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Restorative Justice Week

Oceanside

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The third week of November is recognized nationally as Restorative Justice Week. Locally, Arrowsmith Community Justice Society (ACJS) has been operating a restorative justice and a community dispute program in Oceanside for 21 years now. There are many benefits to going through the process as an alternative to court. When a crime occurs, the RCMP have the option of diverting those involved to the ACJS Restorative Justice Program. All parties involved (victim & offender) must agree to participate in the process or it will go back to the police for alternative dispensation. There are benefits for all who participate:

The Victim: The victim has a voice in the entire process and is given the opportunity to directly ask the questions they have: Why did you do this to me? What did I do to cause this? Do you know what this has done to me? Do you know how afraid I am now? The victim is part of the restitution process and has input into what they feel is a fair and reasonable resolution.

The Offender: The offender gets a quick process so it isn't hanging over them for months or years. They have input into resolution decisions & therefore are more likely to complete. The most significant benefit to the offender is, when the resolution is completed, they will not have a criminal record for this event. The process also gives offenders the opportunity to take accountability for their actions.

The Community: The process is quick with the meeting happening within 30 days of the criminal event and the resolution being completed within 90 days. The cost to the community is negligible as the Restorative Justice program is manned by volunteers and there no fees collected to participate.

Over the 21 years of operations, ACJS has processed 876 offenders through Restorative Justice. The number of community service hours is 4,188 which equals \$42,000 of value going back into the community. Many victims do not want financial benefit and therefore, opt to donate their restitutions. As a result, to date, \$16,200 has been donated to various Oceanside Charities.

Released by

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Oceanside RCMP

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