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Center for Community Justice Makes Changes to Respond COVID-19

Nonprofit makes critical changes to continue to serve community including NEW Restoring Stability Line

Elkhart, IN - COVID-19 is a public health crisis, but it's also testing the social fabric of Elkhart County. However, nonprofit [Center for Community Justice](#) is responding and launching several new programs and changes as well as a dedicated call line to stand by the community in this time of instability and stress, including a new restoring stability line.

“Given the challenges that COVID-19 presents to us, Center for Community Justice is adapting to this very different and indeed fearful landscape. With our building closed and all staff working remotely, we remain committed to supporting our community,” said Irwin Larrier Executive Director of Center for Community Justice.

Below are the new programs and changes the nonprofit has announced:

- **New Restoring Stability Line**

The nonprofit has seen recent examples of residents facing additional challenges since being released from incarceration or while residents are navigating substance recovery. Maybe new or old conflicts have emerged in your home, workplace or neighborhood, or you simply find yourself frustrated with the harm COVID-19 has caused to your relationships, finances, and well-being. No matter what you'd like to talk about, you'll find a listening ear and ideas for moving forward at the NEW Center for Community Justice Restoring Stability Line. The public is welcome to call or text us at 574-312-7347.

- **Conflict Coaching Support**

Center for Community Justice is happy to announce that it will be offering FREE conflict coaching sessions over video source, Zoom or WebEx. Conflict coaching is a one-on-one process in which a coach, who specializes in conflict resolution and communication techniques for de-escalating and managing conflicts, works with a client to empower them to deal with a specific conflict they are facing. COVID-19 has brought with it a number of stressors that may lend themselves to increasing interpersonal conflict such as worry over one's health and the health of others, the impact of social isolation, economic challenges, unemployment, change in routine and general uncertainty. Such stress and challenges can create new conflict or amplify pre-existing conflict. To schedule a free consultation contact Graham Salinger at gsalinger@ccjelkhart.org and he will be happy to start the empowerment process.

- **Youth Support**

In addition, the Center for Community Justice will be offering online classes to youth who have graduated from Promise Academy for Conflict Transformation (PACT). PACT Plus online will be an innovative way for the conflict resolution experts at the Center for Community Justice to offer free enrichment services to youth. The purpose of this workshop series will be to empower youth with conflict resolution, communication and coping skills needed during times of increased stress and isolation. Workshops topics will include self-care and resiliency in times of increased stress, stress management, and conflict resolution practices. While PACT plus online is in response to the challenges to youth and families emerging from COVID 19 and added stressors, it will also serve as a follow up with PACT participants, many of whom were expressing a desire to have more engagement with PACT prior to COVID 19. Many youth who have graduated from PACT have spoken to the transformative impact that CCJ has had on their lives. As one recent graduate explained; *“It was an amazing experience. I learned how to handle situations better while looking at other people’s points of view. I think I will use what I learned for the better.”* Another graduate explained how PACT changed their mindset, actions and relationships; *I learned that talking about feelings and emotions due to conflict is better than fighting or arguing and I learned the ways that my actions affect people. Now I will talk things through instead of fighting”* they explained. The Center for Community Justice is proud of this new program and its results so far and is happy to use this moment as an opportunity to provide additional pathways to success for the youth we serve.

- **Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP)**

The Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) is continuing its work of serving victims of crime and of helping offenders put things right. Though the face-to-face meetings we facilitate are no longer possible at present, our staff are able to have meaningful conversations with those impacted by crime through phone or video conferencing. The technology allows us to continue to offer direct communication between parties virtually when requested. In addition, the nonprofit continues to offer mediation and dialogue facilitation virtually to the community as well. If you've been harmed by our current crisis or are struggling with conflict, we continue to work with people to address harm and restore relationships. We know that ways of connecting and having meaningful conversation are extremely important in this time of "social distancing." Though we won't be present in the physical sense, we are striving to provide creative ways to connect and heal.

- **Victim Impact Panel (VIP)**

The nonprofit’s VIP program was stopped because of COVID-19 and the need for “social distancing.” However, Center for Community Justice is happy to report that we are moving to a virtual/ online platform that can be accessed virtually. However, there are some technical challenges that are in the process of being worked through. We have been given a timeline of April 30, for its launch. If we are able to launch before that date, a

notice will appear on our website. Until that time reach, the public is invited to reach out to the nonprofit at 574-295-6149 or info@centerforcommunityjustice.org.

According to Kathy Royer, Center for Community Justice board chair, “What I have witnessed as the staff of Center for Community Justice has tirelessly responded to the Coronavirus pandemic has inspired me and given me hope. I have seen innovations that will continue long after the virus has run its course. I have seen the depth of commitment to the power of reconciliation to provide pathways to healing for those who are isolated and afraid.”

For the latest updates and news, the public is encouraged to visit the Center for Community Justice Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CenterforCommunityJustice.

About Center for Community Justice (CCJ)

For the past 40 years, nonprofit [Center for Community Justice](http://www.centerforcommunityjustice.org) has empowered Elkhart County by using Restorative Justice to heal the harm caused by crime, strengthen conflict resolution skills, and engage a stronger community. The nonprofit served around 2,500 residents last year alone and through the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) returned more than \$1 Million in the last 10 years to survivors of crime. Center for Community Justice also provides restorative facilitation programs that includes area schools and businesses, restorative training to re-entry for past offenders in our community. The necessary work of Center for Community Justice is fully funded by grants and donations. For more information or to get involved, please visit www.centerforcommunityjustice.org. Find us on Facebook at [Center for Community Justice](https://www.facebook.com/CenterforCommunityJustice)