

# Center for Restorative Youth Justice

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**Location:** Kalispell - Flathead County, MT

**Total Number of Restorative Justice Programs:** 7

**Target Population:** Flathead County Youth (under 18), and Victims of Juvenile Crime

**Website:** [www.restorativeyouthjustice.org](http://www.restorativeyouthjustice.org)

## Mission & Purpose:

### Mission

The Center for Restorative Youth Justice (CRYJ) is a private non-profit who works in partnership with the community to create meaningful accountability processes and restorative community connections as an alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system.

### Values & Philosophy

The Center for Restorative Youth Justice has adopted the alternative philosophy of justice and crime prevention that focuses on the people and communities harmed by crime. This is in contrast to the traditional court system, where the accused young person is represented by counsel and a judge determines his or her punishment. The Restorative Justice philosophy embraced by the Center brings together those most affected by the crime to help determine what the young person may do to begin to make amends. We offer several programs to assist youth in recognizing the impact of their behavior, accepting responsibility, and repairing the harm caused. To be eligible for participation, a young person must accept responsibility for their offense and be prepared to stand accountable to victims, community members, themselves and their families.

### Agency Information:

- CRYJ's programming results in reduced juvenile offense rates. Without these innovative services in Flathead Valley the likelihood that a youth will reoffend is about 33%. If a youth participates and completes a CRYJ accountability program the likelihood that they will reoffend is reduced to 13%.
- CRYJ has worked with 506 referred youth since 2009. Out of the total number of youth referred to participate in CRYJ's programming, 83% of participants successfully complete program requirements.
- CRYJ is recognized as a national leader in the field of Restorative Youth Justice practices and programming
- The Victim Impact Program is the only program in the state that directly involves victims of juvenile crime
- CRYJ works with youth who are either currently involved, or are being actively diverted, from the traditional juvenile justice system.
- CRYJ youth participants dedicate more than 2,500 hours of community service to the Flathead Community every year through participation in CRYJ's Youth Connections program
- The agency has 7 (3 full time and 4 part time) staff members who provide programming and support for 6 restorative justice programs.
- Volunteers are an essential component in CRYJ programming – CRYJ creates opportunities for more than 30 volunteers a year to participate as facilitators, mentors, and support for CRYJ participants.

**Referral Sources:** CRYJ works in partnership with Flathead County Youth Court Services and area schools to provide restorative justice programming options to first time offenders as an alternative to the traditional juvenile justice process. CRYJ is working to extend programming options to area schools as a method of true diversion, where youth would engage in programming as an alternative to a formal charge or offense. For many youth referred through Youth Court Services, a successful completion of CRYJ program requirements will result in a full dismissal of charges.

## **CRYJ Program Areas:**

**Victim Impact Program:** In 2009 CRYJ developed the Victim Impact Program as a means of providing a victim-focused justice response for all victims of juvenile crime. The VIP documents the human impacts of juvenile crime and helps frame the accountability process in a way that allows youth participants to understand the harm and real impacts caused by their actions.

The program provides a voice for each victim of juvenile crime by extending the opportunity to complete a victim impact statement, or the option to meet face-to-face with a youth offender through CRYJ's Victim Offender Conference program. VIP staff provides court accompaniment where appropriate, as well as information and resources.

The VIP is offered in partnership with Flathead County Youth Court Services and to date has served more than 300 victims. It is currently the only program in the state that offers victim outreach and representation to victims of juvenile crime.

The VIP provides victim statements and works to ensure that the voice of the victim, and in turn the human connection to real impacts and consequences, is conveyed to all CRYJ youth participants, when applicable.

- **Referral Sources:** Youth Court Services submits referrals directly to the VIP Coordinator
- **# of Participants:** 370 victims since 2009
- **Funding Sources & Amounts:** VOCA Grant Funding through Montana Board of Crime Control. Funding for 2011= \$18,766 + 20% match (provided by Flathead County and in-kind volunteer service donations)
- **Outcome and Evaluation Information:** Implemented an evaluation process in Jan. 2011. To date, responses have shown overwhelming support for the program.

**Community Accountability Board (CAB):** Community is often an indirect victim of juvenile crime as well as a powerful deterrent. The Community Accountability Board (CAB) is an alternative-sentencing option in which youth offenders meet in person with a 3 to 4 member board to discuss the connections between their behavior and its impact on themselves and others. The CAB process provides the offender with opportunities to take responsibility for the impacts of their choices in ways that connect them positively with their community. The CAB conversation aim to balance accountability, competency and community safety.

Board members are trained youth and adult volunteers who represent the diversity of the Flathead community and a concern for the well-being of all its members. They have a genuine interest in the well-being of the youth, along with the interest in preserving the community's values.

CRYJ's CAB receives referrals primarily from Youth Court Service's juvenile probation officers. Youth referred are from all over the county, including Kalispell, Columbia Falls, Whitefish, Bigfork and the surrounding areas.

CAB participants are required to work with Board members to develop a restorative agreement outlining the consequences and actions necessary to repair the harm that was caused. Restorative agreements outline

program requirements and deadlines, which could include: Community Service, Restitution, Letters of Accountability, Self-Reflection, Individual Mentoring, Drug and Alcohol Education/Chemical Dependency Evaluations, or referrals to other community services such as counseling.

- **Referral Sources:** Referrals to the CAB program come primarily through Flathead County Youth Court Services. CRYJ also works with Kalispell area high schools to receive referrals from School Resource Officers. Primary offenses include: Assault, Theft, Disorderly Conduct, Criminal Mischief, Burglary, and Trespass to Property.
- **# Of Participants:** 141 youth have been referred for participation in the CAB Program since 2009. On average, CRYJ receives about 70 referrals a year for the CAB program.
- **Completion:** 83% of CAB participants complete program requirements
- **Funding Sources & Amounts:** The CAB program is funded largely through the Title II – Making Restorative Justice a Priority Grant through the Montana Board of Crime Control (Anticipated Funding for 2011 = \$59,509. The CAB program is also supplemented through Prevention Incentive Funds available through Flathead County Youth Court Services (available on a per youth basis).
- **Outcome and Evaluation Information:**
  - 90% of CAB Youth felt that the CAB process made them think differently about their offense
  - 98% of CAB Youth felt that the program was beneficial.
  - 95% of CAB Parents felt that the program was beneficial
  - 56% of CAB Parents noticed a change in their youth's behavior after participating in the CAB process
  - 100% of CAB Parents would recommend the program

**Victim Offender Conference (VOC):** Victim Offender Conferencing (VOC) is a voluntary process in which victim(s) and juvenile offender(s) sit down together in a safe environment, with a trained and neutral facilitator, to discuss the circumstances and impacts of the offense. The VOC program follows a restorative justice practice that involves a face-to-face meeting in a safe environment between victims and juvenile offenders so that they may talk about the impacts of the crimes in their lives, promoting a sense of healing and justice that may not have been possible otherwise.

- A victim's needs become a central focus of the justice process, empowering them to help determine meaningful ways offenders may repair the harm caused by their crime.
- Youthful offenders are held directly accountable for their actions, providing them with the opportunity to accept full responsibility for their obligation to repair this harm.
- Offenders are invited to actively participate in restorative activities within the community, strengthening the inter-relationship between individuals and the community.

Victims are provided a safe environment to express how they have been impacted by a crime, to ask questions, and to participate in deciding how the harm they've experienced will be addressed.

Offenders are held directly accountable to those harmed by their behavior. They are provided an opportunity to share the circumstances surrounding the offense (what they were thinking at the time, what they have learned since) and are empowered to accept full responsibility for the impacts of their choices.

Community members are empowered to participate in the justice process by actively supporting crime victims and youth while serving as trained volunteer facilitators.

The VOC Program began in 2002.

- **Referral Sources:** Referrals are sent primarily from Flathead County Youth Court Services. Participation in a VOC is initiated by the victim – if a victim chooses to participate, than a youth would be referred for the VOC program. If a victim chooses not to participate, the referring probation officer can choose to have the youth participate in the CAB as an alternative accountability program.
- **# Of Participants:** 41 youth have been referred for participation in the VOC program since 2009. On average, 87% of VOC participants successfully complete program requirements.
- **Funding Sources & Amounts:** The VOC program is funded largely through the Title II – Making Restorative Justice a Priority Grant through the Montana Board of Crime Control. Anticipated Funding for 2011 = \$59,509. The VOC program is also supplemented through Prevention Incentive Funds available through Flathead County Youth Court Services (available on a per youth basis)
- **Outcome and Evaluation Information:**
  - 100% of victims felt positively about their VOC experience and preferred it to the traditional court process
  - 100% of youth were able to see that their actions had a very large impact on others
  - 95% of youth and 97% of victims felt satisfied with the respect they were given throughout the VOC process
  - 90% of parents thought that this experience was beneficial to their child

**Drug & Alcohol Accountability Program (DAAP):** The Drug and Alcohol Accountability Program (DAAP) is designed to provide youth offenders with an interactive group dialogue including peers and parents surrounding drug or alcohol related offenses (e.g. Minor in Possession, etc.). The program allows for greater depth in understanding of the circumstances relating to an offense. The dialogue actively engages parents in the conversation, and creates an opportunity for youth and families to discuss the impacts of the offense and accountability requirements. Each session includes youth volunteers with past experiences that give them valuable perspective on substance use and its impacts. These volunteers share their stories and meet individually with DAAP participants to encourage reflection and greater understanding of their experience with drugs and alcohol.

- **Referral Sources:** Referrals are sent primarily from Flathead County Youth Court Services.
- **# Of Participants:** 156 youth have been referred for participation in the DAAP program since 2009. On average, CRYJ receives 78 referrals a year for the DAAP program.
- **Completion:** 80% of DAAP participants complete program requirements
- **Funding Sources & Amounts:** The DAAP program is funded through Prevention Incentive Funds. Flathead County Youth Court Services provides PIF funding to CRYJ per youth participant. Anticipated amount requested in 2011= \$10,800.
- **Outcome and Evaluation Information:**
  - 85% of DAAP youth felt that the program was beneficial
  - 62% of DAAP Youth would recommend the program to their friends (*\*cost was a barrier that was significantly noted*)
  - 90% of DAAP Parents felt that the program was beneficial & 93% of DAAP Parents would recommend the program

**Youth Connections (Restorative Community Service):** Youth Connections believes that youth can be held accountable while participating in enriching opportunities for community service that combine critical thinking, civic responsibility, and competency development. In this way, youth envision and establish themselves as necessary and valued community members. The Youth Connections program provides support to all CRYJ participants in the completion of their restorative agreements.

Flathead County Youth Court Services has relied on the Center for Restorative Youth Justice (CRYJ) to organize meaningful interventions for juvenile offenders for over eleven years. CRYJ offers an evidence-based continuum of care based on Restorative Justice Principles which includes: community service, competency development, mentoring, youth leadership and development, diversion and intervention. Since the program's inception in 2005, Youth Connections serves as an unmatched community resource which actively holds youth accountable in ways that meet the needs of victims by integrating meaningful community service activities with self-reflection, competency development, leadership and positive youth development. The success of this program ultimately contributes to reduced delinquency and recidivism in the Flathead community.

- **Referral Sources:** Referrals come primarily through Flathead County. Other referral sources include Kalispell Municipal Court, Kalispell District 5 Schools, and individual counselors and organizations.
- **# Of Participants:** Youth Connections has worked with approximately 506 youth since 2009.
- **Completion:** On average, youth who come through the Youth Connections Program have an 85% completion rate.
- **Funding Sources & Amounts:** The Youth Connections Program is supported through a contract with Flathead County Youth Court Services. This contract is funded through the Montana Board of Crime Control's Juvenile Accountability Block Grant program. Anticipated Funding for 2011 = \$66,811
- **Outcome and Evaluation Information:** Youth are asked to reflect on their community service experience and time with the Youth Connections program in an exit evaluation.
  - 94% of youth felt that the community service projects they participated were meaningful to their community.
  - 100% of youth felt respected and support during the completion of their community service requirements.

**Theft Impact Circle:** The Theft Impact Circle (TIC) aims to teach youth that stealing is a serious problem with long reaching affects for many people, including youth, families, businesses, and the greater community. The program utilizes principles of restorative justice to provide meaningful and achievable opportunities for youth to consider and address harms caused by their offense and to move forward in a positive way. The Theft Impact Circle utilizes an interactive discussion format; engaging youth and parents in activities and dialogue that promote accountability, competency development and community safety. CRYJ staff provides facilitation of the group and a volunteer store merchant/loss prevention officer provides insight from the victim perspective. There are two parts to the TIC program that the youth participate in.

First, the youth along with a parent or guardian attend the Theft Impact Circle, at which time the impacts of theft are address. Each TIC is comprised of 3 to 6 youth and parents. In this format, the youths are given an opportunity to take accountability for their decisions, learn the greater effects of their choices on individuals and the community, and start to repair the harm done. Parents often use this occasion as a learning tool to better understand their youth's decisions, and an opportunity to strengthen communication within their own families.

The second and final step for youth in the TIC program involves participating in restorative community service. The Saturday following their participation in the Circle all the youth give back to the community through a 4 to 6 hours work project. This is arranged through the Youth Connections program.

- **Referral Sources:** Flathead County Youth Court Services
- **# Of Participants:** 126 have been referred to the Theft Impact Circle since 2010. On average, CRYJ sees about 60 referrals a year for the TIC program.
- **Completion:** 85% of TIC participants complete program requirements
- **Funding Sources & Amounts:** TIC is funded through Prevention Incentive Funds available through Flathead County, available on a per youth basis.
- **Outcome and Evaluation Information:**
  - 100% of TIC Youth felt that the program was beneficial
  - 94% of TIC Youth felt that meeting the Merchant Volunteer was beneficial
  - 81% of TIC Youth would recommend the program
  - 96% of TIC Parents felt that the program was beneficial
  - 87% of TIC Parents would recommend the program

**Family Conflict Resolution Program:** Two Rivers Consulting, Center for Restorative Youth Justice, and Youth Court Services have partnered to provide the Family Conflict Resolution Program (FCRP). The foundation of this program is an effective conflict resolution model with roots of the extending deeply within the ground of Warrior Training, Somatic Psychology, Relational Psychology, Cognitive Behavioral Modalities, and the principles and practices of Aikido. The Family Conflict Resolution Program is available to families and youth referred for a Partner Family Member Assault charge, and works with the entire family unit to support the development of skills and tools for a healthier and a more peaceful decision-making process with each other.

Effecting personal change toward prevention, reconciliation, peacemaking, and respect are key goals in the program. Proficiency is measured incrementally and compliance is monitored through progress in each phase leading to adequately accomplishing the tasks of each step. Risk is assessed consistently throughout the program as providers are on call for immediate intervention and proactive de-escalation of potential crisis. Peer accountability and community accountability are utilized within the educational group format to repair harm to victims and protect the community with reinforcement through individual and family counseling. Individual responsibility for thoughts, feelings, and actions are central to the program. Participation in a Family Service Project (designed by the family and CRYJ) to give back to the community, rebuild family unity, and skill building toward the restoration of relationships is required to graduate from the program. Outcomes are measured through assessing self-reporting with community accountability reporting, and skill set application and evaluation to demonstrate responsiveness toward reduction in recidivism.

- **Referral Process:** Youth and Families are referred through Flathead County Youth Court Services and screened for participation by Two Rivers Consulting and CRYJ.
- **# Of Participants:** The program began in June 2011. To date, the FCRP has worked with 4 families and is currently nearing the end of the first 8 week session.
- **Funding Sources & Amounts:** CRYJ is funded for their role in the FCRP through Prevention Incentive Funds available through Flathead County Youth Court Services.
- **Outcome and Evaluation Information:** Outcomes are measured through assessing self-reporting with community accountability reporting, and skill set application and evaluation to demonstrate responsiveness towards a reduction in recidivism.