



MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Supporting Victims and Communities in the Healing Process

Contact: yolanda.toral@marquette.edu or 414-288-7924

<http://law.marquette.edu/jw/restorative>

About Restorative Justice:

Restorative justice is a theory of criminal justice that focuses on the ripple effect of crime against another individual or the community. Victims have an opportunity to express the full impact of the crime upon their lives, to receive answers to any lingering questions about the incident, and to participate in holding the offender accountable for their actions. Offenders can tell their story of why the crime occurred and how it has affected their lives, and about their own victimization at other times. They are given an opportunity to help in the healing process of the victim to the degree possible. The Restorative Justice Initiative at Marquette serves as a resource for victims, communities, and restorative justice organizations; as a restorative justice clinical experience for law students; and as a program promoting scholarship, research, and dialogue on restorative justice. The Initiative is committed to supporting victims and communities in the healing process.

About the Restorative Justice Initiative:

One of the most cutting edge movements in the traditional American criminal justice system is the push to introduce restorative justice into our communities and institutions. In step with the University's mission, "care for the person," Marquette University Law School offers the Restorative Justice Initiative. The Initiative has fostered exceptional community connections in Wisconsin and continues to strive for excellence in the field of public service. Under the leadership of former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Janine Geske, Distinguished Professor of Law at Marquette, the Initiative has brought community focus to the law school by providing the students with substantial leadership training in addition to their considerable technical legal education. The Initiative has become a resource for other restorative justice organizations in the state, formed partnerships with local community groups that work with criminal justice issues, and has been providing Victim/Offender Dialogues for crimes of severe violence services through the Wisconsin Department of Corrections Office of Victim's Services. Marquette has one of the most intensive restorative justice programs among ABA accredited law schools in America, and is proud to offer this unique experience to the students.

Selected areas and organizations within the Wisconsin community that the Restorative Justice Initiative has partnered with:

- Milwaukee Safe Streets Initiative: On July 2007, after The Marquette Law School Restorative Justice Initiative received \$384,290 for an "Anti-Gang Pilot Site Program" as part of a federal government grant awarded to The Milwaukee Safe Street Initiative, Ron Johnson and Paulina de Haan were hired as community coordinators to work in the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) 5th and 2nd District neighborhoods respectively. Ron and Paulina actively worked with the MULS Restorative Justice Initiative coordinating community gang prevention and intervention activities with law enforcement officials, prosecutors, social service agencies, faith communities, corrections officials, and neighborhood communities. On June 15, 2011, two years after the federal grant finished, the Marquette Law School Restorative Justice Initiative wrapped up its operation with the Safe Street Initiative.
- Victim/ Offender Dialogues: We receive crimes of severe violence cases, including homicides, through the Wisconsin Office of Victim Services and Programs. The Initiative provides *pro bono* mediation services for victims wishing to meet with the offender(s) in their case. The preparation usually takes one year and an individual student is assigned to work on them under Professor Geske's supervision.
- Green Bay and Columbia Maximum Security Prison Programs: Professor Geske provides victims the opportunity to speak with circles of very serious offenders in Green Bay and Columbia, often bringing along law students and community members. Victims feel empowered when speaking about how crime has affected their lives, and offenders are encouraged to share how they better understand the negative impact of their crimes.
- FOCUS Program: FOCUS is a Milwaukee County juvenile justice program working with high-end offenders. The law students provided a restorative justice component, using the circle process (run by the law students) and victim speakers to humanize the face of crime for the young men.
- Earned Release Program: ERP is a 25-bed, strength based, gender responsive, AODA program at the Milwaukee Women's Correctional Center. The RJI students work with the ERP, educating the women about Restorative Justice and conducting circles with victim speakers that are brought in to participate.

- Milwaukee Public Schools: Social workers within MPS approached the Initiative about using restorative justice to combat bullying, stealing, and other issues in certain problematic classrooms. Law students continue to facilitate circles addressing different concerns within MPS.
- Marquette University: The Restorative Justice Initiative has conducted talking circles on multi-student discipline issues.
- Marquette University High School: Partnered with the Restorative Justice Initiative in the Milwaukee Metro Conference, Professor Geske and law students have facilitated circles on unsportsmanlike behavior, as well as other student behavioral issues, with administrators, coaches, athletes, and student leaders of 10 Milwaukee area high schools.
- Alma Center and the Task Force on Family Violence: In a unique partnership, the Alma Center and the Task Force came together to provide a restorative justice component to the Alma Center's Batterers' Treatment Program. The Initiative's clinical students were asked to run the circles using surrogate victims of domestic violence, along with group and individual work.
- Ethan Allen Juvenile Correctional Facility: The students, under the guidance of the Initiative, facilitated bi-monthly circles focusing on the impact of crime with juvenile offenders at the Boys and Girls Club which is on site.