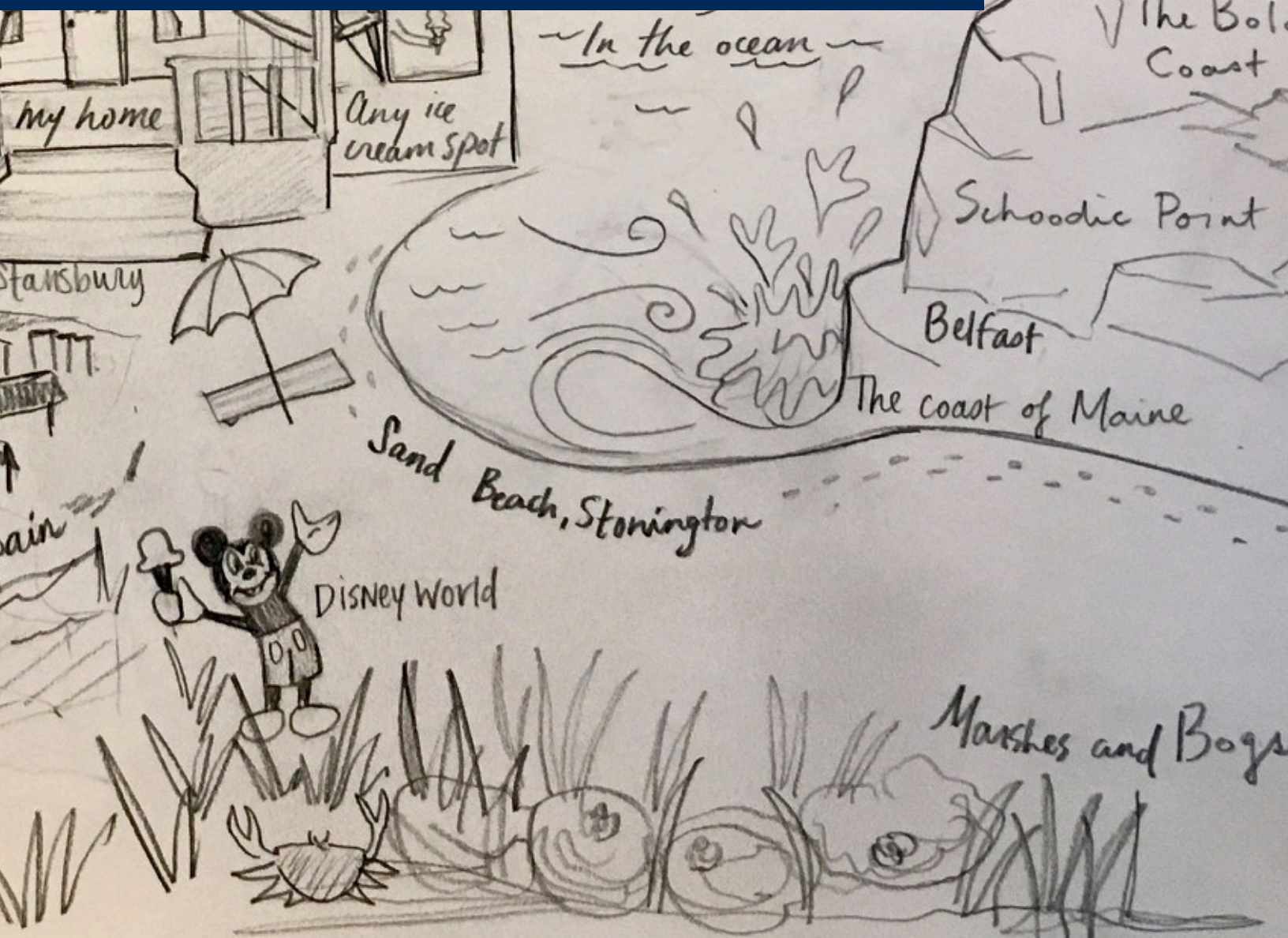


Restorative Justice Project Maine ANNUAL REPORT 2022



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover Art : 2021 Trainees Favorite Places

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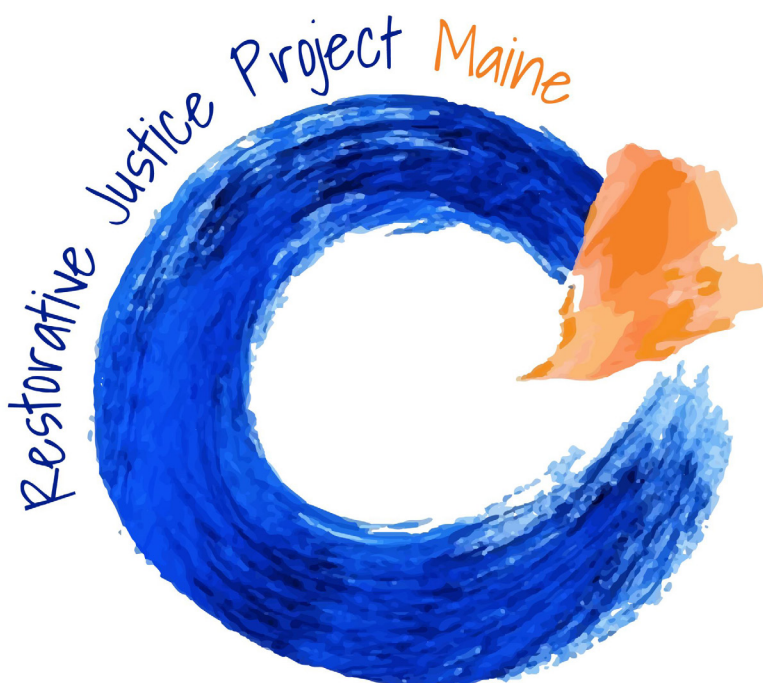
11 Winter Street, Rockland

525 Main Street, Damariscotta

144 Lincoln Street, Bath

OUR MISSION

The Restorative Justice Project Maine promotes justice that is community-based, repairs harm, and creates safety and well-being for all. Our responses to crime and wrongdoing seek renewal and safety for the community, support and healing for victims and accountability and reintegration of the offender.



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



December 2022

GREETINGS,

This has been a year of growth and change, with many new faces joining our team! Thanks to the four-year grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, we have significantly increased our presence in the four counties we serve, and are well on our way to establishing local Community Justice Hubs in each of them — Belfast (Waldo), Rockland (Knox), Damariscotta (Lincoln), and Bath (Sagadahoc).

While we are growing in numbers, our mission remains the same: **to promote a justice that is equitable and community based, repairs harm, and creates safety and well-being for all.** Our county-based Community Justice Hubs will give community members access to restorative practices that will help repair relationships and transform lives.

One of the most critical components of our work is community engagement. RJP Maine's reputation for profoundly impacting peoples' lives rests largely on the shoulders of our dedicated community volunteers, plus a wide network of supporters who understand our work, participate in restorative circles, make community-based referrals, and advocate for restorative responses in their schools and communities.

We believe that crime is a result of broken lives and that as a society, we need to shift from a justice that harms to a justice that heals. Community is central to our

work. In the words of Waldoboro resident and volunteer Melissa Dearborn, *"Volunteers are neighbors who believe that communities get stronger when they hold and repair their conflicts together. In a time where communities are divided and there are fewer opportunities for true dialogue, RJP offers a process that welcomes the whole community to join the efforts to heal and take care of one another."*

We are working hard in our four-county area reaching out to local law enforcement, the District Attorneys' offices, schools, and service providers. As a result, we are receiving more referrals, for both adults and juveniles, and more community members are being trained as RJP Maine volunteers.

In this report you will see our growth in numbers and read powerful stories of how restorative justice transforms lives. The federal grant will end in October 2023, it is therefore imperative that we find the resources to continue our work at its current pace. We are just getting started in some counties, but our momentum is growing, and communities are eagerly embracing the promise of restorative justice. With your help, we will be able to continue this work, together and stronger.

Be well,

Christine LeGore BOARD CHAIR

Kathy Durgin-Leighton EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR ORGANIZATION

We are an agile, responsive organization that continues to grow and learn. In fiscal year 2022, we made significant strides in the following areas.

IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

A Task Force composed of board and staff members conducted a study of the impact and financial sustainability of our organization. The overall impact of each program was assessed by surveying a diverse range of stakeholders (schools, law enforcement, justice and corrections systems; training participants; community members; RJP Maine board, staff, and volunteers; and non-profit partners). Of 120 surveys, 60 were completed — a remarkably high rate of return. Final analysis of survey and financial data demonstrated the significant impact of our programs. Additional funding is needed to meet the scale of community needs for both harm repair and training. While some programs are inadequately funded, all function as parts of the whole, sharing resources as needed to sustain impacts. Like many nonprofits, we are, and will continue to be, dependent on individual philanthropy. Sustainability is dependent on effective ongoing fundraising.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AND ANTI-RACISM WORK

We are in our third year of working toward a more diverse and equitable organization. Our goal is to have a shared understanding among all staff and volunteers of how to ensure that our work is delivered from an anti-racism base. To this end, we added a two-hour “RJ with a Race Equity Lens” module to our Foundations in Restorative Practices training. In addition, three working groups of staff and community volunteers are working toward greater diversity and equity within our organization. They are focused on Mindsets and Behaviors; Centering Anti-Racism and Equity in Restorative Justice Work; and Talent, Processes, and Decision-making.

PUBLIC POLICY

Our RJP Maine Legislative Committee is advocating for fundamental change toward more restorative options in the criminal legal system. For example, we have been researching confidentiality legislation for restorative justice processes, so that those who engage in dialogues or circles can have legal protection over what is said in the encounter. We are reviewing and prioritizing restorative-minded bills that have been proposed by others, working to get those we care most about passed.

A UNITED EFFORT

We have been active in helping to establish the first ever statewide restorative justice coalition in Maine — the Maine Restorative Justice Coalition (MERJ). The Coalition is a vehicle for allies and supporters across the state to transform Maine’s criminal law by supporting the growth of restorative practice in communities and in public policy. The Coalition has worked with the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations to conduct a national literature review; co-conduct over three dozen interviews of key individuals across the state; and help develop conclusions and recommendations for the Permanent Commission report.

BY THE NUMBERS

REPAIRING HARM

We provide an alternative path for community members who have been charged with crimes, caused harm, or are entangled in conflict. Throughout our four service counties (Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo), we divert juvenile and adult offenders from the criminal justice system while holding them accountable for harms caused. This is accomplished through a comprehensive, community-based approach that involves facilitated conversations (conferences, circles, or dialogues) between the harmed and harming parties, a concrete list of reparative tasks for the offender to complete (these often include community service, financial restitution, and apologies), and often the support of a trained volunteer mentor.

▶ In fiscal year '22, we engaged approximately **750 community members** in the harm repair process. This included **107 individuals** who had caused harm (47 adults and 60 juveniles).

"I can't tell you how powerful RJP has been for our family. I don't know if (NAME) would be where he is now without the accountability and support your organization has provided in the past 4 years. Thank you for sticking with him, even as he was actively pushing everyone away. He's really turned a corner and is showing up for himself. Trusting himself again. That is priceless."

— family member of a harm repair participant

▶ Referrals increased in all five counties.

Knox County 41 (21 Juveniles, 20 adults)
Waldo County 31 (5 juveniles, 26 adults)
Sagadahoc County 15 (all juveniles)
Lincoln County 11 (10 juveniles, 1 adult)
Hancock* County 9 (all juveniles)

*As of July 1, 2022, we no longer serve Hancock County

▶ Volunteers are essential to the success of our program — we count on volunteers to facilitate our circles and conferences: In total, **27 volunteers facilitated 37 cases** (the remaining cases were facilitated by RJP Maine staff).

Knox County	14 Facilitators, 20 cases
Waldo County	6 Facilitators, 5 cases
Hancock* County	3 Facilitators, 3 cases
Sagadahoc County	2 Facilitators, 7 cases
Lincoln County	2 Facilitators, 2 cases

*As of July 1, 2022, we no longer serve Hancock County

"When asked about preferred pronouns, a juvenile identified using they/them, and went on to discuss incidents of bullying at school after recently coming out. When I offered an opportunity to expand on this, the juvenile responded that they realized they hadn't formally come out to their mother (sitting next to them), and turned to mom and said, "I'm non-binary." Mom was able to support her child, and smiled offering encouragement."

— a harm repair facilitator

▶ Our impact: **92% of participants** in the harm repair process thought the process was fair and would recommend it to someone else in a similar situation.

"This program has helped me have a new perspective of how I can actually change my future into what I want it to be, and not just go along with what everyone else is doing."

— A harm repair participant

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

Our Training & Capacity Building Team provides internal training for RJP Maine program staff and volunteers, and external training for school and organizational partners. Offerings include: 42-Hour UMaine Foundations in Restorative Practices; Foundations for RJP Maine volunteers; and Harm Repair Practice Series (up to 76 hours of training).

External partners, such as schools and institutions, enter into agreements for training and ongoing coaching to help build their capacity to use restorative practices.

Before they engage with our programs, all RJP Maine volunteers go through the 10-hour Foundations class, and facilitators continue on to a 24-hour Harm Repair Series.

▶ **Number of people trained in RJP Maine's 42 hour Foundations of Restorative Practices class through the UMaine Hutchinson Center: IOI**

"I came to this experience with training in circles, so I wasn't sure what I'd get out of so much intensive training on things I thought I already knew. Now I can say it was incredible. I speak with more confidence on how restorative practices can be used to help resolve conflict. In my daily work I find myself applying restorative practices in more and more places. Circles used to be a thing I used in a few of my programs with students. Now restorative practices are a part of my daily life, something that influences everything I do." — UMaine training participant

▶ **Partner schools and institutions: 13**

"The Restorative Justice Project has contributed to my learning both personally and professionally. The training series offered an important balance of content sharing, reflection and practice. Without this training, I would not be prepared to bring restorative practices to my institution. There is always more to learn about restorative practices, but I am moving in the right direction thanks to RJP Maine."

— an institutional partner

▶ **Number of public school personnel trained in Foundations in Restorative Practices: 37**

A school board member of a local midcoast school district took our Foundations training and, upon completing, introduced the circle process to the district's school board. She has since applied circle keeping other times to help school board members discuss contentious topics.

▶ **Number of public school personnel trained in Harm Repair: 15 (combined total of 630 hours of training!)**

"I really love all the trainings you offer. I try very hard to transfer this training to my present work with students. Thank you so much for all of your support." — school personnel

Note: This was our first year offering Harm Repair Training to school staff members with our 42 hour Foundations course as a prerequisite. 100% of survey takers reported that they now feel comfortable holding responsive processes where they work. In fact, the training was designed to encourage participants to try on practices throughout the series. Most participants were able to apply learning in real time and come back to the monthly sessions with stories of success as well as deeper questions as a result of their practice. One education in an elementary school, after our session on harm repair circles, decided to invite older students into the circle to share their stories around the importance of being inclusive of all classmates.

▶ **Number of volunteers trained in Foundations in Restorative Practices: 40**

I was inspired by the group gathered and the skills of the training team to guide us that a depth of connection was established in our work together. Thanks to all! — Volunteer participant

▶ **Number of volunteers trained in Harm Repair: 14**

I loved this. It clarified so much that was still confusing to me at the end of Foundations. I feel much better prepared to jump into certain situations.

— Volunteer participant

BUILDING COMMUNITY JUSTICE HUBS

Rather than seeking to reform the current legal system, Community Justice Hubs create an alternative justice infrastructure led by local communities so that anyone may seek a restorative response. We are grateful for the initial funding provided for Hub development through a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. In keeping with the grant, we will focus on 18-24 year olds while simultaneously working to provide safety and belonging for all community members.

▶ **4 County Offices Established:** Belfast, Rockland, Damariscotta, and Bath

▶ **23 Listening Sessions** engaging community members on the topics of safety, mattering, and belonging

- 148 community members attended listening sessions in Knox and Lincoln Counties representing families, youth, chamber/civic/business, law enforcement, service providers, RJP volunteers, and people with lived experiences within the justice system and/or recovery communities.

▶ **39 volunteer Steering Team**

members are active within Knox, Lincoln, and Waldo Counties. They are using local crime data to develop strategies to address rural crime and reduce incidents among 18-24 year-olds through restorative approaches.

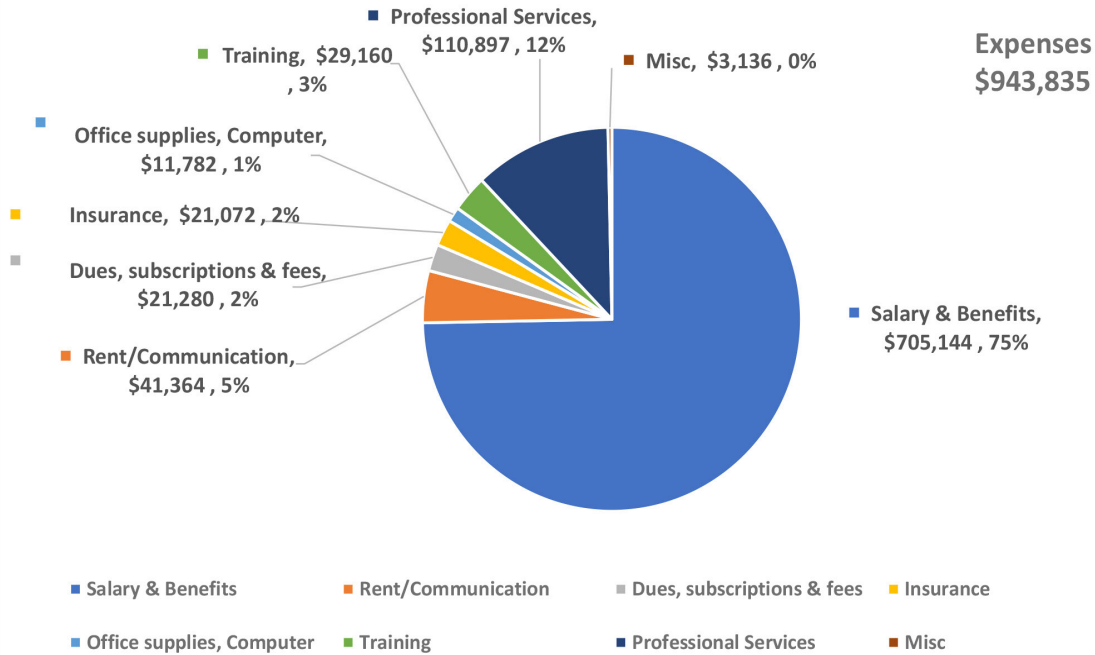
▶ **22 participants** attended the Knox

County data walk with representatives from the Knox county community, RJP Maine, University of Southern Maine Cutler Center, and regional Advisory Partners.

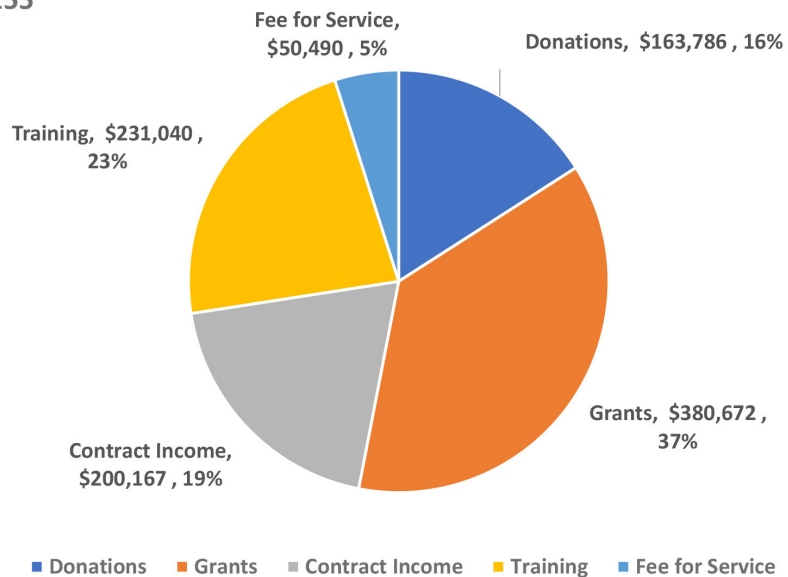


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PROFIT & LOSS, 2021-2022



Revenue Streams \$1,026,155



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