

## **CJC questions and answers**

### **1. Where does the community stand on alcohol and drugs?**

The community approach to issues involving drugs and alcohol are different depending on agency, school or perspective. Speaking for the CJC, we see various cases related to drug and alcohol use. Some cases the use of drugs is illegal and others, the use of alcohol is legal, but the choices made while intoxicated are not. In any case involving drugs or alcohol at the CJC, we require the client to engage in a drug and alcohol assessment at a local agency. We know that the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol result in higher crime rates, and a less safe community. We believe accountability, education, and treatment may help someone start on the path to making better choices regarding drugs and alcohol. Many of the clients who come to the CJC for drug or alcohol related crimes will reach agreements to engage in an assessment, research the affects of the substance they were taking, take an educational class on the effects of the substance involved, repair the harm to their community, and reflect on their behavior.

### **2. What are the upper levels of crime that the CJC deals with?**

The CJC handles generally low-level crimes. We sometimes see seemingly more serious crimes, but these are rare and are special cases worked out by the police, states attorneys and CJC volunteers. One of the most important aspects to seeing a case is the harm done to a person, or community through the crime committed. Our goal is to support the offender to repair the harm they have caused to a victim or affected party. Most of our cases come directly from the Essex Police Department, but we also see cases from Probation and Parole, Chittenden County Sheriffs, State Police, State's Attorney's, judges and schools.

### **3. How do we engage and identify families at risk?**

The CJC engages families at risk through several programs. Police will refer cases of low-level crime to the CJC through our Reparative Board Program. Through our Reparative Board intake process, we may identify and engage with families at risk. We also are referred cases from the police and the school that have not risen to the level of criminal activity, but may need mediation, conflict resolution or Group Conferencing. If a family or youth is at risk, the CJC will engage in needs assessment and referral to appropriate services, establishing a conference where supportive adults and youth come together to make a plan to solve a conflict, or, using our Reparative Board, may create an agreement that addresses the reasons for risk and works towards resolving barriers to success.

#### **4. Is the CJC only volunteers?**

The CJC has 3 part time staff members and nearly 20 volunteers. The volunteers do the vast majority of the heavy lifting regarding client work and are a dedicated and resourceful group.

#### **5. How does a student/child get referred to the Reparative Board?**

A youth who commits a low-level crime may be referred to the Reparative Board by the arresting officer or State's Attorney.

A youth can be referred to CJC programs (including Rep Board) for the following reasons:

- Committing a low-level crime in the communities of Essex, Jericho, Underhill or Westford.
- Being in conflict with a peer that rises to the level that the police or school feels the CJC would be helpful in mediating or conferencing with families/youth.
- Youth who have been a victim of crime.
- Youth who have been affected by crime.

#### **6. Does the CJC work with all youth, not just those referred through law enforcement?**

The CJC will work with any youth who have been impacted by crime, as an offender, victim or affected party. The CJC also receives noncriminal referrals for conflict resolution from schools.

#### **7. What is the relationship between the CJC and Chittenden County Court Diversion?**

The relationship between the CJC's and court diversion is a strong one. We sometimes see cases simultaneously with diversion if an incident led to several charges. The CJC and Diversion have work groups who collaborate on Restorative Justice Principles and Practices that we all use as a framework and we collaborate on other statewide issues that influence our work and involve restorative justice.