

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

DECEMBER



Extension UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

BUFFALO/PEPIN COUNTY TEEN COURT



2023 TEEN COURT AT A GLANCE

18 HEARINGS IN 2023



successful completion rate

MOST COMMON TEEN VIOLATIONS

- Vaping
- Disorderly Conduct
- Theft

YOUTH WITH VIOLATIONS COMPLETED

- **45** hours of coursework
- **30** hours community service
- **20** acts of kindness
- **14** apology letters

VOLUNTEER HOURS

High school panel members volunteered **136** hours in hearings and **128** hours in training

TRAINING

35 students from all six school districts in Buffalo and Pepin Counties are trained peer jury members

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court is to join together as a council of professional and community members to find ways to enhance positive youth and family development in both counties. The Teen Court will serve to modify behavior of youth with violations by combining positive peer pressure and involvement within our counties, families, schools, and organizations to promote youth development and restorative justice.

NEW YOUTH PANEL MEMBERS TRAINED

Buffalo / Pepin County Teen Court welcomed 12 new panel members at their training on April 14 at the Buffalo County Courthouse in Alma. Integral parts of the training included developing an understanding of the pillars of restorative justice, practicing effective and equitable questioning strategies, reviewing the hearing process and steps in deliberation, and discussing the research behind criminogenic needs. Throughout the training, experienced panelists coached new panel members in a mock teen court hearing. They also shared their perspectives, challenges and rewards serving Buffalo / Pepin County Teen Court. The training is centered on educating high school students on utilizing restorative justice with their peers. Restorative justice is an approach that encourages an offender to change behavior; a method that has been demonstrated as most effective, especially for young people, over time. Teen Court panelists also help their peer offenders to repair their relationship with the victim, restore their image in the community and build skills that will boost their future chance at success.



WISCONSIN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE YOUTH SUMMIT

OUR TEEN COURT PANELISTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE WISCONSIN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE YOUTH SUMMIT



Maya Weir (Durand), Kailyn Pophal (Durand), Kailey Herbenson (Gilmanton), Miriam Sandberg (Mondovi), and Jaycee Lisowski (Cochrane-Fountain City) represented Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court at the 4th annual Wisconsin Restorative Justice Youth Summit on the UW-Madison campus on July 27th. Youth participated in restorative justice sessions, engaged with the keynote speaker on youth voice and equity, networked with other youth and adults working in restorative justice with young people around the state, and contributed to the community art weaving. The art was presented with the following words: “Restorative justice is based on the idea that we are interconnected and woven together in humanity. Crime, wrongdoing, and unjust systems break down those relationships and lead to a ripple effect that breaks down communities. Restorative Justice prioritizes repairing harm and recognizes that maintaining positive relationships with others is a core human need. In weaving, the same is true—the structure forms the support for all the interconnected pieces and if one is broken or flawed it can cause the whole piece to fall apart. Justice also ripples outward and leads to wellbeing and wholeness in our communities. As we create artwork through weaving, we are reminded that by securing each individual piece we make a beautiful tapestry where each individual piece is as important as the next.”

WE'RE SO PROUD!

Sofia Sandberg (Mondovi) was awarded the \$500 Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court scholarship at her graduation ceremony in May and Kailey Herbenson (Gilmanton) was presented the \$250 award.

BUFFALO/PEPIN COUNTY LUCKY 16 4-H CLUB AND BUFFALO/PEPIN COUNTY TEEN COURT

TEEN COURT 2023

\$500 SCHOLARSHIP

SOFIA SANDBERG

HOW TEEN COURT HAS IMPACTED HER:

“Teen court has taught me about the justice system, about the psychology of breaking the law, and about myself. Before I became a part of teen court, I didn't know much about restorative justice, and my view of it was not correct. ... Society teaches that those entering the court system need punitive measures, but being involved in a restorative justice approach has had a huge impact on my thought process about the way we approach people that act in deviant ways. It's an amazing...to make sanctions related to infractions and help an offender restore their image in the community, as well as restore relationships with their victims, their families, their friends, and their community.”

BUFFALO/PEPIN COUNTY BUFFALO/PEPIN COUNTY TEEN COURT

TEEN COURT 2023

\$250 SCHOLARSHIP

KAILEY HERBENSON

HOW RJ HAS IMPROVED HER COMMUNITY:

“Through Teen Court, I learned about restorative justice and different restorative practices. Immediately, I believed that restorative practices were the way to go when handling matters with kids. During a Student Council meeting, I suggested we bring in a [local speaker]. I had asked [them] to come in and give a small presentation on restorative justice to the other Student Council members. With this presentation, we were able to collectively create ways we can incorporate restorative practices in our school. This was at the beginning of the year. Now looking back at it, a few months later, I realize that this truly benefited our school.”

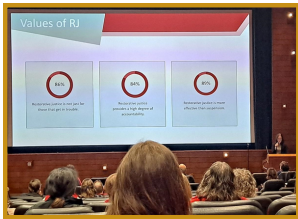
BUFFALO COUNTY @ SHOWCASE



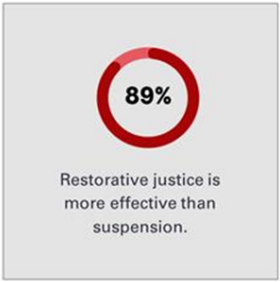
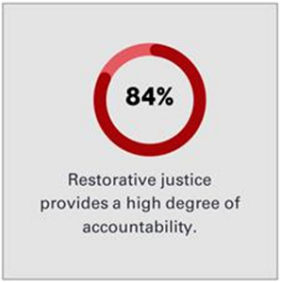
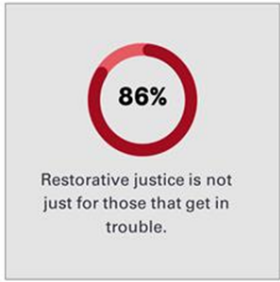
Kailey Severson, the 2023 Wisconsin Idea Restorative Circles intern and current UW-Madison student, presented the findings of the Buffalo County restorative justice in rural schools survey at the Division of Extension All-Colleague Conference. Severson shared more about how equitable access and program implementation looks different in rural districts. Her presentation shared that one major goal of her internship was working to increase the consistency and reduce potential bias in student referrals to restorative justice program; where there are inequities surrounding gender, race, income, and perceptions of students as habitual violators. Another objective was to lessen the stigma related to youth mistake making and more quickly identify resources for young people with a violation. The last target was promoting accountability and repairing relationships for improved likelihood of behavior change.



Some of the key highlights of the survey were: 95% of adults and 100% of the young people believe people should help their peers solve problems. From the interviews and surveys, Buffalo County Division of Extension was able to understand the current misconceptions surrounding restorative justice and how supportive our community would be of a restorative justice program in local school districts. Addressing misconceptions surrounding restorative justice as lacking accountability, being ineffective, and only to be utilized in times of violent or serious conflict is the first step in building a foundation for more equitable access in rural schools.

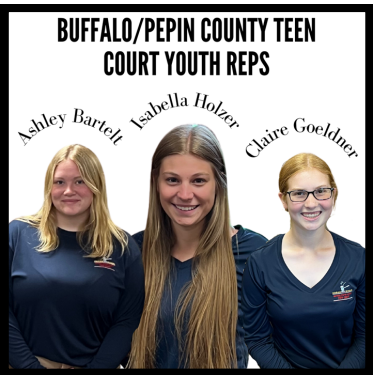


Values of RJ



MEET OUR TEEN COURT ADVISORY BOARD YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES

The 2023-2024 student youth representatives on the advisory board are Isabella Holzer (Cochrane-Fountain City), Claire Goeldner (Rural Virtual), and Ashley Bartelt (Alma). These graduating seniors provide a youth voice at board meetings, serve as mentors for youth with violations, coach peer panelists, advocate for the program, and help train incoming panel members. They started their one year term in September.



A RESTORATIVE REFRESH

We've been working to align our teen court policies and practices with the latest research in restorative justice with youth audiences. As a result, the Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court Advisory Board updated their mission to reflect more restorative language, shortened the requirement (formally sanction) window from 45 days to completion to 30 days, and worked with young people to design a new logo!



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