program youth while 1% has been referred by the Missoula County Attorney’s Office and a Defense Attorney. Youth Probation fill out one of our referral forms with the youth’s contact information, type of offense, legal guardian name and phone number, and victim’s name and contact number. Facilitators contact the juvenile offender before contacting the victims.

Offenses

Youth have been referred to our programs for the following offenses: Assault, assault with a weapon, family partner assault, sexual assault, arson and negligent Arson, burglary, accountability to felony burglary, criminal mischief, criminal endangerment, criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, shoplifting, theft, accountability to theft, theft to a car, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, violation of protection order, violation of privacy in communication.

Most Referred Offenses

Shoplifting and Thefts	150
Assault	24
Disorderly Conduct	23
Criminal Mischief	16

Program Evaluation

In 2005 our program director attended a Financial and Performance Measure Training, Federal Reporting Format, including the use of a logic model and data collection plan, through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as a result of receiving a Title II Formula Grant. Since then, CRJ staff gathers information directly from program participants (demographics), offense type, prior records, referral name, victim name, number of victims, store, as well as information pertaining to the offender’s education, and family supports. Measuring devices include: referral form, participant feedback, case forms designed to illicit information, facilitator observation, and program evaluations.

Program Statistics as of September 2011

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION	<i>Total Youth Referrals</i>
Victim Offender Dialog	45
Accountability Program	77
Shoplifting Intervention	109
BMARC	17
TOTALS	248

COMPLETION RATES			
<i>PROGRAM</i>	<i>TOTAL YOUTH REFERRALS</i>	<i>TOTAL COMPLETED CASES</i>	<i>COMPLETION RATE</i>
<i>Victim Offender Dialog</i>	45	45	100%
<i>Accountability Conference</i>	77	57	74%
<i>Shoplifting Intervention</i>	109	97	89%
TOTALS	231	199	86%

RECIDIVISM RATES			
<i>PROGRAM</i>	<i>COMPLETED CASES</i>	<i># OF YOUTH WITH NEW OFFENSE</i>	<i>RECIDIVISM RATE</i>
<i>Victim Offender Dialog</i>	45	6	13%
<i>Accountability Conference</i>	57	11	19%
<i>Shoplifting Intervention</i>	97	18	19%
NON-RECIDIVISM RATE FOR ALL PROGRAMS			82%

Program Youth Demographics

Program Youth Gender

Male	108
Female	122

Program Youth Age Groups

5 to 9	2
10 to 12	35
13 to 15	98
16 to 18	95

Program Youth Racial Ethnic Group

Asian American/Pacific Islander	2
Black, not of Hispanic Origin	8
Hispanic	2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	7
White, not of Hispanic Origin	211

Program Youth Education

Attending School	226	91%
Not Attending School	21	9%

Program Youth Juvenile Justice Involvement

First Time Offender	134	54%
Prior Record	113	46%

Key Facts

54 Victims have met with their juvenile offender

135 volunteer community members have worked with program youth

Program youth have completed 589 volunteer service hours in the community

Challenges and wish list be to help address those challenges

Our greatest challenge is support for our programs and the clients we work with.

1. Funding Supports:

- Lack of federal and state funding opportunities for small nonprofit organizations.
- Lack of funding to established programs for expansion of needed services. For the past few years we have seen an increase in the number of youth and their families struggling. Financial difficulties, academic failure, lack of engagement in community and education, and views favorable to marijuana use have been the most identifiable issues for clients. We must be able to expand services as identified in order to help leave the system, prosper in their community, and reach their academic, employment, and personal goals.
- Lack of long-term funding commitments from beginning pilot projects through the evaluation of programs in terms of effectiveness (recidivism reduction, behavior improvements, victim satisfaction) and juvenile justice system cost reductions. Secondly, funding must be available for the administration and management of programs in order to evaluate with fidelity whether programs are meeting their desired outcomes (reducing costs, decreasing recidivism rates, and increasing the number of youth who successfully leave the juvenile justice system). Restorative programs have not been established as “promising.” However, if we were able to conduct a larger evaluation on program effectiveness we could develop a program manual, training materials, and instruments for assessing fidelity of implementation, thus determining whether restorative programs were consider “model,” thus, increasing funding through various resources including training, technical assistance, dissemination of materials to communities locally and nationally.
- Lack of public financial support for high-risk juvenile offenders. High-risk youth need the most intensive services for the longest duration but the funding is not available. The public is supportive of many types of prevention efforts and early intervention program from afterschool programs for at-risk youth, preventing underage drinking, teen pregnancy, and youth violence, however, programs that target juvenile-justice-involved youth is lacking. Another example is dropout rates. Communities focus on early prevention efforts, but we miss those youth who are in

- the system and either on the verge or have dropped out. Prevention is a key to helping many youth, but high-risk juvenile offenders have the greatest need and with opportunities they have the greatest room for improvements. Our state will gain more cost saving benefits if we focus on effective interventions for higher risk juveniles.
2. Utilization of our programs and services. Missoula Youth Probation makes 90% of youth referrals to our programs. Judges, victim service providers, county attorneys and defense attorneys can refer youth to programs like CRJ and provide youth and their families with quality services and opportunities that can reduce further involvement in the system and improve their lives.

Wish List for Balanced and Restorative Justice Programming:

- Statewide and local support including steady funding streams, technical assistance, staff development trainings.
- Collaboration between state-wide restorative justice supporters and practitioners, collaboration among service providers, juvenile justice practitioners, and victim service providers.
- Overall state-wide vision for youth from delinquency prevention to intervention for youth who are at greatest risk with a common goal that all youth have the capacity to do great things if we give them the opportunities.
- Greater accountability from programs and organizations receiving federal and state funding.
- Greater federal support for Montana communities. Competing nationally for federal dollars is difficult.
- Overall collaboration and support between schools, afterschool programs, juvenile justice system, and service providers.

Specific Wish List ~ Community Restorative Justice

In order for us to meet the needs of our clients and offer effective interventions for high-risk youth in our community are specific needs are the following:

- Affordable, larger, youth friendly office space. Once we are able to have space we can open the doors to BMARC. Currently, the space we have, we are limited to a maximum of ten youths at one given time.

November 22, 2011

- Computers and software for youth who will utilize homework lab and tutoring services at BMARC. Many of our program youth involved in our programs do not have a computer at home, therefore, families are not regularly checking homework and grades, and youth are not succeeding academically.
- Funding for food for program youth. Our greatest expenditure during the summer mentoring and reporting center is food for youth. Many times the staff donates snacks for the kids.
- Local campaign aimed at educating and connecting the effects of delinquency on our community, including, financial costs to victims, adjudication, investigation, incarceration, time missed from work for victims and families, financial loss from fines and fees, social serve costs, dependency, breakdown in relationships, and academic failure of high-risk youth offenders.