



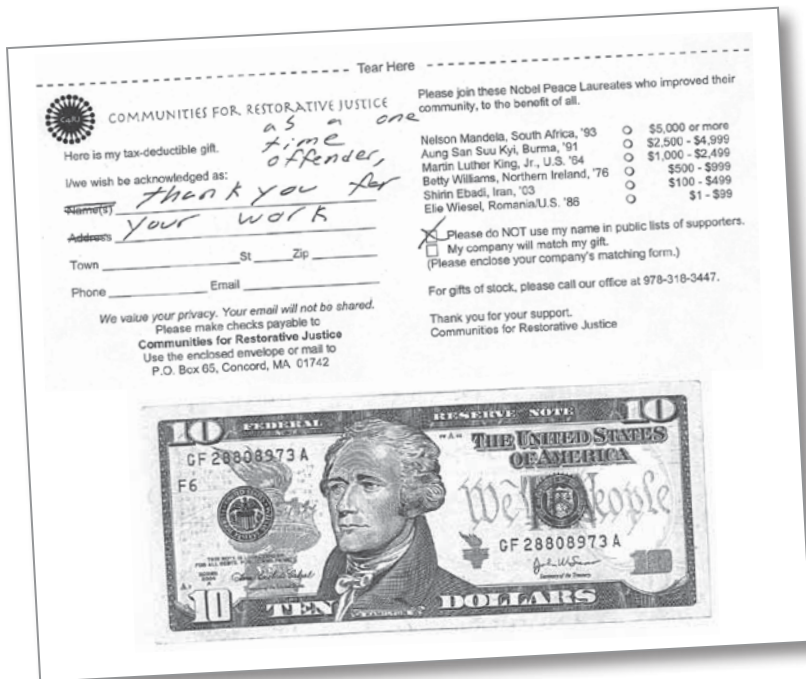
# THE TALKING PIECE

## Inspired Giving Comes to P.O. Box 65

By Barbara Howland, C4RJ Board President

Checking the mail is one of the more mundane tasks of running a program. But one day not long ago, one of our staff dropped by Post Office Box 65 and found something pretty remarkable. Enclosed was a \$10 bill from an anonymous donor along with a simple note (see below). Since then, I've often pictured that person sitting at a kitchen table, filled with a small sense of gratitude, reaching into a wallet for that \$10 bill, sealing an envelope and slipping the gift in the mail to us. Whoever you are, wherever you live, please know that we are grateful and humbled. We've posted this note above a desk in our offices as a reminder that even on tough days and in difficult cases, what we do matters.

That got us thinking: why do others step up to support restorative justice? Well, rather than head-scratching, we went out and asked. In this issue of the *Talking Piece*, we asked a few donors to tell us why they've chosen to invest in us. We hope their views inspire you to think about what motivates you to support worthy causes in your community. In a few short months, we'll be launching our annual appeal to community members who have so generously ushered us along these last ten years. We hope to find many more inspiring notes in P.O. Box 65 when that time comes.



## INSPIRED GIVING Beyond Punishment

**Rev. Susan N. Allen, associate pastor at Boxborough (MA) United Church of Christ, Congregational**



**Q: How did you learn about C4RJ?**  
It was in the early days in Concord. Probably 2000 or so. But I

had a fairly peripheral understanding of what C4RJ did. I learned a lot more when C4RJ leaders spoke at a 2008 Acton-Boxborough clergy-laity meeting and later through a case demonstration that C4RJ volunteers did at my church.

**Q: Why do you invest in C4RJ?**

I invest in organizations that offer an alternative vision, that prioritize community, connection, and serve a variety of perspectives. C4RJ values restoring relationships, growth, understanding and healing. They see beyond punishment, crime, and the labels "good" and "bad". I gave to C4RJ in honor of a group of women I belong to called "Power of 5"—we're five mothers that get together often. Instead of giving each of them a gift during the holiday, I choose a non-profit to donate to in their names.

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# Inspired Giving

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## **Q: In what ways do you see your community benefiting?**

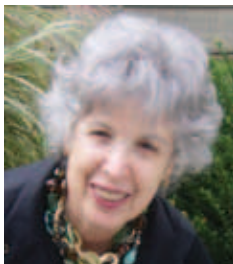
I often wonder about those who participate in a restorative justice process—especially the young people—and how the experience would shape them as future leaders. I also believe that through this process, community volunteers—including people from my church—learn about building consensus, compassion, and understanding between people.

## **Q: What would you tell a friend about C4RJ?**

I'd tell them that C4RJ is a great place to invest time, money, and... if it's a decision-maker in my town... to send them referrals!

*Rev. Susan Allen*

## **Marjorie E. Cahn, LICSW, EdD, Psychotherapist and Qualitative Researcher, Concord, MA**



### **Q: How did you learn about C4RJ?**

I heard from a C4RJ volunteer about how offenders and victims are given

an opportunity to hear one another, and how an offender can be empowered to learn with a supportive community. I consulted with my son Patrick M. Cahn (Somerville) and daughter Amy L. Cahn, Esq. (Philadelphia) about supporting C4RJ through our family foundation, the Cahn Funds for Social Change.

### **Q: Why do you invest in C4RJ?**

Two stories come to mind for me. The first was when my late husband, Attorney Stephen M. Cahn, was on a case with a boy who was especially troubled but not getting help. Stephen worried, "This boy will kill somebody soon and no one is listening to me." Tragically, that came to pass—the boy ended up killing a class-

mate which ironically gave him access to services. I wonder if an earlier intervention through restorative justice would have made a difference. The second story involves me. As a young girl in West Virginia, I was the only Jewish child at school. One day, I touched a friend's desk and the girl screamed, "Don't put your dirty Jewish germs on me!" The teacher did nothing, but the principal intervened. Our class learned about the history of Jews and Christianity. The girl apologized to me and we remained friends. The situation provided a teachable moment. The teacher might have just paddled the girl with a wooden ruler, but the principal took a different path and we were all the better for it. My family believes deeply in supporting programs in our community that have an impact on youth and the future of our country. Through the Cahn Funds for Social Change we try to do that in the communities in which we each live.

### **Q: In what ways do you see your community benefiting?**

I believe C4RJ is a form of prevention. It gives youth an alternative to punishment and provides an opportunity for collaborative community work.

### **Q: What would you tell a friend about C4RJ?**

I would tell them that it is an important program to support at any level and learning about C4RJ and passing on the knowledge will have a great ripple effect.

*Marjorie Cahn*

## **Allene Riley Kussin, MA, LPC Founder of ARK-Ports of Change**



### **Q: How did you learn about C4RJ?**

It was through the Mission Committee of the Trinitarian Congregational

Church in Concord. C4RJ was one of

the first organizations I heard about when I came to Concord and it came to the forefront pretty quickly.

### **Q: Why do you invest in C4RJ?**

Well, I had a personal story, which happened before I came to Concord. In Colorado, my middle son experienced a random act of violence; he was stabbed and left on the street to die. Thanks to the mercy of some folks who saw what happened and called 911, he lived. It left a huge mark on his life, and it was a horrific situation for our whole family. The assailant was caught, but we had no interaction with him until his sentencing hearing. We learned that he had had a history with the courts since he was 14. And the judge was adamant with the family, asking where they'd been when he hadn't met his court ordered requirements. If they had, he might have followed a different path.

### **Q: In what ways do you see your community benefiting?**

Restorative justice is a great opportunity for the victim to hear from their assailant, to be able to ask "What was this all about?," to do it in a safe environment, and to get information directly, not second hand. It is also an opportunity for people to understand the importance of their choices. The fact that it is community-based is an important piece as well. Offenders can learn that what they do truly affects their own family and community.

### **Q: What would you tell a friend about C4RJ?**

The community focus of C4RJ is classic and beautiful. It allows a community to be supportive without just pointing fingers. I would say it is a unique opportunity for a person who has committed some offense to take a different path than one marred by a poor choice, and to know that the community cares.

*Allene Riley Kussin*



## Study: Recidivism very low after C4RJ circles

Only 16% of individuals who have participated as offenders in C4RJ circles have gone on to be charged with other offenses, according to a review of C4RJ records against state and local databases.

"This is a very low percentage of recidivism compared to the conventional criminal justice system, and reflects wonderfully on the work of our volunteers and police who refer cases to us in the wake of crime," noted C4RJ Director **Jennifer Larson Sawin**.



**Sgt. Brian Goldman** and **Ptl. Jeff Shelley** of the Concord Police Department examined C4RJ's caseload (including cases from Acton, Concord, and Carlisle) against local and state databases, looking for reoffense by previous C4RJ participants. Longtime C4RJ volunteer **Win Wilbur** compiled the data for the police review. The review covered cases from 2000, C4RJ's first year of operation, through early 2009.

Recidivism in conventional criminal justice proceedings is 27%, according to a nationwide study (<http://wcr.sonoma.edu/v1n1/embreit.html>). C4RJ's rate is also lower than the average (18%) for other restorative justice programs in the United States, according to the same study. Look for more information on this recidivism study on our website [www.c4rj.com/news.intheknow.php](http://www.c4rj.com/news.intheknow.php).

## Schools improve with restorative practices

Many school systems are employing a range of restorative practices intended to improve school climate and to provide a more effective means of discipline. The Chicago public schools integrated restorative practices into their student conduct code in 2008, and many school systems in Maine are adopting practices that would be very familiar to those of us who work in restorative justice. The range of practices begins with classroom circles intended to build community and culminates with formal conferences to address harmful behavior. C4RJ Chief Case Coordinator **Christy Barbee** recently attended a workshop in Maine on Restorative Practices in Schools. Her full report on the workshop can be found on our website: [www.c4rj.com/news.intheknow.php](http://www.c4rj.com/news.intheknow.php).

### How you can help

There are so many ways! You can help provide:

- Assistance to victims and offenders who need counseling or other services
- Sponsorship of *The Talking Piece* newsletter
- Funding for a database to manage our increasing caseload
- Support costs for a guest speaker
- Donated frequent flyer miles for a staff person to attend a conference

Let us know how **you'd** like to help. Consider contributing or increasing your gift. We'd be happy to accept earmarks for these and other needs. For more information, visit our website, [www.c4rj.com/giving.php](http://www.c4rj.com/giving.php), or contact Executive Director Jennifer Larson Sawin at 978.318.3447 or [jlarsonsawin@c4rj.com](mailto:jlarsonsawin@c4rj.com).

### SHOUT OUTS

## Many, many thanks to . . .

- **Concord-Carlisle Community Chest**, the **CHNA 15**, **Acton-Boxborough United Way**, and the **police departments** of Acton, Carlisle, Concord, and Groton and Littleton for financial support for restorative justice in the next fiscal year!
- **Ofc. Patrick Colburn** for ushering along the new set of Boxborough cases this summer.
- C4RJ friend **Clyde Kessel** for working his tech magic on a new online case evaluation tool.
- Our Picnic in the Park booth staff: **Sue Curtin**, **Pete Funkhouser**, **Brec and Melissa Saalfield**, **Linda Minkoff**, **Debra Stark**, **George Dallas**, and **Sandra Henderson**.
- **Rev. Dr. Barbara Smith Moran** (Blue Team) for her compelling presentation on the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission on August 19th. And to **Sindhu Bharadwaj** (Silver Team) and **Premi John** (Red Team) for helping host the event! More info can be found on our website: [www.c4rj.com/news.headlines.php](http://www.c4rj.com/news.headlines.php).
- C4RJ friend **David Kimball** for donating a brand new fax/copier/printer/scanner (everything-but-a-toaster) machine to our office. Chief Case Coordinator Christy Barbee is giddy with gratitude.
- Board member **Debra Stark** for donating 5% of proceeds from her W. Concord food emporium, Debra's Natural Gourmet, to C4RJ on Sept. 25th. (Mark your calendars for your next chance on December 11th!)







# COMMUNITIES FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

P.O. Box 65, Concord, MA 01742

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## INSIDE THIS FALL 2010 ISSUE:

- Inspired giving: donor perspectives
- Recidivism study completed
- Schools improve with restorative practices
- How *you* can help
- Shout-outs and thank-yous

 Printed on recycled paper

## About C4RJ

Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ) is a community-police partnership that offers restorative justice to those affected by crime. Restorative justice recognizes that crime is a violation of people and relationships, not just a violation of law. Police refer cases to us. In the aftermath of wrongdoing, our “circle” process includes in the decision-making those affected by crime: victims, offenders, loved ones, supporters, community members, and law enforcement officials.

This newsletter, *The Talking Piece*, is named for an object (often a river stone) passed around the circle to engage individuals in the deliberations. The person holding the talking piece speaks while others listen. With this newsletter, we are passing the talking piece to you and would love to hear your views on our work. Contact us at [info@c4rj.com](mailto:info@c4rj.com) or by calling 978.318.3447 to relay your thoughts.

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