

# RESTORATIVE WORKS

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

PRACTICE WHAT  
WE TEACH.



Graduate School

## IMPACTING COMMUNITY

Planting Tiny Seeds: Restorative Practices in the Workplace

## GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWS

Everyone's Got a Story — IIRP's Restorative Works! Podcast

# RESTORATIVE WORKS

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

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# PRACTICE WHAT WE TEACH.



At this year's online World Conference, "Inviting Collective Energy — Igniting Social Change," I was introduced to a new term when a participant shared: "Epistemic injustice — if you don't know about this, you need to." So, as part of a community of learners, I looked it up. Miranda Fricker's work, *Epistemic Injustice — Power and Ethics of Knowing*, speaks to the injustices that occur from acts of exclusion and silencing people. As a graduate school committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, this is an injustice, a true harm, that we know how to restore.

Restorative practices by design invites voice. It invites participation and all the messiness that might bring. There is a difference between having an opinion and taking action. There is a difference between sharing perspectives and misrepresenting a fact. At the IIRP, having voice and welcoming someone's lived experiences, insights, and knowledge is how we learn and

explore the complexity of human life. Our practices pair self-reflection and self-expression; they are yoked toward a collective effort — moving us forward to a more compassionate and humane world.

It is core to our graduate curriculum to share our studies, and it is always important for our culture to serve well. At the IIRP we aspire to "practice what we teach." In this issue, I hope you enjoy hearing how people have invited a plethora of voices to help process trauma, interrupt aggression, and influence community leaders to act. Inviting discourse is a nonviolent but powerful way to right wrongs, be inclusive, and honor all people's voices. With that, we will learn about impacts we might not see, actuate ideas we might not have considered, and rebalance an injustice we do not want to perpetuate.

**Linda J. Kligman, Ph.D.**  
President



# EVERYONE'S GOT A STORY

## IIRP'S *RESTORATIVE WORKS!* PODCAST

Through the power of storytelling, the IIRP Graduate School inspires people, challenges assumptions, informs practitioners, and strengthens commitments to living restoratively. Our newest avenue to share stories, the *Restorative Works!* podcast, hosted by Claire de Mézerville López, M.Ed., M.S., launched in March of 2023.

*Restorative Works!* showcases the impact restorative practices has on communities across the globe and what it is like to work and live within a restorative framework. Leaders, experts, practitioners, and advocates in K–12 and higher education, community organizations, criminal and environmental justice, and more help us explore methods for facilitating meaningful conversations that create understanding between people. Through these shared experiences, we will collectively create a clearer picture of what the field of restorative practices is all about, inspire others to investigate using restorative practices in their communities, and provide practical tools and insights for transforming relationships and effecting change.

"We delve into topics that include supporting teachers and students through transitions brought forth by the pandemic, shifting social expectations in workplaces, inter-generational divides and the challenges they can present, community building in higher education settings, combating gender-based harm, responding to trauma with grace, and much more," said Claire.

Claire is a licensed psychologist from Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR). She holds a master's degree in education with an emphasis on cognitive development from Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de



Monterrey, México (ITESM). She also earned a Master of Science in Restorative Practices from the IIRP Graduate School. She is an associate professor at Universidad de Costa Rica and has experience as a therapist, researcher, and consultant. Claire has published papers on adolescence, restorative practices, resilience, and educational psychology.

Tune in to the *Restorative Works!* Podcast — new episodes drop every Thursday. To listen, subscribe via Spotify, Apple Podcast, Google Podcast or go to [www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/restorative-works-podcast](http://www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/restorative-works-podcast).

## LEARNING COLLABORATIVE FOUNDING PARTNERS MEET IN BETHLEHEM, PA



Founding partners of the Collaborative Center for Restorative Practices in Higher Education convened for a retreat in Bethlehem, PA, in June 2023. On top of discussing future plans, partners were able to meet and participate in a team-building exercise with IIRP faculty and staff. This event was a great opportunity for partners to gather together, as this was their first meeting in person after three years of collaboration.

The goal of this gathering was driven by community building, allowing founding partners to connect with faculty and staff of the IIRP, and continue deepening connections that began virtually from 30 colleges and universities across the United States, and one in Jamaica. Founding partners strengthened their resolve to continue pursuing research around restorative practices and using the framework in their areas of work in higher education.

# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2023 GRADUATES!



Miranda Ashley Cloutier  
 Marianne Conte  
 Kiyaana Cox Jones  
 Karen Cryderman  
 Lisa Ann Dalrymple  
 Mackenzie Janet DeMeer  
 Bobbie Marie Downs  
 Norma Jean Dwyer  
 Steven Fiedeldej  
 Jeremias Garcia  
 Arianna Maria Giaroli  
 Courtney Benson Gilmore  
 MaryJean Glick  
 Trio! Harris  
 Marcia L. Hawthorne-Bonds  
 Livia Kay Kleinow  
 Kayne Bradley Langston  
 Tamara D. McCord  
 Karen E. McCormick

Elise M. Patterson  
 Carole Louise Penner  
 Jenna Elisabeth Plump  
 Dennis O. Poirier, III  
 Ruchelle L. Pride  
 Jennifer Reed Larkin  
 Abigail A. Rendón  
 Anthony C. Rush  
 Sara Schmitt  
 Tanya L. Schoeffling  
 Elizabeth Sophy  
 Tyler Stroh  
 Martha Elisabeth Tolkamp  
 Erika Treannie  
 Amanda K. Wadel  
 Alissa K. West  
 Bennie Lee Williams, Jr.  
 Susan Wolper

# STUDENT VOICES: GRADUATE SCHOOL ALUMNI TESTIMONIALS

Alumni of the IIRP Graduate School are taking their education and applying it to real-world situations of proactive community building and responding to harm and conflict. Our students come from various backgrounds and diverse areas of expertise, from criminal justice to education to mediation. They are effecting positive change and making an impact in their communities, nationally and internationally. Their voices are a reflection of the IIRP Graduate School and its programs. We asked recent alumni about their experience earning their Master of Science degree, which courses impacted them the most, and what they would like to see in the future for their work in restorative practices.



**RUCHELLE PRIDE, '23**  
**What was your biggest takeaway from your experience with the IIRP Graduate School?**

My biggest takeaway from the IIRP is the confirmation that restorative practices work! It is truly the bedrock of human civility and social connectedness necessary to

prevent and repair harm by building relationships and community.

**What course had the biggest impact on your learning and why?**

Global Perspectives of Restorative Justice was a fantastic learning experience! Immersion into human-centric philosophies and practices from around the globe influencing justice reform resonated deeply. As a criminal justice practitioner, the course equipped me with real-world examples of systemic change and encouraged my continued advocacy for Restorative Justice implementation within my jurisdiction and beyond!

**What would you like to see in your restorative work in the future? What are your plans for using your degree/certificate?**

My goal is to become a restorative practices trainer and support justice systems, educational systems, and organizations with the implementation of restorative practices. My degree will continue to serve as a foundation in my work as a public servant and systematic change enabler!



**BENNIE L. WILLIAMS, JR., '22**  
**What was your biggest takeaway from your experience with the IIRP Graduate School?**

My biggest takeaway is that the IIRP not only allowed me the opportunity to obtain my master's degree, it took me on a journey to redefine who I am as a human. At the same time, it

allowed me to broaden my lens, not only from a national but an international perspective through the experiences of my classmates and professors.

**What course had the biggest impact on your learning?**

There were two. Transforming Relational Harm and Narrative Inquiry for Empowering Facilitators, both taught by Dr. Frida C. Rundell.

**What are your plans for using your degree/certificate?**

I am using what I have learned, aligning that with my beliefs and exposing restorative practices to communities locally and nationally.



**TRIO! HARRIS, '23**  
**What was your biggest takeaway from your experience with the IIRP Graduate School?**

Compassionate witnessing was my biggest takeaway, given the amount of work I do around interpersonal and institutional violence. This framework helps me

respond to different forms of violence and violation that result in common shock and I have seen it benefit the communities I serve.

**What course had the biggest impact on your learning and why?**

Transforming Relational Harm had the biggest impact on me because of the different proactive and responsive tools used to understand how we repair harm in civil societies. The course material was applicable to various parts of my work and personal life. I feel this course gave me tools that I can use with parents and community partners as well.

**What would you like to see in your restorative work in the future? What are your plans for using your degree/certificate?**

I am taking my degree with me in my new role as a Community School Manager in my district. I would like to see myself tangibly scaffold Restorative Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for parents and teachers. I am also interested in how my specialization in education can assist me in my attempts to implement restorative discipline on campuses.

# THE IIRP BOARD OF TRUSTEES WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The IIRP is proud to introduce six new members to our Board of Trustees in 2023. The IIRP Board of Trustees are holders of the organizational trust and mission. They bring many different perspectives and experiences from fields such as law, higher education, faith, public education, private foundations, government relations, management, and child welfare, which mirror the numerous arenas where restorative practices are being implemented.



**HÉCTOR ALEJANDRO VALLE LÓPEZ, Ph.D.**, is a narrative psychotherapist, mediator, and restorative justice facilitator. He is the founder of the Dialogues Collective, a program that develops psychosocial and psychotherapeutic accompaniment programs in different communities such as prisons, schools, hospitals, and communities of victims. He is a trainer of facilitators in restorative justice, peacemaking circles, and mediation throughout Latin America and Spain.



**DEBORAH MCLEOD, Ph.D.**, worked for many years in the area of equality and human rights and recently retired as Director of Human Rights for the Northwest Territories in Canada. Deborah was instrumental in the development and implementation of a restorative approach to the work of the territorial human rights system and particularly to the human rights complaints process. She currently works as an independent consultant and is pursuing her master's degree at the IIRP Graduate School. Deborah earned her doctorate from the University of Alberta (Canada) and is a chartered professional in human resources.



**MIKE BUTLER** is a retired Public Safety Chief in Longmont, Colorado, where he served for 26 years. He reinvented public safety within the context of partnerships and leveraged social capital. During his tenure, Longmont Public Safety instilled a philosophy that utilized many alternatives to the criminal justice system in order to respond to the human condition. Those options included restorative principles and practices in response to numerous social and health issues. Mike also co-founded the School of Statesmanship, Stewardship, and Service (SOSSAS). The purpose of SOSSAS is to create a learning environment in which leaders, elected officials, appointed officials, and students can embrace, learn, and practice the many skill sets necessary to enhance their capacity to serve their local community, organization, or company in ways that produce high levels of citizen and/or employee engagement.



**STEPHEN YOUNG** is a certified community mediator and restorative justice trainer with Community Justice Alternatives of Durham Region (CJAD), where he also serves as the President of the Board. He works for Restorative Resolutions, providing training and coaching to schools across Canada, and can be heard in the weekly podcast

"Circle Forum" discussing aspects of restorative justice in schools and broader society. He recently published *The Restorative Principal: Leading in Education with Restorative Practices*, describing his personal journey in learning about and implementing restorative practices in schools. He is an IIRP alum and retired elementary teacher and principal with 35 years of service, having used restorative practices in schools for more than 20 years. Steve also worked in the youth justice court system and is a member of FaithCare, providing restorative services to faith communities.



**MARK TWOMEY, MPA**, has worked in a wide range of roles in a number of industries and organizations over his professional life. He spent extensive time at ANZ Bank Australia, with roles covering corporate and commercial finance, human resources, and strategic planning. At Youth Off The Streets, Australia, a not-for-profit organization, Mark provided support for young people through accommodation, outreach, and education. During his career, Mark gained experience leading and managing finance, fundraising, human resources, and information technology teams. In his current role as the chief corporate services officer at Ability Options Limited, he applies his diverse experience as he oversees finance, property, and communications.



**ABDUL-MALIK MUHAMMAD, Ed.D.**, has been serving both youth and adults as an educator, transformational leader, entrepreneur, and author for nearly three decades. Working with the underserved in urban and rural areas, he has focused on the development of boys to men, been active in social justice, and built progressive organizations. His previous leadership journeys have included being a principal, career college president, corporate director of education, and regional vice-president of a national mental healthcare organization. He is currently the founder and CEO of Akoben, LLC, a professional development company, and Transforming Lives, Inc., a provider of alternative education services. Through this work, Malik is continuing to diligently transform lives, one community at a time. He is the author of *The Restorative Journey – Book One: The Theory and Application of Restorative Practices* and contributing author of the recently released *Colorizing Restorative Justice: Voicing Our Realities*.

# GRADUATE SCHOOL GROWTH

In 2023 we welcomed **65** new graduates to the IIRP alumni family.

# 37

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN  
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ALUMNI

# 28

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE  
RECIPIENTS

## NEW COURSE OFFERINGS

Expanding our course offerings is essential to the growth of our graduate school and ensures that we continue to investigate and challenge traditional modes of thinking. These new courses explore the complexities of transgenerational trauma and its connection to the operation functions in our brains and social justice through a restorative lens, highlighting new theories and building capacity for positive impact across communities.

### RP 645 TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

This course explores the deeper implications of transgenerational trauma and community resilience within our everyday lives. Using mindfulness practices in group processes and a range of witnessing circles, students will address transgenerational harm in personal and cultural contexts. Students will learn how neuroscience describes trauma from a lateral and transgenerational lens. We will discuss how certain resiliency patterns may limit potential. Students will gain a new understanding of how neuroscience and community awareness can transform traumatic experiences into effective resiliency patterns to positively impact relationships and culture.

### RP 637 SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

In this course, students will explore social justice theories and principles and the application of restorative practices in social causes. They will consider patterns of social injustice, analyze assumptions across cultural identity and social issues, and review methods associated with disrupting injustice. Students will complete individual projects to demonstrate an understanding of how restorative practices can be integrated to advance social justice.

# PLANTING TINY SEEDS: RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE WORKPLACE WITH IIRP STUDENT JONATHAN SHENK



Current IIRP student, Jonathan Shenk, is serving his community as a small business owner and a Presbyterian minister. His education at the IIRP is helping inform his practices in both roles, which he will continue to develop and carry out after graduation. Through creating a sense of belonging for his employees, Jonathan embodies the principles of living restoratively each day.

Introduced through restorative justice, Jonathan recognized that restorative practices methodologies had direct application to the workplace. After enrolling in the IIRP graduate degree program, he quickly started applying what he learned with his employees at his small business, Greenleaf Painters, LLC.

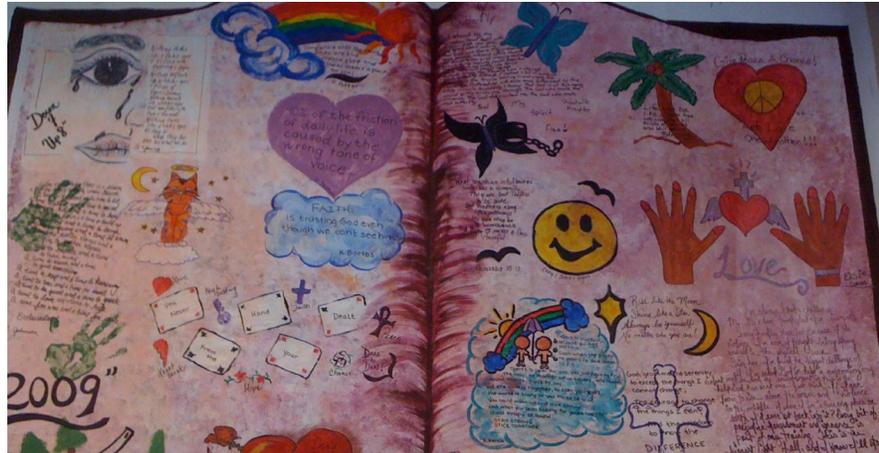
Jonathan has been incorporating fair process into his painting business. When making decisions that affect people in the company, he reaches out first to receive input from his employees. He uses check-in questions when stopping by work sites, often pulling the crew

aside (typically 2–6 people at a site) for a 10–15-minute check-in. As they stand in a circle he asks questions like, “How are you doing?”, “What is something you enjoyed doing as a child?”, or “What is on your mind?” This proactive bonding time has strengthened the social ties among crewmates and improved morale within the company. It has made communication with Jonathan and his team easier, creating a space to ask, “anything else?” It has also made communication across the team easier, creating a space to ask questions and address budding discontent before they become bigger issues.

Jonathan says, “I love having an opportunity to positively influence the company I lead. I have been planting tiny seeds and watching them sprout forth and blossom.” Looking toward the future, Jonathan would like to see the circle check-ins evolve to the point where his managers and crew members can lead them and have a more active role in building relationships within the company.



# ART AND HEALING FOR WOMEN IN THE LEHIGH VALLEY



Bonnie Winfield, Ph.D., is an expressive arts facilitator and educator who has worked for more than three decades to provide a safe space with listening circles for individuals healing from trauma. After completing her Ph.D. in Philosophy at Syracuse University, she served as a faculty member and administrator at several higher education institutions while furthering her training at Marywood University. She later enrolled at the International Institute for Restorative Practices and completed her Master of Science degree in 2017. She is currently operating a community arts studio, The Journey Home, and serves as the director of a reentry program for women who are and have been impacted by the criminal justice system.

Bonnie was introduced to listening circles while working for the National Congress of Neighborhood Women in 1993. This group comprising both professional and neighborhood women, always met in a circle as they endeavored to develop affordable housing for women. While in her role as Director of Women's Residence for Transitional Housing, she incorporated art into the program by having the women create an image of themselves on a clothes pin. That clothes pin was then placed on a mobile showing their path to stable housing so they could see themselves and their progress. This was her introduction into expressive arts for women.

The Journey Home studio, located in Easton, PA, is decorated top to bottom, corner to corner in art created by incarcerated women from the Northampton County Jail, also located in Easton, PA. Bonnie's relationship with the jail started while she was an academic supervisor for a student at Monmouth University. While visiting the jail with the student, she noticed there were no services available to the incarcerated women. Through volunteering, she first established a book club and Zen coloring sessions for the inmates. Prior to the Covid-19

outbreak in 2020, Bonnie was visiting the jail four days a week, offering listening circles and expressive art activities.

One of the many restorative activities Bonnie teaches is drawing out one's life story. Broken up into segments of five years, women face their personal history and accompanying trauma. One woman who completed the life story art project drew an image of an explosion, representing the car crash she and her father were in when she was a child. Her father tragically passed away as a result of the accident. Her art told the story of her using drugs to cope with the loss and trauma resulting from the accident. After being released from jail, that same woman came to the Journey Home studio and told Bonnie that the life story art project helped her learn how to cry, something she was not allowed to do growing up.

Listening circles have opened doors for understanding for incarcerated women Bonnie has worked with over the years. Melding expressive arts and restorative methods creates a space where participants have the opportunity to self-reflect in peace and create the bonds that support a safe environment for them to explore community and self-care together.

The Journey Home offers services to women such as Creative Artwork, where participants are introduced to different art supplies, including Japanese ink, freeform art, collaging, and more. On Saturdays they offer healing drum circles. Sunday is Art on the Gogh, where participants can move freely between different art stations and get to explore several mediums to create artwork. The Journey Home also provides individual sessions, as well as group sessions, where participants build relationships through art by collaborating on one large piece of paper, working together to finish the piece.

# 2023 WORLD CONFERENCE



## BUILDING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

A RADICAL APPROACH THROUGH RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

IIRP WORLD CONFERENCE • DETROIT, MI • OCT. 2023

The IIRP World Conference has traveled across the globe and has served as a forum for community leaders, educators, scholars, and members of the justice field to expand the field of restorative practices since 1998. In October 2023 we were back in person in Detroit, Michigan, with *Building Thriving Communities: A Radical Approach Through Restorative Practices*, presented in partnership with Black Family Development, Inc.

The 2023 IIRP World Conference brought together leaders from K-12 Education, Human Services, Criminal Justice, Community-based Organizations, Healthcare, Faith Systems, Philanthropy, and Community-minded Businesses from all over the U.S. and internationally. Engaging plenary sessions gave audience members a look into methods and strategies they could implement in their personal and professional lives immediately. Thought-provoking workshops challenged participants to self-reflect, find empathy, and engage in civil discourse with discernment and grace. We are proud to continue to host the World Conference and bring together change-makers from all over the globe. As we look forward to the next World Conference, these conversations will continue, and solutions will evolve and change over time, as will our graduate school.



# PUBLICATIONS

## THE PRESIDENTIAL PAPER SERIES

The Presidential Paper Series highlights leading thinkers and new voices in the field of restorative practices. Papers explore innovative theories and applications in fields such as education, community health, social justice, and organizational leadership, pointing to new directions for civil society advocates around the world. All presidential papers are available as free downloads from the IIRP website.

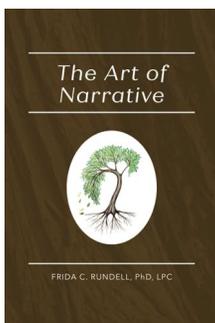


### **A Restorative Practices Strategy to Advance Community Health**

In Summer 2023 we published our 8th Presidential Paper, *A Restorative Practices Strategy to Advance Community Health*, by Gina Baral Abrams, DrPH. In this paper, Dr. Abrams suggests that community health can be supported by using restorative practices to reduce health disparities and promote health equity.

In this paper, the evolution of the community health field is traced, leading up to the recent U.S. Surgeon General's report, *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation*. The author suggests that, in addition to the work that has been done to identify key factors and dynamics, it is necessary to focus explicitly on how we strengthen relationships and community.

Integrating principles from the social-ecological model, a new model is presented to describe how restorative practices can be used to advance community health goals by focusing on social connection, facilitating community engagement, fostering positive social norms, nurturing collaboration, addressing harm and healing, and increasing equity in systems and policy. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

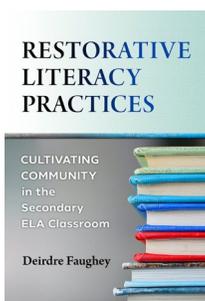


### **The Art of Narrative, by Frida C. Rundell, PhD, LPC**

Published January 2023

Based on her long-held interest and practice in using narrative structures in counseling, Dr. Rundell, a founding faculty member of the IIRP Graduate School, offers a practical guide for deepening facilitation skills using structured questions that align with restorative practices within circle processes. Useful exercises allow practitioners to enjoy the building blocks found in each chapter to learn post-modern narrative processes so the storyteller is the center of attention rather than the facilitator.

Whether you are working with clients that include students, family members, those in the workplace, or the community, *The Art of Narrative* can be a valuable resource for building better relationships.

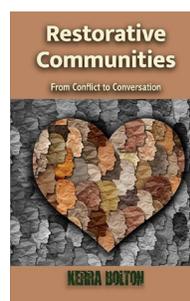


### **Restorative Literacy Practices: Cultivating Community in the Secondary ELA Classroom, by Deirdre Faughey**

Published May 2023

Based on classroom action research conducted in a diverse suburban school district, Faughey shares a framework that encourages teachers to approach their work with a

restorative mindset by focusing on four elements of instruction: methods, literature, relationships, and culture, identity, and language. The text offers lesson plans, rubrics, and handouts that teachers can use to inform their own practice.



### **Restorative Communities: From Conflict to Conversation, by Kerra Bolton**

Published April 2023

Covering the Six Facets of today's society and how they are successfully addressed by Restorative Practices, Bolton examines new ways of approaching the world's political upheaval, civil strife, spiritual malaise

and how it's all playing out in a post-COVID world. Best of all, she provides case studies of how restorative communities large and small are taking back our society in a positive, productive and hopeful movement toward a more just and equitable life.

# FOSTERING PRACTICAL CURIOSITY AT BUXMONT ACADEMY

History is painted with stories of triumphs and tragedies. In Chris Lawson's social study class at Buxmont Academy's Woodlyn campus, the students get to explore these stories and themes with curiosity and through their own unique lens of experience.

As a first-year teacher with limited experience in restorative practices, Chris approached the school year with an open mind. He relied on his fellow teachers and mentor for support while building a restorative environment in his classroom. Through training, Chris felt empowered to use restorative methods and applied basic principles with his students. The restorative principle that all people have knowledge and stories to share from their unique human experience formed the basis for all learning in his classes.

Proactive classroom engagement sparked many conversations in Chris's classes. Check-in questions are an important part of building community in the classroom. Having the freedom to spend classroom time focusing on topics brought up by the students made diving into the content much smoother, with more active participation and genuine interest displayed by the students. Check-in questions around current historical events, like the passing of Queen Elizabeth II in the United Kingdom, sparked conversations

around the legacy of monarchies across the globe and brought up questions about global governments both antiquated and modern. Questions posed to the class such as, "Have you seen anything interesting in the news lately?" shed light on what type of news students were consuming and what piqued their interest.

Students volunteer their opinions, debate perspectives, and look for evidence to support their ideas, all while absorbing the content and building relationships in the classroom.

Practicing skills needed to be a historian and active participant in life, students were encouraged to ask questions, investigate, and be critical of history. Nurturing a sense of curiosity in the students gave insight into what was important to them and what came up for them while looking at history. It's not just about memorizing historical facts, but rather engaging in active learning and current events.

Embracing restorative practices helped guide Chris as a first-year teacher and provided him methods to build relationships with his students. Creating and sticking to classroom norms and engaging the students in ways that made them feel seen and heard made it a great year.



# IIRP SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE LEADS WITH ACCEPTANCE IN CANADIAN SCHOOLS



**“As an elementary school principal, my goal is to transform each school into a place where everyone feels welcome.”**

Norma Jean Dwyer, M.S., is a recent graduate of the IIRP Master of Science degree program and the 2022 Shawn Suzch Scholarship Award recipient. Norma is a principal with the Peel District School Board

and has worked in several schools as an administrator. She currently works at Ellwood Memorial Public School in Bolton, Ontario. As a principal, she saw a disconnect between her school’s teachers and their wider community. Over the past nine years she has implemented restorative practices throughout each school and has seen significant change. Teachers are connecting with students’ parents more frequently. Staff and teachers are now communicating with community organizations and creating meaningful relationships that strengthen the school’s ability to support their students.

At one of her schools, Norma observed a particular 8th grade student who was frequently sent to the office. Taking the time to connect with all students, staff, and caregivers, she embarked on a journey to understand the situation and offer support to the troubled student.

Using restorative questions, Norma engaged in conversations with the boy, seeking to uncover the underlying issues. As a rapport developed with the student and his family, doubts arose regarding the stories shared by other staff members and his peers. Determined to address the situation using restorative approaches, she used affective language and circle sessions with each student and staff member who had concerns, taking approximately a month to gather relevant information and input.

Armed with an understanding of everyone’s perspective, she convened a circle involving the entire class and the concerned teachers. Prior to the circle, Norma and the student discussed the circle’s

purpose and confirmed the student’s comfort and willingness to participate.

The circle was a profoundly impactful experience. Students revealed that they had been fabricating stories about the boy for two years, perceiving him as an “easy target.” They believed that staff would support the storytellers, leading to his discipline. During the circle, every student apologized to him, and he graciously accepted their apologies.

As time passed, the 8th grade class grew closer and more accepting of one another. The previously troubled student became known as one of the kindest and most supportive members of his class. His transformation was so remarkable that he was ultimately nominated as valedictorian for his graduating class at the end of the year.

Undoubtedly, implementing restorative practices requires patience, understanding, and time. Norma’s efforts have created a restorative-based foundation for relationships that make space for all voices to be heard and recognize that we are all interconnected and responsible to each other. She states, “I truly believe I have found my passion and purpose – to ensure all people are accepted, included, and loved, and their lived experiences are acknowledged and celebrated. This can be done through restorative practices. I am happy and honored to be a part of spreading the importance of restorative practices in schools.”

The Shawn Suzch Scholarship is made possible by a generous donor who wanted to support graduate students who are passionate about making a difference. Awardees demonstrate outstanding spirit and drive worthy of Shawn’s memory. \$1,000 in tuition assistance is awarded in memory of Shawn, a young man who overcame adversity with courage and determination.



# THE VALUE OF LISTENING: RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Restorative processes often focus on proactive measures, but reactive interventions have an important place in addressing harms after they have occurred. To exist as a member of society is to accept that conflict is an inevitable and unavoidable part of the human experience, and we use listening circles to help us embrace and navigate difficult situations.

In May of 2023 the IIRP offered a series of public listening circle opportunities, honoring the work that began with Liz and Vic O'Callaghan, to create space for shared emotional connection about the impact of school shootings and safety. Our goal was to support individuals and communities that had been harmed to explore the collective experience together. These sessions filled up quickly and the audience was diverse. Parents, teachers, students, community members, administrators, and IIRP graduates who are working in schools and harm reduction all attended these sessions. To further enhance the engagement, facilitators introduced innovative elements such as collaborative word clouds and moments of silence, adding depth and

meaning to the interactions between participants. This effort was led by IIRP Instructors and Implementation Coaches, Kiyaana Cox-Jones and Pam Thompson, and was supported by various units across the organization.

As we continue to move and exist in a world of uncertainty, the IIRP is committed to being of service to our community in Bethlehem, PA, and beyond, extending to all people who are impacted by violence, conflict, and harm. The success of these listening circles was born from our ability to self-reflect as an organization, to know that we must first be restorative with ourselves in order to do so with others. Before holding the public circles, we as an organization held circles for our staff on this matter — making sure our own voices were heard.

This journey of collective effort demonstrates that positive change requires more than just good intentions. It demands collaboration, empathy, and the willingness to create spaces that allow every individual to be an active participant in building community and responding to harm.

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# STUDENT-LED ANTI-VAPING SOLUTIONS

Students across the country are navigating social issues in their schools every day, including the use of e-cigarettes. In October 2022 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released results of their National Youth Tobacco Survey, noting that 3.3% of middle school students (380,000 individuals) across the U.S. are using or have used e-cigarettes, more commonly referred to as vapes.

This statistic suggests that middle schools across the country are dealing with this issue. Saxton Middle School in Patchogue, New York, engaged their students to help them find solutions. Utilizing listening circles, teachers were able to begin the conversation with students about the dangers of vaping and engage them on their thoughts on the matter.

The school's anti-vaping initiative began with listening circles held in 8th-grade English and Language Arts classes, addressing the dangers of vaping to raise awareness and educate students. Co-facilitated by Linda Sommer and IIRP alum, Gregg Scheiner, the circles aimed to spread awareness about the issue. Some students expressed their interest in vaping as a social tool, some described vaping as a stimulant for them, some relayed their fears around vaping, and all had various feelings around the issue.

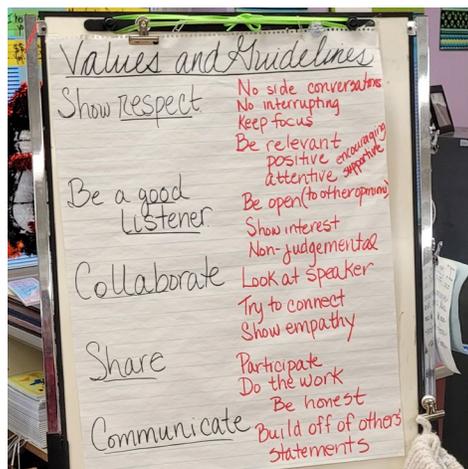
To form a building-wide anti-vaping team, the school conducted a student survey to identify interested students. Following discussions during the second round of circles, 8th-grade executive council members were chosen to serve as peer leaders for the initiative. The 8th-grade executive council members created the student-led intervention plan for the rest of the school year. The plan

involved coaching the "Right of Passage" team to speak to their fellow 6th and 7th-grade students during restorative periods, raising awareness that "vaping is not cool."

Tapping into more creative avenues of spreading their messages of awareness, the school held a building-wide poster contest on the dangers of vaping, an 8th-grade PSA team presented a student-led Public Service Announcement video, and the creation of a "Commitment" banner with the pledge not to vape was worked on by all students in the school. Staff and administration provided a high level of support to empower programs that sounded and reflected student voice.

A truly community-wide initiative, the school connected with their local library, Patchogue Medford Library. The library's vaping cessation program serves as a resource for students who have admitted to or been caught vaping at school. Additionally, the Suffolk County Department of Health came into the school to hold building-wide assemblies to raise awareness about the dangers of vaping. By collaborating with the library and health department, the students saw that their community cared about the same issues they were dealing with and that they could find support outside of their school walls.

Giving students the opportunity to lead, Saxton Middle School has high student engagement in addressing the dangers of vaping and has made major strides in facilitating vaping cessation among the students. Leaning into student leadership provides more weight to the student voice and experience and also supports the teachers, staff, and administration in their efforts. They are collaborating with their students and accomplishing great things with them!



# UPLIFTING STUDENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP WITH AN “INSIDE OUT” APPROACH

Empowering young minds is crucial for a brighter future. Community Matters located in Santa Rosa, California, is a non-profit organization committed to ensuring a brighter future for students by fostering safe and supportive school environments worldwide. Erica Vogel, CEO of Community Matters, is dedicated to youth development and community transformation. Her passion stems from her own experiences of being uplifted by programs similar to those she now champions. Recognizing the profound impact of such initiatives, she has made it her life’s mission to connect communities and create positive ripple effects through the power of education.

As Community Matters evolved, they became increasingly committed to bringing restorative practices to schools. Collaborating with the IIRP, the organization began training teachers to foster a warm and supportive school climate with programs like Restorative Practices for Educators and Restorative Justice Conferencing. Proven to be proactive and preventative, restorative practices have been shown to reduce suspension rates by 36% in schools (RAND, 2018). Community Matters’ unique approach includes leaning into the social discipline window. Once influential students are who can positively impact their peers are identified, staff work with them and teachers by providing the necessary training to uphold core principles.

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*“We want to hear their voices, of course, but it doesn’t matter to just hear them; we must also give them the keys to use their voices.”*

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The heart of Community Matters’ work is empowering students to become active contributors to their own education, rather than passively absorbing academic knowledge. Students bring up issues proactively, such as concerns about weapons and bullying. At the core of their efforts is the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) program, designed to amplify student voices and empower young minds starting from Grade 4. Part of the SSA program includes training youth as circle keepers. The students have the skills to create the spaces to resolve conflict and maintain a positive school culture. Erica says, “We want to hear their voices, of course, but it doesn’t matter to just hear them; we must also give them the keys to use their voices.” Students are an active part of creating a restorative environment, and they support their teachers in this culture building work.



Every school is different, but students are always the architects of each SSA program, initiative, and norm in which they participate. Establishing a restorative culture lies in maximizing positive outcomes and fostering an environment of inclusivity and voluntary participation. For example, an elementary school in the Midwest created a “Wall of Courage,” which became covered top to bottom with sticky notes written by students expressing how they planned on making the school environment a better place for all. In a northern school, a bomb threat was averted when a Safe School Ambassador felt safe to tell a program advisor about the threat, even at the risk of being labeled a “snitch”. A group of Safe School Ambassadors in Wyoming created an anti-bullying parade for their school, and the school made letter jackets for their ambassadors as a way of showing pride for their positions.

Ambassadors at this school in Wyoming found creative ways to intervene and interrupt situations of peer-to-peer conflict. For example, a Safe School Ambassador stopped a fight in its tracks by getting in the middle and yelling “I love rainbows and unicorns!” — distracting the students who were fighting. Two other ambassadors intervened and removed the fighting students after having noticed what their fellow ambassador had done to diffuse the situation.

The foundation of the Safe School Ambassadors program lies in the power of social influence. By nurturing social connection and encouraging kindness among peers, students learn to uplift each other, creating a domino effect of positivity. Ongoing training ensures that the SSA program stays relevant and effective.

# SUPPORTING COMMUNITY AND YOUTH IN BERMUDA



The Coalition for the Protection of Children, located in Pembroke, Bermuda, provides services to low-income, unemployed/underemployed families with a mission to heighten public awareness of children's issues, advocate on behalf of families, and provide services that address critical but unmet needs. They support parents and children up to age 17 with medical, financial, and educational assistance. By modeling restorative behavior, Community and Development Coordinator Sloane Johnson and her team teach clients how to be supportive with themselves so they can be supportive toward their family and model these behaviors in the home. The Coalition for the Protection of Children uses listening circles and restorative conferences to help mediate inter-familial conflict and when clients are involved in legal matters.

Earlier this year, the Coalition for the Protection of Children held a Youth Mental Health Summit. Young participants had the opportunity to voice their needs in regard to their mental health and could find supports to have those needs met through community partnerships. Participating youth were taught restorative methods to engage with their peers as well as themselves, giving them the tools to proactively move forward with their relationships in their school spaces, homes, and friendships.

Sloane is also CEO and Founder of OATH International. OATH International collaborates with corporations, organizations, and schools to create "OATH spaces" where Sloane provides training to civil and organizational leaders. The space is changed, not by rearranging furniture or painting walls, but by improving how the people who occupy it interact with each other. Training includes policy development, parent workshops, leadership, international conferences, teacher wellness techniques, faith-based conflict

mediation, and instruction developed specifically for law enforcement. Using empathy as a foundation for these trainings, Sloane facilitates conversations between various stakeholders to reach a common understanding and resolution.

OATH also offers the One Love Program to middle schools and high schools on the island, focusing on what healthy love looks like in romantic, friendship, and family relationships. By utilizing empathic listening, storytelling, and self-reflection, students' autonomy, boundaries, and self-perception are strengthened so they are able to better navigate loving relationships. The program is conversation based and uses real-life examples that the students bring into the space.

Sloane has used creative and collaborative measures to make a difference in her community, based in the foundations of restorative practices and empathic listening. Her work reminds us there is joy in supporting the human dignity of those around us, and we are better for it.



# MEANINGFUL REHABILITATION IN PRISON

## JAMMU AND KASHMIR, INDIA



Restorative practices in the criminal justice system has emerged as a transformative approach, focusing on healing and rehabilitation for both those who were harmed and those who created harm, while keeping justice as the focal point and end goal. One individual who has embraced this paradigm shift is Mushtaq Ahmed Malla, a modern Prison Superintendent (the U.S. equivalent of a prison warden), hailing from the region of Jammu and Kashmir, India.

As a Fulbright-Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship awardee at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, USA, Mushtaq experienced an eye-opening course on restorative practices. Subsequently, he honed his understanding and expertise in restorative practices through a professional affiliation with the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). It was during these formative experiences that Mushtaq recognized the profound value of restorative approaches, particularly in their human and relationship-centered methodology.

Mushtaq's dedication to restorative practices goes beyond theory; it extends to the very fabric of the correctional facility he oversees. Under his leadership, a series of initiatives has been put into practice, fostering a culture of healing and rehabilitation. These initiatives not only bridge the gap between inmates and staff, they also equip the former with essential skills and opportunities, propelling them toward meaningful reintegration into society.

One of the cornerstones of Mushtaq's approach is creating an inclusive environment where inmates and staff co-exist as a community. By encouraging shared experiences, the staff and inmates build meaningful connections. Staff eat their meals side-by-side with the incarcerated individuals. Eating the same prepared food conveys a respect for one another, creates shared experiences, and allows for informal conversations where one can be known, breaking down barriers and nurturing a sense of camaraderie. Mushtaq firmly believes in the transformative power of giving inmates a voice in

decisions affecting their daily lives. Using circles, Mushtaq and his team involve inmates in choices regarding food preparation, educational activities, roles within the prison, and music programs. This has proven pivotal in creating a calm and harmonious prison environment.

Recognizing the importance of education in breaking the cycle of crime, Mushtaq took proactive steps to enhance inmates' skills. He collaborated with local universities to provide computer skills training, giving inmates a valuable asset for their future. Additionally, he introduced software for an adult literacy program, empowering inmates to improve their literacy levels and bolster their self-confidence.

Mushtaq and his team initiated a compost program to help mitigate the facility's impact on the environment. This program tackles waste management, ensuring proper disposal of food waste and promoting hygiene within the facility. Involving inmates in such initiatives gives them a sense of responsibility and instills a spirit of environmental stewardship.

To foster personal growth and emotional well-being, Mushtaq introduced a range of holistic programs for inmates. Yoga sessions aid in mindfulness and self-awareness, while arts and crafts offer a creative outlet for self-expression.

Mushtaq's restorative approaches have borne fruit in the transformation of inmates' behavior. By being involved in meaningful activities and having a say in their daily lives, inmates feel more connected and motivated to rehabilitate. Though there are challenges with implementing these modern methods within the prison, Mushtaq plans to continue these initiatives and expand them to include more formal conferencing and engaging in ongoing training of his staff. His goal is to create a network of restorative practitioners across sectors in India to establish the foundations of a restorative movement that recognizes and prioritizes humans, their unique experiences, and their right to justice.

# THANK YOU!

The IIRP and its consortium of organizations appreciate all gifts, great and small. We want to acknowledge the following donors who gave to the IIRP, Community Service Foundation, and Buxmont Academy from September 2022 through August 2023 in support of our work to restore community, including Impact Scholarships.

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*Please excuse any misspellings or omissions, but do let us know so we can correct our errors.*



# IMPACT SCHOLARSHIPS



IIRP students and alumni are engaging individuals, tackling racism and promoting educational and professional equity and inclusion. They are educating the next generation, supporting prisoners reentering their communities, and developing new strategies for building strong relationships across colleges and universities.

We want to expand this positive impact to areas of the world that need it most. Our Impact Scholarships provide full tuition for graduate students who demonstrate promise for greatly impacting their communities. Our intention is to make a graduate-level education in restorative practices more accessible to more people from a variety of backgrounds, benefiting the recipients and the communities they serve. This initiative also elevates our entire IIRP learning community by infusing new, diverse perspectives into the student body.

**We need your help to continue this vital work.**

Donate today at [iirp.edu/give](https://iirp.edu/give)