

# Restorative Justice & DUII Victim Impact Panel

**What is Restorative Justice?** Restorative Justice in Benton County is a process that restores balance, elevates the status of victims, enhances the accountability of offenders, and increases community participation in the criminal justice system.

**The Mission:** To encourage and develop responses to crime in Benton County that:

- Provide victims with opportunities to have their needs identified and included in any plan of repair,
- Hold offenders accountable in ways that create potential for their re-entry into the community, and
- Actively involve the community in the design and implementation of justice.

**WCJC Restorative Justice History:** The Restorative Justice Task Force was developed in response to the Community and Restorative Justice Conference held in Corvallis in October 2000. A group of local residents decided it would be worthwhile to encourage Benton County to become more restorative in its responses to crime. The group invited nationally-recognized restorative justice advocate, Dennis Maloney, to speak to the Willamette Criminal Justice Council in February 2001. Out of that meeting, the Restorative Justice Task Force was developed with input from a wide variety of community members and criminal justice representatives.

**Commitment to Community Safety:** The Restorative Justice Task Force is committed to finding programs that reduce repeat offenders and then implementing them in Benton County. Restorative Justice is concerned with the relationship between offender, victim, and community. The focus is on the harm done to others by crime and to ensure that the harm is repaired.

**Who's on the RJ Taskforce?** The Restorative Justice Task Force includes members from the District Attorney's Office, the Courts, the Juvenile Department, Corrections, Parole and Probation, and lay members. If you are interested in getting involved or would like more information, call Rebekah Schweitzer at 766-6647.

**Pilot Project — DUII Victim Impact Panel:** The DUII Victim Impact Panel gives crime victims an opportunity to have their experiences heard by offenders in a safe, structured environment. The program features various presentations by patrol deputies, Good Samaritan Hospital trauma unit nurses, victims of DUIIs, and Benton County Circuit Court Judges. Panels are conducted bi-monthly. The Task Force began with a DUII Victim Impact Panel and may potentially expand to include other types of crimes.

*Here's what participants have said:*

- I am deeply affected by what I heard and saw. I thank God each day that I did not cause anyone any injury or loss of life.
- It made me think and realize what could have happened the night I made a terrible decision.
- I'm glad that I came. I don't have the right to chose to drink and drive.
- This impact panel has taught me that life is too precious to make the wrong choice.
- I never realized how much damage driving drunk has on other people.
- I never understood just how much my decisions could impact others in such a negative way.

WCJC brings people together to explore and discuss issues of importance in the criminal justice area and works to implement best practices for Benton County to enhance the livability of our community.

— JoAnne Trow, former WCJC Chair

## Partnering with the University

Oregon State University (OSU) plays an important role in making Corvallis the kind of town where people want to live. From the excitement of University sporting events to the world-class facilities such as Valley Library, Oregon State University provides residents with the benefits of living in a "College Town." It can be considered a 'city within a city.'

*The concept of community policing is paramount at Oregon State University. The unique challenge to law enforcement on campus is to remain diligent and persistent in addressing the concerns of residents, students, and staff.*

Having a "city within a city" presents some unique challenges for service providers, including law enforcement. Police services on campus have been provided by the Oregon State Police under contract since 1989. The Oregon State Police provide 24-hour police patrols of the campus by vehicle, bicycle, and on foot. The University also has a Department of Public Safety that addresses the campus' physical security. Both departments work collaboratively to provide services including educational presentations addressing student concerns about personal safety, underage drinking, and sexual assaults. A liaison program provides troopers who are assigned to housing groups and student groups.

A close working relationship with the Corvallis Police Department is essential to the mission of keeping Oregon State University and the City of Corvallis a safe and livable community. Open and honest communications between agencies and with University groups occur frequently. Community forums are held regularly on campus to address topics as diverse as racial profiling and other civil rights issues. The WCJC encourages and supports the OSU/City of Corvallis partnership approach to campus law enforcement.

The concept of community policing is paramount at Oregon State University. The unique challenge to law enforcement on campus is to remain diligent and persistent in addressing the concerns of residents, students, and staff. With graduations and new students, the population changes annually and the process continues.

Oregon State University has myriad resources to assist students and citizens with concerns. These resources include The Office of Student Conduct, University Counseling and Psychological Services, and Student Health Services. Information on these and other University Resources can be found at <http://oregonstate.edu/>

The WCJC continues to discuss issues surrounding the OSU student population and law enforcement. An Oregon State Police representative on campus regularly attends the WCJC meetings. When needed, forums are held to encourage the sharing of viewpoints and information that will help the parties involved to work together and to come to resolution as needed.

