



Restorative Justice Program (RJP) Conferencing **By Bettina Graf, District Case Manager and** **Restorative Justice Coordinator**

The fundamental hypothesis of Restorative Practices is based on the Social Discipline Window belief that “human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things **with** them rather than **to** them or **for** them.” The foundation of RJP is based on **Fair Process** which includes: Engagement, Explanation and Clarity of Expectations.

The Restorative Approach is based on the belief that the best people in place to resolve a conflict or a problem are the people directly involved, and that imposed solutions are less effective and possibly less likely to be honored.

The first step of conferencing is the pre-conference. The pre-conference is facilitated by an RJP facilitator and the offender/offenders, victim/victims separately to establish criteria for a successful conference. The offender/offenders must admit to wrongdoing before the conference can be held. If all parties are in agreement the RJP conference is conducted. The goal of this conference is to repair the harm that has been done and to move forward without shame. There is an intended script that is strictly followed by the facilitator. At the end of the conference all parties come to an agreement and it is signed by all participants.

SMUHSD has begun to integrate RJP conferencing in collaboration with the current discipline model. Several deans have attended a two day International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) conference on the RJP model of discipline. On October 12, 2015, I facilitated a RJP conferencing workshop for district deans and have facilitated conferences on school sites as requested by the deans, administration and faculty. RJP conferencing has been implemented at a majority of our school sites and has been proven to be an effective intervention tool for student success.

The RJP team is available to meet with anyone interested in RJP trainings, site trainings, facilitation of circles and or conferences or simply a conversation to give you more information. I would be more than happy to work with administration, faculty, and staff on implementing RJP on your campus in the capacity that best fits your specific site needs. Please call me at (650) 558-2510.