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2013 ANNUAL REPORT

*Strengthening Community in the San Luis Valley by
bridging conflict and restoring relationships.*

Executive Director's Report

2013 was full of growth, challenges and, most importantly, increased opportunities to impact the lives of youth and families throughout the San Luis Valley. CRP has been working diligently with an array of partners throughout the SLV to both deepen and broaden the services available to the most vulnerable youth and families of our community. These partnerships included our local House Bill 1451 collaborative, an effort to more effectively work with youth who have dual involvement in juvenile justice and child welfare called CYPM, renewed partnerships within the juvenile justice system to increase diversion opportunities, and intentional and strong partnerships with three local school districts (Monte Vista, North Conejos, and Alamosa).

One final partnership worth noting is CRP's partnership with its community volunteers and supporters. CRP supporters Neil and Elise Rudolph were integral in helping CRP put together a Valley-wide Restorative Justice Summit. This event was a huge success and helped CRP deepen its relationships with our various community partners. You can read more about this event below.

CRP's growth has also included taking on additional staff. 2013 saw CRP's staff increase from three to nine. This staff expansion included taking on three Wraparound Facilitator positions on behalf of our local House Bill 1451 collaborative. Expansion also involved welcoming two Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) participants to the CRP staff compliment. And to round things out, we are pleased that we have been able to bring on a part time bookkeeper.

Increasing our staff from three to nine employees could not have been more timely. Recent statewide legislation, HB 13-1254, names the 12th Judicial District as one of four pilot sites throughout the state to implement a comprehensive restorative justice based diversion program. CRP has been working diligently over the past year to create protocol for early diversion of youth out of the juvenile justice system. This also led to the implementation of a new piece of programming called Rethinking Drinking, which is a restorative model for addressing underage possession and consumption. Laurel and Heather, MVS staff, have helped ensure that all of the protocols put in place are working smoothly, while Paula has the task of

managing an increased caseload. We expect this increase in cases to continue in the coming year.

This growth and expansion has not been without its challenges. Funding continues to remain an issue, as many state and federal funds have not returned after the recession. This has led to both a contraction of available funds and an increase in the competitiveness of each grant application we submit. This has forced us to be creative in seeking smaller and less reliable sources of funds from foundations, to work to build our local donor base, and to take on more varied contracts with local agencies. Seeking funds has become an increasingly large part of my job as the director.

However, in 2013 CRP greatly increased its ability to meet its mission of *Strengthening community in the San Luis Valley by bridging conflict and restoring relationships*. We thank each of you for the role you played in helping make that possible, and we look forward to accomplishing even more in the year to come.

Luke Yoder, Executive Director



CRP Office at 714 3rd Street, Alamosa CO

Victim-Offender Dialogue and Restorative Discipline Conferences

In 2013, the victim offender program received 75 referrals; 47 of these referrals were mediated or conciliated with 5 being adult cases. 10 cases either the victim was unavailable or unwilling to meet, 3 cases involved offenders unwilling to meet or otherwise unavailable. We had 4 cases involving 4 young men involved in the same case that went to mediation but no agreement was reached, 2 cases were rejected due to more intense services required and we currently have 9 ongoing cases.

Our referral level stayed fairly steady throughout the year, with cases received from most counties in the valley. We worked more closely with the Alamosa and North Conejos School

Districts and we also did some work in Saguache County that involved some major restitution. We were also able to do some mediation that involved youth and law enforcement in the northern part of the valley. We had quite a variety of cases this year which made for a very interesting and rewarding experience.

We continue to have a small, dedicated group of volunteer mediators. Without them, we could not serve our widespread communities as effectively.

Paula continues to volunteer monthly with Alamosa County Judge Dan Walzl in the small claims arena. She mediates approximately 4 cases per month. This work is outside our main focus area and not included in our case statistics. However, this pro bono contribution is made to strengthen our partnership with the local courts and promote positive resolution in minor conflicts.

In 2013, Center for Restorative Programs, specifically our victim-offender program, was chosen as a pilot program for HB13-1254 Restorative Justice. This bill allows for pre-filing diversion for juveniles to restorative justice, providing a study of the results and allowing offenders and law enforcement to initiate this process. CRP along with the Judges from the 12th Judicial District, the Public Defender's office, the District Attorney's office, and other attorneys held meetings to discuss how to implement this new legislation. This was an exciting step for CRP. We are still fine tuning the process but are looking forward to what the future holds in the area of restorative justice.

Juvenile Diversion Programs – Rethinking Drinking

Last fall, CRP prepared a new diversion program for underage alcohol possession and consumption. The Rethinking Drinking program was developed as an alternative to the criminal justice system in an effort to decrease underage drinking. This voluntary restorative justice program encourages youth to be accountable for their actions related to underage possession and consumption and provides information on alcohol and underage possession to teen and parents. Participants attend two three-hour sessions and develop an agreement plan that addresses the needs of those impacted by harms to self, family, and community. Youth then have five weeks to complete the agreement plan before a closure meeting with CRP staff.



In November, ten CRP staff and community members participated in a two-day training led by Resolution Works specialist, Gabrielle Frey, who facilitates the Rethinking Drinking program in Denver, CO. In addition to the program training, these volunteers participated in a half-day local orientation with CRP staff.

Beginning January 1, 2014, CRP will receive referrals from the Alamosa County Court and Alamosa Municipal Court. The first official Rethinking Drinking circle began on January 16 with five participants and their supportive adults. CRP hopes to continue developing this program and plans to add circles for underage marijuana possession by 2015.

Family-centered Facilitation Services – Wraparound

2013 proved to be an integral year for the Wraparound process. By the end of the year, all three Facilitator positions were housed through CRP for the first time. Beginning in May, Ruben Graciano was hired as the Wraparound Facilitator for Rio Grande County. In July, both the Alamosa County and Conejos county positions were transitioned from San Luis Valley Behavioral Health to CRP. Gail Garcia-Kuhns made the transition as the Facilitator for Alamosa County, but the Conejos County position needed to be occupied. After much discussion, it was decided that Ruben would transition into the Conejos County Facilitator role and Joseph Green would move into the position for Rio Grande County, after spending a year working within the Alamosa School District. All three facilitators are pursuing their facilitator certification through the Wraparound Coalition and Joseph is also pursuing his “Coaching” certification so he can supervise the other facilitators in the Wraparound process.

For the year, the Wraparound process has served 54 families in four counties (a family from Saguache County has been serviced through the Rio Grande county facilitator). The consistency of referrals being made varies by county, with Alamosa having the steadiest influx of authentic Wraparound referrals, with 22 overall made throughout the year. Conejos and Rio Grande Counties each had 16 referrals made. Referrals for Alamosa County were submitted predominately through the Probation office, while the referrals in Conejos came through the Department of Social Services and the three school districts in the county. The Monte Vista School District submitted the most referrals from Rio Grande County.

Wraparound facilitators have seen much success in their endeavors, having helped families connect with Mental Health Resources, educational opportunities that best suited a child’s needs, internships, and resources that have helped families meet the parameters of their open cases with DHS/DSS and/or Probation. Perhaps, most importantly, the Wraparound process has helped cultivate a collaborative culture amongst the various service providers, as well as providing a safe, supportive avenue for families to express their own “voice and choice” in how they are served by the various agencies. In facilitating Wraparound meetings and developing Wraparound plans, the Wraparound process has fostered a new form of communication and dialogue between families and their service providers.

A total of \$5660 of HB1451 family support funds has been spent on these families for a wide array of purposes. Money has been used to help families pay for gas to get to work or to get their children to school. Other money has been spent to help with rent or to help pay bills that a family cannot pay because of a recent hardship. And still other money has been spent for simple incentives such as buying new wardrobe for school or celebratory dinners after the successful completion of a case.

School Programs

In September, a new partnership began between the Monte Vista School District and CRP.

Lucas Cashman was hired by CRP as School Programs Coordinator to help the district address attendance and truancy concerns and implement restorative discipline practices into the current discipline matrices and PBIS programs. The primary goal of the partnership is to improve student attendance in the district. To reach this goal CRP is working 1) to improve communication between schools and families; 2) to emphasize the correlation between school attendance and academic success and; 3) to identify, problem solve, and address underlying issues that might be affecting families.

As school program coordinator, Lucas works with both behavioral and attendance referrals. For behavioral referrals, Lucas meets with students individually, participates in behavioral intervention meetings with students and parents, and consults with school staff on a variety of behavioral problems. For attendance referrals, Lucas and school administrators have established a system for monitoring and addressing attendance across the district. Three unexcused absences or six total absences were identified as the threshold for contacting families and inviting them to attend mediation with Lucas and the school counselor or campus administrator. For both attendance and behavioral referrals, Lucas and school officials work to identify the issues surrounding the absences and behavioral problems and try to find solutions within the school or connect the family to resources in the community. Lucas has worked hard to develop and strengthen relationships with a variety of support services available for families. He is involved with the Individualized Service and Support Team (ISST) in both Alamosa and Rio Grande Counties and frequently communicates and collaborates with WRAP facilitators, the Department of Social Services, San Luis Valley Community Mental Health, BOCES, the Immigrant Resource Center, Tu Casa, juvenile probation and SB94 officers, and local law enforcement.

In the four months that Lucas has been working in the district he has had contact with the families of approximately 125 to 150 students, has conducted over 50 mediation meetings, all of which resulted in an agreement between the family and the school, and has been working with at least 10 families that have required more support and follow up than the average case. The solid partnership between Monte Vista School District and Lucas has contributed to a high success rate with students and families. The partnership shows a district's willingness to truly understand and meet the needs of their students.

SLV Restorative Justice Summit and Events

The SLV Restorative Justice Summit took place on November 7-9. The Summit educated both juvenile serving professionals and the community at large on RJ and featured both state and national RJ experts. The events included in the Summit were, the "Key Leaders Meeting" on November 7, a workshop for youth serving professionals on November 8, and a community workshop on November 9.



The “Key Leaders Meeting” on November 7 had over 30 attendees that included judicial officials, the district attorney and staff, school superintendents, law enforcement and other institutional juvenile justice leaders. Presenters included Colorado representative Pete Lee (House District 18), Fred Van Liew a retired long-time prosecutor from Des Moines, Iowa, and Len Wetherbee a retired police chief from the Boston area. Pete Lee presented on HB 13-1254, “The Restorative Justice Pilot Project”

passed earlier this year. Both Van Liew and Wetherbee presented on the success of RJ Practices and programs in their workplaces within the juvenile justice system. All three speakers shared about the positive impacts RJ has on increasing victim and offender satisfaction within the criminal justice system, and lowering the rate of recidivism and detention of the offender. Following the presentations, there was a discussion period with the attendees and speakers. Clarifications and insights were given on how different parties (law enforcement, district attorney, school, and courts) can work together to implement RJ practices and programs for juvenile offences.

On November 8, over 90 youth-serving professionals gathered for a full day of workshops focused on restorative justice practices available to the San Luis Valley. Participants learned more about restorative justice by engaging with local and national experts and brainstormed possible ways to integrate restorative practices into work with juveniles. The participants represented professionals from education, social service, and justice sectors and also included several of the key leaders present at the meeting on November 7.

The community workshop on November 9 had 30 community members attend and focused on creating action plans for incorporating restorative justice in the justice system, faith organizations, schools, and the general community. Goals included creating an active partnership between law enforcement and community, educational opportunities through faith organizations, and increased restorative justice in workplace settings.

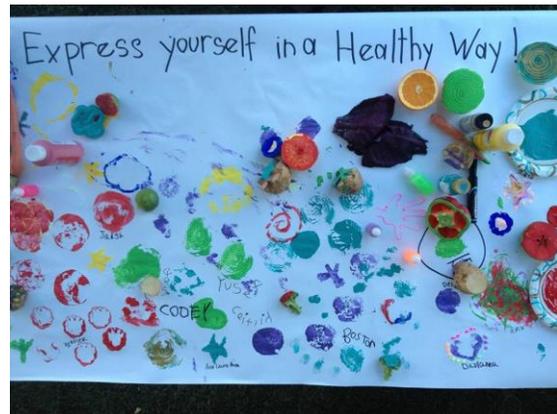


Events and Trainings

We hosted our Annual Wine Tasting fundraiser “Vintage Wines, Fresh Voices” on June 21. The event raised over \$15,000 with over 125 of people attending. We continue to receive positive feedback from attendees about this event. One attendee commented that it was one his top

three favorite events to attend in the Valley! The planning process for this year's event has already begun, with the event scheduled for June 20, 2014.

Last Fall, CRP hosted two smaller fundraisers; Opening Night for the ASU play "Getting Out" on September 20 and the Sporting Clay Competition on November 2. For the Opening Night fundraiser, we connected the theme of juvenile justice in the play to CRP's programming. Attendees were invited explore the issue further in a talkback section with CRP's Executive Director, Luke Yoder and the play's director Jenna Neilsen. The Sporting Clay Competition was a fun event for the small crowd that attended! In the next year, CRP board and staff are planning on hosting this event again and increasing its' fundraising potential.



In 2013, CRP provided mediation training for over 10 adults. CRP also led a full day peer mediation training for 36 students from four high schools (Alamosa, Creede, Center, and Antonito). Peer Mediation participants included experienced and beginning peer mediators, school sponsors, and volunteer role play coaches. In addition to these trainings, CRP staff has presented on bullying prevention, conflict resolution, and general communication skills to youth and adults in a variety of settings.

2013 Report prepared by CRP Staff: Luke Yoder, Paula Medina, Joseph Green, Lucas Cashman, Heather Driedger, and Laurel Woodward