



ARROWSMITH COMMUNITY JUSTICE SOCIETY

VOICES

Our Vision is a community in harmony

Welcome to the Spring edition of the ACJS newsletter. We hope that you will find it informative and interesting.

Please help us to save some trees and let us know if you would prefer to receive the newsletter by email or the old snail mail.

If you have items that you would like to see in the next Newsletter (winter) or ideas for items please send them to either:

Ruth Addy
rgaddy@shaw.ca or
 Dorthe Jakobsen
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Coordinator's Voice

Greetings to everyone. It's been a while since our last newsletter. I hope this finds everyone in good health and good spirits.



To start, I would like to welcome nine new volunteers to ACJS. We are just completing our latest training. A big thank you to all of our experienced volunteers who took the time to come out and assist in the training. It is so very appreciated. It is also a good opportunity to meet the newest members on a more personal level. Also, a big thank you to all those who are going to

be coaches after the training. Your time and experience are invaluable to us.

Form Changes

Recently some of our forms have been changed slightly. Most of the changes are grammatical but some are more significant. The Evaluation Forms have been removed and volunteers no longer have to get them filled out after a conference. In their place are updated Conference Summary Forms. These forms must be completed by the team. They will be used by the coordinator, who will be the person contacting everyone after the resolution agreement has been completed to get a verbal assessment over the telephone. The conference script and preconference forms for victims and offenders have also been updated. Please take a few minutes when you receive an information package to review everything.

Get Well

A big "Get Well" to George Jones. George has been recovering from a recent illness.

Hope to see you all at the next Volunteer Meeting on Tuesday, April 17th.

Upcoming Events

Volunteers' Supper Meeting

Date: Tuesday, April 17th, 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Place: Frank Collins' home at 1096 Eaglecrest Drive, Qualicum Beach

Agenda:

1. Welcoming new trainees
2. Update on finding opportunities for community service
3. Discussion - "Case Complications: When the Unexpected Happens"
4. Form Review

Trainees' Voices

Submitted by Joyce Daman



- Learned a lot but have lots more to learn
- Focus on listening extremely valuable
- Enjoyed meeting folks from different walks in life with such a variety of skills
- Appreciated the volunteers who helped
- Great experience, especially the role plays
- Anxious to develop own style and comfort
- Meeting folks was a pleasure
- Found it amazing how varied personalities melded together so well
- By the end it almost felt like family
- Appreciated the sharing of the first hand knowledge of the experienced volunteers
- Realized it surely takes a variety of skills

Volunteer Voices

Letter to the editor from Janet Dunnett

A pleasant task when I get back from travel is to catch up on goings-on while I've been gone. I like to read the community news collected by my door. As always, I am struck by the personality of this area as a "great place to grow old".

But this time I was unsettled by signs that it is no place to be poor, and it is sure hard to be a youth. Family Day was almost cancelled because no one seemed to care. A guy named Fred admits to feeling unwelcome because he lives in a basement suite and

can't afford to buy a home. A report suggests youth addiction is made worse when the community turns a blind eye. Another article reassures us that crime is down and thanks community emphasis on public safety for that.

But there were also signs of community building. There was a workshop to explore how the virtues of love, kindness, justice and service could be put to work to build safe and caring communities. There is the weekly hot lunch with non judging friendship hosted by St. Stephens. Wow! And there is one other item. It's an alert that in May there is a national celebration of youth. Its organizer, Jenn Browett of the Regional District of Nanaimo says, "residents are urged to get involved.....anything they want to do that supports youth". She wants the community to recognize and encourage the positive contributions of youth and foster closer relationships within the community, celebrate diversity, and be more aware of youth issues.

There was a lot more in my study of a month in the life of Oceanside. But I didn't see anything about Restorative Justice. So I wonder if we are missing the community building boat by sticking too much to our focus at the trouble-end of our community chain of community well-being ? Aren't we learning a lot that might help out at the positive prevention-end too? Could we contribute some of our knowledge during Youth Week ?

ACJS Volunteer of the Year – Caryl Wylie



Caryl Wylie is our Volunteer of the year 2006. She was chosen by the board from member nominations. We thought you might like to know more about Caryl and her contributions to our society.

Caryl came to us from the prairies - born in Saskatoon, and after nine years there, moving for a further nine years to Calgary before landing in

North Vancouver in 1968. She worked as an accountant in a bank and married an RCMP officer. Nowadays, she lives in Nanoose, where she enjoys a panoramic view of the Fairwinds Golf Course. Her home is filled with light and the light shines through a spectacular collection of stained glass work which Caryl has been creating meticulously for several years.



No visitor can ignore another important member of the Wylie household. You will be enthusiastically greeted by Kennedy, a rambunctious Wheaton Terrier. He loves everyone and everything. Nothing is ignored, particularly telephone aeri-als. All telephones must be put out of reach whenever Kennedy will be alone in the house.

While Caryl was living in Prince George, she was part of a conversation between her husband and a neighbouring prosecutor who introduced them to the concept of restorative justice. He was concerned about the long hours required for court trials and the time wasted on the procedures. Consequently, when her husband was transferred to Nanaimo and they settled in Nanoose, Caryl was ready to participate when an opportunity arose in Parksville. She began by developing a data base for the new society which began in October, 1997, and the following year was asked to submit a 'resume' to sit on the original steering committee. She has continued to be an essential member of our society. Caryl loves to work in the office, where her friendly, forthright manner and exceptional organizational skills have been invaluable.

An unassuming person, Caryl was surprised and appreciative when she became the volunteer of the year. She considers many others in the group to be equally deserving. She is amazed at the talent and enthusiasm exhibited by members of our society. She became so involved in the Restorative Justice society because she valued the opportunity it provided to help some move forward after they have miss-stepped. For her, it is important they realize they can achieve a good life. She looks forward to expanding our efforts to include more mediation

with other community concerns such as by-law problems and neighbour's disputes.

Directors' Voices

Looking to the Future by Joyce Daman



By the time you read this, 9 new trainees will be into the practicum component of the ACJS community conference training. Wisdom, energy, enthusiasm and tremendous insight are the descriptors which jump to mind when thinking of Margot Brady, Bob Carpenter, Chris Davies, Rita Levitz, Barb and John Lyotier, Henri Neit, Helen Thomas and Kathryn Watson-MacDonald.

Each trainee will be assigned to a conference team to serve as an observer to the process and will attend pre-conferences as well as the conference and the debriefing. Several of our experienced volunteers have been selected to act as coaches of the trainees. After all of our trainees have observed a 'real case', we will bring them back together to complete their training which will include a supervised practicum.

Many thanks to all of you, our current working team members and board members, who helped with training, role plays and will continue to provide guidance to our new folks as they find their comfort level in our process.

We are thrilled that Bob Carpenter, who has recently been named as coordinator for the School District Restorative Justice Program, is training with us. This will help to build the bridge between the two programs and hopefully lead to a great partnership.





Voices of Justice

Excerpt from *Dancing with a Ghost* by Rupert Ross



Exploring Indian Reality

I want to pass on something taught me by a significant Native mentor. Several years ago Charlie and I had just finished a court session on a remote reserve, one in which a community Elder had again been of invaluable assistance by advising the court on appropriate sentences for each offender. I had gone up to him, looked him straight in the eye, shook his hand and told him, in effusive terms, how much I appreciated his contribution. I learned from Charlie that I had made two basic errors.

First, he advised, verbal expressions of praise and gratitude are embarrassing and impolite, especially in the presence of others. The proper course is to quietly ask the person to continue making his contribution next time around.

Second, looking someone straight in the eye, at least among older people in that community, was a rude thing to do. It sends a signal that you consider that person in some fashion inferior. The proper way to send a signal of respect was to look down or to the side, with only occasional glances up to indicate attention. I had been trying to say one thing but had done so in a way which conveyed exactly the opposite.

When Charlie told me that sustaining direct eye contact was frequently considered rude, I was swamped with memories of countless Native victims and witnesses who, almost without exception, had taken the witness stand and refused to look anyone in the eye. Instead, they alternated between staring off into the distance and giving us only the most fleeting of glances. In doing so, they had meant to send messages of attention and respect. The messages received by the non-Native court personnel, however, were exactly the opposite ones. Within our culture we are trained to see such behaviour as evasive. We discount what people say when they won't hold our eyes, concluding most often that they are insincere and untrustworthy as witnesses. I wondered how many true stories we had dismissed simply because we saw those people through the lens of our own culture, never once suspecting that the act of turning away the eyes might mean something entirely different in another culture.

This, then, is the nature of the task at hand: learning to go beyond what we think we see and hear to ask what a person from a different culture and with a different sense of reality is truly trying to tell us. I'd like to quote a sentence I copied from the blackboard at a band hall. "I believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."