



# THE TALKING PIECE

ERIN FREEBORN

## A New Leader for C4RJ

Restorative justice is a powerful process that I believe in," said new C4RJ executive director Erin Freeborn who joins us with a wealth of experience and a keen appreciation of the way RJ can help after harm has occurred. She sees it as a way "to restore the humanity and dignity of all the stakeholders" involved in an incident.

Erin is an attorney who has focused her career on restorative justice. She was a cofounder of Juvenile Court Restorative Justice Diversion (JCRJD), headquartered in Lowell, and served as JCRJD's first executive director from 2011–2014. JCRJD works with the Massachusetts Juvenile Court and receives referrals primarily from the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. While at JCRJD, Erin helped draft and amend pending restorative justice legislation with the Office of Senator Jamie Eldridge. She continues that endeavor in her position at C4RJ.

Erin is an avid athlete, having played at goal as a college soccer player. She ran the Boston Marathon in 2006 and Tufts 10k race in the years 2005–2008 and 2010 to 2012.

She also holds a master's degree in divinity from Boston University School of Theology, where she completed work for a certificate in Conflict Transformation in 2010. Erin earned her juris doctorate from Northeastern University School

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C4RJ Executive Director Erin Freeborn (pink jacket) with, left to right, Marge Kennedy of Acton-area League of Women Voters, Acton Det. Keith Campbell, State Sen. Jamie Eldridge (Acton), and State Rep. Sean Garbally (Arlington). They appeared at a February 26 LWV Forum on Criminal Justice Reform, emceed by Senator Eldridge.

## Another Way

Diane\* was collecting her things at the end of a big gathering. Her purse was nowhere to be found. "It took a while for it to dawn on me that it was taken," she said. "Then I got it that my keys were in the purse, and there was no way I could drive home." It was inconvenient but easy enough to get her husband to come down with a spare set of keys.

But the next few days were an ordeal, canceling credit cards (one of which had already been used), getting a new license, applying for a substitute social security card—while missing work. After about a week, the police called to say they'd found the person who'd taken it. A resident of the town Diane lived in, had stolen the cash and credit cards, then ditched the purse.

"Now I was furious, and really kind of afraid because I didn't know who might have access to my identity now," Diane said. She thought for a few days about what she wanted to do. "I'd heard about restorative justice and I told the detective I didn't want the person prosecuted. For one thing, I wanted her to have to face me."

So Diane contacted C4RJ. We convened a circle meeting, and

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\* C4RJ is committed to the confidentiality of our circle participants and our processes so the names and minor details have been changed.

# Welcome to Joe, Holly, and Bill!



Joe Landolfi



Holly Kimball



Bill Kea

**C**4RJ is honored to announce that Joe Landolfi, Holly Kimball, and Bill Kea have joined our Board of Directors.

**Joe Landolfi** is a media and communications specialist who worked early in his career in criminal justice. He served as former Governor Deval Patrick's communications director for three years. Before leaving government in 2102, Joe was the assistant secretary at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, where he managed the Offices of Media and Public Affairs and Government and Legislative Affairs. Now, as an independent consultant, Joe works with a variety of agencies and individuals, including one of the nation's oldest community justice programs for at-risk populations and individuals with disabilities. Joe resides in Acton with his wife, Mary Osterman-Landolfi.

**Holly Kimball** has volunteered with C4RJ since 2008, serving in just about every capacity—working with offenders and victims, and their families. So she is particularly well qualified to represent C4RJ's volunteers on our Board. An attorney, Holly specializes in high technology, intellectual property and energy and environmental law. Holly received her masters of law from Tulane Law School, juris doctorate from Suffolk University Law School, and undergraduate degree in computer science from Siena College. Holly and her family reside in Carlisle.

**Bill Kea** has been chief financial officer at several Boston-area venture-backed companies over the past 20 years and currently provides financial services through the DavCard Group in Danvers, MA. He has served as a volunteer and board member with RARA (a Lowell based non-profit that seeks to enrich the lives of adults with intellectual disabilities) and Nashoba Valley Special Olympics. Bill received his undergraduate degree in finance from Boston College and his MBA from Babson College. Bill and his family have lived in Westford since 1992.

**"C4RJ is a unique community-police partnership where offenders and, more important, victims of crimes are encouraged to participate in the process outside the confines of traditional criminal justice. When offenders recognize the harm they have caused and work with victims to repair that harm, the entire community benefits. Working with the Board and staff at C4RJ to enhance and expand the reach of this distinctive program is something that I am committed to."**

Joe Landolfi, C4RJ Board member

## Another Way

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the two women discussed what had happened. "I want to see you get your life straightened out," Diane told Jane, sternly. "And I want to be compensated for the purse."

Jane was chagrined, saying she stole the purse because she wanted to buy clothes for her kids. After that first meeting, she was grateful that Diane was "being a human being" about it. "But I could not even begin to see how I was going to make up for what I'd done." She agreed to make restitution and to take measures to ensure her family's well-being, as Diane had requested.

With the support of C4RJ facilitators, Jane contacted municipal services to get assistance for her family. Raising the restitution money was not easy, and she had to ask for more time. Using her facilitators as a sounding board, she drafted and polished an apology letter to Diane that described her remorse and, perhaps more important, her understanding of what she had put Diane through.

A few months later, at our closing circle, Diane accepted Jane's apology and expressed admiration for the steps she had taken to bring some order to her life. And Jane tearfully thanked Diane for seeking restorative justice instead of criminal prosecution.



## Getting to Know Erin

### How did you come to restorative justice? How did you first learn about it?

I learned about RJ in divinity school, and was really drawn to the engagement piece. I love the experience of bringing people together to learn about each individual's deeper story. I felt that the greatest need for restorative justice was in our justice system, in response to crime. I went to law school specifically to learn and think more about how restorative justice can be infused throughout our systems of justice. I believe it is particularly important to understand a system in order to offer helpful tools or alternative options.

### What has been your most impressive experience in restorative justice?

My favorite case experience involved a young person apprehended for arson. The fire department investigators were feeling extremely negative minutes before the parties arrived for the circle. They were angry because the juvenile codefendants had given them the runaround and had not been truthful. The detective had written off one particular kid because of the psychological and legal problems his mother had. The officer said the boy was a lost cause who was bound to reoffend. The officer was sure our RJ process would be a waste of time.

But as the circle proceeded, I saw the officer's outlook change. He started to care about the boy, and he shared stories from his own youth. At the end, he invited the boy to say hi when they saw each other in the neighborhood. That was a wonderful example of the power of RJ: each person in the circle looked beyond the beliefs they'd brought into the room, beyond the labels and the facts and circumstances, and saw something more. He saw the boy's humanity.

The young man recognized the transition and instantly rose to the occasion. He responded to the officer by fully accepting responsibility for the various levels of impact the harm had caused and earnestly apologized. He succeeded in completing his diversion contract, again surprising some who'd thought he wouldn't honor his obligations.

### What attracted you to C4RJ?

I'd worked closely with Jennifer [Larson Sawin, our previous executive director] and some of the Board members on the pending RJ legislation and knew Christy [our program director] as a practitioner. I really enjoyed working with them, and I'd always found C4RJ's model very interesting. I especially admire the fact that so much of this program rests on the shoulders of community volunteers who support both the people affected by the crimes referred and the responsible parties. I'm finding that the work I've done with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office is a real help in the work we're doing here with police departments, and I look forward to both those sets of relationships growing and strengthening.

## Truly a Community Response

C4RJ's annual appeal brought contributions from 220 individual donors, and we couldn't be more grateful for your great affirmation of the work we're doing in our communities. Your contributions support the work we do to help people affected by crime get answers and repair. This makes it possible to help those who've harmed others see what it means to be held accountable. Your donations are a vote of confidence that justice can be attained when people are able to talk together about the consequences of crime and the steps needed to heal. Thank you very much!

## Our Generous Grantors

In addition to our many individual donors, we'd like to thank the following organizations that supported us in 2014 into this new year:

- Acton-Boxborough United Way
- Anonymous family foundation
- Community Health Network Area 15
- Concord-Carlisle Community Chest
- Henry Vincent Couper Charitable Foundation
- The Cummings Foundation
- First Parish in Concord (UU)
- Middlesex Savings Charitable Foundation
- Stow Community Chest
- The Sudbury Foundation
- Trinitarian Congregational Church of Concord

*Interested in planned giving or leaving a legacy to C4RJ? Please contact C4RJ Vice President Diana Clymer, [dcllymer@c4rj.com](mailto:dcllymer@c4rj.com), or call 978.318.3447.*

## A New Leader for C4RJ

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of Law in May 2010. She served as a legal intern for the Restorative Justice Center at Auckland (New Zealand) University of Technology, for the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office, and for Massachusetts State Senator Karen Spilka. After law school, Erin practiced as a criminal defense attorney before she turned to full-time restorative justice work.

She's the mom of Catherine, almost 3, and Madelyn, 6 months at this writing. Husband Thatcher is a commercial loan officer in the not-for-profit group at Century Bank.

Erin can be reached at 978.318.3447 or [efreeborn@c4rj.com](mailto:efreeborn@c4rj.com).





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## SPRING 2015 ISSUE:

New Year, New Happenings

- Meet our new Executive Director
- Meet our new Board members
- Annual Appeal update
- Thanks to our funders

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## 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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