

**FIRST PROGRAM REPORT  
VT SRS JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAM EVALUATION  
JUNE 2000**

## OVERVIEW AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is the first of two descriptive evaluation reports that will include two evaluation products deliverable in Phase I of the SRS Juvenile Justice Program Evaluation being conducted by Florida Atlantic University (FAU). The current report includes products one and three as specified in the FAU proposal, the *Program Profile Document* and the *Program Implementation Monograph*. We have combined these products into this *Program Profile and Implementation Monograph*. Products two and four, the Program Logic Models and Case Study documents, will be submitted at the end of Phase One of the evaluation pending further qualitative data collection involving the complete array of initiative programs expected to have by that time been actively operational for several months.

### Purpose

The specific purpose of this document is to describe and critically assess initial implementation of the array of SRS programs being funded in support of the department's *Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ)* initiative. The primary focus of this report is on goals, objectives and practices associated with this initiative as seen primarily through the eyes of program staff, and through initial observations of the evaluation team. In addition to this descriptive program profile, the report also examines initial implementation issues encountered as staff attempt to operationalize BARJ objectives through new programs and modifications/refinements of existing ones, while connecting in a more meaningful way with other programs.

An important feature of the report is its consideration of what program professionals perceive themselves to be doing and the relative consistency of their beliefs and practices with the principles of restorative justice and the Balanced Approach mission. Conclusions about consistency or lack of it should not be viewed as judgmental or in any way negative at this early phase of implementation, but rather as providing a kind of benchmark for developing consistency and improving overall implementation. For example, our hope is that the report may reveal some weaknesses that can be corrected through training, consultation and assistance, additional resources, or rethinking staff and program roles and responsibilities. Although the tone of the report may seem critical, it is therefore important to point out that there are many strengths in the SRS vision for BARJ, and more generally, for juvenile justice reform. These strengths should not be minimized and are reflected in the practical agenda for implementation that should prove capable of helping stakeholders overcome obstacles both within and between programs. Moreover, the good news in Vermont is that staff are not in general resistant to change and do not appear to be antagonistic to the BARJ philosophy or the department's vision. In general, most also seem willing to collaborate to develop a more seamless system of intervention.

Although many of the descriptive findings contained in this document may not come as a surprise to state SRS staff and some program administrators, this information

will hopefully serve two purposes. First, it will assist the evaluators—working with SRS and program staff—to develop meaningful outcome measures for various programs and to make initial inferences about strengths and weaknesses of operationalization thus far. These inferences can hopefully be used to improve quality and consistency of implementation. Second, by describing programs as seen through the eyes of administrators and staff, this report may prove to be educational for these staff and other juvenile justice professionals interested in learning more about how they can work more effectively with these programs. Both of these purposes will hopefully assist SRS decision makers in identifying problems and making appropriate recommendations to strengthen this important but complex effort to develop a statewide BARJ approach.

### **Scope and Limitations of this Report**

Although we believe the information provided in this report provides a generally accurate overview of programs included in the SRS Balanced and Restorative Justice initiative, there are of course important gaps in our knowledge even at a descriptive level. And there is an important caveat about statements pertaining to program operation and procedure. Because they are necessarily based in part on information provided by staff and managers who may not themselves have a valid and reliable understanding of how their programs actually work, the findings presented in this report may on occasion present an inaccurate portrayal of a program or policy. We therefore hope that this report will encourage comments that help us improve our understanding of the complex set of practices and policies that make up this initiative before moving into the next phase of this evaluation.

The primary unit of analysis in this report—and to some extent for the evaluation as a whole—is the *program*. Certainly, in a Program Profile Report it is important to document in a systematic way what these programs are trying to accomplish as separate entities designed to implement one or more components of the BARJ mission. We recognize, however, that this analysis of separate, if not independent, programs certainly has both conceptual and practical limitations. Although weak programs must certainly be analyzed to get to the source of and remedy problems lest the entire implementation effort suffer, even strong programs functioning independently will not achieve the holistic and systemic reform vision outlined in the SRS strategic plan. Conceptually, the focus on programs may encourage a specialization or compartmentalization of function that can lead to segmentation of restorative justice that is not comprehensible to clients—or perhaps even to staff. In the worse case, most of the system and even most programs may continue with “business as usual” while one or two—restitution and panels for example—get defined as the “BARJ Initiative.” Practically, the reality is that the majority of youth in the SRS system are or soon will be participating in multiple programs that claim some focus on BARJ goals; these agencies must inevitably rely on each other to reinforce objectives consistent with these goals. Nonetheless, in this early phase basic program integrity is a necessary, though not sufficient, feature of Vermont’s holistic BARJ initiative. This report is therefore divided into five major sections each of which addresses one of the following program components: juvenile restitution programs (JRPs), juvenile restorative panels, street

checkers, competency classes, and community justice centers (CJCs). Within each major program category, several common issues are addressed in each descriptive profile. These issues are addressed in several major categories of an outline followed with more or less consistency for each program type, except in those cases when a particular topic was irrelevant for a particular program. These categories include: a program description focused on the purpose of the program [including a general overview of program goals, objectives, and outcomes focused especially on understanding and consistency with the BARJ model]; an overview of the referral process including current caseload,<sup>1</sup> a discussion of initial successes for this program including a discussion of how the program is perceived to fit and collaborate with other programs, and a discussion of initial concerns and problems. Most program report sections also include general recommendations for program maintenance and enhancement.

Data sources for this report include responses to a Program Summary Survey completed by the vast majority of funded programs in this initiative. In addition, this descriptive analysis is also based on informal interviews with program staff, site visits, observations of several key programs in action, focus groups with program staff and community volunteers, and written information provided by various programs. It is our hope that this descriptive report will provide a solid foundation for future impact evaluation reports, as well as for the aforementioned additional qualitative studies and reports.

## **OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS**

### **Program Purpose: Goals, Objectives and Outcomes**

Respondents seemed generally clear about where their particular programs fit within the SRS system and articulated program goals within the framework of general SRS probation objectives. Some programs such as community justice centers have mandates that extend beyond the boundaries of SRS and thus address objectives that go beyond the concerns of this agency.

Overall, there was much greater variation between programs in recognition/familiarity with the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) model. Compared with their general sense of SRS goals and objectives, awareness of the balanced approach mission was superficial in some cases, and some respondents who claimed awareness could not define basic goals of the mission and/or could not articulate accurately how program practices addressed these goals. While there were examples of very clear understanding and articulation among some respondents involved in all program types, in general restitution program respondents seemed somewhat more well informed about these goals.

---

<sup>1</sup> One important part of this section, a “snapshot” of daily caseloads of staff in each program that will allow us to estimate workload between programs given staff to client ratios was not available in time for this report. This information will be included later as an addendum to this report.

Similarly, restorative justice principles seem to be clearly understood by only a few respondents. Though most expressed high agreement with the core principle of repairing harm as a priority for intervention, commitment to the goals of victim and community involvement was relatively weak in most programs, and practice clearly lagged behind even in those jurisdictions where respondents expressed strong commitment to community participation in the justice process. A related concern is that even among those who are most articulate about the balanced mission and restorative justice, there is an apparent disconnect between BARJ goals and objectives more traditionally associated with SRS. In some cases, for example, respondents apparently supportive of BARJ seemed to view the primary task of their program as simply enforcing court requirements and getting youth off of probation as soon as possible. While there is nothing wrong with such objectives, this focus does not seem to acknowledge the intrinsic value of repairing harm and meeting community needs as articulated in the Balanced Approach mission nor indicate awareness of the impact of achieving such objectives on other more long-term outcomes such as recidivism.

### **Number and Type of Referrals**

While several programs around the state experienced a slow start in receiving cases, those responding to the Program Summary Survey reported that they are now receiving referrals. Though no program reported being overloaded and some are not yet at full capacity, the absence of a “floodgate effect” may be a blessing for those programs who took advantage of the lower caseload periods to further develop their programs and build connections with other programs and the community. Currently, with the exception of some restorative panels, most programs seem to be moving toward capacity.

Most respondents noted that they were generally receiving what they viewed as appropriate referrals. Those who were not create some doubt about whether they were indeed having long-term, difficult, and unsuccessful cases “dumped” on them or were simply operating from a base of unrealistic expectations. In the case of some programs whose primary mission is to increase compliance among youth who tend toward noncompliance (e.g., street checkers), complaints about inappropriate referrals may be misplaced and raise cause for concern that such programs will be misused for youth who would have complied with probation requirements without use of additional enforcement and monitoring resources. In any case, the meaning of “inappropriate” may need further exploration. Caseload and workload in these programs does not seem to be a major concern at this stage in the implementation process, and several respondents and other staff expressed gratitude for being able to focus on activities such as involving community members rather than simply managing cases.

### **Defining and Accounting for Success**

Most respondents were rightly committed to the goal of getting clients successfully through their programs and ensuring that they met all court and SRS obligations in doing so. Other definitions of what constituted “success” or a “successful program completion” were however, for some, more elusive. Though most respondents were confident about the value of their program interventions, most were unable to clearly express the linkage between the requirements placed on young offenders to achieve program completion and later outcomes such as reduce recidivism.

Some respondents, on the other hand, indicated that a key element in their intervention approaches involved strengthening connections around the young person and building relationships. Some were clearly able to establish rapport with both youth and family in a supportive relationship because they were not burdened with the enforcement responsibilities of SRS workers or the surveillance assigned to street checkers. The common insight about the importance of better youth/adult and youth/community relationships across all program types is, of course a core theme in restorative justice, was a positive that could be built upon in training and program enhancement. Although a minority of staff emphasized more punitive or surveillance-focused elements in accounting for program success completions, another insight articulated by some was the importance of placing young offenders in different, more active roles—first as citizens responsible for making things right with victim and community, and then as competent community members able to participate in decisionmaking and assist others in need.

### **Program Fit and Collaboration**

Although funded as independent entities, programs supported by SRS for this initiative were assumed to collaborate and share responsibility with one or more other programs on various cases. While there are important concerns about the appropriate role of various programs and occupants of various staff positions, most survey respondents expressed comfort with how their program fit into the larger SRS reform initiative. Among most respondents, there was discussion of sharing responsibility for cases in which young offenders might be involved in as many as three programs; the typical youth according to respondent reports is involved in at least two BARJ programs.

The SRS vision for BARJ as a systemic approach appears to be coming together initially in the collaboration that seems to be occurring in some jurisdictions between restitution programs and competency classes when competency instructors seek to design community service experiences that reinforce the learning of the classroom setting. When such collaboration does not occur, on the other hand, there is a concern that classes will simply replicate the insularity of many traditional treatment programs.

Restorative panels should also provide a vital supplement to restitution programs once they are up and running at capacity by engaging community members and victims in developing the reparative agreement—and hopefully in planning for offender and victim reintegration. As virtually all respondents report low community and victim participation, active panels could indeed be a conduit for bringing citizens into virtually all forms of SRS programming not simply restitution programs.

Checker programs may continue to perform a vital function in ensuring completion of obligations developed in panels and restitution programs, and so far staff in these programs seem to be performing an important support and monitoring role, as well as meeting surveillance and enforcement needs. These staff should not be overlooked for training in restorative values precisely because they may ultimately develop some of the closest contacts with offenders, families and community groups.

### **Initial Program Successes**

This reinforcement and increasing resonance between programs and willingness to collaborate is one early sign of success of the BARJ initiative in Vermont. Another is the successful execution of restorative panels thus far, although they have been few in number. Staff have shown a great deal of innovation in virtually all programs; checkers in particular have been innovative in cultivating community contacts to help them maintain consistent contact with young people, and have begun to go beyond the surveillance role to emphasize developing a trusting and supportive relationship with youth and families.

### **Initial Concerns**

The flip side of some of these program successes reveals cause for some concerns. Specifically, collaboration and mutual support between programs is not easy and will require nurturing and facilitation; the initiative of staff in some jurisdictions in holding weekly meetings between various programs requires time and support from superiors. Panels and restitution programs will need to continue to work hard to create a seamless link between the panel process, restorative obligations, and follow-up on reparative requirements. Concerns have also been raised about excessive role expansion among checkers in some communities where they may be taking on responsibilities beyond those suited to their professional qualifications. In general, more work seems to be needed on role clarification for all staff if youth, families, crime victims, and community members are to experience a user-friendly response that meets their needs by addressing mission goals and seeking to repair harm.

Specific recommendations for addressing concerns within each program can be found in each program section. General recommendations are for system-wide training in restorative justice principles and the Balanced Approach mission. Ultimately, all staff should understand their role in the BARJ approach.

# RESTITUTION PROGRAMS

## Program Description

### *Purpose: Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes*

This section describes the restitution program as a key component of the SRS BARJ initiative. As described in the SRS Restitution Program Grant Provisions, restitution programs are intended to reinforce and support the accountability goal of the Balanced Approach and generally provide a structured approach to developing and monitoring a plan for restitution payment. (See Appendix Table 1).

Results from the Program Summary Survey completed by directors or staff from five agencies providing restitution programs indicate agreement with the view that restitution programs are focused primarily on increasing offender compliance with the reparative aspect of the probation plan. Two respondents also emphasized the role of the restitution worker in monitoring conditions of probation such as curfews and school attendance [but this multiple role should be seen in the context of the fact that these respondents appear to have been the same persons responsible for the checker program]. One program director seemed to express the officially stated intent of this program in her observation that the restitution program sought to “collaborate with SRS in assisting offenders to complete the restorative components of their probation.”

General goals and objectives of the program, according to survey respondents, are focused on ensuring that probation conditions are successfully completed. Another respondent said that a primary objective of the program was to ensure that restitution and community service orders were “completed within six months of entering the program,” suggesting that speedy release from probation was an important end in itself. Ensuring compliance with curfews and school attendance on a regular basis was mentioned by another respondent, while another indicated that it was “successful completion of the restorative aspects of probation focused on accountability and self-awareness of the impact of the offense” that was most important.

Outcomes mentioned included getting clients discharged from probation, getting a “100 percent success rate”[\$], ensuring that each restitution program client would be able to “hold themselves accountable and understand the impact of the offense on offender and the community and internalize more socially acceptable behavior.” “Success” for these program staff was said to equate to avoiding new offenses, or achieving a lower than expected reoffense rate. One respondent noted that success should be defined as the young offender “becoming a more productive member of the community.” Three activities seem to be reported as core interventions, or those that are used most often: community service, monetary compensation and letters of apology. Other conditions that are included in the probation contract are mentioned when talking to the restitution programs, but it is not clear whether the restitution workers are responsible for monitoring them as well. These include counseling, regular school attendance, special intervention programs, etc.

Some of the apparent confusion about goals and objectives here may be a result of staff viewing the restitution program as one part of a larger probation whole. This is of course appropriate given that most JRP clients have other requirements presumably related to other needs. Yet the failure to articulate a goal and rationale for paying restitution and performing community service beyond the fact that doing so was necessary for release from probation may be a cause for some concern—especially since these respondents, unlike SRS workers, are assigned completion of these obligations as a primary responsibility. Understanding of desired offender, victim, and community impacts of these reparative sanctions, and of the underlying theory associated with these interventions, may need to be probed further through focus groups or other means. Perhaps asking more in-depth questions about outcomes and rationales for restitution and community service would reveal whether or not these reparative sanctions are being viewed in a restorative way.

### **How Many and What Kinds of Referrals? Eligibility: Offender Profile and Referral Process**

Source of referrals reported by these respondents included SRS, the court, schools, and panels. Number and frequency of referrals reported for the three respondents operating only restitution programs were 82 [@ 2 per month], 81 [@ 2-3 per month], and 90 [@ almost 4 per month]. Those operating multiple programs including restitution reported 36 referrals [@ 4 per month], 0, 82 [@ 3 referrals per month], and 16 [@ 2 per month]. Referrals, with a few exceptions (one or two sex offenders, an occasional mentally unbalanced young person) were generally viewed as appropriate. One program director reported that all referrals were now appropriate because they had “sent back those that weren’t.” Still another said that a few kids with excessive restitution orders had been sent their way.

Respondents reported that youth spend approximately 6 months minimum in the restitution program and may stay up to several years if there is a high monetary contract.

### *Successful Completion: Program Theory and Logic*

The meaning of “successful completion” of the JRP varied from getting probationers released from probation as soon as possible without violations, to fulfilling the “restorative justice requirements of probation in the time allotted,” to one definition that referred more to what the experience and outcome of the program should be: “completing meaningful probation components that provide education, therapeutic models, opportunity for success, and enhancement of self-esteem.”

Overall success of the juvenile restitution programs is determined at three levels. The first level of success occurs when youth have completed the requirements of their restitution contract with community service, monetary compensation and/or other requirements such as letters of apology, etc. While optimally, the youth should complete their restitution requirements within 6 months, in reality a youth will often continue in the restitution program until they have successfully completed their community service, paid any monetary orders and completed other requirements as assigned. This can take from six months to a number of years. Youth cannot ‘fail’ out of the program. They can, however, violate the terms of their probation and be sent to SRS for review, but in most cases they will return to the Restitution program eventually for continued work towards completion of their restitution expectations.

The second level of successful completion occurs is when a youth has completed the all the requirements outlined in their probation contract and is successfully discharged from probation with SRS. This usually means that the youth has also met additional expectations included in their probation contract such as counseling, education, curfew, etc. There is some apparent disagreement in the field as to whether these additional expectations on the probation contract should be monitored by the restitution programs also (See additional discussion that follows).

The third level of success to which restitution programs aspire is the reduction of recidivism in the form of return to SRS for delinquent behavior once they have completed their restitution requirements and/ or are discharged from probation. Some programs also report feeling successful when they see a positive behavior change in program youth and an understanding of the impact of their offense on the victim and on the community.

### *Understanding and Operationalizing the Balanced Approach Mission: Goals & Relevant Practice*

Understanding of the Balanced Approach mission among restitution program staff also varied from one respondent who stated that he/she was “unfamiliar with this terminology,” to a program director who was one of relatively few in the entire group of survey respondents to articulate this correctly as “a balanced focus the goals of accountability, public safety, and competency development.” The former respondent was also unable to define the three goals or address how the JRP was able to address them in practice. The latter, on the other hand, described how his JRP program sought to

accomplish each goal, with an expected greater emphasis on the accountability component. Other respondents defined “balance” also appropriately as an equal focus on stakeholder needs, and some then also defined the needs of offender, victim and community in terms of the three goals. For those who could accurately define the three goals, all seemed to understand that competency development had something to do with helping the offender acquire skills, and that public safety was about “making the community feel safe,” as well as managing the risks presented by program clients -- for example, as one respondent noted, “through appropriate matching of supervised worksites with ‘at risk’ youth.” Accountability was unfortunately understood by most respondents in the traditional sense as reporting regularly to SRS and encouraging youth to practice acceptable behavior. Only one JRP respondent noted correctly that accountability in the restorative sense was about “helping the youth understand harm done and rectifying it.” Yet, there appeared to be good overall understanding that practices that most clearly addressed accountability had to do with restitution, service, apology, etc.

In terms of how program practice addressed these goals, there seems to be a slight disconnect for most respondents between the generally more practical goals and objectives stated for their program in response to the earlier question and questions about how they addressed goals of the Balanced Approach mission. Though most addressed these mission goals in some way, they did not (with the exception of one respondent) relate them to the formerly stated goals and objectives. Most were clear regarding the accountability goal in linking it directly to paying restitution. Another respondent clearly viewed accountability as allowing community members “to make the decisions,” linking this objective directly to the restorative principle of maximizing stakeholder involvement in setting the terms of accountability. Regarding competency development, most respondents struggled more to identify the skill building aspects of restitution and service, though one respondent viewed restitution as an opportunity to “build confidence and self-esteem by accomplishing a concrete task.” Another was more articulate in her understanding of the competency building potential of community service in providing “natural opportunities for mentoring and positive community feedback,” but this important theme was not repeated by others....suggesting that community service may not be receiving the priority it deserves as an intervention capable of address multiple mission goals.

Risk management in supervision of work service, according to several respondents, was one practical way programs could address the public safety goal, and one program director noted that she made adjustments to work site supervision depending on risk assessment; the highest risk youth for example were generally supervised directly by the JRP worker. This same respondent also appeared to view worksite supervisors, including staff at public agencies and volunteers, as playing key roles in the public safety focus and reported weekly contacts with them about each client in order to respond to problems and learn from “success stories.” An even more interesting response was that safety was being addressed in one JRP by making “positive community connections,” but unfortunately, this same respondent then responded to the question about how program

practices address public safety by listing “curfews” and “police” as the primary public safety strategies, along with “watching to make sure they aren’t breaking the law.”

### *Restorative Justice Principles*

The purpose of this section of the survey was to attempt to gain better understanding of overall consistency of practice and perspective with restorative justice principles. The survey questions did this in part by addressing understanding of, and commitment to the ideas of repairing harm as a primary goal of intervention and engaging stakeholders in the process of doing so.

Regarding commitment of the JRPs to the principle of repairing harm, this goal was clearly ranked high by all respondents. In terms of their *vision* for the program, repair was given a 7 on a scale of 7, and in terms of the more practical emphasis on this goal, repair was assigned an average score of 5.3. All respondents noted that their JRP program addressed the goal of repairing harm, and did so through restitution, community service, apology letters.

On the stakeholder involvement issue, these programs seemed less consistent in their understanding of restorative justice principles. In terms of program vision, the three respondents who ran multiple programs were relatively high in their rating of the importance of victim participation (a mean score of 5.3), but clearly fell short of full commitment to this core idea in restorative justice. For other respondents focused on JRP, the response to both questions was only slightly higher. The response to the question about *current practice*, moreover suggests that the lower ranking (3 on the 7 point scale) may be due to the fact that there is some dissonance about the current ability of JRPs to effectively involve crime victims. This does not seem unusual for traditional restitution programs that were not for the most part informed by restorative principles. Also, the lack of victim participation may be remedied somewhat through the restorative panels, though thus far these have also not initially attracted wide participation from crime victims (See section on panels in this report).

As might be expected, restitution program respondents gave highest priority to engaging offenders actively in the process (a 7 in both vision and actual practice). More information is needed, however, on *how* the offender is asked to participate; for example, is the offender allowed input into the reparative contract, or is this court-ordered or otherwise mandated? Regarding the community, JRP respondents also gave high priority in vision and practice to community participation (6.7 for both responses). Yet, it is not clear what this means in reality; for example, is this level of involvement simply referring to the fact that citizens participate in some relatively passive way as in the case of manager of public parks who allow youth to community service in their agency? One respondent admitted that this was important, though less active participation was the norm in his program. Another discussed community participation in a much less positive (and less restorative) way as “school officials, police, and parents *calling us* if there are problems,” a definition that seems to suggest that the proper role for citizens is to ask the “experts” for help rather than, consistent with restorative principles, to take on more

responsibility for solving problems and meeting needs of offenders and victims with the support of the system.

A more appropriate form of involvement common to restitution programs, in other jurisdictions, for example, has been having employers directly involved in providing jobs for youth who have restitution orders, or having citizens work with offenders and victims in other ways to support reparative goals. If participation is limited to community service, this can mean that a library or park simply allows an offender to complete hours there, *or* it can mean that citizens work together with young people in community service crews -- building Habitat for Humanity homes or cutting firewood for the elderly for example.

No respondents associated with restitution programs reported having plans for increasing victim involvement, although one stated that more panels might increase participation. Two respondents said that they hoped to increase community participation through boards, but others had no specific plans other than to expand community service projects. Of those respondents reporting volunteer involvement in restitution programs thus far (not counting diversion), the estimate was that under 30 citizens had been involved. For the most part, it seems that victim participation has not been part of the restitution process in any direct way, nor is it viewed as important at this point in time. Although community involvement is seen as more important, it has thus far not been strong, and outside of the community service context is not viewed as vital to restitution programming.

### **Successful Completion: Program Theory and Logic**

Staff feel that the restitution project is successful because they build a relationship with the youth through discussing their needs and interests when finding community service sites and assisting them in meeting the terms of their probation contracts. They believe that they build a one-on-one relationship because they have the time to spend with the youth that SRS does not. Because youth cannot ‘fail out’ of the program, staff work closely with them until they have successfully completed; they cannot ‘give up’ on a youth. Some believe the restitution program works well precisely because the staff stay with the youth until they have had a successful completion—which should be a positive experience for them. Also staff feel that the relationship which develops with the restitution worker is useful for the youth when they have completed SRS and may need to contact someone for assistance, etc. JRP workers are said to get to know the youth, and some function essentially as mentors.

### **Initial Successes: What is Going Well With This Component?**

Based on field observations and interviewing, restitution staff appear to be very committed to youth and have positive attitudes about the ability of the youth to successfully complete their restitution and make lifestyle changes. First, they also seem very committed to building a relationship with the youth that will ensure success and some even feel that this relationship should extend beyond the requirements of the project so that youth have some adult support. Because restitution staff remain with the

youth until they complete the expectations of their restitution contract, there may be greater opportunity for youth to be successful and to benefit from positive role modeling.

Second, many restitution staff report going to the homes of the youth and talking with the parents about the restitution requirements and the plan for meeting reparative obligations. Some workers report they develop a better understanding and assessment of a youth's situation having seen where they live and getting a sense of parental support. This home contact is seen by JRP workers as a strength and one of the reasons they think they can more successfully work with the youth.

There have been many individual success stories with JRP youth. In one district, an offender completed his restitution hours, but because of the value he attached to his community service work and the sense of success he was experiencing, he completed an additional 20 hours on his own. In another example a group of young people had committed an offense together, but due to the age of some of the offenders, not all were placed under SRS probation. One of the youth began in the restitution project and had such a positive relationship with the restitution worker and good experience of paying back the victim for damages that several of the other youths who were not on probation raised several hundred dollars to also give the victim.

#### *Fit of Program Within the System and BARJ*

How and to what extent is the restitution program integrated with other programs? To what extent, for example, are restitution programs collaborating with SRS generally? Restitution and the checkers program were reported by one respondent to fit together very nicely because both promoted successful completion of probation conditions. Two respondents agreed that restitution also fit well with SRS goals by "monitoring and supporting each probation component," while another stated this more specifically and positively as assisting SRS with encouraging success in the probation experience.

The fit between restitution and the statewide BARJ strategy was less confidently expressed by most respondents. For one restitution provider, restitution programs were viewed simply as "the monitoring force/ factor behind the juvenile offender." For another, the JRP was said to fit into the BARJ effort simply because it was "another agency to hold the offender accountable for his conditions," and was believed to complement BARJ programs by allowing offenders to "face victims"[the latter an ironic comment in that this particular program reported virtually no victim involvement or plans to increase victim participation]. Yet another program director viewed the restitution program as playing a vital role in the state's BARJ effort by "encouraging accountability in youth through successful completion of the restorative aspects of their probation certificate." For this respondent, the JRP could in the future play a vital complementary role with other BARJ programs by "monitoring conditions of the youth's agreed requirement of the restorative panels and close collaboration with the agency's street checker." Other somewhat vague statements of "fit" such as "we try to mesh with other programs to do anything we can to help," or "we help to create a seamless continuum of services" did not inspire great confidence in some JRP respondents' understanding of BARJ goals.

Of the three respondents primarily associated with JRP programs, estimates of involvement of their clients in other programs ranged from 10 % in one program where that proportion of the restitution cases in the program was also a part of the checker program in the same agency, to 30% [with 10% being referred from panels and 20% involved in street checker), to a high of 95% in a program where that percentage was reportedly involved in either the street checker or the restorative panel program or both. In summary, there is substantial overlap in programs with clearly reparative components such as restitution and panels and with programs designed to ensure follow-through and support in completing obligations. While this overlap creates the potential for collaboration in creating a truly seamless set of restorative interventions, it may not do so if there is not common understanding of, and shared commitment to, restorative justice goals and clear articulation of the role of various programs in achieving restorative objectives.

Several of the restitution programs responded that they worked best when they collaborated closely with the checkers program and with the SRS workers. With the checkers program, many programs said they preferred almost daily contact to discuss their mutual clients and any issues of concern. Regarding the SRS office, the restitution workers said they preferred at least weekly contact so that they could be updated on other parts of the probation contract or other issues which may be going on with the youth. This is particularly important in cases where a youth may be getting into trouble, or when a change has occurred in the probation contract and the restitution worker needs to know in order to make necessary adjustments.

### **Initial Concerns**

The types of cases that are apt to be unsuccessful are those where the restitution amount was too high for the youth to actually achieve, or in which there were more serious issues which could not be addressed by the JRP program.

Like many other new BARJ programs, a number of youth originally referred to restitution programs were those that had been on probation a long time and had been unsuccessful up to that time under SRS supervision. As the restitution projects have received new youth, however, they have increased their success substantially. This success in the view of staff seems to extend across a variety of cases, including those involved in a variety of types of offending. (See general discussion for more of this issue).

In communities where there is little contact between restitution and the SRS probation worker or with other programs such as checkers or diversion, the restitution projects reported made difficulty in assisting the youth. Either they were unable to find a youth or felt the youth had an issue to be dealt with, yet the SRS worker seemed to be unavailable or the restitution worker believed them to be incapable of addressing the issue at hand.

Some programs responded that they needed some more ‘teeth’ to back up reparative plans. If a youth was not doing well, a series of graduated responses could show the youth that there were consequences to not completing their restitution requirements. Some programs said that currently if they called SRS to request a probation violation, nothing would happen and the youth quickly learned that there were no consequences to ‘screwing up.’

Finally, several of the programs reported that when a youth successfully completes their restitution requirements and have thus completed their probation, SRS is not closing their cases. This is problematic for the restitution worker who has used the closing of the SRS probation case as an incentive for the youth. When SRS doesn’t close the case right away, -- at times even if there are not additional requirements – the worker may lose credibility and trust with program youth. Also, some program staff indicated that they didn’t understand why cases were left open even if all the requirements have been met.

### **Recommendations for Maintenance or Enhancement of Programs**

The restitution programs are designed to oversee only the part of the probation contract that deals with monetary reimbursement to the victims or community service requirements. Often probation contracts also include the stipulation that the youth remain in school and (complete homework satisfactorily) as well as attend counseling or other intervention programs. These are not to be monitored by restitution workers as they are not considered under the framework of restitution. Because of the nature of the relationship that is developed as well as the time that the restitution worker has to work with the youth, it is worth a discussion of whether the restitution worker should also be involved in assisting the youth to meet the other expectations of their probation contract. While SRS workers would have final assessment and decision-making over the additional pieces in the contract, restitution workers may be useful in including these other pieces in their monitoring relationship with the youth.

One enhancement recommendation is to examine ways to extend the restitution relationship to a more informal mentoring role after the youth has completed the restitution expectations as a form of aftercare. Several restitution workers indicated that the youth needed support once they had completed their probation requirements to assist them in staying out of trouble. Because of the positive relationship developed with an adult, it may be worth examining whether an aftercare role or component could be developed.

# JUVENILE RESTORATIVE PANELS

## **Program Description**

### *Purpose: Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes*

Juvenile Restorative Panels (JPs) are intended to involve community volunteers to meet with probationers and their victim(s) to determine an appropriate restorative response to the offense. This response may include: community service, letters of apology, educational programs, etc. (See Appendix Table 2). The program coordinators and staff who responded to the program summary survey were in agreement with the intent of the programs. Several restorative panels are conducted as a post-adjudication, while at least one is conducted pre-adjudicatory alternative to court.

The general goals of the program are focused on holding young offenders accountable to victims, providing an opportunity to repair the harm done, developing positive connections between young offenders and to their communities, and developing life skills (competencies) that facilitate legal, healthy future behaviors.

The program outcomes as determined by SRS include: reducing the number of repeat juvenile offenders, reducing the number of juvenile violations of probation, increasing the number of juvenile offenders who comply with their terms of probation, and increasing the number of juvenile offenders who successfully complete their terms of probation.

The meaning of “successful completion” of the Juvenile Restorative Panels varied according to survey respondents: "offender compliance with their probation," "completion of the terms of their contracts," and "offender not reoffending."

## **What Kinds and How Many Referrals? Eligibility: Offender Profile and Referral Process**

Referrals for the JPs are received from the court and SRS. Of the eight program coordinators who responded to the survey, two JPs had received no referrals. Two other programs received two referrals each. Other programs noted: 18 (3 referrals per month), 10 (2 referrals per month), and 4 referrals (in 3 months). Six of the programs have received all referrals appropriate to the JPs. One respondent indicated that a few of the referrals had "mental health issues and are difficult to work with." Another coordinator mentioned that his program usually received appropriate referrals, however had received a serious offender.

## **Successful Completion: Program Theory and Logic**

Successful completion is determined once the youth has fulfilled all of the conditions of the restorative agreement. Conditions of the restorative agreement might include: a letter of apology to the victim, restitution, community service, and/or competency classes. One program coordinator added that successful completion means that the "victim is satisfied, offender follows through, becomes and remains engaged in useful, healthy community activities, and expresses feelings of being successful."

### **Consistency With Balanced and Restorative Justice Principles**

Overall, the program coordinators accurately defined the balanced approach as an approach that is not punitive. Responses to how the balanced approach is defined included that: the process holds the "offender accountable for the offense," "teaches skills," and "creates a safer community." When asked about accountability, respondents noted that the offenders "take responsibility," "a willingness to correct situation," and "juvenile understands the impact of the crime and chance to repair the harm." Competency development was defined as: "skills development," "offenders learn skills and behaviors that are socially acceptable," and "gaining new skills, make healthier choices, more options, better feelings of self." Community safety was understood as the community not being at risk of the youth reoffending and "community members feeling safe."

The JPs address the balanced approach goals by holding the youth accountable for the crime through letters of apology, restitution, and community service; competency development goals by utilizing educational programs and competency classes; and community safety goals are met when the offender meets the program goals, fulfills restorative agreement and order of probation. These goals were addressed by the programs and by incorporating other programs within the continuum of services.

Regarding commitment of the JPs to the restorative justice principle of repairing harm, this goal was clearly ranked high by all respondents. In terms of both vision and practical emphasis for the program, repair averaged 6.4 on a scale of 7 among these respondents. All respondents noted that their JP program addressed the goal of repairing harm, and did so through restitution, community service, and apology letters. The program coordinators also perceived victim satisfaction as an important outcome in terms of vision, ranked 7 on a scale of 7; in terms of practice, victim satisfaction was ranked 6.4 on a scale of 7. Offender taking responsibility was another high priority in terms of vision and practice, ranked by the coordinators as 6 on a scale of 7. Reducing court work was ranked lowest on the priorities in vision and practice, averaging respectively 2.6 and 2.4.

One of the primary motivations behind restorative panels is to provide a forum and "space" for citizen, family and crime victim to participate actively in discussion of the harm caused by crimes and in developing a response that holds offenders accountable and repairs harm to victim. This focus on victim and community involvement suggests that engaging the participation of these stakeholders should be a high priority for panel

staff. Indeed, involving victims was ranked highly by these respondents as a vision for their panel (6.8) but rather low in actual practice (5.0), perhaps based on an acknowledgement that victim involvement thus far has been relatively minimal (see discussion below). Community involvement has been somewhat better according to these respondents and the success of panels in volunteer recruitment, yet respondents gave slightly lower priority to citizen participation (a rank of 5.8 in vision and 6 in practice). Assisting victims was ranked 6.2 in vision suggesting that panel staff view victims as an important client or stakeholder, but 4.2 in practice indicating the lack of success in bringing victims to the table. Offender participation is of course also a high priority receiving ranks of 6.4 in vision and 6.8 in practice.

### **Successes**

JPs that have handled cases have responded positively to the success of the program and implementing the model. The programs have also been successful in recruiting and utilizing community volunteers as panel members. The eight programs have a total of 163 volunteers, ranging from 6-100 community volunteers in each program.

### **Fit of Program Within the System and BARJ**

The most likely combination of programs within the system included JPs, restitution, and street checkers. Two program coordinators also included street checkers programs as a likely combination. The proportion of youth in one or more programs was 100% of the programs that staff responded to the question, with three program staff not answering. The proportion of youth in two or more programs averaged 85%, with three program staff not answering. Essentially, then, it appears that JPs are not used as a stand alone intervention.

The JRPs are perceived by the program coordinators as fitting within the juvenile justice system as a sentencing option of the family court. Surprisingly, one respondent mentioned that the fit is "with difficulty [because] SRS is not accustomed to working with probationers." Another stated that panels are a component of "youth services work with a youth development approach that includes the youth in the decision process."

In terms of the program fit into the department's overall effort to implement BARJ throughout the state, program coordinators noted that it is "one of several programs along the continuum of services." One respondent stated that she is an "active member." Another program coordinator mentioned that the program "utilizes the balanced and restorative justice model in JRP." While these comments are interesting, they are perhaps somewhat narrow from a restorative perspective in that, with one exception, they not view panels as a very different and important decisionmaking intervention.

## **Problems and Concerns**

A majority of the program coordinators are concerned with the low number of referrals that have been received by the JRPs from SRS or the court. There have been no referrals to two of the programs.

There have been no concerns expressed about the conduct of panels thus far. Indeed, the process has seemed to proceed smoothly and shows promise of providing a uniquely juvenile justice approach to reparative boards. The following case studies provide more insight into the potential strengths of this model as well as concerns that may emerge. The case studies are followed by analysis and recommendations.

## **JP Case Studies**

On May 15, 2000, the evaluator, David Karp, observed two Juvenile Restorative Panel (JP) cases in Lamoille County, VT (Town of Morrisville). The cases were also observed by two SRS staff members from other counties (Ted Allen, SRS Supervisor, Washington County and Derek Miodownik, Panel Coordinator, Chittenden County). After the cases, the evaluator met with the four panel members/volunteers for 30 minutes, and then with three SRS staff for 2 hours (the additional staff member was Heather Hobart, Panel Coordinator, Lamoille County, who participated in the observed cases). This strategy enabled the participants to reflect on the JRP program by analyzing specific cases and comparing the observed cases with others held in Lamoille County and in other jurisdictions. In so doing, a concrete portrait of the program can be drawn, in Lamoille and beyond. (Note: This portrait does not effectively represent counties that did not have SRS staff in attendance. This gap will be filled in future evaluation activities.)

### *Setting*

The JP met at the county SRS office in the small town of Morrisville. The meeting was held in a conference room. Four panel members, the panel coordinator, and one other staff member from Diversion, sat on three sides of a rectangular table. In both cases, the juvenile offender and his mother (or step-mother), sat together on the fourth side of the table. The atmosphere was friendly, informal, and comfortable. Three of the four panel members were women; all appeared to be in the 50's or 60's.

### *Case Protocol*

Panel members are provided with case histories that describe the offense, statements from the juvenile offender and crime victims, biographical information about the juvenile, the court order, and police report. Panel members spend a few minutes clarifying circumstances before the offender is brought into the meeting.

In both cases, the panel coordinator facilitated the meeting. She began the meeting with a description of the process, took a lead role in asking questions, and

managed transitions from one subject to another, e.g., from the discussion of the crime to the negotiation of the contract. Nevertheless, the panel members spoke frequently, and were active decision-makers. That is, the panel coordinator facilitated, but was not domineering. The coordinator also took notes, keeping (impressively accurate) track of all suggestions made regarding the contract.

The meetings began with a description of the process, personal introductions, and then the juvenile was asked to provide an account of the crime. This is followed by a general discussion of the circumstances of the offender's life, while panel members probe for risk and protective factors. Some discussion occurred in both cases regarding how the event had negative impacts on the juveniles, placing them at risk for future harm and more significant formal social control, e.g., jail. Following this discussion, the panel discusses terms of the contract, a timeline for its completion, a date for a second meeting with the offender (at the end of the timeline), and concluding remarks offering support and encouragement to the offender. The first case lasted approximately 30 minutes, the second approximately 45 minutes.

Panel members and SRS staff identified several reasons why this protocol will achieved program goals. First, the JPs provide an opportunity for intensive collective focus on each case. Each case also receives follow-up over the course of the probationary period. Second, the JP provides a model of community support, in marked contrast to the problem social environments that many of these offenders often experience. Third, panel members are volunteers from the community, often having multi-dimensional connections to the juveniles. For example, one panel member knew the parents of one of the juveniles observed in this evaluation. Fourth, the JP creates an opportunity for offenders to become actively engaged in the justice process—sharing their own perspective, assuming responsibility for their behavior, and participating in the decision-making process.

#### Case #1

The first case involved a 15-year-old named Colt, who had been convicted of DWI nearly one year earlier. Apparently the long delay between arrest and JP appearance occurred because of adjudication. Following disposition, the panel met with him in a timely manner. Much of the discussion revolved around how Colt might avoid alcohol use. The panel also discussed Colt's work schedule (after school and on weekends at a local dairy farm). They asked questions such as, "What do you think you learned from all of this?" and "How do you think your parents felt about this?" They also involved Colt's mother in the latter question. The panel identified several ways in which the offense impacted Colt: lost wages, future cost of auto insurance, potential risk of appearing in adult court. A contract was negotiated and Colt was required to attend a Victim Impact Panel and write a 2-3 page report about it. He was also asked to write a short report discussing the idea of "graduated licenses" (which place stipulations on young drivers) and on a recent study that describes the risks of youth driving. The panel learned that Colt had previously completed the CRASH program (10-hour program on alcohol and driving) and is receiving counseling. The meeting ended with supportive statements such

as the following, “I’d like to suggest you’re not a bad guy; this is just a bump in the road.”

## Case #2

The second case involved a 15-year-old named Maurice, who had been involved in a break-in at a state park snack shop with a group of friends. This had occurred nearly a year earlier. The delay in this case, however, is a result of Maurice’s failure to complete the Diversion program. Much of the discussion with Maurice involved concerns around school failure and the identification of protective factors, such as his interest in auto-mechanics. A contract was negotiated that required Maurice to: (1) pay back \$11 as restitution for stolen soda at the snack bar—as reparation; (2) take a tour of the St. Johnsbury Jail—as a “heads-up” along the lines of “scared straight”; (3) find out how much it costs Vermonters to send Maurice to school—to reinforce the idea that he should not waste this privilege; (4) interview an auto mechanic and write a one-page report—to give him a sense of what skills are needed; and (5) write a short reflection on “what he would like to do in life—just dream.”

## *Juvenile Offenders*

The JPs handle youth adjudicated delinquents, ages 10-17, on probation for crimes that did not include violence. Inappropriate referrals sometimes occur, such as with a violent offense, and JPs are empowered to reject these cases. SRS staff concurs that this control should be sustained. As the program is new, it is taking some time for JPs to receive all possible appropriate cases. One coordinator noted that while both the state’s attorney and public defender in his county were aware of the program, and appeared to be supportive, they were simply entrenched in traditional dispositions, and needing further encouragement to include JPs.

Often, JPs meet with youths who have violated terms set in Diversion, or had previously been on Diversion, but have committed new offenses. In sum, while not violent offenders, JPs handle more intractable cases. Panel members and staff recognize this as a significant challenge, and tend to stress the importance of reintegration and the need to reduce the likelihood of re-offense.

Both Colt and Maurice were reticent, typically providing monosyllabic responses. Panel members sometimes see more active engagement of the offenders, but note that defensiveness and reticence is typical of this population. One panel coordinator observed that the single biggest obstacle to the JPs is eliciting emotional engagement, overcoming the youths’ tendency towards “apathy.” Both panel members and SRS staff emphasize the importance of emotional involvement. One staff member, for example, described a JP case in which the offender became so overwhelmed that he stormed out of the meeting for a brief period. With caution, he believed this to be a sign of success because that offender had become intensely involved in the process. Another staff member described one panel member as uniquely effective because of his ability to “connect with the kids on their level.”

## Recommendations

- ◆ Educate and re-educate the courts about the program.
- ◆ Have JP staff physically present at court to foster rapport with attorneys and judges.
- ◆ Encourage probation officers to write disposition requests that include JPs.
- ◆ Ensure the panel members understand the nature of this population, with special attention to their greater risk of re-offense than the Diversion population, and are trained to respond to their particular needs.
- ◆ Because many cases appear before JPs because of Diversion violations, ensure that any reparative terms negotiated in Diversion are re-assessed by the JP. In addition, clarify whether the panel should be focused on the original incident or the violation of Diversion.
- ◆ Teach panel members how to communicate with teenagers. In particular, respond to the challenges of eliciting emotional dialogue with boys.

### *JP Volunteers and SRS Staff*

Panel members are volunteers from the local community. They tend to be middle-aged, although in Chittenden County, panelists are significantly younger, with a majority being adolescents. At this stage, the effect of panelists' age is uncertain. Older panelists may play the role of "community elder," offering sage advice and respectability, while youthful panelists may provide better identification with offenders.

SRS staff members believe recruitment of additional panel members is necessary to sustain the program. This will be particularly necessary as case referrals grow. In addition, JRP volunteers may serve a variety of roles, such as victim liaison; parent liaison; school liaison; community service opportunity development; mentor program development, etc.

It is apparent that training of volunteers is inconsistent across jurisdictions. No comprehensive curriculum has been developed, nor has there been a training for trainers. While both SRS staff and panel members interviewed in this evaluation have demonstrated a good working knowledge of restorative principles and practice, and both groups share significant mutual respect. Yet, it is unclear how universal this high level of competence and knowledge may be. In one instance, SRS staff were concerned that panel members stressed with both Maurice and Colt that if they did not comply with the terms of their contracts, it was likely that they would end up in jail. Such an outcome is not likely and may undermine the credibility of the program in the eyes of savvy teenagers. More opportunities need to be offered for panel members and staff to learn about restorative justice and compare notes about best practices. In Washington County, panels have implemented a 15-minute debriefing session after each meeting with offenders. Panel members appeared delighted to have an opportunity to reflect on the cases they heard, and SRS staff members asked numerous questions of one another in order to learn how the JPs operate in each other's counties.

## Recommendations

- ◆ Recruit additional panel members from a variety of age groups, and diversify volunteer roles.
- ◆ Develop a comprehensive training curriculum, and provide training for trainers.
- ◆ Create opportunities for cross-jurisdiction reflection on best practices, for both volunteers and SRS staff.
- ◆ Create opportunities for panel self-reflection, such as a 15-minute debriefing following each case.

## *Crime Victims*

A special focus of the JPs is to make offenders accountable to victims, and create the opportunity for offenders to repair the harm of their offenses. In this regard, JPs have a greater focus on victims than Diversion, although Diversion's emphasis on victims may vary across the state. JPs contact victims and encourage their attendance, as well as gather any verbal or written statements the victims may wish to make. This victim focus is in marked contrast to the traditional juvenile court that excluded victims from participating in the adjudication process.

Victim attendance is rare, however, and this may be the result of a number of factors. Victims may not understand the value of the process or may not want to expend any more time or money on the incident (e.g., time off from work, transportation costs, etc.). In one case, the loss prevention officer at a large retail store turned down the opportunity to attend a panel meeting because he did not have the staff coverage to enable his attendance. Sometimes victims will not attend because they had already appeared before a Diversion board for the same incident. Many cases, perhaps most, do not have direct victims.

SRS staff appears to be satisfied with how panel members work with victims in JPs. However, they also believe that some cases would benefit from victim-offender mediation conducted by trained mediators. VOM might therefore become an item negotiated on the reparative contract.

## Recommendations

- ◆ Provide public education about the program and the community and victim role in restorative justice processes. This may be done through public forums; public available literature (including the web); and through media attention on the program.
- ◆ Develop a victim compensation fund to reimburse victim expenses for participation.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for victim-offender mediation, particularly by providing the resources to compensate trained mediators.

## *Parents of Offenders*

Parents provide an important role in JPs. Ideally, they will form an alliance with the panel in supporting the restorative goals of the program and enabling the juvenile to

take full responsibility for his or her behavior. Parents are seen as supporter of the offender as well as disciplinarian—holding them accountable, while fostering social development. Parents play a crucial role helping the child to understand some of the larger consequences of the offense—how it disappointed them, and how it inconvenienced them. In the observed cases, the mother (or stepmother) attended the meeting. This is typical, though sometimes fathers attend. While staff would “like the parents to be the ‘ultimate-engaged parent,’” parents do not always fulfill this role. Sometimes, parents fail to support the child in his or her attempts to comply with the court order. One staff member described how an offender was forced to hitchhike to the JP meeting because his father overslept. Sometimes, parent work in direct opposition by cultivating criminal values. Another staff member overheard a juvenile admonish his father: “God Dammit, I stole this battery fair and square, go get your own fuckin’ battery.”

Tension often arises between panel members and parents as they negotiate the terms of the contract. Panel members report that they often feel as if the parent is allied with the juvenile against the panel, rather than allied with the panel in support of a just resolution to the incident. In the case with Colt, it became evident that his mother did not want the panel to assign tasks to Colt, particularly community service or other activities that would require her assistance in transportation or conflict with any of his household chores (or his work schedule). The panel was caught in a bind: while they wanted to hold Colt accountable, but they did not want to burden his mother. This is a common predicament for the JPs.

### *Recommendations*

- ◆ Clarify the parental role with panel members, identifying how parents augment, or sometimes, undermine the JP meeting.
- ◆ Ensure that parents understand their role in the process, emphasizing that the panels are designed to support them in providing a healthy environment for their children. Ideally, this would involve a separate meeting with the parent, with SRS staff, or better, with the panel.
- ◆ Always have panels ask the parent to explain how the crime affected them.
- ◆ Develop mechanisms to enable juveniles to complete their contracts without the assistance of their parents when the parents have proven to be unreliable.
- ◆ Develop protocols with panels that will assist them in overcoming tension between JP and parental objectives. This may include major interventions such as recommendations for family counseling in order to develop parental alliance and support. It may include minor interventions such as experimenting with seating arrangements, for example, separating parent and child so that do not become an oppositional alliance (Note: this must be balanced by the need for parents to provide support for the youth).

### Obstacles to Restoration

Reparation of harm is central to the mission of JPs, yet several obstacles exist making this goal difficult to achieve. First, staff members observed that the program

offers little deterrence. If offenders fail to comply with reparative terms, nothing much will happen. It may be possible for them to violate probation orders until they turn 18, at which point they will be discharged. The need for realistic consequences is particularly acute since it is likely that offenders will know of the outcomes of others who violate contract terms through their own peer networks.

Second, both cases observed involved incidents that occurred nearly one year earlier (for reasons explained above). Because of this significant time delay, it becomes difficult for all parties to identify and articulate the criminal harm, and convey that with emotional intensity.

Third, in neither of the observed cases did the reparation of harm become a central focus of the meeting. This may have occurred because of the time delay, because neither case involved direct victims, or because restoration became a lesser concern to panel members than reintegration. In Maurice's case, for example, there was no discussion of the diversion contract, and whether or not it contained reparative tasks with the exception of his failure to and need to pay restitution of \$11. They did not ask Maurice questions that elicit the identification of harm such as, "How do you think the community was affected?"

Fourth, restoration often requires a solid infrastructure that will enable offenders to repair harm. This includes resources developed with SRS and cultivated in partnership with the community.

### Recommendations

- ◆ Identify realistic consequences for violations that are not retributive, but will serve as an adequate deterrent.
- ◆ Reduce time delays between offense and JP meeting wherever possible.
- ◆ Strive to identify all aspects of the harm caused by the offense; stress the need for relevant reparative activities.
- ◆ Develop restorative infrastructure such as (a) a program in which youths may work for pay in order to comply with restitution orders; (b) a community service work crew in which offenders can participate to repair both harm to victims and community (e.g., a list of needs might be compiled through interviews with affected parties).

### Obstacles to Reintegration

In concert with restoration, the JPs are focused on reintegration by developing the offenders' social ties to the community and helping them to develop social competencies. Since SRS also offers competency programs, JPs are made aware of these opportunities, but it appears that the caseworkers have taken primary responsibility for referrals. Similarly, panels are aware of other programs such as street checkers and detention should safety issues arise during the course of a panel meeting. Since the JPs are composed of community volunteers and not social work professionals, their role is best understood in terms of fostering social integration of the juveniles into their community

life. It is their task to find a positive social role for the youth in the community, by fostering tighter social bonds to educational, occupational, voluntary, or other local social institutions. Their creative role is to identify the best fit between a particular individual, his or her interests and needs, and a positive social role.

In the case of Maurice, for example, much time was spent discussing his interest in auto mechanics and possible educational and career opportunities, as well as the potential for finding support or mentorship that would capitalize on this interest. In another case, for example, one offender was assigned 1000 hours of community service. Although this number was surprisingly large, it was an intentional response to a need—the offender was expelled from school and was doing nothing—and an opportunity—a community member was willing to supervise his work maintaining local parks. Rather than draconian, the contract was designed to foster a positive social role for the offender in the context of an ongoing mentoring relationship. The panel also stipulated that the service hours might be reduced if the youth returned to school or obtained gainful employment.

Realization of social integration is difficult because JPs have few community resources to rely upon. While both staff and volunteers agree that this program's success is contingent upon the creation of an ongoing, positive mentoring relationships, mentors are not readily available, and few mentor programs exist.

### Recommendations

- ◆ Develop mentor programs or other opportunities for youths to establish ongoing relationships with positive adult role models.
- ◆ Develop close links to schools, churches, and other local institutions, so they may provide opportunities for reintegration. Relevant members should be invited to participate in panel meetings.
- ◆ Develop community service opportunities, particularly for younger offenders, ages 12-15, where greater supervision is necessary.

## COMPETENCY CLASSES

### Program Description

#### *Purpose: Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes*

As indicated in Table 3, competency classes are aimed at developing cognitive skills and enhancing problem-solving capacities in young offenders. They are intended to reinforce and support the competency development goal of the Balanced Approach and generally provide a structured format for youth to gain a range of “life skills” including conflict resolution, anger management, time management, etc. (See Appendix Table 3)

The competency class consists of six units from the Botvin curriculum and a victim’s impact curriculum. It consists of a total of 6 weeks of classroom material assuming that youth who attend straight through can complete it in that timeframe. However, one respondent in the program summary survey described an 8-9 week offering.

The core intervention in the Competency classes are the Botvin Life Skills Curriculum, though specific programs appear to add their own component and exercises depending on part on instructor preference. A new victim’s impact curriculum has just been received by the programs and will be included as an additional module that can be taught on its own or in conjunction with the regular competency class curriculum.

Results from the Program Summary Survey completed by directors of four programs currently offering competency classes at the present time revealed a range of understandings of overall goals, desired outcomes and definitions of successful completion and how to determine success. In general, program directors saw competency classes as helping young people develop social skills to solve problems in non-aggressive ways with the overall goal of reducing risk of reoffending. One program director said that the goal was to help young people “lead healthier lives.”

Specific outcomes listed by respondents included: a reduction in new offenses, increased parental participation, and fewer probation violations—or helping youth complete probation successfully. One respondent was, however, more focused on balanced and restorative justice goals noting that his programs [which included competency classes with several other interventions] were aimed at the overall goal of repairing harm, giving offenders any opportunity to see new options, to become part of the community, and to provide positive role models. Specific outcomes listed were offenders taking responsibility for making amends; “victims feeling safe, restored, and satisfied;” and both victim and offender forming lasting positive relationships with their communities.

## *Understanding and Operationalizing the Balanced Approach Mission: Goals and Relevant Practices*

In response to questions about the Balanced Approach mission and how their competency class program addressed mission goals, one respondent reported that “we don’t use the Balanced Approach we use a youth development approach,” and defined the former as addressing “equally the needs of offender and community.” Another defined the BA mission as a “proactive approach to crime and actualization of the entire society,” and said that competency classes addressed the mission by “helping young people to help themselves.” Two other respondents were, however, more accurate and more articulate in their understandings of the mission and in how they were attempting to apply it.

One defined the mission as “giving equal consideration to the needs of victim, offender, and community and attending to the needs of all to take responsibility and be reintegrated into the community.” He noted that his program attempted to bring together community, victim and offender to “make decisions, help all gain insight, and assist all in working together to improve the health of the community and create a better environment for kids.” Another defined her “Libra Program balanced mission” as combining competency classes, street checking daily, and community service aimed at holding youths accountable for their behavior and to their victims. Her life skills competency classes were said to accomplish these goals by providing conflict resolution, problem-solving decision making, and communication skills. Classes also explore how each person’s actions effect the community, and three sessions include victim impact awareness. Both the latter responses were also more accurate in defining the specific goals of the balanced approach, while the other two left one or more blank and inaccurately defined these goals.

For the most part, problems were more a result of a general failure of respondents to articulate any clear goals and outcomes related to the Balanced Approach mission. In some cases, practices believed to operationalize the Balanced Approach in these programs were generally not connected logically to goals. For example, it is not clear how competency classes were addressing the goal of “bringing victim and community and offender together to solve problems” [nor is it clear that these classes should be expected to address this goal]. When asked how his program (s) addressed the accountability goal, another respondent suggested that accountability for youth in programs was primarily about staff adding consequences. Some respondents did not appear to have a basic grasp of the meaning of mission goals—defining accountability, for example, as “making better decisions,” or competency as “understanding the consequences of one’s actions,” and competency development as “being assertive and identifying and knowing anger.” Practices addressing accountability were limited to panels (which had not yet begun), and addressing accountability for those in the program on a daily basis was said by one respondent to be accomplished by ensuring that “they will be punished and not allowed to return.” Practices addressing competency development listed by this respondent included learning: “how to be assertive, decision making, and identifying and knowing anger.”

For two respondents who indicated some understanding of the mission and goals, however, a linkage to practice was effectively made by moving beyond the competency classroom setting itself to other activities and contexts. In one case, for example, the respondent pointed to community service as a way to build and reinforce competencies to make offenders “feel more a part of their community.” Another respondent whose agency directed 3 SRS programs was able to link several practices to the specific goal of accountability to the community -- service, by ensuring that citizens were involved in decision making -- and to the victim, through restitution. His program also was able to address competency development creatively through community service in those sites that, as he put it, allowed youth to learn skills. His program also offers budget counseling and career, education, and seeks to provide a very important linkage between young offenders and one or more law-abiding adults. This program seeks on a daily basis to address competency development through “coaching, helping clients formulate plans, and solve problems.” Because competency classes, without such linkages to other interventions, have the potential to become insular, closed-system programs, individual staff efforts to reinforce learning from classes with meaningful service or work opportunities and relationship building—or vice-versa—may be the key to ensuring that these classes truly address competency goals.

### **Restorative Justice Principles**

The purpose of this section of the survey was to attempt to get a reading on overall consistency of competency classes with restorative justice principles. The survey questions did this in part by addressing understanding of, and commitment to the ideas of repairing harm as a primary goal of intervention and engaging stakeholders in the process of doing so. In response to the questions “does your program seek to repair harm” and “what practices address reparation of harm,” the respondents were generally unable to address this for competency classes alone. Those whose agencies also operated panels or restitution referred to those practices in response to this question. On questions about what outcomes were important to their program’s *vision*, competency class participants similarly ranked repair a 5 on a 7 point scale, and a 3.5 in actual *practice*, relative to other goals such as punishment, offender reintegration, public safety and so on. Regarding community and victim involvement, even as part of the program’s *vision*, these goals ranked relatively low (5.5 and 5.3, respectively), and in practice ranked, 4.5 and 4.6.

Regarding the future, responses to questions about intent to involve victims or community members suggested that generally there were no plans for such involvement other than trying to get victims to participate in a victim awareness component in one program, and families in another. In programs with multiple components, stakeholder involvement was discussed in terms of plans for involvement in community service and victim participation in panels.

In general then, there appeared to be little incorporation of a restorative justice framework in either the vision or practice of competency class programs. Because making these linkages is less straightforward, this is not surprising. However, as

indicated by some respondents' discussion of community service as addressing both competency development and accountability [and by comment from panel staff about the value of community service as a monitoring opportunity -- see Restorative Panel section of this report] competency both conceptually and practically within a restorative justice framework

### *Successful Completion: Program Theory and Logic*

When asked how they would determine if they were successful in achieving goals and outcomes, the four respondents interpreted the question as a methodological one and noted that they would seek to discover whether youth had reoffended, by "street checking" in one program where the street checker also conducted the competency classes, or by close monitoring and follow-up with the SRS worker. When asked more specifically how they defined "successful completion," however, respondents from St. Albans and Rutland respectively reported that: "they are successful when they completed 12 weeks with no new reoffenses and engage in appropriate behavior with less than two absences;" and "when they attend 6 weeks and participate and at the end know something they didn't know at the beginning." The other two respondents basically said that successful completion was defined as completing all classes successfully. Although this is OK as it stands, an obvious question is what kinds of changes in the young offender are anticipated. For the respondent more focused on restorative justice goals, the questions about determining and defining success were answered by saying that volunteers would continue to be involved, victims would be more satisfied, and offenders would build and sustain strong relationships.

Closer examination and discussion of classes with program staff on site revealed that overall "success" in competency classes is determined at three levels. The first level of success occurs when they have completed all the coursework in the six-week competency class cycle.

The second level of success is when a youth has integrated the skills taught in competency classes and exhibits them through changed behavior. For example, students may deal with a conflict in a more effective way using techniques learned in the class, they may be able to discuss their offense behavior with more insight or increased sense of accountability, or when they describe having a different view of self as in increased self-esteem or seeing their own potential.

The third level of success is a reduction of recidivism for those youth who have participated in the competency classes and an enhancement of positive behaviors when they return to school and when they are in the community.

What makes this program successful in the eyes of the administrators and staff? Staff feels that the competency classes are successful because they are designed to teach the skills they need to make more positive and healthy choices in their lives. The content of the curriculum is also designed to teach the youth to recognize the consequences of their behavior and how to make different choices for different outcomes. The classes are

designed to give the students opportunity to practice the skills they are learning. One program uses the issues that come up in class as material upon which to apply the curriculum. Another program has the youth complete a project at the end of the program where the students must exhibit some of the material they learned in class.

### **How Many and What Kinds of Referrals? Eligibility: Offender Profile and Referral Process**

One respondent reported having received 28 referrals to date, all appropriate for the program. Another had received 41, and stated that not all were appropriate because they were “too young” and needed a “higher level of care.” Another program had only received four referrals—two each in the two months prior to completing the survey -- and all but one was appropriate. Another had received 22, and was averaging about 10 per month; these referrals were viewed as not always appropriate because some sex offenders and “extremely nonmanagable” case have been sent.

### **Initial Successes: What is Going Well With this Component?**

Of the competency classes that were able to get off the ground and continue at some level of consistency, those staff seem very committed to program youth and have a very positive attitude about their ability to successfully complete the classes, integrate the material and make some lifestyle changes.

In addition, some competency classes use using a variety of enhancements to the curriculum to make it more effective for the youth. For example, one instructor has additional written materials and worksheets that she uses to enhance the classes. Another instructor has students do projects together or other activities so that he can apply the curriculum material to the issues that arise. This instructor also sought to work with the restitution program to ensure that community service work also reinforced competency development objectives. One program has an ‘incentive’ bag where youth who have been particularly attentive or have done well during the class night, can choose something from the bag such as highlighter pens, stuffed animal, etc. This has worked very well with the younger students and the teacher is looking for items that would be appropriate for older youth.

Another program has been very creative in moving the location of the classes in order to accommodate youth who could not attend class. The instructor has also been very pro-active in finding additional participants in order to make up a full class. Another instructor talked about creating games to address the behavioral problems that arise in class, so that youth could address these issues more effectively. For example, one evening after several futile efforts to hold class attention, students created a checklist game to note every time they ‘got off task’ as a group. This technique helped students become conscious of their behavior in a creative, rather than in a blaming way.

### *Fit of Program within the System and with the BARJ Model*

To what extent is this program integrated with other programs? For example, are competency development programs collaborating with restitution, checker programs and SRS generally?

Competency class staff typically reported that their clients were involved in multiple programs with the most likely combination being classes and street checkers, followed by restitution and classes. “The question addressed here is to what extent classes reinforce other programs. These respondents saw a “fit” between the competency classes and other components of the juvenile justice system, though not always with the effort to implement BARJ. Some mentioned classes as a preventative service for first offenders, and one respondent talked about the classes as “providing the tools” youth need to stay out of trouble. One respondent saw the classes as providing the skill development component of juvenile justice and also noted that classes reinforce the “rehabilitative plans” of SRS kids. One respondent failed to answer questions about how classes fit. For most the fit was not something they had thought much about: one respondent said in answer to a question about how classes might complement other programs that classes simply “filled unmet needs,” while another said this would happen if SRS would simply “refer youths from other programs to mine.”

Because of the multiple program involvement of youth in these classes, it is very important that the competency class instructor be part of any joint meetings held in order to share insights about specific youth and gain input into how they might use the curriculum to respond to these issues. In addition, because youth involved with community service are evaluated as to how well they integrate the curriculum on the job site, competency class staff feel it is important that they are made aware of the youth’s program involvement. When team meetings including the other programs in which youth are involved, such as street checkers and restitution, are not held regularly, staff reported that they felt they could not be as effective in using the material meaningfully and felt that they were fragmented from the rest of the system.

The earlier question about involvement of competency class youth in multiple programs indicates that there is substantial overlap between this component and other BARJ programs. Competency class staff reported that there cases were typically involved in one other program, with the most likely combination being competency and street checker, followed by restitution and/or community service.

### **Initial Problems and Concerns**

A number of the competency classes have had problems getting referrals, and this is a continuing problem in at least one of the districts. Several of the programs also received what were viewed as very difficult referrals in the very beginning of the program. Youth who languished on probation for a very long time before referral to the program, for example, generally did not complete the competency curriculum. New

referrals to SRS, regardless of offense, on the other hand, seem to be more successful in completing classes.

Most program staff indicated that they were full satisfied with the pre-post test currently being used to evaluate their programs. One program has created another pre-post test, and another only uses parts of the test. Eventually, it will be important to develop a common instrument and process for all programs; ideally, such a test would gage success in core competencies as defined in the BARJ model across all programs regardless of site specific differences in the curriculum.

The victim's impact curriculum has only recently arrived, so classes have not had time to integrate this material or establish a curriculum sequence. This was a frustration to some of the instructors, but should correct itself now that the curriculum is available.

Other problems and concerns in specific programs include difficulty with students who were unable to complete the full program cycle because of inconsistent attendance, or in another instance, simply because the instructor had not been informed by the SRS office that the youth was no longer on probation. In one program, instructors were unable to control the class and hired extra staff just to police the entranceway and assist in monitoring the youth. This class and contract has since been cancelled and a new contractor is being sought for this district.

### **Initial Recommendations for Maintenance or Program Enhancement**

Finding a process for obtaining consistent referrals to the competency classes and establishing a pattern for a class cycle so that youth who miss a class can make it up on the next round seem important issues to address. All programs reported making progress in this area, so maintaining that progress seems to be essential. Giving staff and others broad input into how to make the current pre-post test more acceptable valid and reliable could enhance competency classes overall and improve consistency.

Training for all competency class staff on competency development/strengths based principles could also improve the quality and consistent of practice. Strategically, efforts to integrate classes with other interventions and programs with competency development implications would enhance current practice.

# **STREET CHECKERS**

## **Program Description**

### *Purpose: General Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes*

The goals of the street checker program are to decrease the number of repeat juvenile offenders, decrease the number of violations of probation, and ensure compliance with conditions of probation. Checkers are intended to reinforce and support the accountability goal of the Balanced Approach by ensuring that youth complete reparative obligations as well as other for conditions of probation. The program also intends to achieve the community safety goal by providing community supervision (through supervision at school, at home, and in the community) for youth assigned to this program.

The program is structured to direct youth toward more acceptable activities, support parents in supervising their children, and improve communications among agencies, school, court, home, and the community. (See Appendix Table 4)

Results from the Program Summary Survey completed by directors or staff of six street checker programs revealed a range of understandings of overall goals, desired outcomes and definitions of successful completion and how to determine success. In general, these staff perceived this program as “keeping the youth on track,” “providing a safer community,” and equipping “youth with other means of acting and attaining goals.”

Specific outcomes listed include decreases in: out of home placements, placement at local detention, recidivism, subsequent adjudications, and violation of probation adjudications. Respondents also mentioned reductions in the intensity level of probationary supervision, increased compliance with conditions of probation – including regular conditions (e.g., curfew, school attendance, work attendance, drug or alcohol use), special conditions (as specified by other court orders, i.e. treatment), and reparative conditions (e.g., “attending classes and or service sites,” other scheduled programs), -- as important outcome for the checker program.

## **Balanced Approach Goals and Objectives**

In response to questions about the Balanced Approach (BA) mission and how their street checkers program addressed mission goals, one respondent reported that the program addressed all three aspects, community protection, competency development, and accountability. Another respondent noted that the program achieved the goals of the BA “where the needs of offender, victim, and community are met, keeping the youth on track, [providing] safety for the youth and community, and [allowing] the youth to learn new or other means of acting or attaining goals.” A third respondent noted that the program addressed the BA goals as being ‘somewhat met by holding youth accountable where being successful is a goal, an accomplishment.’

Most of these respondents were more comprehensive in defining the specific goals of the balanced approach in later questions. However, one respondent was not sure what the BA mission was and how the program reflected this mission.

Practices operationalizing the Balanced Approach were generally not connected logically to these goals. For example, it is not clear how street checkers were addressing the goal of “bringing victim and community and offender together to solve problems.” But for the most part, the problems were more a result of a general failure to articulate goals and outcomes at all for these programs.

Respondents were moderately clear on the goals of the BA. Respondents were in consensus that the accountability goal was met youth “taking responsibility for [their] actions.” A respondent went further by saying “24 hours a day, seven days a week.” Another noted that accountability restored the community for the delinquent act. One respondent felt accountability meant that the “youth learned to respect behavioral limitations in home, school, and community.” Competency development was defined as “developing skills to accomplish a given task” and “learning socially appropriate behavioral (e.g., work and personal) skills.” Another respondent defined competency development as “working on building skills and knowledge to effectively interact with the community” and through “community service.” The community safety goal was accurately defined as “citizens feeling a sense of comfort in the community.” One respondent stated that if the community safety goal was breached, a “violation of probation would occur with additional charges and conditions [incurred, which may mean] lock up residential [facility].”

The respondent who was not sure how his program addressed the BA mission reported that the program had indeed done no work with victims, but did note that and accountability was addressed to “the community through community service, restitution, and apology.” Another respondent confused the BA with restorative justice principles by addressing the accountability goal as “making the victim, offender, and community whole again after the offender’s successful completion” of the program. One program staff stated the program addressed these goals by “checking if the youth is doing community service and acting responsible.”

### *Restorative Justice Principles*

Several survey questions attempted to gauge overall consistency with restorative justice principles by addressing understanding of, and commitment to the ideas of repairing harm as a primary goal of intervention and engaging stakeholders in the process of doing so. In response to the questions “does your program seek to repair harm” and “what practices address reparation of harm,” the respondents generally said “no” or “not applicable.” One respondent added “other than accountability, no.” The respondents also answered negatively to the question about whether the program sought to repair harm to the crime victim.

On questions about what outcomes were important to their program's *vision*, street checker program respondents similarly ranked repair a 4 on a 7 point scale, and surprisingly slightly higher 5.3 in actual *practice*. Victim satisfaction was the lowest ranked response at 1.6 for *vision and practice*. Offender issues were ranked highest on the scale for *vision and practice* –offender rehabilitation (5.8 and 6.0 respectively), offender taking responsibility (6.5 and 6.8 respectively), resolving conflict (6.3 and 5.7 respectively) and keeping offenders out of court (6.5 both responses). The latter higher responses suggest that checkers also recognized a role for themselves in the offender – focused aspects of restorative justice while admitting that repairing harm is not foremost in their minds as objective of street checking.

Regarding the future, responses to questions about intent to involve victims or community members suggested that there were no plan for such involvement. One respondent mentioned involving community members such as “school officials, law enforcement, parents, and social service agencies (e.g., SRS). In response to plans for getting community more involved in programs, one respondent answered “maybe.”

### **How Many and What Kinds of Referrals? Eligibility: Offender Profile and Referral Process**

The Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services was the primary source of referrals listed by all respondents. Other referral sources include schools, community alternative programs, and court.

In only one instance were all referrals to checker programs viewed as appropriate (in this case the program had only two referrals). In another program, several youth who had been referred reportedly needed residential services and were re-referred to SRS. Another program stated that approximately 60% were appropriate, because several youth were not willing to participate in the program, ran away, or needed a higher level of services. This view by checker staff may be either an indication that staff has an unrealistic expectation of the level of compliance of this population of offenders, or a sign that referrals are indeed inappropriate. The concern of course is that this program not be used for “easy” cases because to do so would jeopardize the likelihood of achieving one of the primary program goals, decreasing out of home placements.

There were a total of 107 referrals for the six responding street checker programs combined. The number of referrals at the time of survey completion ranged from 1 to 41.

### **Successful Completion: Program Theory and Logic**

All respondents involved in checker programs reported complied that successful completion was achieved when the “youth complies with all conditions and completes probation.” One respondent added that successful completion meant that youth were “taken off street checker for good behavior.” Another respondent noted “no reoffending.”

In reality, overall success of the street checkers is measured on three levels. The first level of success is considered when youth are found where they are supposed to be at various times during the day such as being home by curfew times, attending classes as expected, and being at the job site completing community service. The street checkers add another layer of daily accountability, monitoring and support for the youth through a positive consistent relationship. The second level of success is the increased compliance with the conditions of probation and other program expectations through increased supervision and collaboration with other agencies working with the youth. Success here is measured when a youth has successfully completed all of the conditions of probation and is successfully discharged. The third level of success is a reduction of delinquent acts for those youth who have been assigned a street checker.

The street checkers describe their role as one of accountability and support for the youth in assisting them to meet the expectations of their probation conditions. The street checkers believe that they are successful because they develop a relationship with the youth and their parents such that they feel the checker is there to help the youth get through his probation conditions. In addition, checkers add a layer of adult contact with the youth and parents that can become a supportive relationship, and they may also identify other issues that may arise and warrant intervention or services such as substance abuse by the youth or parental child abuse.

Most of the street checkers interviewed mentioned that they conduct intake sessions at the home of the youth so that they can observe their surroundings and meet youth and parents in familiar and comfortable territory. This approach is believed to establish a good relationship from the beginning so that when they make surprise visits to check curfew, the parents recognize them, and begin to understand their role. The street checkers also see themselves as being able to serve as a liaison between the families, youth and SRS.

The SRS administrators and staff participated in a recent program focus group. The following successes were identified: there are more services to the youth on probation with following a plan; youth follow a probation order; youth are released from probation when the orders are met; the program include a continuum of services, JRPs, restitution, competency classes, street checker, and community service; youth assigned to street checkers are being seen by street checkers, SRS workers, and other staff who are involved in programs that the youth are assigned to. This provides positive reinforcement to the youth giving them limited room to violate their probation order. Staff are aware of positive negative issues associated with the youth's progress in fulfilling the probation order; collaborative effort, interaction, and communication among system partners: police, school, SRS, provider. Communication and collaboration among system partners including SRS, school providers, police etc., have increased since the proper implementation of these programs.

## **Initial Successes: What is Going Well With This Component?**

### *Fit of Program Within the System and BARJ*

Several of the respondents saw the program fitting approximately within the juvenile justice system, but were less certain about the role of checkers in the BARJ system. Other respondents stated that the program was “part of monitoring the probation order.” One respondent was “not sure” (in fact, this respondent was not sure of the program fit within the department’s overall BARJ effort throughout the state, nor how the program complemented BARJ). In response to the program fit within the department’s overall BARJ effort throughout the state, a few respondents said “very well.” Another said, “to hold youth accountable for conditions of probation.” When asked about how the program complemented BARJ, one respondent noted that this occurs through “collaboration with other programs.” Another respondent said that the program “encourages youth to complete probation and requirements.” Another respondent said that the programs are “all encompassing.” One program provider stated that the program contributes “more intensive services after hours and follow up to other programs.”

The street checkers are all very active in locating and supporting the youth they have on their caseload. Several described strategies to ensure that youth get to “where they are supposed to be,” such as sometimes providing transportation. If youth miss curfew or cannot attend counseling or competency classes, some trackers attend with them. Other accompany youth to job sites to assist in the transition, talking to them about being with their delinquent peers or other limitations of their probation conditions. Furthermore, trackers report that they learn more about offenders because of their frequent and varying contact with them and their parents and thus may have a greater opportunity to observe other problems which may indicate a need for referral such as substance abuse or child abuse. The street checkers also feel that they are often able to develop a good relationship with parents, and that parents use them as an additional support mechanism for their disciplinary efforts with program youth.

One street checker mails different kinds of information to youth and parents so that she can talk to them about the information when she sees them, or uses it as a foundation for striking up a conversation with the parents and youth. The youths tell her that they like receiving the mail and they do read it.

The street checker programs apparently work closely with all the other programs and assist in seeing that the youth successfully meet requirements and ultimately all probation conditions. The street checkers assist with restitution, for example, ensuring that program youth make it to job sites to complete their community service. They assist the competency classes by assuring that the youth attend, and then locating them when they do not show up for class. The street checkers assist probation by monitoring curfew and other conditions such as avoiding contact with other delinquent peers, abstaining from substance abuse, and so on.

The street checkers report that monitoring works best when they are able to maintain at least weekly contact with SRS and other programs. In particular, they need timely information from the SRS workers if conditions of probation have changed or if they need to be aware of additional issues.

Regarding overlap with other program survey respondents reported that their cases were typically (77%) involved in one other program, with the most likely combination being street checker and juvenile restorative panels, followed by restitution.

### **Initial Problems and Concerns**

Based on comments made at a recent SRS street checkers provider meeting, staff boundaries are a concern in relation to what level of intervention the street checker is supposed to provide. Specifically, this concern appears to be with a blurring of the specific role and duties of the street checkers. SRS workers want the street checkers to report to them and avoid decisionmaking about cases. Yet, the street checkers feel that it is difficult to limit their involvement to reporting only. Thus far, a number of street checkers appear to have established a strong relationship with individual youth, families, and schools. Although this fact in itself is not problematic – and may indeed be viewed in a positive light – the concern is that checkers may begin to assume responsibilities associated with the more professional, case manager of SRS probation officers, simply by virtue of their common link to SRS, program providers, community institutions such as schools, and young offenders and their families.

As part of their role, checkers have also expressed a concern with connecting youth with the community, e.g., intramural sports, school/community newspapers, community group activities. The intent is to connect the youth with an activity to establish a long-term relationship with as part of transitioning into the community.

Some respondents reported that the number of conditions placed on probation client were so great that it was difficult for youth to keep track of rules and regulations. As a result, many eventually ‘bomb out’. As long as the conditions are workable, most street checkers believe they and the youth can come up with a plan and a short-term set of goals. Various street checkers indicated that it was sometimes difficult to be effective with youth who were not meeting the expectations because there were few consequences for noncompliance available from SRS. One street checker works in two districts and reported that this requires spending a substantial amount of time driving to complete curfew and other monitoring checks. It is his understanding that this situation may change in the future. Another street checker indicated how difficult it was to monitor several different curfew hours, having some youth with 7, 8 and 9 o’clock requirement. Although they understood age-difference needs, several felt that curfew check would be easier if the times were closer together.

One street checker indicated that youth quickly figured out that there were no real consequences if checkers caught them doing something they weren’t supposed to do. This has been a source of frustration, as some checker described reporting a violation to

SRS and getting no response. This particular street checker reported overcoming this difficult by changing her attitude toward the youth and focusing more on the assistance part of the relationship, and not the punitive, monitoring part. She continues report violations to SRS, however, but her approach with the youth was to be more persuasive rather than threatening.

Another street checker noted that in the most difficult cases, the parents may also not follow through, and this may place the youth in the difficult position of being held accountable for not complying with the probation conditions. For example, if the youth is supposed to be attending classes or counseling sessions and the parents cannot or will not provide transportation, or if the parents refuse to cooperate with the street checker, this creates a very difficult situation for both youth and street checker.

When team meetings do not occur, or when the street checkers are unable to reach the SRS staff, then the mission of the street checker is substantially diminished. One of the biggest problems reported by the street checkers is when the communication with SRS breaks down especially with a change in the status or the location of a youth—such as if they go into foster care or are moved to another foster home. On such occasions, the street checker needs information quickly to make adjustments to their monitoring.

## **Recommendations**

These programs seem to be working fairly well across Vermont. The types of issues which affect the success of these programs has to do with their ability to receive timely information from SRS on changes in probation conditions as well as the ability to report to SRS any violations or concerns with youth so that appropriate and timely interventions can occur.

Some of the street checkers indicated that the tracking notes and case management notes were repetitious and wondered if there was a way to combine the two in order to be able to document substantial case management information on the youth and make quick notes on tracking on the same form.

In some places, restitution and checkers have quite a bit of overlap. In some areas, the restitution workers take a lot of the case management role and coordinate contact with the parents. In other places the checkers operate as the liaison with the families and restitution does not have as much contact. In such cases, the checker may be placed in the awkward role of case manager despite his/her lack of experience for this level of responsibility. Some discussion on roles and how to best utilize the relationships with the families and the youth might help.

While this is not an enhancement *per se* of the checkers program, a several checkers indicated that it would be useful to provide training for parents on how to set limits for their children, how to parent adolescents, how to offer them choices and then hold their children accountable for decisions they make. Others also mentioned that there were actually only a few families (7-8 in one particular District) that were in crisis and

using up all of the resources. From this perspective, finding a way to intervene with families that need more services would be a good enhancement to the overall system.

In a truly BARJ model, checkers would be constantly reinforcing restorative accountability, would facilitate and attain competency development, and seek out and develop community guardians to support their surveillance and supervision.

## COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTERS

### Program Description

#### *Purpose: Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes*

Currently, three Community Justice Centers (CJC) are operating in the communities of Bennington, Burlington, and St. Johnsbury. Each CJC incorporates different programs and emphasizes different program goals. From the perspective of SRS CJCs may help to meet several juvenile justice and BARJ objectives, including: strengthening connections with the community; developing relationships between youth and adults; and responding to community needs. Several goals and objectives of CJCs are related to SRS objectives -- and to the overall goal of reducing recidivism -- while others are more generally linked to community safety, citizen participation and community-building. (See Appendix Table 5)

The stated goal of the Bennington CJC is to establish substantive communication among student, family, and school and to provide a student-centered plan for education. Toward this end, the Bennington CJC features a school-based mediation program for truants or students at risk of dropping out of school. The Burlington CJC facilitates a Juvenile Restorative Panel program and serves as a resource center for community services. The primary stated goal of the Burlington CJC relevant to SRS objectives is to engage youth to actively participate in the restorative justice process in order to successfully complete the conditions of their probation contract. The outcomes that it seeks to achieve include: offender accountability to the victim and the community, offender responsibility to self and family, and an extended connection with the community. Several objectives have been identified for the St. Johnsbury CJC including: 1) providing information and referral services to local residents, 2) providing education and training to residents in conflict resolution, 3) providing conflict resolution skills and services mediation, family group conferences, reparative boards (adult) and restorative panels (juveniles). An overall goal for the St. Johnsbury CJC is to provide needed services to the victim, the community, and the offender.

### **Understanding and Operationalizing the Balanced Approach Mission: Goals and Relevant Practices**

In response to questions about the Balanced Approach (BA) mission and how their CJCs addressed mission goals, two respondents were unsure of the mission. Another respondent incorporated restorative justice principles in the response, “inclusion of victim, community and offender who meet and discuss the impact of harm caused by a juvenile’s offensive behavior.” This respondent also stated that “it is further defined by an overall review of the present systemic approach to juvenile justice and a renewed commitment to enhance government and non-governmental partnerships to enable an effective holistic approach that attend to the individual needs of juveniles. “

Respondents were not entirely clear on how the BA mission fits with the program goals, and were somewhat constrained in their articulation of mission goals and how program practice addresses these goals. One respondent discussed accountability as “demonstration of respect for the victim, ability to verbally and sincerely apologize for offensive behavior, ability to restate the impact of the offense to the victim, ability to be responsible for restitution owed to the victim, and ability to successfully complete the program.” Another respondent noted that accountability to the victim is addressed by the offender’s appearance and participation at restorative panels and group conferences. Competency development was described (somewhat narrowly) by one respondent as participating “in social skills and educational competency improvement classes.” Another responded to the question of how competency development was addressed on a daily basis at the program at his CJC, “through discussion of educational goals with the mediator, school personnel, and fellow students.” This respondent further stated that his program addressed the public safety goal by ensuring that students were “enthusiastically enrolled in school” and therefore less likely to present a threat to public safety.” One respondent was unsure about specific operationalization of BA goals.

In response to the questions, “does your program seek to repair harm” and “what practices address reparation of harm,” one respondent noted that the program seeks to repair harm to crime victims through restorative panels and group conference contracts. One CJC Director understands “that any harm caused to a victim may not be reparable. There are, however, steps that the juvenile probationer may take to express remorse and an understanding of the impact the harm may have caused to a victim. Certainly, financial remuneration for property loss, stated apology, and restatement of a victim’s perspective validates the victim.” One CJC does not have any contact with crime victims (This program is a drop-out prevention, mediation program.).

On questions about what outcomes were important to their program’s *vision and practice*, CJC Directors ranked repairing harm a 6.0 on a 7 point scale. Offender punishment was ranked lowest both as *vision and practice*, 1.6 and 2.3 respectively. The CJC directors’ assigned victim satisfaction the highest rank at 7 for *vision* and 6.3 for *practice* (excluding the school-based mediation program). As might be expected, resolving conflict was a highly ranked (6.6) outcome for program *vision and practice*. Regarding program *vision*, other high ranking outcomes included offender taking responsibility (6.9) and building community capacity to respond to crime (6.7).

Community members are actively involved in each of the CJCs, e.g., as mediators, panel members, group conference facilitators, victim support service providers, and mentors. The three CJCs involve a total of 75 volunteers in their programs. Two CJCs have ongoing recruitment efforts to engage community member participation; one CJC director reports no current plans for increasing community involvement. Victims are involved in the two programs that facilitate Juvenile Restorative Panels. One respondent said that “most do [participate], others have input but do not personally appear.”

## **What Kind and How Many Referrals? Eligibility: Offender Profile and Referral Process**

The primary source of referrals varied between these programs. The Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services was primary in one CJC, local police in another, and schools in the third. A secondary referral source for one CJC included the state attorney's office. Overall, comments of CJC respondents suggest that of all programs in the BARJ initiative, CJs may be the least dependent on for referrals and for their operating rationale.

All referrals were viewed as appropriate by CJC respondents. In this regard, CJs, appear to be also different from other SRS BARJ initiative program. While other programs seemed to have a fixed idea about "appropriate cases" it could be that CJC staff view referrals as presenting problems to be solved and are thereby less narrowly focused on needs and risk profiles.

There were a total of 82 referrals to the three CJs, ranging from 2 to 55 for each CJC. One CJC accepts juvenile and adult referrals. The CJs have averaged receiving 1-2 per month to 4-5 per month, one CJC reported receiving 2 referrals total.

## **Successful Completion: Program Theory and Logic**

How is successful completion defined on paper and in reality? Successful completion would include completion of the Juvenile Restorative Panel contract that could involve: verbal or written letter of apology to the victim, education classes, participation in a community building activity. One respondent went on to say that "beyond this, successful completion would be demonstrated by a heightened (or increased) sense of awareness of self, victim, and community." In the school-based mediation program, successful completion is defined as the youth returning "to school with a social plan for completion of the current year and on toward high school graduation."

The CJs serve as a resource center for the community and social services network. The CJs incorporate programs that respond to community needs, e.g, JRPs, mediation, and family group conferencing. The administrators and staff perceive the potential for the CJs to develop into a comprehensive model.

## **Successes: What is Going Well With This Component?**

CJs, if they operate as intended, almost by definition help to operationalize the Balanced Approach mission and the restorative justice framework. At the same time, they provide an untraditional community-building response that does not offer an easy fit with the typical casework focus of juvenile justice.

Yet this broad focus is essential if juvenile justice is to begin to embrace a less insular, more inclusive, and ultimately more impactful response. CJs can move juvenile

justice further along the path to a restorative justice response simply by engaging community members more actively in the justice process. A more difficult, but essential, objective that should be an outcome of such involvement is to increase the capacity of community groups and non-governmental institution to respond effectively to youth crime and to the problems that foster it.

The most difficult objective by far is to connect this community-building focus to the range of other SRS programs attempting to address BARJ goals. But from an SRS perspective, CJs would be limited in their success if they involve citizens and strengthen community capacity around their own programmatic activities (e.g., reparative boards, community service) while the vast majority of youth in SRS programs remain unconnected to their neighborhoods and to the community groups affecting their development.

#### *Fit of Program Within the System and BARJ*

The respondents had a general view on the overall fit of the program within the juvenile justice system. One respondent noted that the program is seen as an “alternative to initial referral to the juvenile justice system or to continued processing through that system.” Another saw the fit as the youth not offending and entering the system.

Two CJC directors reported that their cases were typically (99%) involved in at least one other program, with the most likely combination being CJC (Juvenile Restorative Panel program) and restitution. The other CJC did not know if the youth involved in his program were involved in other programs as well.

#### **Problems and Concerns**

In general, there seems to be a problem of identity among CJs as a core component of the BARJ effort. This could be because of the multiple consistencies and funding sources supporting these programs (SRS seems to be one relatively small player here). However, the role of CJs in serving and enhancing other BARJ components should be downplayed and should be explored in depth. [This may be a good topic for a focus group discussion with CJC and other program directors in the near future.]

#### **Recommendations**

An essential objective that should be an outcome of community involvement is to increase the capacity of community groups and non-governmental institution in responding effectively to youth crime and to the problems that foster it. The most difficult objective by far is to connect this community-building focus to the range of other SRS programs attempting to address BARJ goals. CJs could venture to not be limited in their success by involving citizens and strengthening community capacity around their own programmatic activities (e.g., reparative boards, community service), but by integrating youth in SRS programs and assist in forging a connection to their neighborhoods and to the community groups affecting their development.



## **APPENDICES**

**Chart 1: SRS Juvenile Justice Organizational Chart**

## **Chart 2: State of Vermont Juvenile Justice System**

**Table 1: Program Profile  
Program: Restitution**

<b>Program Profile Program: Restitution</b>		
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth who have adult supervision and support will have a greater success in completing restorative conditions of probation</li> </ul>	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the number of repeat juvenile offenders</li> <li>Increase financial compensation as ordered by the court</li> </ul>	
Target Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth ordered by the court to participate in and provide financial compensation as part of the restitution program</li> </ul>	
Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Court</li> </ul>	
Performance Indicators	Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of financial compensation ordered compared with amount collected for youth participating in restitution project</li> <li>Percent of financial compensation ordered compared with amount collected for youth who did not participate in the restitution project</li> <li>Percent of community service hours ordered compared to amount completed</li> <li>Percent of community service hours ordered compared to amount completed for youth who did not participate in the restitution project</li> </ul>
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectiveness of individual Restitution Program</li> <li>Effectiveness of the Restitution model</li> <li>Effectiveness of the Restitution model when combined with other interventions</li> </ul>	

**Table 2: Program Profile**  
**Program: Juvenile Restorative Panel**

<b>Program Profile</b> <b>Program: Juvenile Restorative Panel</b>		
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youthful offenders are held accountable to victims, have the opportunity to repair the harm done, develop connections to their communities, and develop life skills (competencies) that facilitate legal, healthy future behaviors. Their chances of having successful experiences while they fulfill their terms of probation are optimized.</li> </ul>	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the number of repeat juvenile offenders</li> <li>Reduce the number of juvenile violations of probation</li> <li>Increase the number of juvenile offenders who comply with their terms of probation</li> <li>Increase the number of juvenile offenders who successfully complete their terms of probation</li> </ul>	
Target Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth adjudicated delinquent and on probation for crimes that did not include violence (including sexual perpetration or domestic violence), ages 10-17 (No more than 2 youth shall be served from 6/99-12/99)</li> <li>Victims of non-violent crimes of delinquent youth</li> <li>Communities in which the crimes of delinquent youth are committed as represented by panel members</li> </ul>	
Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Court</li> <li>SRS caseworkers (Court receives disposition recommendations)</li> </ul>	
Outcomes	Offender outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of youth participating in JR Panels</li> <li>Number of repeat juvenile offenders</li> <li>Number of subsequent adjudications for new offenses</li> <li>Number of adjudication for VOP</li> <li>Number completing restorative conditions successfully</li> </ul>
	Victim outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of victims participating in panel</li> <li>Number of victims participating other than at panel (ie, phone contact prior to panel)</li> <li>Number of victims satisfied with outcome (after panel, 3 month follow-up)</li> <li>Number of victims reporting that the process was fair</li> <li>Number of victims reporting that they felt heard</li> <li>Number of victims reporting that they feel safe (at 3-6 month follow-up)</li> <li>Percent of restitution paid to victims</li> </ul>

	<p>Program based performance indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors are clearly, accurately, and expediently communicating with social workers and other service providers</li> <li>• Semi-annual reports are thorough, completed and forwarded to LIBRA grant managers on schedule</li> </ul>
<p>Evaluation criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness of individual JR Panel Program</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the JR Panel model</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the JR Panel model when combined with other interventions</li> </ul>	

**Table 3: Program Profile**  
**Program: Competency Classes**

<b>Program Profile</b> <b>Program: Competency Classes</b>	
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop social skills that increase ability to solve problems in non-aggressive ways</li> <li>• Spend positive time with adults and parents</li> <li>• Reduce risk of reoffending</li> <li>• Fully understand the impact of their crimes on victims and community</li> </ul>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concrete conflict resolution tools</li> <li>• Social and community integration skill development</li> <li>• Problem solving and decision making strategies</li> <li>• How their actions impact the community and victims</li> </ul>
Target Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classes will target male and female adjudicated juveniles or at risk youth ages 10-17 while specifically targeting adolescents in the 12-15 year old age group</li> <li>• Youth who are ordered by the court or referred by the Juvenile Reparative Panels to attend classes</li> <li>• At risk youth are included for services because they are engaged in pre-delinquent behavior. Although no laws have been broken, their behavior often constitutes offenses against communities</li> <li>• At risk youth are defined as any adolescent who is exposed to at least three of the following risk factors: substance abuse, abuse and neglect, school failure, parent illegal behavior, family problems, or behavioral and socialization issues</li> </ul>
Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court</li> <li>• Juvenile Restorative Panels</li> <li>• SRS caseworkers</li> <li>• Agencies working with high risk youth</li> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>
Completion/Failure Compliance/Non- Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of the course is considered when all sessions have been attended and all assignments completed satisfactorily</li> <li>• Youth behaving inappropriately can be removed from a session for a time out or for the session at the discretion of the instructor</li> <li>• Behavior that warrants removal from the session includes but is not limited to: verbal abuse of class participants, verbal abuse of instructor, inappropriate language, disruptive behavior that impedes class progress</li> <li>• Instructors shall keep referring agencies informed of any behavior issues that arise and corrective actions taken</li> <li>• If inappropriate behavior continues, it will be grounds for immediate removal for the remainder of the program. Upon removing a student from the program, the instructor is required to inform the youth, parents or legal guardian, SRS social worker, reparative board coordinator, or other referral source. Behaviors that warrant permanent removal from the program include, but are not limited to: any illegal activities, violence, verbal assaults, disruptive behavior, breaches of confidentiality</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses available to eligible youth:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conflict resolution</li> <li>b. Social skills development</li> <li>c. Communication skill development</li> <li>d. Victim impact awareness</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>Gilbert Botvin Life Skills Curriculum will be used to address the competency development areas of conflict resolution, social skill development, and decision</p>

	<p>making and problem solving skills. A ten session program should have a minimum of 8 students and will be 5 weeks in length with 2 sessions per week or 10 weeks with 1 session per week.</p> <p>The Vermont Department of Corrections Victim Impact Curricula will be used to address the fourth competency development area. The 4 session program should have a minimum of 10 and maximum of 20. Sessions are 2 weeks in length with 2 class sessions per week.</p>	
Interim Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in life-social skills (e.g., problem-solving, decision-making, conflict resolution, social skills, empathy)</li> <li>• Increase ability to stay in school</li> <li>• Increase ability to hold a job</li> <li>• Increase understanding of social norms</li> <li>• Increase interest in following social norms</li> <li>• Increase understanding of how youth's actions affect others</li> </ul>	
Performance Indicators	Program objective based performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower recidivism and subsequent adjudication</li> <li>• Lower VOP and adjudication</li> <li>• Positive "marks" from community service providers</li> <li>• Increase in pre- and post- test scores (at end of class)</li> <li>• Parent participation rate</li> </ul>
	Program based performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of youth receiving services</li> <li>• Professional quarterly reports are thorough and completed on time</li> <li>• Instructors are clearly, accurately, and expediently communicating with social workers and other service providers</li> <li>• Written training plan including orientation and on-going in-service training for instructors</li> <li>• Statistical information is collected and forwarded to evaluators accurately and on scheduled.</li> </ul>
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness of individual Competency Class Program</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the Competency Class model</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the Competency Class model when combined with other interventions</li> </ul>	

**Table 4: Program Profile**  
**Program: Street Checkers/Youth Tracker**

<b>Program Profile</b> <b>Program: Street Checkers / Youth Tracker</b>	
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease repeat juvenile offenses and violations of probation</li> <li>• Hold youth accountable for conditions of probation</li> </ul>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower recidivism by providing increased supervision</li> <li>• Increase options for non-compliant youth</li> <li>• Direct youth toward more acceptable activities</li> <li>• Support parents in supervision of their children</li> <li>• Improve communications (e.g., interagency, school, court)</li> </ul>
Target Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth adjudicated delinquent and living in community setting at home, in kinship care, or regular or specialized foster care</li> <li>• Youth with violent offenses are not eligible for this program</li> <li>• N=30-40</li> </ul>
Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SRS caseworkers</li> </ul>
Completion/Failure Compliance/Non-Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Checkers find youth to be out of compliance with conditions of probation, social workers and ESP will be notified on the same working day</li> <li>• If for any reason the checker believes that a youth should be detained, the checker will call the police and SRS immediately</li> <li>• If the behavior constitutes a new crime, or crime in progress, police should be notified immediately</li> <li>• If behavior is in the nature of a conduct violation (e.g., broken curfew, truancy) Checkers may assist parents in escorting a compliant youth home or non-resistant youth home</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring youth's whereabouts and activities</li> <li>• Following SRS case plan and communicating with social worker</li> <li>• Reporting to social worker - verbally and in writing</li> <li>• Maintaining established school, community, home, police, and service links to assure daily schedules and expectations are followed</li> <li>• Attending some meetings as established by SRS</li> <li>• Appearing and or testifying in court as per SRS</li> <li>• Documenting youth behavior and activities as per SRS</li> <li>• Supporting parents by notifying them of at risk or behavior non-compliant with probation conditions</li> <li>• Small group supervision through planned constructive activities</li> <li>• Transportation to competency classes, group activities planned by checkers and approved by SRS, and home</li> </ul>

Interim Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in out of home placements</li> <li>• Decrease in placement at local detention</li> <li>• Lower recidivism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # subsequent adjudications</li> <li>• # of VOP adjudications</li> <li>• Increase/Decrease probation level</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Compliance with conditions of probation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular conditions (e.g., curfew, school attendance, work attendance, drug or alcohol use)</li> <li>• Special conditions (compliance with other orders, ie treatment)</li> <li>• Reparative conditions (e.g., attending classes and or service sites, other scheduled programs, youth is on track where they're supposed to be and doing what supposed to be doing, success in reparative conditions)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	Parental involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents feel better able to control their child's behavior</li> <li>• Parent cooperate and participate in keeping youth on schedule</li> <li>• Call street checkers if youth is non-compliant (go with checkers to find youth, take youth to programs, drug screen, call programs to check if youth is participating and to discuss progress, keep scheduled appointments at SRS, actively participates in meetings)</li> </ul>
	Program based performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly reports are thorough and completed in timely manner</li> <li>• SRS and grantee in contact</li> <li>• Checkers are clearly, accurately and quickly communicating with social workers</li> <li>• Grantee is providing orientation and regular ongoing training</li> <li>• Statistical information is collected and forwarded to evaluators on schedule</li> <li>• Services are being provided to the satisfaction of the grantor, as per conditions of grant</li> </ul>
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness of individual Street Checker/Tracker Program</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the Street Checker/Tracker model</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the Street Checker/Tracker model when combined with other interventions</li> </ul>	
Research questions	Are youth who participate in the restitution project and have street checkers/tracker more likely to finish conditions of probation than youth who only participate in the restitution project?	

**Table 5: Program Profile**  
**Program: Community Justice Center**

<b>Program Profile</b> <b>Program: Community Justice Center</b>		
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connection with community</li> <li>• Youth developing relationships with adults</li> <li>• CJC to respond to community needs</li> </ul>	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of repeat juvenile offenders</li> <li>• Objectives vary according to local CJC</li> </ul>	
Target Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth population in general. CJC serves as a resource for non-adjudicated and adjudicated youth.</li> </ul>	
Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court</li> <li>• SRS caseworkers (Court receives disposition recommendations)</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>	
Performance Indicators	Interim Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in youth connection to community members</li> </ul>
	Program based performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of youth served by programs run by adults</li> <li>• Number of youth served by programs run by youth</li> <li>• Number of youth participating in center as governors</li> <li>• Number of youth volunteers</li> <li>• Number of individual youth served by the center (e.g., call in, requests for help)</li> <li>• Number of youth calling the CJC directly for assistance</li> <li>• Number of youth receiving mentor or other one on one relationship arranged, formally or informally, by the CJC</li> <li>• Number of youth participating in any of the above that have previously been in the juvenile justice system</li> <li>• Number of youth participating in any of the above that are in the juvenile justice system</li> </ul>
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness of individual CJC Program</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the CJC model</li> <li>• Effectiveness of the CJC model when combined with other interventions</li> </ul>	



- b. What outcomes are you seeking to achieve?
  - c. How will you determine if you have been successful in achieving these?
  - d. What constitutes a "successful completion" in your program?
8. Which of the following outcomes are most important to *your vision* of what your program should be? Please rate the importance of each on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is most important and 1 is least important?
- a. Public safety
  - b. Victim satisfaction
  - c. Offender rehabilitation
  - e. Offender punishment
  - f. Offender taking responsibility
  - g. Repair of harm
  - h. Offender reintegration into community
  - i. Resolving conflict
  - j. Keeping offenders out of court
  - k. Reducing court workload
  - l. Building local community capacity to respond effectively to crime
9. Which of the following outcomes receive the most emphasis *in the current practice* of your program (s)? Please rate the importance of each on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is most important and 1 is least important?
- a. Public safety
  - b. Victim satisfaction
  - c. Offender rehabilitation
  - d. Offender punishment
  - e. Offender taking responsibility
  - f. Repair of harm
  - g. Offender reintegration into community
  - h. Resolving conflict
  - i. Keeping offenders out of court
  - j. Reducing court workload
  - k. Building local community capacity to respond effectively to crime
10. How do you describe/define the balanced approach mission?

How does your program reflect the goals of this mission?

A. How would you define accountability?

B. Competency development?

C. Community safety?

11. Does your program address the accountability goal of the Balanced Approach mission? Yes \_\_\_;  
No \_\_\_ How?

A. What practices address accountability to the victim? Please describe.

B. What practices address accountability to the community? Please describe.

C. What practices address accountability of program participants for harm to staff or other participants in your program?

D. How does accountability get addressed on a daily basis?

12. Does your program address competency development in offenders? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
How?

A. What practices address offender competency development?

B. How does competency development get addressed on a daily basis?

13. Does your program address the public safety goal of the balanced approach? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ How?

A. What practices address community safety?

B. How is community safety addressed a daily basis?

14. Does your program seek to repair harm to the crime victim? Yes\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_  
How?

A. What practices address reparation of harm?

15. How does your program fit within the juvenile justice system?

A. How does your program fit into the department's overall effort to implement BARJ throughout the state?

B. How specifically, might your program complement other SRS BARJ programs?

16. Are juveniles currently in your program(s) likely to also be in other programs? For example, some youth may participate in a board and then be sent to restitution.

What proportion of youth are in one or more programs?

Two or more?

Which are the most likely combinations?

How do you work with the other programs when you share a case?

17. What is the primary source of referrals (e.g., SRS, court, community, schools, etc.)? Secondary source?

18. How many referrals has your program received since the beginning of the program? On average number per month?

19. Have the referrals been appropriate to the program?

If not, why not?

20. Which of the following process issues are most important to *your vision* of what your program(s) should be? Please rate the importance of each on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is most important and 1 is least important?

- a. Victim participation
- b. Community involvement
- c. Offender participation
- d. Assisting victims

21. Which of the following are most important in the *current practice* of your conferencing program (s)? Please rate the importance of each on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is most important and 1 is least important?

- a. Victim participation
- b. Community involvement
- c. Offender participation
- d. Assisting victims

22. Are crime victims currently involved in your program? If so, how? How many victims have been involved thus far?

A. Do you have plans for getting victims involved in your programs? If so, please describe.

23. Are community members, not including paid juvenile justice or youth service workers, currently involved in your program? If so, how?

A. How many volunteers have been involved thus far?

B. Do you have plans for getting community member more involved in your programs? If so, please describe.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
----------------------	----------	-------------------------------------	-------	-------------------

1. Having offenders do community service is an important way to:

- a. Punish a criminal offender
  - b. Have them make amends to my community
  - c. Have them learn how to be productive members of my community
2. Having offenders do community service is most *restorative* when it is:
- a. Completed in the community where the crime took place
  - b. Linked to the offense (e.g., drunk driver presents at high school on dangers of drunk driving)

**Other comments about restoring the community and community service work:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. A primary concern should be making sure the offender gets the proper treatment or counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We need to spend more time on offender reintegration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Most juvenile justice programs are insufficiently concerned with offenders' due process rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. SRS programs are generally too soft on offenders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Offenders who have successfully completed our program have achieved. . .					
a. An understanding of how their behavior affected the victim and my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. An understanding of their responsibilities as a member of my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. A sense of remorse for their crimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. An active participation in the decision-making process that generated their contracts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. A completion of tasks that restored victims and my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. New skills that will help them avoid criminal activity in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>