
ALAMEDA COUNTY

**RESTORATIVE JUVENILE JUSTICE
STRATEGIC PLAN**

January 2009 – December 2012

ALAMEDA COUNTY RESTORATIVE JUVENILE JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

JANUARY 2009 - DECEMBER 2012

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INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2007, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY) gave informational presentations on restorative justice to Superior Court Judge Gail Bereola, Presiding Judge of Alameda County's Juvenile Court, and other juvenile justice officials. Impressed that restorative justice addressed many of the shortcomings of our present juvenile justice system, Judge Bereola convened a Restorative Justice Task Force engaging a wide network of juvenile justice stakeholders which met monthly for more than one year. During these meetings, further education about the principles and practices of restorative justice led to intensive conversations among prosecutors, defenders, law enforcement, members of community-based groups and others about implementing system-wide restorative justice processes along the entire juvenile justice continuum. Subcommittees laid the groundwork for applications of restorative juvenile justice in Alameda County, including diverting youth away from the juvenile justice system, community-based sentencing alternatives, and circles of support and accountability for youth re-entering their schools and communities after a period of incarceration.

In 2008, these discussions culminated in a two-day Strategic Planning Session in which stakeholders began the collaborative process of charting the system-wide implementation of restorative justice processes in the county. Present at the planning sessions were approximately forty department heads and directors in the public and private sectors.

The strategic planning sessions produced the following three year plan which calls for outreach and public education about restorative justice, incorporation of restorative justice practices into existing providers' current programs, implementation and evaluation of pilot projects, and the development of financial resources to support these activities.

TASK FORCE AND PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals and organizations participated in the Task Force and the planning process that produced this strategic plan for restorative justice in Alameda County.

Hon. Gail Bereola, Presiding Juvenile Judge, Alameda County Superior Court

V. Toni Adams, Alameda County Office of Education

Michael Alexander, Alameda County Public Defender's Office

Yejide Ankobia, Pathways to Change/The Mentoring Center

George Arroyo, Alameda County Public Defender's Office

Yolanda Baldovinos, Alameda County Social Services Agency

Sujatha Baliga, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth

John Beard, Hayward Police Department

Donald Blevins, Alameda County Probation Department

Bidyut Bose, Niroga Institute

Alex Briscoe, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

Yasmin Burke-Taylor, Alameda County Probation Department

Millie Burns, Catholic Charities of the East Bay

Sally Bystroff, Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission

Barbara Cannon, Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission

Arnold Chavez, Alameda County Public Health Dep't, Urban Male Health Initiative

Amy Cheney, Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center Library

Jerold Coats, Oakland Housing Authority Police Department

Tony Crear, Alameda County Probation Department

Fania Davis, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth

Erica Donahue, Hayward Unified School District

William Fenton, Alameda County Probation Department

John Flores, Alameda County Office of Education

Matthew Golde, Alameda County District Attorney's Office

Madge Haynes, Casey Family Programs

Lisa Hill, Alameda County Probation Department

Sharon Hollis, Tri-Valley Youth Court

Kerry D. Jackson, Alameda County Sheriff's Department

Mark James, Empowering Youth Through Music/Superior Court

Adrian Kirk, Oakland Unified School District

Sheri Kramer, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth

Susan Kleebauer, Alameda County Bar Association/CAAP

Alice Lai-Bitker, Alameda County Board of Supervisors

Yvette Leung, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

Johnny Lorigo, Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission
Michelle Love, Alameda County Social Services Agency
Barbara Loza-Muriera, Interagency Children's Policy Council
Tom Luce, Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists
Pamela Mchombo-Taylor, Center for Family Counseling
Rosylen Mangohig, Alameda County Bar Association
Barbara A. McClung, Oakland Unified School District
Alison McKenzie, Alameda County Our Kids
Fausto Melara, Jr., Oakland Police Department, Youth and Family Services Task Force
Laura Moran, Oakland Unified School District
Nancy Nadel, City of Oakland, City Council
Tamara Perkins, Apple of Discord Productions
Carol Pitts, Center for Community Dispute Settlement
Jasmine Polar, Alameda County Superior Court
Belen Pulido, Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action
Wilma Robinson, Alameda County Probation Department, Camp Wilmont Sweeney
Michael Roosevelt, Administrative Office of the Courts
Gail Sadalla, Oakland Unified School District
Michael Shaw, Alameda County Public Health Department
Rachel Sing, McCullum Youth Court
Celsa L. Snead, The Mentoring Center
Jeff Snell, Hayward Police Department
Deborah Swanson, Alameda County Probation Department
Scott Swisher, Alameda County District Attorneys Office
Terry Symens-Bucher, Department of Child Support Services
Gary Thompson, Interagency Children's Policy Council
Monica Vaughan, Oakland Unified School District
Kirsten Vital, Oakland Unified School District
David Yusem, SEEDS Community Resolution Center
Darren White, McCullum Youth Court
Sarah Wilson, Board of Supervisors, District 3
Bethany Woolman, Stanford University student
Kevin Wright, Oakland Police Department
Chien Wu-Fernandez, Hayward Unified School District

VISION

WE ENVISION:

- A juvenile justice system that is improved by the county-wide use of restorative practices which emphasize repairing the harm caused by youthful wrongdoing while reducing the social and financial costs of our present system.
- Widespread use of restorative practices which collaboratively engage victims, youth, families and communities in addressing the harms created by wrongdoing in ways that focus equally on victim needs, community safety, as well as youth accountability and growth.
- The institutionalization of restorative principles and practices throughout our juvenile justice system, our schools, and community-based organizations serving youth.

MISSION

Our mission is to institutionalize evidence-based restorative justice practices in Alameda County's juvenile justice and dependency systems, schools, and community-based youth-serving organizations, in order to more effectively address youthful wrongdoing and the mental health and behavioral issues associated with such wrongdoing.

PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Instead of asking:

- What law/rule was broken?
- Who broke it?
- What punishment is deserved?

Restorative Justice asks:

- What is the harm?
- What are the needs and responsibilities of all affected?
- How should those affected collectively address the needs and repair the harm?

CORE VALUES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- Hold youth accountable
- Attend to victims' needs and concerns
- Repair harm to the degree possible to victims and community
- Address youth needs and the root causes of wrongdoing
- Engage broad-based stakeholder and community involvement
- Employ participatory dialogue and decision-making
- Treat all parties with respect and dignity

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

This restorative justice plan was developed in accordance with the following principles and planning guidelines:

- Planning and implementation will be collaborative. A broad range of stakeholders will be engaged at every level of planning and implementation.
- Strategies will reflect the principles and best practices in restorative justice.
 - To the extent possible, program design will be guided by evidence-based practice.
 - Pilot projects will include strong evaluation components to gather evidence to enhance best practices in the field of restorative justice.
- Strategic plan implementation will involve development of the human and financial resources needed to institutionalize restorative practices throughout the county.
- Creativity and innovation will be encouraged. Program designs and strategies will be tailored to address social, cultural, developmental, familial, institutional, and other factors relevant to the needs of our children, families, and communities.

During the past quarter century, restorative justice has demonstrated that it can address victims' needs while holding offenders accountable for the harm they have caused. Just as importantly, it has shown great promise as a way to empower and re-energize local communities.

Howard Zehr,
Professor of Sociology
& Restorative Justice
Eastern Mennonite University

Reliance on punishment and incarceration too often as a first rather than last resort has given the U.S. the largest prison population in the world. In 2006, the United States' inmate population of 2,312,414 exceeded China's... We need a paradigm change.

Children's Defense Fund

Justice is love correcting that which revolts against love.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We believe we will always need a formal justice system. It's the cornerstone of the democratic process and the only means of dealing with those who deny responsibility...It is our hope that widening the use of Circles with the justice system will not only strengthen communities but also free the necessary resources to address the most serious threats to well-being of our society and communities – e.g. environmental harm, corporate crime, predatory violence, structural injustice...

K. Pranis, B. Stuart, and M. Wedge
Authors, *Peacemaking Circles: From Crime to Community*

TARGETED OUTCOMES

Our strategies and actions are intended to achieve the following targeted outcomes:

Safer Communities

- Reduced number of youth who reoffend
- Successful re-integration of youth into communities and schools
- Reduced suspensions, expulsions, truancy, and violence in schools

A fundamental change in the way we respond to youthful wrongdoing

- Increased victim satisfaction
- Elimination of negative stereotypes about today's youth
- Greater family and community involvement

Cost-effective methods of dealing with youthful wrongdoing

- Reduced incarceration rates

STRATEGIES

1. Implement county-wide community outreach, public education, and training to promote adoption of restorative justice principles and practices.
2. Build the capacity of Alameda County's juvenile justice system, schools, and youth-serving organizations to design and implement programs and services that are more restorative.
3. Implement and evaluate restorative justice pilot projects.
4. Develop financial resources.
5. Continue planning in the areas of child welfare and education and explore additional applications of restorative juvenile justice.

ACTIONS

STRATEGY 1. Implement county-wide community outreach, public education, and training to promote adoption of restorative justice principles and practices.

- ACTIONS**
- Develop a media campaign to promote increased understanding of and support for restorative justice by engaging television, radio, and print media (including billboards, newspaper articles, and Op-Ed pieces).
 - Distribute informational flyers about restorative justice.
 - Launch webcasts and podcasts.
 - Create and market an electronic restorative justice hotline.
 - Sponsor workshops, conferences, and other outreach and educational activities.
 - Provide forums featuring victim needs and concerns.
 - Include the voices of youth in community outreach and educational activities.
 - Design creative approaches to engage the faith community, varying age groups, and diverse populations.
 - Reach out to various Chambers of Commerce.

STRATEGY 2. Build the capacity of Alameda County's juvenile justice system, schools, and youth-serving organizations to design and implement programs and services that are more restorative.

- ACTIONS**
- Provide outreach, education, and training to empower agencies and organizations currently serving youth and families to incorporate restorative justice practices into their current programs.
 - Target the diverse faith community, government agencies, Chambers of Commerce and civic groups, schools and school systems, community based organizations, and the agencies and offices associated with the justice system.
 - Prioritize training of current providers who serve juvenile offenders, truant and delinquent youth, youth who have

been exposed to neglect, abuse and violent crime, and others with identified risk factors.

- Provide continuing education and on-going training, such as “Keepers’ Circles” to continually strengthen the restorative justice service community and increase and diversify the competencies of restorative justice practitioners.
- Encourage funders and contractors to incorporate restorative justice services into their funding priorities.
- Provide technical assistance for the development and implementation of pilot projects and new program designs.
- Produce films/videos capturing the voices, thoughts, feelings, needs, and aspirations of youth, featuring both victim and offender perspectives.

Strategy 3. Implement and evaluate pilot projects.

ACTIONS

- Expand Camp Sweeney Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA's) project to support at least ten youth.
- Design and implement restorative group conferencing diversion pilot projects (pre-adjudication) beginning with the Oakland and Hayward Police Departments.
- Design and implement sentencing and restitution pilot projects.
- Design and implement school-based pilot projects using restorative practices to address truancy, re-entry, and disciplinary issues.
- Develop research and evaluation components for each pilot project.

Strategy 4. Develop financial resources

ACTIONS

- Convene a Development Committee charged with raising funds to implement this strategic plan and support its mission.
- Sponsor and participate in forums with foundations and contracting agencies to encourage support of restorative justice services.

Strategy 5. Continue planning in the areas of child welfare and education and explore additional applications of restorative juvenile justice.

ACTIONS

- Maintain the Child Welfare/Dependency Planning Group to complete that segment of strategic planning.
- Collaboratively explore restorative justice approaches to the issue of disproportionate minority contact (DMC).
- Convene a committee to design and facilitate implementation of multi-district Schools Truancy, Reentry, and Disciplinary Pilots.
- Form a planning group to address the potential uses of restorative justice to address domestic violence, with a focus on teenage relationships and violence.
- Form a Quality Assurance Sub-Committee to monitor adherence to the philosophy, values, and best practices in Restorative Justice.
 - Monitor planning to ensure that the needs of girls and young women are fully addressed in terms of the harm done to them and the harm they cause.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Immediately following adoption of this strategic plan, the Restorative Justice Task Force will prepare an operating plan which will feature an organizational structure, annual agenda, and timelines for implementation of targeted strategies and actions.