



Delaware Center for Justice, Inc.

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Dear Friend,

There is some good news this holiday season: despite the economic recession, **America is still the most charitable nation in the world!** Here at the Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ), we know just how generous Americans, and specifically DCJ donors, truly are. We thank you so much for *your* past support. Without you, and the charitable donation(s) you have made to our organization, we would not be able to **help turn lives around through our work with justice-involved people.**

The United States topped the "World Giving Index" for 2013, giving more in time and money to charitable organizations than any other country on the planet. In the United States, 77% reported helping a stranger, 66% reported giving money, and 45% reported giving of their time. **We're counting on your spirit of generosity so we can continue to help victims of crime, at-risk youth, and prisoners returning to the community.**

We're counting on your generosity because without it, we simply can't help our clients transition to stability. While DCJ does receive State funds and some grants from foundations, and although our staff work very hard to be good stewards of these gifts, there is quite often a **budget shortfall** between what these funding resources can provide and the monies required to operate our offices and best serve our clients. In addition, funds from these sources are usually restricted to specific program needs, which means they cannot be used to pay for any expenses other than the specific criteria cited in the original grant request. So, in order to meet individual program budget shortfalls and to sustain and/or increase the number of positive outcomes for our clients and the community, we look to our individual DCJ donors to meet these needs.

This short newsletter is designed to provide you with information about what your kindness, generosity and charitable giving has provided to DCJ clients and our community in 2013. In addition, it outlines some of the specific needs that will go unmet without your help in 2014.

Your donation will help to fund needs such as these:

- Costs to train university volunteers to work with elderly prisoners
- Stipends given to our foster youth teens for participating in planning meetings
- Postage costs associated with sending out thousands of letters annually to victims and defendants, advising them of the opportunity to participate in DCJ's restorative justice programs
- Rental assistance for domestic violence victims, so they can relocate to be safe
- Gas money so that staff can visit struggling clients in their homes
- DCJ office rent, which allows us to have a space to meet with clients
- Case managers' expenses for working with youth in our Youth Gun Violence Prevention Program, such as the cost of celebratory pizza and completion certificates
- A comfortable space for elderly victims to meet with a counselor
- A welcoming waiting area for all DCJ clients who visit our offices

As you reflect upon which organizations to fund in 2014, we hope you will consider DCJ and will give as much as you can afford to help others in need through your financial assistance!

Sincerely,

Joanna Champney
Executive Director

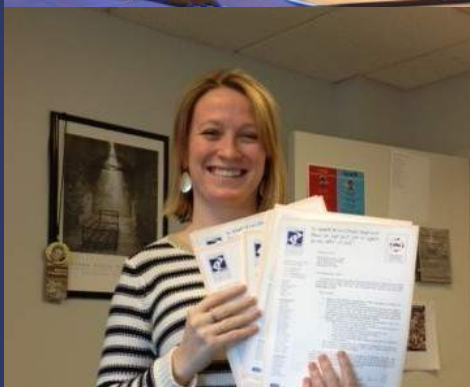
SAVE THE DATE!

January 29th, 6-9 pm
Guest Bartender Fund Raiser
BBC Tavern, Route 52 in Greenville
100% of Tips Will Be Donated to DCJ!



YOUR IMPACT

Your Support Enabled Policy Victories that Make Communities Safer, Create Fresh Starts for People with Criminal Histories, and Assist Youth Aging out of Foster Care!



Member Involvement Yields Banner Year for Justice Reform

Youth Advocates, Community Volunteers, and Youth Join Forces to Change Legislation for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

Each year, approximately 100 youth age out of the foster care system in Delaware. The hardships they face often make their successful transition to an independent, productive life very difficult. Homelessness, lack of education and unemployment are often the reality for these young adults. Recognizing their challenges, DCJ's Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (DYOI) program has worked to bring together the people, systems, and resources necessary to assist young people who leave the state's foster care system.

These efforts culminated on September 19th, when Governor Jack Markell, surrounded by current and former foster care youth, signed HB 163 ("Ready By 21") to enhance support services that will better prepare young people who have experienced foster care for adulthood. More than 125 volunteers (including both professionals working in the child welfare and juvenile justice sectors as well as concerned citizens) worked with youth to draft the legislation.

DCJ's Advocacy Program Achieves Major Criminal Justice Reforms In 2013

DCJ's advocacy program, Stand Up For What's Right and Just (SURJ), celebrated three major criminal justice reforms passed in the General Assembly during the first half of the 147th legislative session.

The following reforms were passed:

House Bill 182 modified Delaware's sex offender registry requirements by giving Family Court discretion to determine whether it is appropriate to place juvenile offenders who are under age 14 on the public sex offender registry. "We are glad to see the 'one size fits all' approach go. The new law gives judges the ability to review these children's cases individually to make a developmentally appropriate decision," says Joanna Champney, DCJ's Executive Director.

Senate Bill 9 acknowledged the fundamental differences between children and adults by eliminating mandatory life without parole sentences for children convicted of first-degree murder. Judges can now select sentences from a range of 25

years to life with the possibility of review.

House Bill 10 lifted the existing five-year waiting period before eligible ex-felons who have fully discharged their sentences may have their voting rights restored.

SURJ will continue to advocate on key criminal justice issues when the legislature reconvenes in January. Senate Bill 19, the bill seeking to repeal the death penalty, has already passed in the Senate and efforts will continue to successfully move the legislation through the House. SURJ is also working on legislation to remove employment barriers for ex-offenders, to reform bail in Delaware, and to continue to address issues regarding juvenile justice. In addition, SURJ is researching and investigating alternatives to pre-trial detention in Delaware.

These successes were achieved as a result of your participation and support. Thank you for writing, calling, and visiting your elected officials about these topics! Please give today so that we can continue to make smart reforms in 2014!



More than 500 Adults Participated in our Prisoner Reentry, Dispute Mediation, and Victim Services Programs Last Year!

Your Help is Needed to Support Former Prisoners Returning to the Community

During the first three quarters of 2013, the Community Reentry Services Program (CRSP) served 214 men and women who are on probation following their release from prison. In this still-struggling economy, the biggest obstacle to employment for our clients is their criminal history, especially those convicted of theft or a violent crime. In addition, the lack of probationers' education and employment experience limits their opportunities. Unstable housing and transportation issues are also factors in failing to find a job.

Donated funds have allowed DCJ case managers to work with these probationers to prepare for employment by teaching them how to fill out a job application, prepare for a job interview, coaching them on how to answer difficult questions, and "vouching" for them so an employer will take a chance on extending a job offer.

In addition, the program offers probationers rental assistance, utility assistance and transportation assistance. The program is in dire need of your financial support so that it can continue providing these much-needed services while clients get back on their feet. Last year's available budget for client rental assistance (generously contributed by a local foundation) was \$5,000, which did not nearly meet the need of all 214 probationers. Even \$100 can go a long way in helping clients secure a room to rent while they search for work.

Probationers are mandated to seek employment regularly or risk having their probation violated. Since many of our clients lack their own means of transportation, it is extremely helpful when DCJ can supply our clients with bus passes for public transportation. Conducting an active job search may require taking multiple busses each day, and probationers may need four to five bus tickets at a time over the course of just a day or two. Monetary donations are welcomed so we may purchase bus passes for clients who need them.

Our clients also have basic personal needs like clothing and personal hygiene items. We are grateful to the Kenny Family Foundation and the DuPont Legal Department at Chestnut Run, which both recently made donations of toiletry items to assist our clients! But the needs are great, and we can always use more toiletry items.

The economy has not completely recovered and it is still a difficult time to find a job. Imagine the additional hurdles these men and women face—no transportation, unstable housing, and lack of basic necessities. Won't you please consider giving today to help our clients have dignity, achieve stability, and make a fresh start?

Victim Services Program Seeks Donations

DCJ is pleased to announce that our Victim Services Program will soon hire a part-time counselor to offer therapeutic support to help victims process their traumatic experiences and begin the healing process. DCJ will be transforming one of its office rooms into a welcoming, comfortable space for these counseling sessions. A financial donation or an in-kind gift of a small loveseat and other needed furnishings would help transform a plain office into a warm and welcoming area of healing.

Our Victim-Offender Mediation Program Needs Your Support!

To date in 2013, the Court of Common Pleas referred 550 criminal cases to DCJ for mediation. More than 80% of cases that we mediate are settled successfully without the need to go to court. Through the program, victims are empowered by telling their story directly to the defendant in a safe setting, and defendants have an opportunity to be a part of the process and to make amends for their mistakes. We send out thousands of notification letters to victims and defendants each year, informing them of our program and inviting them to participate. This requires *a lot* of stationary and postage! You can help us by donating to support these costs so we can continue offering victims and defendants alike the opportunity to experience restorative justice first hand.

Making mistakes is an inherent part of being human. So is learning from those mistakes and doing better-- for yourself and your community-- going forward. Your financial support helps get kids back on track, and helps to prevent them from being further involved in the justice system.

Investing in prevention and diversion programming *now* is more effective than spending hefty sums in taxpayer money *later*. YOU can help to make a difference in these kids' lives by making a gift *now*.



Students talk about the School Offense Diversion Program:

"I became more aware of my patterns and decisions."

"I was able to express myself and have someone listen."

"Talking with [staff] and my mom face to face was helpful, trying to figure out ways to prevent me getting in trouble."

DCJ's Youth Programs Champion Positive Outcomes And Brighter Futures For At-Risk Kids

Students who are at-risk or who are involved in the juvenile justice system are often marginalized and "pushed out" of traditional academic settings.

Hundreds of students are reported to the court system each year because they have too many unexcused absences or because they have gotten in trouble at school. More than 140 students were referred to our programs for intervention.

Children who don't have an education don't have a bright future. DCJ staff need *you* to be a champion for these kids. You can be a champion by supporting our programs financially, giving some of our most vulnerable children and youth the support they need to succeed.

The School Offense Diversion Program (SoDP) Offers Kids A Chance To Learn from their Mistakes

The School Offense Diversion Program (SoDP) works in collaboration with the Delaware

Department of Justice, Office of the Public Defender and Family Court to hold students accountable for criminal actions committed in school or on school property, while supporting their ability to learn from their mistakes. Nearly 100 students completed the program this year and had their criminal charges dismissed! But we can't continue to serve these students and their families through our relationship-centered program without your support.

In These Violent Times, DCJ's Youth Gun Violence Prevention Program Offers Hope For Our Children's Future

Gun violence is a growing problem in our community, and DCJ is offering solutions to this problem through our Gun Violence Prevention Program. Youth at Ferris School who are charged with gun crimes and other violent crimes, as well as other youth in state custody at Grace and Snowden Cottages, undergo a specialized curriculum designed to deter gun violence and teach conflict resolution skills.

Upon completion of the program, students are rewarded with a pizza party and completion certificates.

You can help recognize their efforts to turn themselves and their community around by making a contribution to help pay for pizza and certificates.

DCJ's Truancy Reduction Program Works To Keep Kids In School

DCJ's Truancy Reduction Program has hired a full-time, and more recently in 2013, a part-time case manager to work with the Red Clay and Christina School Districts and their students to help reduce truancy.

Students who are chronically truant have an increased propensity for violent behavior, have poorer physical and mental health, and an increased likelihood of incarceration. The potential long-term benefits of addressing chronic truancy, especially in early grades, are enormous. DCJ's program offers intensive case management services to students who might go unnoticed and unaided only to emerge later with more serious problems as drop outs or delinquents. Please help us cultivate the potential of these children and teenagers by financially supporting our work today!