

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

## UNA-LIMESTONE CAMPUS NEWSLETTER

### CONNECTING THROUGH STORYTELLING EVERY PERSON HAS A STORY, EVERY PERSON HAS A LESSON

Since becoming a part of the Restorative Justice program, we have learned the power of storytelling and being able to express our feelings. It's built upon relationship and safety. It has motivated us to embrace the values of Restorative Justice, move forward, and to use the restorative values as tools to build ourselves up as individuals and those who we're becoming connected with through storytelling.

The restorative values, which are respect, care, trust and humility, all contribute to the speaker and the listener during storytelling and it's very critical that the restorative values are mutual, whether we're speaking or listening.

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Storytelling allows us to aid each other which evokes a great deal of trust, because we willingly open up once we express feelings and share our stories. This allows our relationships and bonds to form. Once we begin to trust the process, we'll be able to transform our pain into beauty.

### THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:

1. Restoration
2. Accountability
3. Engagement

**Source:** "Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding," Howard Zehr (2009).

Storytelling will begin to weave together the fabrics of the community as though it

### TYPES OF HARMS

- **Verbal**

Having to do with words that attack the heart or your mind emotionally.

- **Emotional**

Intense feeling dealing with love, hate or despair.

- **Physical**

The unwanted mental or personal touch or attack to one's body.

- **Communal**

A body of people living in the same place, under the same laws.

- **Self-Harm**

Harm inflicted upon oneself physically, verbally, mentally, etc.

were a fabric meant to be woven together. Through storytelling, we'll continue to build a web of relationships, creating a community that will call for our stories to be shared which hold the power to reveal to us our self-worth and help us to shape our unique individual identity.

## STUDENT TESTIMONIES

Firsthand accounts of the power of storytelling from Inside students.

At the tender age of sixteen, experiencing the harm of a drunk driver running my family off the road and killing them one tragic night caused harm to my family and I.

The sad thing is that the drunk driver left the scene, and

still to this day no one knows who they are. Through Restorative Justice and writing poems, I've been able to express my heart-felt story. By telling what happened and healing through writing about the harm

that was caused that stormy midnight.

“Judge not that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7:1).

--- Inside student

I grew up as a middle-class family that from time to time was dragged down to lower middle-class. I had trouble with the law and using drugs and alcohol. I only found myself in jail after I got drunk, never sober. Today, I find myself fighting for my life in this prison. I have two life sentences, and this program taught me how to understand my faults in life and how to be sensitive to those I have harmed and their needs.

--- Inside student

Even before ever being sent to prison, I had always been taught to “Don’t say anything, to anyone, about anything.” I had embraced a mindset that kept me disconnected from people who chose to live different than I did. Those people who were always interacting with others were labeled as suspects or people

who might tell something, so I was taught to isolate myself, and beware of certain characteristics that others showed me.

Now, since I’ve chose a different path, there’s not a feeling much greater than to be able to open up to others, share my testimony, and express my feelings to others. I’d like to give

all credit to Restorative Justice for creating an environment that chooses empathy, grace, and a chance for us to move forward.

---Inside student

Through storytelling in Restorative Justice, we’ve discovered how to forgive and seek forgiveness. Our community has shown us what David Mendeloff meant when he said, “Not to forgive is to be imprisoned by the past, by old grievances that do not permit life to proceed” (Mendeloff 17). Storytelling also allows us opportunities to discover and express our truths: “Truth telling... is increasingly considered a necessary, if not vital, component of the peacebuilding process” (Mendeloff 355).