



# Finger Lakes Restorative Justice Center

Fall 2006

## Ben Douglas selected as Interim Executive Director

### FLRJC Mission

The mission of the Finger Lakes Restorative Justice Center is to transform

- individuals,
- organizations,
- communities

Through

- education,
- advocacy,
- implementation of restorative justice principles and practices,

Thereby

- redressing harm,
- restoring peace,
- improving relationships,
- reducing violence,
- promoting healing,
- building better communities.

Finger Lakes Restorative Justice Center's Board of Directors has selected Ben Douglas to lead the organization as Interim Executive Director. Mr. Douglas is a current Rochester City Councilmember and former member of the Rochester Board of Education.

"Ben is a forward thinker with a proven ability to grow an organization," says FLRJC Vice President Sue Klassen. "He has a combination of analytical and people skills, diverse experience in public, private and non-profit sectors, proven ability to increase revenues, and extensive relationships with people throughout the City of Rochester. We appreciate the value he places on



Ben Douglas

restorative responses, and his thoughtful, dedicated approach. He will use his wealth of experience in the public, private and non-profit sectors to develop our program and financial base, and prepare us for hiring a full time Executive Director."

Newsletter Editor MJ Ebenhack sat down with Douglas recently to get his take on restorative justice and his new responsibilities.

**Ebenhack: What attracted you to the work of restorative justice?**

Douglas: When I first looked at the Finger Lakes Restorative Justice website I wasn't sure I understood restorative justice but I thought I had an inkling. For years I was in awe of Nelson Mandela and what was accomplished by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. I followed the process carefully and was impressed with how it allowed South Africans

*Ben Douglas, continued on page 2*

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## Save the Date: Annual Meeting Nov. 17

The Annual Meeting of Finger Lakes Restorative Justice Center will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, November 17, at South Presbyterian Church, 4 East Henrietta Road. Key-note speaker will be new FLRJC board member and RIT graduate student Chad Posick who will address the impact of incarceration on families and the community and how Restorative Justice can help.

Incarceration rates are on the rise and "get-tough" policies are ever more ubiquitous, claims Posick. Alternatives are gaining ground as empirical research proves them effective. Incarceration is a detrimental response to crime. Upon release, ex-cons are in the same, or worse, situation, often alienated and ostracized from the community. Posick will focus on how restorative justice can reintegrate offenders

for healthier neighborhoods and relationships.

Besides Posick's presentation, those gathered will elect new members to the FLRJC Board, review the Annual Report and think together about the future of the organization with its new leadership and expanded staff. As always, delicious refreshments will be served. The meeting is open to all interested parties. 

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**Staff:**

Ben Douglas (Interim Executive Director)  
 Becky Hollenberg (Brethren Volunteer Service Worker)

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*Ben Douglas*, continued from page 1 **make a difference in the Rochester region?**

— black and white — to overcome the evil things that had happened to them.

A nation can not move forward if it is continually mired in the past. People have to get beyond pain and the hatred. In order for a great nation to move forward, all its elements must be knit together. Restorative justice sets the stage for this to happen.

Restorative justice seems so right. To me it has the same spirit that is embodied in the early documents of this country: our constitution and Bill of Rights. I sometimes wonder why these are not part of everybody's government.

In talking with various people since I've begun my job as Executive Director, it has become clear that restorative justice is an idea that has been a foundation of many societies and civilizations. Any family group that developed into a tribe, that developed into a nation, had to have a way to build community. It takes more than rules and laws. There must be a way of healing social stresses so that we can hold together as a family, a group, a nation. There is no way of making peace if there is not something like restorative justice.

This old idea is being rediscovered in some communities. It is especially needed in certain inner city neighborhoods where we find a kind of senseless violence, particularly among young people.

**Ebenhack: What are your visions for how restorative justice can**

Douglas: We have allowed the Rochester community to break down to the point where there are not enough anchors to hold it together. I've personally witnessed this while working in various programs along Joseph Avenue. Because they have no other role models, young people emulate behaviors that they learn from their peers — that may be twisted.

Teen court is an attempt to make teens responsible for setting standards of behavior. When young people commit crime and do harm, restorative justice can be a guide to them. I'm thinking of a particular case in which something horrible happened. Two fairly young kids — 14 and 15 year-olds — were involved in an awful crime. I talked with someone who knew the kids when they were young. He said they were nice kids back then. No one knows what happened to influence them to act they way they did.

Although kids know right from wrong, they don't seem to understand the consequences of their actions on others. They don't have the emotional maturity to understand the pain they cause others. Lots of times kids put on a street tough demeanor — trying to be hard, to not let themselves feel, because the circumstances of their own lives are so painful.

If we can get to these kids when they have committed petit crimes — larceny or burglary — and help them develop empathy for oth-


ers and themselves, then I think we can save them and restore peace to our communities.

**Ebenhack: What kinds of people do you hope to attract to RJ leadership?**

Douglas: Finger Lakes Restorative Justice Center has had the good fortune of having people who are passionate and committed to this cause serving as staff, board members, and volunteers. As a person with roots in the business community, I think we need to carefully define our product and our niche. It will be helpful to have people from the business community help us do this. We also need people who can open doors to funders. We must lay a good financial basis for the organization.

**Ebenhack: What do you personally hope to gain from your service with FLRJC?**

Douglas: Obviously, I am acquiring new knowledge and understanding. I find that RJ principles and practices are on my mind as I relate to colleagues and family. I was recently talking with my Mom who lives in the Washington D.C. area. In one of her family updates she mentioned a conflict situation. I thought how useful a peace circle would be in that state of affairs.

As I tell community people about my new position they seem genuinely interested in the concept of restorative justice even before I can explain it fully to them. It is definitely expanding my horizons and theirs. 

## 3rd Annual Western New York Restorative Justice Conference Attracts Over 150 Participants

Over one hundred and fifty people from across Western New York gathered at Genesee Community College for the 3rd Annual Western New York Restorative Justice Conference, September 29, 2006. They came with a variety of expectations and left with valuable information, personal connections, and renewed energy.

This year's conference offered both an introductory track and an advanced track. Attendees choose among 15 workshops sessions which allowed them to tailor the day to suit needs. Interac-

tions among seasoned RJ practitioners were especially appreciated by newcomers.

Many attendees came looking for ideas and tools to use in their work settings: teachers, college administrators, victim's advocates, businessmen/women, probation officers, youth workers, social workers, religious leaders. Others hoped to improve their skills at work, at home and/or in community settings.


The day began with a tribute to Michael Barrett who was killed by a drunk driver exactly 22 years to the

day of the conference when he was 22 years of age. His father, Don Barrett, who has taken a restorative approach to this tragic event, was on hand to talk with those assembled.

Keynote speaker, Mark Yantzi, Executive Director of Community Justice Initiatives in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, offered a look at the future of Restorative Justice practice through the lens of its genesis in Canada.

Forty-four attendees signed up for future training to become a restorative justice facilitator and many

provided suggestions for making next year's conference even better. "I will encourage others to become the phoenix from the ash-heap," wrote one attendee on the evaluation form.

The conference was financially supported by the Helen L. Morris Fund of the First Unitarian Church, Rochester; and the Foundation of the Monroe County Bar Association. FLRJJC would especially like to express appreciation to Sue Klassen who served as this year's conference coordinator. 



1. Kirby Trask and Steve & Sandi Hastings visit during a break
2. Mark Yantzi visits with a conference participant
3. Reed Stewart leads a breakout session
- 4, 5. Three breakout periods allowed participants to specialize
6. Mark Yantzi gives the keynote address
7. Three teens, Nadine Dyskant, Sylvia Klassen and Claire Wayman, staff the book sale.
8. Kris Johnson and Marjorie Bing Stanislaw present a breakout session

## Fulbright Scholar Selects Rochester to Investigate RJ's Role in Neighborhood Policing

In March 2007, FLRJC will welcome Sandra Hastings as our second\* Fulbright scholar. Sandi is a Police Officer with the Leicestershire Youth Offending Service in Leicestershire, England. Besides working with FLRJC, she will be affiliated with one of Rochester's local colleges and the Rochester Police Department to examine the use of restorative justice within a neighborhood policing context.

\*Pakistani Police Officer Kamal Tipu served as an intern with FLRJC in 2004.



Sandi Hastings

Sandi's current responsibilities include working with the Neighbourhood Policing Team, using RJ whenever appropriate in their intervention work. Over the past five years she has facilitated many RJ conferences between victims and offenders, which have included offences of extreme violence and those of a sexual nature. "I've experienced, first hand, the positive effects that RJ has on individuals and their environments," she reflects.

Leicestershire Constabulary is leading the way nationally on neighborhood policing (NP) and the creation of constructive partnerships, recognizing that a 'citizen focus' impacts all aspects of police work. 'Getting personal' with communities means better access to local policing services, influence over priorities, involvement with interventions, and receiving answers and offering sustainable solutions, she contends. This leads to safer

and more cohesive communities significantly reducing crime and the fear of crime.

Sandi will not only identify best practice from the USA for implementation in the UK, but also share with us the use of innovative reparative activities in the UK, which are often suggested by victims of crime.

Sandi's work will be a catalyst for change in the implementation of a National Policy Framework to apply RJ in the Neighbourhood Policing (NP) context throughout England and Wales. The impetus for research into restorative justice within a neighbourhood policing context comes from the fact that NP has been identified as a 'mission critical priority' for 2005/6 in England's National Policing Plan. Major reforms have the agreement of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA).

"My research comes at a time when major changes to traditional police service delivery methods as well as geographical boundaries are taking place. These reforms will enable us to protect people and neighborhoods from the growing threat of serious and organized crime and terrorism which comes from beyond local boundaries," says Sandi.

Sandi and husband Steve traveled to Rochester to attend and present a workshop at the 3rd Western New York Restorative Justice Conference in September. "It was a wonderful opportunity for us all to get acquainted," says FLRJC Newsletter Editor MJ Ebenhack, whose work initially caught Sandi's attention. The ethos of Fulbright scholarship is to "increase the chance that nations will learn to live in peace and friendship." We know that Sandi's sojourn with us will more than facilitate this lofty goal.

## Forgiveness Project: A Moving Experience

By Sue Klassen

"The range of stories here is remarkable. Each is so very personal and moving in its own way, even the ones that say 'I'm not yet ready to forgive,'" a participant wrote in the Forgiveness Project journal.

The Forgiveness Project toured four locations in Rochester in September. Visitors wandered between stands which held photos and stories of people who

have experienced extreme violence, and their reflections on forgiveness.

FLRJC co-sponsored the tour. MJ Ebenhack arranged for Jim Wolff at House Parts, 540 South Ave., to transport the display between the locations, a great gift to the community.

Though the project has moved on, people can view the stories and photos at [www.theforgivenessproject.com](http://www.theforgivenessproject.com)



The Bausch & Lomb Wintergarden provided a quiet place for reflection

# FLRJC Augments Staff with Brethren Volunteer Service Worker

By MJ Ebenhack

On September 25, Finger Lakes Restorative Justice Center welcomed Becky Hollenberg as a full-time, year-long volunteer from Ft. Wayne, IN.

Majoring in Peace Studies and Spanish, Becky graduated from Manchester College, North Manchester, Indiana in May 2005. Having long planned to spend time

giving back to a community, Becky enrolled in the Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) program of the Church of the Brethren immediately following graduation.

Becky's first BVS assignment was at the Catholic Worker in Oakland, CA. During that time, Becky was introduced to restorative justice principles and practice through the Nevada Desert Experience in Las Vegas and the *Pace e Bene* (Peace and All Good) training in Oakland. Restorative justice also resonates deeply with Becky's upbringing in the Church of the Brethren, an historic peace church.

Though Brethren Volunteer Service workers (BVS-ers) are not paid for their


services, placement projects supply room, board and a small stipend. During her stay in Rochester, Becky is living with Michael and Catherine Brennan-Burke and their four children in Scottsville. Members of the Rochester Area Mennonite Fellowship, the Brennan-Burkes have housed a number of guests over the years, including some from Latin America.

In 2002-3, Becky studied at the University of Veracruz in Xalapa, Mexico. Fluent in Spanish, she intends to enter law school upon completion of BVS and prepare for a career in legal services to Hispanics.

Becky's arrival came at an opportune time as FLRJC was gearing up for its 3rd

Annual Western New York Restorative Justice Conference, a conferencing training, and the FLRJC Annual meeting. "People have been very friendly and supportive," reports Becky.

"We feel very fortunate to have secured such a capable, energetic young volunteer," states FLRJC Vice President Sue Klassen.

Becky will attend the conference training in November and hopes to be facilitating conferences soon as well as handling office responsibilities. The next time you hear a friendly young voice answer your call at the FLRJC office, please spend some time getting to know Becky – and ask her about her dragon collection! 



Becky Hollenberg at Sept. 29 Conference

## An Amish response to tragedy

By Becky Hollenberg

Sometimes the world we live in can seem like a dark and confusing place. Most of the media helps reinforce this view. We hear about suicide bombings, torture chambers, ethnic cleansings. What place does nonviolence and restorative justice have in this violent world? Recently, the Amish reminded us that nonviolence and restorative justice have important roles to play and, in fact, they are what allows us to keep our humanity.

What happened recently in Lancaster, Pennsylvania was an undeniable tragedy. In a world filled with countless tragedies, the Amish chose a different response

than expected. They sent pies to the family of Charles Roberts, the man who shot their daughters. They chose to reach out to another family suffering the loss of a family member.


Nonviolence has been a part of the Amish lifestyle since their church began. In response to this notorious tragedy they chose to act even beyond nonviolence to start the rebuilding of a community. They demonstrated for us all a restorative response. Although a

full restorative justice process (which brings the victims, offender, and affected community members together) can ask important questions like "Why did he do this?" and "Will he do this again?", it is clearly not possible in this situation since the murderer is dead. We, like the Amish, need to remember the other restorative questions too.

We need to ask "How can we make things right as much as possible?"

None of us know for sure how we would respond in a similar

situation. For many of us, responding as the Amish have would be unthinkable. We may need to start small in our practice of nonviolence and restorative justice. We can practice with our friends and our loved ones when conflicts arise.

It never becomes easy to practice restorative justice, but we've seen that traditional responses fail. We know that the world needs something new. If we heed the call, if we rise to the challenge, we can heal some of the hurt in our violent world. We can use the Amish community's response as inspiration. 



### Support the work of FLRJC by becoming a member!

Membership benefits:

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Check one: (make checks payable to FLRJC)

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*I agree to support the mission of FLRJC*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

For more information contact FLRJC at (585)473-0970



### RJ Facilitator Training to be Offered in November

A 12-hour training for persons interested in facilitating RJ conferences will be held the first three Wednesdays in November at Roberts Wesleyan College. Jeanne Carlivati and Sue Klassen will be co-leading the training which will cover restorative justice concepts, pre-conference meetings, facilitator responsibilities, developing agreements and monitoring compliance.

The training will be held from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Voller Athletic Center. Cost is \$60 which includes materials, and dinner. For registration forms, please check the FLRJC website ([www.flrjc.org](http://www.flrjc.org)) or call the office (585-273-0970). Group size is limited to 25.

Carlivati is a member of the FLRJC Board of Directors and a retired school counselor. She conducts mediation trainings for students and staff and has conducted circle and conference trainings through FLRJC.

Klassen is a founding member and President-elect of the FLRJC Board of Directors, a volunteer with the Rochester Police Department's Juvenile Accountability Conferencing Program, and the driving force behind the establishment of the Western New York Restorative Justice Coalition.



Sue Klassen



Jeanne Carlivati

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