2017-18 Year in Review

In 2017-18, Resolve served a total of 13 schools across four districts throughout southern Oregon spanning from Ashland to Rogue River. Four schools were served by onsite Restorative Justice Specialists: Phoenix High School, Talent Middle School, North Medford High School and Rogue River Junior Senior High School.

For processes facilitated by these specialists, Resolve can report the number of people served. It is notable that, because a good deal of the work Resolve accomplishes each year is through training, it can safely be assumed the numbers below are a fraction of the grand total of people served through restorative justice processes as a result of the training and consultation support Resolve offers schools in implementing these practices.

- 732 students and 34 adults participated in a community building process facilitated by a Resolve RJ Specialist
- 498 administrators, teachers and school staff participated in training for restorative justice implementation
- 1,251 students and 473 adults participated in a restorative process to repair harm facilitated by a Resolve RJ Specialist

This report offers a summary of the highlights and findings from schools implementing restorative justice practices in southern Oregon through a partnership with Resolve.

For further information, contact Resolve, contact@resolvectcenter.org.

What’s Inside?

Elementary Schools
- Abraham Lincoln Elementary
- Howard Elementary
- Lone Pine Elementary
- Jackson Elementary
- Jefferson Elementary
- Roosevelt Elementary

Middle Schools
- Talent Middle

High Schools
- Rogue River Junior/Senior High
- Phoenix High
- Central Medford High
- North Medford High

Community Outdoor Schools
- John Muir School, K-6
- Ruch Community Outdoor School, K-8
Implementing Restorative Justice this year has been challenging and rewarding. We have felt a bit out of our comfort zone, but have experienced a lot of growth. I am so proud of our staff and their conscience effort to change our mindsets. I’m excited to see where we go in the future.  
- Megan Young, Principal

“I think the Resolve It path is helpful because if you have a problem you can just resolve it on the Resolve It path. It’s helpful for kids that get into fights because the monitors don’t need to handle it, the Peacekeepers at the Resolve It path can handle it.  
– Memphis, 3rd Grade Student

Using the new “Resolve It” path at Abraham Lincoln Elementary School, student mentors help their peers problem solve a conflict at recess.

- Memhis, 3rd Grade Student

Stop and Think with Teacher Kelly Dempsey!

Inspired to create a tool to help teachers facilitate classroom circles, Kelly Dempsey created “Stop and Think”, a ring of flashcards with single prompts on a variety of topics addressing social and emotional issues she feels are important to discuss proactively. These will be used in our community circles facilitating students to share how they would respond in certain common situations, talk about an experience they’ve had, or how they could apply a tip to their own problem solving toolkit. These will also be used by peer mentors working with younger students to coach them on positive problem solving skills. Truly the possibilities are endless! The goal is to teach these crucial skills in a calm and neutral environment so that they can then apply them to real life situations.” - Kelly Dempsey

- Kelly Dempsey

<table>
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<tr>
<th>100%</th>
<th>Staff trained in facilitating pro-active classroom circles</th>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Teachers implemented community circles at least 2x per week</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>Students &amp; staff trained on use of the Resolve It path</td>
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<td>18.5%</td>
<td>Decrease in minor referrals for contact/physical aggression between 2016-17 and 2017-18</td>
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When she arrived at our school in the fall, it was obvious she did not fit in. She was the “new girl” from a small town. She was loud, boisterous, expressed herself frequently without filters, and was quickly well-liked by the popular boys. That being said, she was not embraced by the girls. She had skills in being divisive among existing friends, created new groups of social groups at conflict with other social groups. She understood well how to play the victim when she was the instigator. 

It wasn’t long before a serious physical fight erupted between her and another strong girl among our 6th graders. The fight resulted in major ripples of taking sides, parental anger and involvement in the issue, and a serious fracture existed now among this group of students. The Principal had more than one parent vehemently expressing, “That girl doesn’t belong here!” 

Knowing we needed to quickly heal this issue, the Restorative Practices Team met with the teacher of this student to strategize what would be our next steps. While the classroom teacher was not deeply trained in Restorative Principles, she was coached on how to facilitate a series of several community circles that would hopefully lead to restoring these relationships and unifying our entire 6th grades once again.

She was hesitant and nervous, and rightly so, but launched these conversations among the class. Many heartfelt feelings, opinions, and expressions of fear were brought out during these conversations. In just a few sessions of expressing and listening to each other, the process was a raving success! Within a week, students were expressing that this girl deserved a second chance. Some rallied around her and relationships began to show signs of healing. Last to heal were the parents, but they also began to see the change and trust was beginning to be rebuilt.

While the entire year was not flawless, and there continued to be occasional mistakes and interventions, the process was working, and about January, this same student was selected as a class Student of the Month.

This entire process had a strong impact upon our whole staff to see how Restorative Principles put into action actually healed a major rift among our upper grades. This influence has impacted later issues and led to actions toward similar restorative circles, conversations, and healing.

- Gerry Flock, Principal

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**Proud Accomplishments**

- Full implementation of community circles. All classes practicing weekly, some as often as daily.
- 4 restorative problem-solving questions implemented staff-wide.
- Evidence of breaking down barriers between students: racial & socio-economic.
- Precipitated in school-wide theme, *Kindness Matters*, and week-long celebration, *Kindness Week*.
- Launched a Sparrow Program and supported a Lone Pine student through over 350 community service hours.
- When a 5th grade class experience racial harassment during a competitive game, the teacher immediately restructured the moment into a racial sensitivity circle and discussion, which concluded with promises from the class to end the year in unity.
Roosevelt Elementary School, Medford

- Created a restorative justice collaboration team.
- 100% of students and staff took part in a community building circle and circles responding to conflict and repairing harm.
- Principal facilitated staff circles during staff meetings.
- Over 600 restorative responses were completed by RJ Coach, Principal, Teachers, and Staff.
- Restorative justice processes are now 100% implemented as the re-entry process for school suspensions.

“Circles are nice and a safe place to share your feelings when something is troubling you. It also resolves problems with students that are doing bad things during class, recess or other occasions. I was in a circle with my new teacher to get to know each other. We went around and shared things about ourselves. It was helpful to get to know the teacher because she was a new teacher halfway through the year.” - 5th Grade Student

Creating A Classroom Community With Circles

“The community building circles have been a positive experience in my classroom. I started with my fifth graders mid-way through the school year. Because I had to jump in and take over from a different teacher, it took time to get to know my students and make connections with them. One strategy that helped achieve this was the use of community building circles. We had fun getting to know one another through fun question prompts. We also had some great moments when kids felt comfortable to share personal experiences. I felt this helped me create a bond with my students. I had a few challenging students that put up barriers when I first arrived. I feel that circles have helped break down those barriers. Overall it has been a positive experience in our classroom.” Teacher

“I am glad to hear that my son is working with the custodian. I wanted to support that and had him also write an apology letter at home instead of playing PlayStation. I wanted to hold him accountable at home to support what you were doing at school”. - Parent

“I really like what is going on at your school. You are teaching my son to understand his choices and to be held accountable. I really like that he had to write the teacher an apology letter and helped clean up her class. I’m really glad he gets to be a part of the great things at Roosevelt.”- Parent of a 3rd Grade Student

“This program you have going on here at Roosevelt really gets the kids understanding how they hurt others when they are disrespectful. It’s nice when a student gets to hear from me how their actions really upset me and I get a say on how they get to make it up to me.”
- Substitute Teacher

Whole School Sing-a-long 2018, Roosevelt Elementary
Howard Elementary School, Medford

Integrating RJ Into Systems

“Our first year with Restorative Justice has taught us that the practices are complex and very powerful. We are proceeding with our implementation slowly, thoroughly, cautiously as we realize it takes skill to effectively implement. We are also trying to determine how the processes best fit within an elementary setting - considering the cognitive and socio-emotional developmental level of our young students - and within the context of trauma-informed practices (TIPs). We are excited that the philosophies align so well with all we know about TIPs!

So far, we have informally integrated RJ ideology and practices within our “referral” system and how we teach conflict resolution strategies - many times involving informal restorative dialogues. A frequently heard conversation in our SEL room might sound like this:

Everyone makes mistakes, and everyone has the right to make mistakes better - to repair harm caused by the mistake. If harm is caused to another person, that person has the right to experience the harm repaired and to be involved in the process of determining how and what ‘repair’ looks like.

Often a part of the reparation process involves an informal restorative dialogue.

This year, we focused on implementing classroom circles to build community. I believe that was our main commitment to the restorative process. Most of the issues we deal with at the elementary level have more to do with conflict than with causing harm (although harm also occurs) and circles help in working with student conflict.”

- Javier del Rio, Principal

We do circles in my classroom daily because I want students to reflect on their mental state as they come in and have a space to express it to the class. This daily practice creates a strong sense of community. I know students also value the circles because when I ask if they want to keep doing them, 100% say “yes”.

- Michelle Lindley, 4th Grade Teacher

The ultimate impact of our first year of implementation has been...

- Stronger relationships between staff and students
- Increase in student trust
- Increase in students’ belief and experience that their voice will be heard and their feelings and needs validated.
Jackson Elementary School, Medford

“Our greatest accomplishment was the commitment to whole school implementation of community building circles. It supported enormous growth in building relationships, opening doors for conversations and building trust amongst one another.

- Kelly Soter, Principal

Jackson Running Club circles up to show off their new shoes!

A Successful First Year

- 5 Staff members trained through Restorative Justice Facilitator training.
- 100% Teachers trained in facilitating classroom community building circles.
- Community building circles and restorative responses to conflict and harm occur regularly across the school.

Jefferson Elementary School, Medford

“I have noticed teachers are using their circle time in a way that supports all students. The model has led to a greater understanding of students who are creating harm. I believe the long term effects of that understanding will change the experience of students and ultimately change behavior.”

- Shelly Inman, Principal

Working Hard To Make Things Better And Better

- 10 Staff members trained through Restorative Justice Facilitator training.
- 100% Teachers trained in facilitating classroom community building circles. All Teachers and Support staff trained in one-to-one restorative conversations.
- Community building circles and restorative responses to conflict and harm occur regularly across the school.
What are the kids saying?

“I like Circle because it gives you a chance to share how you’re feeling so that people know if they can joke around or not. They know if I’m having a good day or not. Circles are good too because they help if you don’t understand something and you can hear what others say and share what you think and its safe.”

- Harper, 3rd grade

“We get to know people better”

“I like the ice breaker questions”

“Circles are a good way to share and solve problems.”

- Rebecca, 6th Grade

“We learn from others”

“Circles are a good way to share your conflicts. Sometimes people don’t know things and it’s a way to be more careful.”

- Ava, 6th grade

“We can problem solve together”

“The first couple of minutes of a restorative dialogue are very intense because most times when you have a conflict with someone, it’s hard to be around them. When the adult provides things to talk about, I get more comfortable because I realize the adult wouldn’t let things escalate. The dialogue feels like a safe place to express my feelings and to talk about how to make things better. I wish they would happen more often.”

- Braydon, 5th Grade

What are teachers and administrators saying?

“I like that circles give every kid a chance to be heard each day. That really helped to build our classroom community. We also used responsive circles on a couple occasions. One such time, we considered everyone who might be impacted when we leave a mess at the lunch table. I think it was great for my first graders to think outside of themselves without being individually called out or shamed.”

- Lauren Martinez, 1st Grade Teacher

“I am thrilled to see teachers who have not had formal restorative justice training begin to use the restorative questions when working with students. They are picking up on techniques by watching others, seeing how well it works, and have started using it in their conversations with students. It’s great to see that not one person is expected to be responsible for the restorative work in the school, but everyone is beginning to take responsibility for making this the way we approach all situations in which harm has been caused.”

- Katie Mayfield, Special Education Teacher

“I love how circles shape your classroom community. Students learn important skills such as thoughtful listening, empathy, and respect for others. There were times where students shared very personal things, expressing a great deal of vulnerability. This shaped my classroom by allowing students to feel heard, feel safe, and understand perspectives and experiences other than their own.”

- Ashley Smith, 3rd Grade Teacher

“In the past, there was punitive mentality of staff: acts of disobedience should result in punishment. There was a belief that if the acts of disobedience continued, then the punishment was not severe enough to deter the behavior. I have seen a noticeable difference/change in this perspective. The attitude now is much more inclusive, responding appropriately, applying natural consequences, following through with apologies and/or restorative conversations. This perhaps has been the greatest change that restorative practices have had upon Lone Pine.”

- Gerry Flock, Principal
A Path To Make Things Right

“One particularly impactful circle occurred after racial slurs were targeted at a guest speaker in a classroom. During the speaker’s presentation several students were whispering then shouting phrases that were inappropriate, hurtful and bigoted in nature. The speaker had to excuse themselves from the classroom. It was not apparent to many of the students what had occurred and for those who participated in the behavior, the gravity of the statements was not clearly understood. Our school’s RJ specialist, along with the Assistant Principal and class teacher met with all students the next day to discuss the impact of the situation before bringing the speaker back into the classroom.

The speaker shared at length about the personal impact of the statements to illustrate the lasting and continuing damage such comments may have. Following the story, several rounds of debriefing questions were discussed to allow the students to reflect back to the speaker and their peers. The guest speaker finished her classes later in the week without further incident and some of the youth wrote a responsibility letter to the speaker.

Without the pre-existing framework for having a conversation about the incident in a circle, the youth involved simply would not have fully understood the impact of their actions. This was an unfortunate event where simple suspensions or detentions would have done nothing to help with the healing and needs of the speaker or teach the youth about harming others while providing them a path to make things right.”

- Andrew Jordan, RJ Specialist

“Restorative justice continues to be a great tool for us to use when working with students who have damaged their relationships with staff members and other students. When students can understand and acknowledge the harm they have caused, it often leads to greater empathy on their part in the future.”

- Aaron Santi, Principal
“Learning to shift from traditional discipline to restorative justice has been exciting and has challenged me to get used to it from a systems perspective. I feel that continued effort has allowed the shift to get easier and more natural. There have been many breakthrough moments for me in circles that have involved discipline situations that were resolved in ways that affirmed the students, built their confidence, and allowed them to grow. This has been the most rewarding part for me.”
Chris Carmiencke, Principal

“I like that circles make us communicate to people we usually don’t talk to. You could make friends that you didn’t have”
-Brooke, 8th Grade Student

School Spirit
One of the greatest impacts restorative justice has had on our school is the community building process. The level of engagement and school spirit that has been shown by our Freshman class this last year has been impressive to all students. Much of this has been because of the community building circles that have come out of the restorative justice implementation that has occurred in our school.

Collaborating With Families
“I was afraid my daughter was going to be kicked out of school, but after hearing all the positive things about her I was almost brought to tears—not only because I was relieved but because it was great to hear positive things about her. [The accountability process] also has made a huge impact on her behavior.”
-Parent of 8th Grade Student

“The restorative conversation was kind of calming knowing that it is resolved and being able to talk to them again like friends. Things are better. We resolved it.”
-Junior High Student
Phoenix High School, Phoenix

4 Years and Going Pirate Strong!

Referrals for Fighting

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>2017-18</td>
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Referrals for Bullying

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Referrals</th>
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<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>2017-18</td>
<td>10</td>
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Change Since 2013-14

- **33% Decrease** in out-of-school suspensions overall
- **76% Decrease** in out-of-school suspensions for students belonging to a minority group (race/ethnicity)
- **6% Increase** in attendance
- **60% Decrease** in discipline referrals for students with Special Education or IEP status
- **65% Decrease** in discipline referrals for students who receive free or reduced lunch (economically disadvantaged)

A Teacher’s Reflection

“My experience with Restorative Justice this school year allowed for one of my students to truly learn from his actions and led to an opportunity for that student to better himself. I was far more impressed with this approach to student discipline, versus the traditional punitive techniques that have plagued the first 10 years of my teaching career.

The student in particular made a grave error in judgment trying to be "cool" and impress his friends. This student’s action led him to say and record a truly harmful, hateful, and vile video. However, this video was not in the true spirit of who my student is. This video was him trying to fit in. He knew the mistake he made the second he made it.

What I enjoyed about working with Restorative Justice is that my student got a chance to learn from his mistake. That doesn't always happen, but when it does, true progress is made. This student was able to learn from his mistakes and I saw a change in his behavior once he gained this valuable lesson. This student took the time to make sure those impacted by his actions were apologized to and had regained the respect that he tried to take from them. This student helped to turn around the school culture and tried to prevent others from making the same mistake he did.

This is what Restorative Justice is about. Learning from our mistakes, growing from our mistakes, and giving back what we took when we made those mistakes.

- Jeff Rhoades, Teacher
Building Systems At Phoenix High School

We were able to sit down as a team to modify our original restorative justice discipline referral into a digital form, aligning it with the process at the middle school. So now as students transition from middle school to high school there is continuity with our processes. We were also able to introduce to staff and students positive referrals as a way to celebrate the amazing work going on at our school. Students and staff have both embraced the opportunity to accentuate the positive versus only focusing on negative behavior. - Christie Sanders, Student Manager

The restorative justice principles fit us well at PHS because they are based on building relationships and we are a school that takes great pride in building positive relationships with all of our students. We are also working to increase school-wide respect and we know that restorative justice is going to play a vital role in this process.”

- Toby Walker, Principal

“I like that it gives all of my students a chance to have a voice if they want it. It allows us to get to know a little more about each other and it helps them to see another side of me because I participate in all of the questions as well.”

- Carolena Campbell, Teacher

“We have continued to see the positive impact of restorative justice at PHS. Not only have our students and staff become more accustomed to this process, we strongly believe it has helped shape our positive school culture.

“The restorative process really conveyed to me how my actions negatively impacted my teacher and peers and started me on the path to rebuilding those relationships.”

- Junior Student

“My son was held accountable by peers, staff, and family. This really hit home for him, causing him to look at this actions. I believe he was truly sorry for his actions and learned from it which is what a parent wants from this type of situation. Great experience, thanks to all!”

- Mother of Junior Student

“Having a conversation with the person that I had hurt was tough, but it was needed. Not only were they already hurting prior to the situation, I was too. We worked through it and by talking we are closer friends. I had apologized and I learned my lesson on taking my anger out on others, rather than just talking through it.”

- Freshman Student
Central High School, Medford

- 4 staff members attended the 4-day intensive RJ Facilitator Training
- Implemented student-to-student restorative dialogues
- Implemented teacher-to-student restorative dialogues
- Implemented re-entry circles for students that return from JDH Options program
- Three staff members attended the Northwest Justice Forum, a regional restorative justice conference
- Implementation of community service system to support student accountability and making things right in the community

“Restorative Justice is not a magic “silver bullet” that makes everything perfect. Rather it is a tool and a mindset to support stronger relationships and to help build community. Restorative justice can have a positive impact on many aspects of the learning community.”

Michael Shunk, Dropout Prevention Coordinator

Circles In The Classroom

“For me, circles are like a do-all Leatherman tool in my teacher pocket. I use them for:

- Relationship building and sustaining
- Social and emotional skill building
- Responsive intervention
- Checking in
- To deepen subject matter learning
- To help students make connections between what they are learning in school and their own personal experiences.”

Jay Schroder, Teacher

“Circles are revealing in a good way. I get to learn things about other students that I otherwise wouldn’t know, and realize we have much more in common that I otherwise would have thought.”

-Student, Central Medford High School
North Medford High School

“North has seen an increased rate of graduation and attendance, in part, due to the improvements seen in student/teacher relationships. Students feel more connected to teachers, causing them to want to be in class more, which boosts their grades and the school’s overall graduation rate.”

- Jesse Pershin, Assistant Principal

Proud Accomplishments

✓ Increased graduation rate
✓ Freshman Academy circle implementation
✓ School-wide core-values lessons and conversations
✓ School-wide professional development in restorative justice
✓ Decrease in referrals (6.5%)

Growing Through Communication

“Being a part of a restorative process helped me learn that it’s good to talk about things and not to give up. I’ve learned to stay open-minded towards people. If I don’t like someone it doesn’t mean I can’t listen to them.”

- 10th Grade Student

“I’ve had a few great experiences talking with students with our on-site specialist. One student was hardened towards learning and struggled academically. After meeting with that student and hearing his perspective, we gained a deeper mutual understanding of what the real issue was, improving our relationship and ultimately helping him succeed in my class.”

- Teacher
John Muir Elementary School

In response to a conflict arising and escalating between a group of students we did a circle right there on the spot. I posed the question, “What would be fair?”. The four students settled into the process quite readily and smoothly, and they came up with a solution.

I was heartened and inspired to see them in the circle process. They listened respectfully, spoke from their hearts, and worked as a team to come up with a fair solution. After the circle they implemented their plan and that went smoothly, calmly, and respectfully too.

Oftentimes, as adults and teachers, I think we feel discouraged, wondering if all the restorative justice processes that we implement are working. In that circle, I saw all our hard work paying off. I am so grateful to be in this community doing this work.”

- Rebecca Gyarmathy, Principal

“I feel like my teacher listens to me. We hear other people’s perspectives. We talk about repairing harm and we list ways of how to repair the harm. Sometimes we pick a stick from the positive ripple jar.”

- Student

Proud Accomplishments

- Started a restorative justice committee
- 30 min. of class time scheduled daily for restorative justice
- 100% staff attended training
- Involving parents through “RJ 101” gatherings
- Decrease in referable problem behaviors
- Created a restorative justice webpage

Behavior referrals reduced by 57% between 2016-17 and 2017-18
Community circles are the heart of a strong classroom. Using them to get to know students and have them feel connected and respected by each other and the teacher is vital to the classroom environment. They build bonds that help students learn and grow together. When I run community circles, we make sure to start by developing class agreements such as “What is said here, stays here.” This helps create a safe and welcoming environment. After that, the circle can be a serious topic such as, “What is something in your life you wish you could change?” or a fun topic or game. **Taking 15 minutes each day to build these bonds will add more time into your day for other learning** and teaches students to take care of each other.”

- Jennifer Drane, Middle School Teacher

*I was scared to tell him that he had hurt me and that I was scared to go to recess. He told me that he was sorry and that he would not do it again. I believed him because he cried. I cried."

- 2nd Grade Student

“I pride myself as being a leader in a school where all staff members engage in conversations with students that determine reasons for behavior rather than handing out a consequence with no knowledge of why the behavior occurred. Relationships are strong and our kids are receiving that caring adult that ALL kids need and should have.”

- Julie Barry, Administrator

Impact

Because of our school-wide practices, we are experiencing less major behavior infractions and the minor ones are usually handled very easily with a conversation including all parties. Students anticipate and engage in discussions with involved parties with more confidence.