CCJ CENTER FOR CREATIVE JUSTICE

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Quarterly Newsletter, Summer 2011

Director's Message

Mark Kubik
Executive Director

The Center for Creative Justice recently held its fifth annual volunteer appreciation dinner to honor our volunteers and to recognize their valuable contributions. Like many non-profit organizations, our volunteers are critical to our success.

I would like to recognize Judy Jones, CCJ's volunteer of the year. Ms. Jones has served on CCJ's Board of Directors since 2007. In that time she has served as Board Secretary, member of the Executive Committee, has twice been the Chair of the Public Relations Committee, and has written four successful grants for the agency. It is no coincidence that Ms. Jones is the first person to earn this award twice! Ms. Jones's involvement and leadership have been invaluable to our agency.

Left: Judy Jones holding Volunteer of the Year plaque. Right: Mark Kubik, CCJ Executive Director

"I am honored to be selected as the CCJ volunteer of the year. I have enjoyed being associated with CCJ these past years and am proud to volunteer and serve as a Board member. CCJ changes lives and maximizes their resources to produce a positive impact on our community."

- Judy Jones

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CCJ is sponsored through major funding by:

Dedicated to positive change in our communities...one life at a time

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A Client's Story

By: Ashley Schmuecker, CCJ Intern

Last December, I had the opportunity to speak with an exceptional and enlightened young man who had been a client of CCJ twice. When I asked him about his most recent experience with CCJ, he stated that his probation officer "really sat down with me and we came up with a plan to accomplish everything…he really did a good job." He was on probation for a year and a half, and during that time he felt that he was given positive direction and opportunities from his probation officer. "He was always there giving me other options, trying to find some other information that he could help me figure out what I needed…I felt that the overall experience was pleasant. Not very many people can say that about probation." When I asked this young man how his life has been different after his time at CCJ he detailed some remarkable changes.

He has taken full responsibility for his finances, and currently has paid off all of his outstanding bills and even stays ahead of them by paying off the next month's bills long before they are due. He has taken charge of his overall health and wellbeing by working with his therapist and getting treated for his anxiety and ADHD, which makes it hard for him to focus and concentrate. However, despite his struggles with anxiety and ADHD, he has raised his grade point average from a 0.67 to a 3.0! He spoke excitedly about graduating after one more semester and obtaining his degree. He said, "CCJ was what I needed when I got in trouble to move forward in life and accomplish what I need to accomplish. My probation officer really set those stepping stones that helped me to accomplish those goals."

This insightful young man saw probation as "more of a reward than a punishment". His rewards from working hard as client of CCJ with the direction of his probation officer include taking full responsibility for his education, his health, and his finances. He understood that forward progress and accomplishing your goals takes more than just showing up to meetings with your probation officer; it takes willingness to change and dedication.

Since being released from probation, this young man has no new charges! It is clear that his experience at CCJ contributed to his ability to move forward with his life. As the interview came to a close, he reflected, "I think that what it comes down to is that people on probation are looking at is as a punishment, and it is a punishment for the things that you've done, but it's also an opportunity for you to become what you want to become and to change what you are doing…because you're just gonna be doin' the same thing your whole life. It's always about movin' forward, that's what it comes down to and if you have the opportunity to do that then I feel like you should take that opportunity into your hands and you should accomplish that goal."

CCJ Impacts

1,400 low risk and first time offenders supervised each year by CCJ

75% of all probation cases in Story County are handled by CCJ

79% of CCJ's clients successfully completed all requirements of probation in 2009

87% of probation clients that have successfully completed their probation did not re-offend within the following year

How Can I Help?

Assist CCJ with projects or events

Volunteer to assist clerical staff

Make a donation to CCJ