

# Volunteers of America

Dispute Resolution Center (DRC)  
of Skagit County

## Restorative Justice Program



# Overview

## What is Restorative Justice?

- ▶ An alternative form of criminal justice
- ▶ Three consistent things victims of crime want
  - Offender to take responsibility
  - Make sure it won't happen again
  - Make things right

“A focus on punishment is an inadequate response to addressing the harms done by crime.”



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# DRC Roles in Restorative Justice

- ▶ Relationship with Office of Juvenile Court
  - Local youth misdemeanor diversion program
- ▶ 10 trained restorative justice facilitators
- ▶ Group classes for kids in diversion
- ▶ 1 on 1 sessions for kids in diversion
- ▶ Face to face meetings with victims and offenders



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# Victim Offender Impact Competency Education (VOICE)

- ▶ Monthly classes for youth in diversion
- ▶ We receive referrals from the Office of Juvenile Court
- ▶ We see around 120 diversion kids/year in our VOICE Class
- ▶ Less than 1% recidivism rate in our 3 year history working in restorative justice



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# Victim Offender Meetings (VOM)

- ▶ Those referred to VOM also attend VOICE.
- ▶ Goal: to seek a restorative outcome for victims, the community, and offenders.
- ▶ Victims need: harms to be meaningfully addressed, an opportunity to participate , and a voice.
- ▶ Offenders need: to be accountable, integrated into the community, and to change.



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# Restorative Alternative Meetings (RAM)

- ▶ Parties involved include offender, facilitator, and parent/guardian
- ▶ Offender also attends VOICE class
- ▶ Highlights the diversity of individuals harmed by the crime
- ▶ Conversation eventually moves to making things right
- ▶ Functional restitution



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# Future...

- ▶ Increase number of youth served while keeping recidivism low
- ▶ Emotional Awareness/Decision Making
- ▶ Referrals from high schools and/or middle schools
  
- ▶ Upcoming Professional Basic Mediation Training  
November 4–8, 2013 in Mount Vernon



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