Restorative Justice Project
Mission

The mission of The John Marshall Law School Restorative Justice Project is to further the values and principles of Restorative Justice by educating law students, law faculties, the legal community, corrections facilities, judges, educational institutions (including primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, and universities, both public and private), faith-based institutions, community organizations, and other governmental bodies about Restorative Justice techniques.

Cover caption: John Marshall law students who have participated in the Restorative Justice class.
What is Restorative Justice?

Traditional justice relies almost exclusively on retribution through the adversarial system.

Restorative Justice is a flexible approach to justice that focuses on the needs of victims and offenders, as well as the community.

Restorative Justice holds offenders accountable for their actions and repairs the harm done to the offender, to the victims or survivors, and to the community.

Restorative Justice holds the community, city, state, and nation responsible for conditions that give rise to crime, including grinding poverty, lack of affordable housing, segregation, poor schools, lack of resources for mental health and substance abuse, and a police and court system that incarcerates a disproportionate number of African Americans, Latinos, and individuals living in poverty.

“Restorative Justice is harmony among people, restored after a time of discord.”

Michael P. Seng, Co-Director, Restorative Justice Project, The John Marshall Law School
Guiding Principles of Restorative Justice

Persons who engage in criminal and anti-social conduct cause harm to and impair their relationship with other persons and the community.

Persons who cause harm have an obligation to remedy the harm and to restore their relationships with other persons and the community.

Persons who cause harm meet this obligation by taking responsibility for their conduct and making amends to the persons whom they injured and the community. The injured persons and the community are active participants in this process. The community also has an obligation to remove those conditions that contributed to the criminal and anti-social conduct and to create an environment that promotes justice.

The objective of Restorative Justice is to restore harmony so that all persons—the offender, the injured persons, and the community—are made whole.

“Restorative Justice will cause us all to take time, to make time to help each other recover from trauma, depression, poverty, and addiction.”

Judge Sheila Murphy (Ret.)
Co-Director, Restorative Justice Project
The John Marshall Law School

Why Do We Need Restorative Justice?

Instead of imprisoning individuals at great economic expense to taxpayers, Restorative Justice seeks to rehabilitate them by providing techniques for healing and changing the offender, helping the victims, and making the community safer.

In this way, Restorative Justice is a community-oriented approach to resolving conflicts and crimes.
Restorative Justice Project
at The John Marshall Law School

The John Marshall Law School’s Restorative Justice Project provides law students with knowledge of Restorative Justice and the opportunity to put that knowledge to practical use in the community. The project utilizes a combination of restorative chats, peace circles, and peer juries in its work with local schools, community organizations, and detention facilities.

Through the Restorative Justice Project, students:

- **Visit courts** and observe the differences between judges who utilize Restorative Justice practices and those who use only punitive models.

- **Visit corrections facilities and local schools** to implement Restorative Justice principles. They instruct students, teachers, and administrators on peaceful ways to resolve conflicts, including the practice of self-reflection.

- **Use restorative chats and peace circles** to induce behavioral change. Additionally, students may utilize peer juries for fact-finding purposes and to avoid arrest records for youth.

- **Lobby legislators and public officials** to enact laws and policies that enable Restorative Justice to thrive in all communities.

“I was not only able to explain the concept of Restorative Justice to practicing lawyers, but also to convince them that this was a noble and gallant way to approach punishment in certain cases.”

Jesse Gonzalez (JD ’13)
Attorney at Law, Henderson Adam, LLC
Class Participant, Restorative Justice Course

Jeanne Bishop, Assistant Public Defender, Second Municipal District Office of the Cook County Public Defender, speaks to the Restorative Justice class.
Tom Dart, Cook County Sheriff, speaks to law students in the Restorative Justice class.
Moving Forward

The John Marshall Law School intends to move the Restorative Justice Project forward through:

- Research
- Publications
- Video presentations
- Legislation
- Implementation
- Outreach

Targeted audiences include:

- The legal community, including bar associations and the courts
- Faith-based and community organizations and public agencies
- Public and private educational institutions, including elementary and high schools, colleges, and universities

How Can You Get Involved?

Familiarize yourself with Restorative Justice.

Solve issues in a positive way instead of using punishment and blame.

Take part in The John Marshall Law School’s Restorative Justice Project and invite law students into your school or community.

Advocate for Restorative Justice at your place of employment or in your community, and implement the principles of Restorative Justice into your everyday life.

Spread the word!

For more information about the Restorative Justice Project, please visit www.jmls.edu/restorative-justice/.
Contact Information

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More information about The John Marshall Law School Restorative Justice Project can be found on our website at www.jmls.edu/restorative-justice/.

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