

Restorative Justice

a six month progress report

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Dispute Resolution Center in partnership with Skagit County's Youth & Family Services has provided a Victim Offender Meeting (VOM) program with funding from the Recovery and Reinvestment Act since March 2010.

In the first 6 months of service, 46 youth participated in the Victim Offender Impact Competency Education (VOICE) class with 91% successfully completing the training. Eleven youth and their families participated in the Victim Offender Meetings and 7 victims were served by the program.

Feedback from the youth, parents and victims is very positive. It has been amazing to witness the change and progress in young people who begin the process angry, distrustful, defiant and scared. Through the VOICE class and subsequent meetings with our facilitators, we see them open up, begin to communicate and learn to take responsibility for their actions. They begin to see themselves as part of the web of community and know that their actions impact others. Parents, especially, have shown appreciation for VOM's approach and the emphasis it has on taking meaningful responsibility.

Dispute Resolution Center
of Snohomish, Island and Skagit

Victim Offender Meetings

A Restorative Justice Alternative

AT A GLANCE

- 46 youth participants in VOICE
- 11 youth referred by Probation for Victim-Offender meetings
- 9 Restorative Alternative Meetings held
- 2 Face-to-Face Victim –Offender meetings conducted
- 0% recidivism from first VOM participant
- Recidivism for VOICE class is just over 7%

Victim Testimonials:

- *"I believe this process provides juvenile offenders a chance to confront the wrongs they have been involved in. It provides them with a diversionary measure so that they do not have to carry the weight of a conviction label through their adult life."*
(retailer)
- *"I really like this program. I hope this program stays in effect."*
(private business owner).

VOICE CLASS

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

Students in the VOICE class are referred for a wide variety of crimes such as malicious mischief, shoplifting, theft, assault, graffiti, criminal trespass and MIP. In a pre-post class assessment, 64% of participants after the class were able to identify victims of their crimes they were unable to at the start or identified additional persons hurt by their crime. They also moved in other measures such as, "should you do something to "make it right" around this crime?" and "Do you think your behavior makes an impact on the community?"

When asked whether other kids in trouble would benefit from the class, participants responded:

- *"Yes, I think they will, because I've learned too many good things. From now on I will change for good."*
- *"Yes they would learn about their consequences on a larger scale (impact on community)."*
- *"Yes, I would think this is a good thing before things get more out of hand."*

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