

*Understanding, Accountability, Shared Power, Equity-Minded, Non-Adversarial, Non-Punitive, Respect, Honour, Dignity, Kindness*

# EMBODY

## Restorative Justice



**Annual Report 2023/2024**  
**EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE, EVERYDAY**

# Executive Letter



**Chris Cowie**  
Executive Director

Local kids were playing soccer when the ball landed in their neighbour's yard—again! The older woman refused to return the ball. Tired of hearing his kids complain, a father pounded on his surly neighbour's door with a bat in hand. The frightened woman returned the ball and then called the police.

What should happen next?

We've been enculturated to believe that bad behaviour must be punished. Restorative Justice is not our first thought. But Restorative Justice is only a nice idea unless you and I embody it in our everyday lives. What if we got curious instead of jumping to punishment when we were in conflict or heard about a crime? We could ask, "What's happening in this person's life and how did their world shape them to believe their actions are acceptable?"

I see this generous curiosity among our volunteers and staff who come alongside people in conflict, including folks in prison and people who have caused sexual harm.

As CJI volunteers participate in Restorative Justice, they listen to multiple viewpoints, value every community member, and invite people to meaningful accountability. These skills become a way of being at home, work, school and in society.

We collaborate with volunteers so more folks are transformed by experiencing Restorative Justice. Slowly, but surely we are shifting the culture. Waterloo Region is becoming a restorative Region as we reach a critical mass of citizens, living by these practices and embodying a restorative world view.

Curious about the outcome of the neighbours in conflict? The local police referred them to CJI for mediation. Their tension dissolved as they truly listened to each other. The woman expressed her frustration over the ball breaking a sculpture made by her recently deceased husband. The remorseful father apologized for his threatening behaviour. Restorative Justice empowered these neighbours to transcend their conflict and embrace peaceful coexistence.

Imagine a community where everyone, everywhere, responds with Restorative Justice every day.

I invite you to join us on this journey and to be curious, kind, and committed to restoring relationships.

Chris Cowie  
Executive Director



CJI thanks Chris Cowie for  
15 years of stellar leadership!  
He embarked on a new chapter of  
his life in August 2024.

## VISION

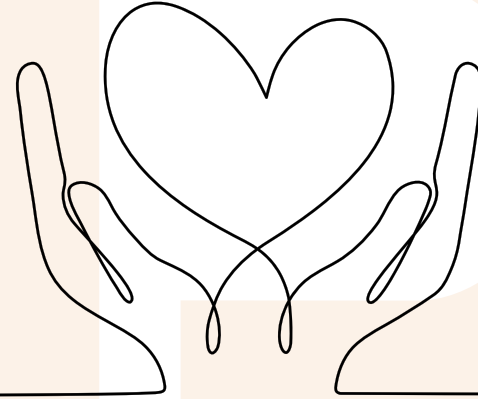
We envision connected, peaceful communities, where all conflict is resolved in a restorative way.

## MISSION

CJI equips individuals and communities to repair relationships and create restorative systems.

As CJI journeys toward a more just society, we challenge our biases, nurture radical love and acceptance, and imagine new possibilities for healing and reconciliation.

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## IN 2023/2024...

**185 CJI volunteers gave 11,856 hours\*** embodying restorative justice with our community

**2,356 people** learned restorative justice skills through CJI's training and learning programs

**9,584 people** resolved conflict, learned new skills, and heard about the power of restorative justice through our programs, workshops and communications

\*this equals \$320,000 of donated time, which is 19% of our budget.

# Mediation Services

Community, Victim-Offender,  
and Identity-Based Harm

**"Restorative Justice gave  
me answers and resolution..."**

– Tami, a business owner who experienced vandalism



## Owner Meets Men Who Vandalized Her Business

*Tami felt like a gut punch when customers told her the mural on the side of her business had been graffitied. A local artist had created the mural to pay homage to their small community.*

*Tami wondered why. Was it random? Did someone have a problem with the community or with her?*

*The two men who graffitied the mural were identified through nearby security cameras and were arrested. The courts recommended Restorative Justice to the men and Tami was eager to take part.*

*During the mediation, the men listened, explained, and accepted responsibility for*

*their actions. They also made amends by repairing and sealing the mural so that it could not be damaged again.*

*"I couldn't have asked for more. I had an idea in my head of what I wanted the outcome [of the mediation] to be, and they offered up the solution that was exactly what I wanted," said Tami.*

*Tami learned that one of the men was an artist. She offered him a spot on the wall to create a design to "use his talents in a positive way." She adds, "Restorative Justice gave me the answers and resolution that I never would have gotten had they gone through traditional fines or jail time."*

## THIS YEAR, THROUGH CJI...

**89 people** experiencing neighbourhood and community conflicts were provided with restorative processes

**112 people** dialogued after a criminal incident with support from CJI mediators

**31 dialogues** were facilitated in situations of identity-based harm to build connection and understanding across differences

**8 people** were matched with affordable housing arrangements through our Home Share program

# Mediation Services

Family, Older Adult, & Workplaces



**"The process allowed both of us to come to an understanding and foster more mutual respect."**

– Mediation participant



## **THIS YEAR, THROUGH CJL...**

**481 coworkers** in schools, businesses and organizations used a restorative process to manage conflict



**108 teens and their caregivers and 112 caregivers** and their impacted children were assisted in managing conflict



**49 caregivers, children and their supports**, involved with the child welfare system, participated in Child Protection Mediation, Family Group Decision Making, and Transitional Planning Conferences to navigate conflict and make decisions



**1304 older adults** were provided with social connections to ease the burden of social isolation

CJL's Elder Mediation Services collaborated with Kind Minds Family Wellness and several other community agencies to engage low-income, older adults at risk of isolation, conflict and abuse. In recreation groups, participants built relationships, learned about resources, and strengthened their conflict resolution skills.



Gwen (left) joined a weekly craft group when she moved to a Cambridge geared-to-income complex. "It's a friendly group. The girls are a laugh!" Gwen liked meeting new people, the crafts and a Waterloo Region Police presentation warning older adults about scams.



# Integration Services

Supporting people impacted by sexual harm and experiencing prison.

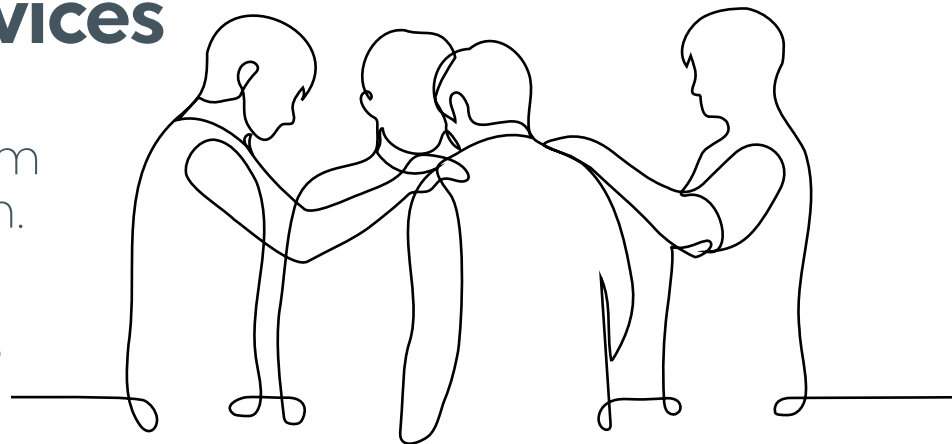
## THIS YEAR, THROUGH CJI'S REVIVE PROGRAM...

**36 survivors of sexual harm** were supported in their healing journey

**26 family members, partners, and others impacted by sexual harm** were provided space to share their experiences

**39 people who offended sexually** were assisted to address their offending patterns

**11 facilitated dialogues** brought people together to discuss impacts and needs after sexual harm



## AND THROUGH OUR STRIDE PROGRAM...

**92 Stride nights gathered 135 people** in prison and community volunteers for recreation and relationship

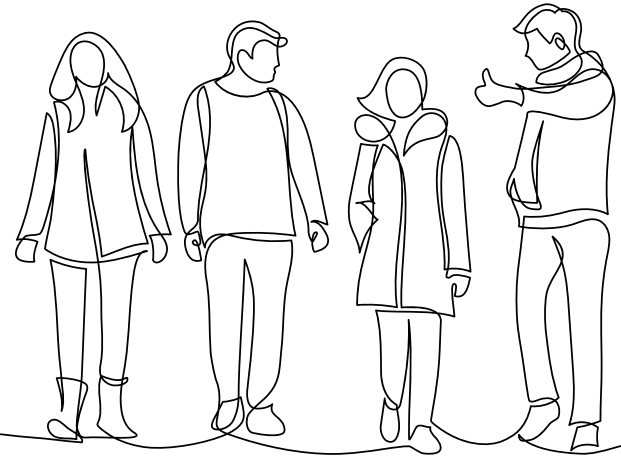
**10 women or gender-diverse people** were supported by a Circle of caring volunteers to return to the Waterloo Region community

*"My life is not where it was; I have a chance now."*

– Person reintegrating from prison with CJI's support

# Community Engagement

Communities are transformed when individuals adopt more restorative ways of thinking and acting in their families, neighbourhoods, schools, and workplaces.



## CJI TRAINING TRANSFORMS

In her Wilfrid Laurier University law and society classes, Felicia C. heard about Restorative Justice as theoretical and "nice to have". Then, a professor said CJI puts Restorative Justice into practice. Intrigued, Felicia signed up for CJI's Elder Mediation Co-Mentorship Training.

Felicia found the training "inclusive and welcoming". In one activity, participants chose an object to spark vulnerable sharing of personal stories. They related authentically as they listened deeply and discovered common ground. "True listening is more than waiting to say how you can help," said Felicia. After the training, friends and family noticed Felicia connected with them more deeply.

Felicia observes that the traditional justice system doesn't value everyone equally. "We support everyone except 'those people.' But, Restorative Justice is available to all."

In March 2024, 150 people gathered to launch CJI's Community Justice Centre. The Centre is a catalyst to address the roots of deeply entrenched social challenges in Waterloo Region. To begin with, the focus is on: identity-based harm, homelessness, and youth. CJI's Justice Navigators are collaborating with leaders stewarding the "headwaters" of our community to effect upstream change.



Jason Spencer,  
Justice Centre  
Director

# 2023-2024 Financials

## REVENUE

Donations & fundraising	23%	399,019.75
United Way	4%	67,000.00
Government grants & contracts	61%	1,037,637.81
Federal	10%	
Provincial	38%	
Regional	44%	
Fees & other income	12%	209,984.87
	100%	1,713,642.43

## EXPENSES

Wages, benefits & contact service	76%	1,297,091.10
Purchased services	9%	156,195.15
Program & events	1%	20,438.87
Promotion & fundraising	1.4%	23,733.94
Travel	0.6%	9,498.86
Staff training	1%	15,804.60
Office & facilities	11%	190,210.69
	100%	1,712,973.21
		669.22

\*Unaudited financial statements. Audited version available on request.

## CJI FUNDERS

Department of Justice Canada  
 Service Canada  
 Correction Services Canada  
 Public Safety Canada  
 Employment and Social Development Canada  
 Region of Waterloo  
 RBJ Schlegel Family Foundation  
 Sisters of St. Joseph  
 Status of Women Canada  
 Stirling Ave Mennonite Church  
 The Hallman Foundation  
 United Way Waterloo Region Communities  
 Waterloo Region Community Foundation  
 Wilfrid Laurier University  
 W-K United Mennonite Church  
 Zonta Club of Kitchener-Waterloo

Canadian Friends Service Committee  
 Canadian Women's Foundation  
 Christian Stewardship Services  
 Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo  
 Family & Children Services of Waterloo Region Foundation  
 First United Church  
 Kindred Credit Union Foundation  
 Provincial Government  
     Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services  
     Ministry of Culture, History and Sport  
     Ministry of the Attorney General  
     Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility  
     Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development  
 Federal Government of Canada  
 Many individual donors

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**Imagine a Just Community**

Community Justice Initiatives  
 Charitable Registration #106962707 RR0001