

THE Compiler

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Fall 2003



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Balanced and Restorative Justice

Victim advocates already applying BARJ concepts

By **Cristin Monti Evans**

Balanced and restorative justice is being applied in a variety of victims' advocacy initiatives throughout Illinois. Anger management courses, peer juries, and mediation programs are just some of the initiatives already under way that incorporate the BARJ philosophy.

"We use BARJ in pretty much everything we do," said Sharon Covey-Sink, executive director of the Bloom Township Youth and Family Services Department. "Most of the time we're dealing with kids that are delinquent, so we always take a look at the victim, offender, and community aspect, rather than just looking at the youth, and help that youth understand the perspective of the victim."

Covey-Sink was one of only 20 criminal justice practitioners selected to participate in a national training event on balanced and restorative justice at Florida Atlantic University in 2001. Her department offers family violence counseling, a community outreach program, and victim-offender mediation, taking victims, offenders, and the community (the three main stakeholders)

(Continued on back page)

Implementing a new juvenile justice philosophy in Illinois

By **Phillip Stevenson**

In September, the Authority sponsored a Balanced and Restorative Justice Summit in Springfield. Nearly 150 participants from across the state took part in the three-day event. These participants represented schools, community- and faith-based agencies, and all parts of the juvenile and criminal justice systems in Illinois. Their purpose was to assist in developing a strategy for implementing balanced and restorative justice in Illinois, consistent with the Juvenile Court Act reforms.

Background

On January 1, 1999, balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) became the guiding philosophy for juvenile justice in Illinois. BARJ merges two complementary justice perspectives, the balanced approach and restorative justice, into a single guiding philosophy on criminal justice.



Daniel Dighton

Catherine M. Ryan, a major force behind BARJ initiatives in Illinois, receives a standing ovation upon receiving the "Champions for Balanced and Restorative Justice" award at the BARJ summit. Ryan is chief of the Juvenile Justice Bureau in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

The balanced approach seeks to remedy the historical emphasis of the criminal justice system on offenders. The perspective of the balanced approach is that crime victims and communities are also primary clients of the criminal justice system and re-

(Continued on page 2)

An ex-offender relates to BARJ philosophy — page 6



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Created in 1983, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice. Most of the work of the Authority falls into three major divisions: Research and Analysis; Information Systems and Technology; and Federal and State Grants Administration.

The Authority is governed by a 20-member board comprised of state and local leaders from the criminal justice system and members of the public. There is one vacancy on the board.

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BARJ

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quire attention equal to that given of-fenders.

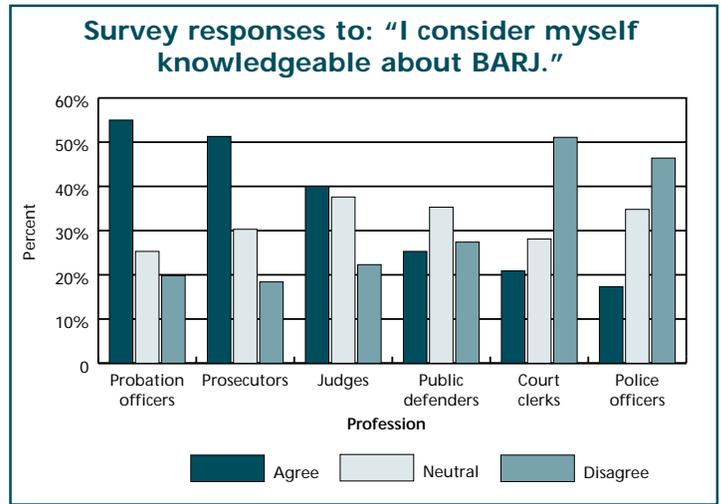
Restorative justice, in contrast to re-tributive and rehabilitative justice strategies that focus primarily on the offender (i.e., perspectives that rely on punishment and treatment, respectively, to change offender behavior), provides a framework by which the justice system can respond more holistically to offenders and those that have been harmed by their crimes (i.e., crime victims and the communities in which victims and offenders live).

Programmatic applications of the BARJ philosophy include victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, and community reparative boards. Evaluations of programs based on the BARJ philosophy have consistently shown that these programs are very effective at increasing satisfaction with the criminal justice system among victims, offenders, and community members. Additionally, a recent meta-analysis of restorative justice program evaluations in Canada found that, "those individuals who choose to participate in restorative justice programs find the process satisfying, tend to display lower recidivism rates and are more likely to adhere to restitution agreements."¹

Awareness lacking

Although BARJ became the guiding philosophy for Illinois' juvenile justice systems in 1999, more than one year later there remained a significant lack of knowledge about it among juvenile justice professionals. According to results of a study conducted by the Authority, nearly 18 months after the revised Juvenile Court Act took effect, less than 40 percent of juvenile justice professionals who participated in the study agreed with the statement, "I consider myself knowledgeable about balanced and restorative justice."² Additionally, there were notable differences in knowledge of the BARJ philosophy by profession, with probation officers reporting the greatest agreement with the statement (55 percent) and police officers the least agreement (17 percent).

Coinciding with the inclusion of the BARJ philosophy in Illinois' Juvenile Court Act, a grassroots effort was spawned to provide education about BARJ through an informal organization known as Restorative Justice for Illinois. Although many organizations in Illinois were attempting to meet the BARJ training needs of juvenile justice



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Brent Hanson, State of Illinois/IS

Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Mary Ann G. McMorrow presented Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine with the "Champions for Balanced and Restorative Justice" award at the BARJ summit. She also presented the award to state Rep. Tom Cross and Carl Hawkinson, deputy chief of staff for Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Although the discussion at this meeting was initially focused on the creation of an organization that would be responsible for moving Illinois' BARJ efforts forward, there was an acknowledgment of the absence of a statewide BARJ vision, and a strategy for realiz-

professionals, most of their efforts were focused on providing training to their members (e.g., Juvenile Police Officers Association, Illinois Probation and Court Services Association, etc.).

Restorative Justice for Illinois attempted to complement the organization-specific training by sponsoring an annual conference that brought together juvenile justice professionals from different aspects of the system. Although the existence of Restorative Justice for Illinois was short lived, their work and the positive response to their annual conferences illustrated the need for continuing education and training on BARJ, and the need to bring together the various actors in Illinois' juvenile justice systems to learn about BARJ and how it can be applied to their work.

In the two years since the last Restorative Justice for Illinois conference, there has been little statewide coordination of BARJ implementation efforts. Although there are pockets of BARJ activity around the state and within various juvenile justice professions, little progress has been made toward a systemic and statewide approach to implementing BARJ. Given the absence of a state-level agency whose sole purpose is to support juvenile justice in Illinois, it is not surprising that a strategy for the statewide implementation of the BARJ philosophy in Illinois' juvenile justice systems does not exist.

The summit

In November 2002, a diverse group of juvenile justice practitioners and interested community members gathered in Bloomington to discuss a method for moving Illinois' BARJ efforts forward.

ing that vision. Subsequent discussions among those who participated in the Bloomington meeting and the many others who were interested in how BARJ could direct their efforts resulted in a focus on planning a BARJ summit with the purpose of "creating a strategy that promotes the statewide implementation of Balanced and Restorative Justice practices consistent with the purpose and policy statement of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Reform Act."

The BARJ summit planning committee was composed of juvenile justice practitioners and citizens from the public and private sector, from all regions of Illinois and from the many agencies that are responsible for juvenile justice in Illinois. Early in the planning process it was recognized that embedded in a strategy for the statewide implementation of BARJ practices must be strategies for the many entities responsible for juvenile justice (e.g., law enforcement agencies, probation departments, state's attorney's offices, etc.) and strategies that account for the regional diversity of Illinois. As a result, a summit format was developed that provided attendees with the opportunity to collaborate with others who did similar work, and then collaborate with others who worked in the same region of the state.

Principal funding for the summit was provided by the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) program administered by the Authority, with additional support from the Office of the State's Attorneys Appellate Prosecutor, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, Lutheran Social Services of Illi-

Publications

A Crime Analyst's Guide to Mapping

With a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Authority has developed a crime analysis and mapping manual for local law enforcement agencies. The manual is primarily intended for the beginning analyst working at small- and medium-sized police departments, although experienced crime mappers may learn from later chapters. This manual is not intended as a guide to any particular software, but as a guide for understanding general mapping, geographic information system (GIS), and spatial analysis concepts.

Chicago Homicide Dataset Series: Is Age Discrepancy a Risk Factor for Intimate Partner Homicide?

The Authority's Research and Analysis Unit maintains a comprehensive database containing information on every homicide that occurred in the City of Chicago. Staff researchers recently completed an effort to update the dataset with information that will generate a variety of research products. The most current research report focuses on the difference in age between partners and the risk this generates for intimate partner abuse and homicide. Relative to their numbers in the general population, intimate partner homicide is more likely for couples with a large difference in age.

Criminal History Record Information 2003 Audit

The 2003 Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) Audit report is complete and available on the Authority website. The CHRI Audit Center operates under the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit and examines the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of criminal history information.

Chicago Community Policing Program

The full evaluation of the Chicago Police Department's community policing project, Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy – CAPS, during years 8 and 9 and three evaluation summaries: *Community Policing in Chicago, Years 8 and 9*; *Accountability in Management*, and *Police and Community Problem Solving in Chicago*, are currently available.

(Continued on page 4)

Research

Phillip Hoke Award

The Authority's Research and Analysis Unit was recently awarded the Phillip Hoke Award during the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) / Justice Research and Statistics Association's (JRSA) 2003 National Conference in San Francisco. The award was received for the Authority publication, "Methamphetamine in Illinois: An Examination of an Emerging Drug," by Senior Research Analyst Robert W. Bauer. Available on the Authority website, the publication focuses on how key indicators can be used to measure, monitor, and evaluate the extent and nature of methamphetamine use and abuse in Illinois.

JRSA is a national nonprofit organization of state criminal justice planning and research agency directors, researchers, and practitioners throughout government, academia, and criminal justice organizations. The Hoke Award recognizes outstanding efforts to apply empirical analysis to criminal justice policy-making in the states. This is the 10th Hoke award won by Illinois.

BARJ summit

R&A and other Authority staff members assisted in the planning and development of the Balanced and Restorative Justice Summit held in Springfield in September. The summit included nearly 150 participants from across the state, representing schools, community- and faith-based agencies, and all aspects of the criminal justice system. The goal of the summit was to develop a strategy for implementing Balanced and Restorative Justice in Illinois, consistent with the Juvenile Court Act reforms.

According to the purpose clause of the Juvenile Court Act, the state is to create a juvenile justice system capable of dealing the problem of juvenile delinquency, a system that will protect the community, impose accountability for violations of law and equip juvenile offenders with competencies to live responsibly and productively. Balanced and restorative justice, (BARJ), is comprised of three main principles: public safety, offender accountability to the victim and the community, and the competency development of young offenders. Participants at the summit were being asked to assess the current status of balanced and restorative jus-

(Continued on page 5)



Daniel Dighton

Dr. Howard Zehr, left, an internationally known practitioner, writer, lecturer, and teacher in the field of criminal justice, delivered a plenary address at the summit. He is considered one of the founders of the contemporary restorative justice movement.

Another plenary address was given by Dennis Maloney, a community justice fellow with the Community Justice Institute and the BARJ Project. He is a former director of the Department of Community Justice in Deschutes County, Oregon.

nois, the Illinois Probation and Court Services Association, and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The end result was a summit that was structured around eight interest-area workgroups:

- Victim issues/advocacy
- Offender issues/advocacy
- Community/faith-based organizations
- Schools
- Judiciary/prosecution/defense
- Probation and court services
- Law enforcement
- Corrections and parole

And five regional workgroups:

- Northern Region
- Central Region
- Southern Region

- Cook County
- Collar Counties

In contrast to conferences that are educational in purpose, the BARJ summit was created to allow those who were knowledgeable about BARJ to participate in the statewide strategic planning process. For each workgroup, local workgroup facilitators were identified and paired with experienced BARJ practitioners from around the country who were brought to the summit by the BARJ Project — an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention initiative based at Florida Atlantic University — the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The connection between workgroup participation and the strategic planning process can be seen in the following questions used by the local and national facilitators to drive discussions in the interest area and regional sessions:

- What is the status of BARJ in your interest area/region?
- What is the vision for BARJ in your interest area/region?
- What is needed to realize the BARJ vision of your interest area/region?

It is the workgroup discussions around these three questions that will serve as the foundation for the development of a strategic plan for the state-



Daniel Dighton

The serious and hard work at the BARJ summit ended on a light note, with some creative presentations from the different regional groups. Above, the Northern Region group makes their presentation to the participants.

wide implementation of BARJ practices.

Through the active participation of the attendees and facilitators who recognize the promise that BARJ holds, the summit created a level of interest and activity around BARJ not previously seen in Illinois. Interest area and regional collaborations that were created at the summit have continued. New BARJ collaborations have also been created. E-mail

"listserves" that give participants the opportunity to share BARJ information and learn from each other have been created throughout Illinois.

The future

One challenge that lies ahead is the continued facilitation and support for statewide and local planning that is crucial to the implementation of BARJ. Specific recommendations that came out of the summit workgroups include additional education and training on BARJ for the community and juvenile justice system practitioners, and a mechanism by which new information and research on BARJ can be shared (e.g., an Illinois BARJ website or an organization that is responsible for facilitating the statewide implementation of BARJ practices).

At the heart of BARJ is a collaborative process that depends, when possible and appropriate, on open and honest dialogue between all those affected by crime. Similarly, collaboration and dialogue among all those who have a role in juvenile justice is at the heart of the meaningful inclusion of BARJ practices in Illinois. If the conversation that was fueled by the summit continues in an earnest and meaningful way, the promise that BARJ holds as a process through which offenders are held accountable for the harms they caused their victims and their communities, while at the same time meeting the



Daniel Dighton

Participants at the BARJ summit listen to final presentations from the regional groups.

needs of offenders and building on their strengths, can be realized.

Having the BARJ philosophy as the purpose and policy of Illinois' Juvenile Court Act is only the beginning. The enthusiasm that was demonstrated at the summit and afterwards makes clear that there are many juvenile justice professionals who believe that BARJ is an important advance of juvenile justice philosophy and practice. Crucial next steps include the development of a strategic plan to guide implementation of BARJ throughout the state, and the creation of BARJ-related tools that can improve the juvenile justice process for victims, offenders, and communities.◆

(Notes)

¹ Latimer, J., C. Dowden, and D. Muise. *The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice Practices: A Meta-Analysis*. Ottawa: Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada, 2001.

² Lavery, Timothy, Phillip Stevenson, Megan Alderden, and Charese Jackson. *An Implementation Evaluation of the Juvenile Justice Reform Provisions of 1998*. Chicago: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 2002.

(Phillip Stevenson is a senior research analyst with the Authority.)

Research continued

Research in Illinois, and to develop a strategy for full implementation of the concept in all regions of the state and throughout all parts of the juvenile justice system. R&A staff members are exploring opportunities to evaluate the programmatic application of BARJ, including a future request for proposals to study the Neighborhood Restorative Justice Mediation Program in Bloom Township.

Study of detention screening instruments and detention practices in Illinois

The Authority received a grant from the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA) for a study of the detention screening and detention practices in Illinois. As part of this study, R&A staff members are conducting detailed interviews with probation officers and detention center administrators in each county to learn more about who makes detention decisions in Illinois and what factors are used to determine if a juvenile should be detained. The researchers on this project also are collecting detention screening instruments to assess the differences and similarities across the various instruments used in Illinois. To date, 72 interviews have been completed, and it is anticipated that the data collection phase of this project will end in mid-November. The final report is expected in the spring of 2004.

Evaluation of Illinois Going Home program

The University of Chicago was awarded a competitive grant for the evaluation of the Illinois Going Home program. This major offender reentry program is overseen by the Illinois Department of Corrections, with Authority R&A staff overseeing the evaluation. The Illinois Going Home Program primarily targets offenders released into the North Lawndale area and involves the collaboration of numerous Chicago-area government, community and faith-based organizations. By coordinating resources and employment opportunities for the ex-offenders, the project seeks to successfully reintegrate them back into their communities. The University of Chicago will evaluate this effort through data collection, surveys and interviews. A final two-year report is expected in the fall of 2005.

Grants

Elder abuse programs funded

Three downstate elder abuse prevention programs will be implemented with Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. Nearly \$200,000 was earmarked for the Stopping Woman Abuse Now (SWAN), and the Shawnee Alliance for Seniors' and Effingham Committee on Aging's senior victims of violent crime programs. The programs will provide legal advocacy and counseling to lessen the impact of elder abuse in 18 southern Illinois counties.

Federal grant designations

The Authority recently received designations for several grants from the U.S. Department of Justice for federal fiscal year 2003.

- \$1 million in **Local Law Enforcement Block Grants (LLEBG)**. These grants will be used to reduce crime and improve public safety.
- \$1.6 million in **National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP)** funds. NCHIP promotes the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of criminal history records.
- \$19.2 million in **Anti-Drug Abuse Act (ADAA)** funds. Also known as the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program, these funds support government programs that support drug law enforcement and combat violent crime.
- \$1.8 million in **Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)** funds to continue providing assistance to state prison inmates.
- \$14.5 million in **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)** funds. Funded with fines paid by those convicted of violating federal laws, VOCA supports direct services to victims of violent crime.
- \$4.9 million in **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)** funds. VAWA funds are used to improve the response of the criminal justice system to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.
- \$5.5 million in **Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG)** program funds. JAIBG funds are used for initiatives that enable prosecutors to address drug, gang, and youth violence problems more effectively, and programs establishing and maintaining interagency information-sharing capabilities.

An ex-offender appreciates what BARJ represents

By Daniel Dighton

When he was just 13, Xavier McElrath-Bey began serving a 25-year prison sentence for a gang-related murder. A year ago, after spending half his life locked up, he left prison and began, as he says, "learning what it's like to be an adult in a free society."

Like most ex-offenders leaving prison, Xavier returned to the neighborhood where he grew up. But rather than fall back into the gang-oriented behavior that got him in so much trouble, he is trying to bring something positive to the community. He is trying to help other young people avoid the type of life he had. Much of what he does is about competency building, a key ingredient in the balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) philosophy that has been embraced in Illinois under the Juvenile Court Act.

"I still have love for my neighborhood, my community," said Xavier, who is from Chicago's South Side. "Now I try and play a positive role."

He frequently speaks to groups of young people about his life and how he has turned it around. Chuck Michalek, a chief deputy probation officer with the Cook County Juvenile Probation and Court Services Department, first met Xavier when he saw him speak to a group of kids in a probation program.

"Xavier is a perfect example of reaching out to the community...of trying to work with kids in the community," Michalek said, adding that he was particularly impressed with Xavier's ability to recognize risk factors and to talk about the impact of victimization.

Michalek said Xavier was particularly effective at talking to kids about the positive traits they should demonstrate when interviewing for jobs, and how they should present themselves to a prospective employer.

Welcomed at summit

In September Xavier attended the Balanced and Restorative Justice summit in Springfield with Michalek. Xavier shared his experiences with the other participants, including police officers, probation officers, and prosecutors. He was embraced by many and lauded for his determination and success at changing his life and being a positive role model.

"This BARJ (summit) touches my heart," Xavier said in an interview at the conclusion of the summit. He went on to explain that while in prison most of the inmates are very aware of the latest criminal justice trends because of the impact they can have on them personally. But usually it was all about retribution, not balancing the needs of victims, offenders, and the community. "We never heard of anything like this, it was all about punishment," he said.

From offender to role model

Xavier, who turns 28 in November, joined a gang in his South Side neighborhood when he was 11. Over the next two years he was arrested 20 times. The last arrest led to a murder conviction, which, in 1989, at the age of 13, sent him to the Illinois Youth Center in Joliet to begin serving a 25-year adult prison sentence.

He stayed at "little" Joliet — as the inmates called it — until he was 17, and was then transferred to "big" Joliet, the adult correctional center. He continued to be a gang member, and a few years later, after being transferred to Pontiac Correctional Center, he assaulted a correctional officer and was placed in segregation.

With little else to do while in segregation, Xavier began contemplating his future, and he made decisions that would eventually begin to turn things around in his life.



Daniel Dighton

Patricia Zamora, a restorative justice trainer with Alternatives Inc., joined other summit participants from the Cook County region in giving Xavier support and encouragement.

"I just reflected on my life. A lot of praying. A lot of introspection," he said. "And I realized if I didn't change I was going to end up on death row."

After he got out of segregation, Xavier quit the gang. The reaction of the gang members was mixed, but with the encouragement and support of many of his peers in prison, and his faith, he made the break. He was 18.

He began taking college courses and writing articles about his life and gang experiences for a magazine based in Texas. His story was featured in a book, "Too Young to Die," with the subtitle, "Bringing Hope to Gangs in the Hood," written by Gordon McLean of Youth for Christ ministries.

By this time Xavier was at Galesburg Correctional Center, where he earned his bachelor's degree in general studies and social science from Roosevelt University, making the Franklin Honor Society with a 4.0 grade point average.

In October 2002, after serving 13 years of his sentence, Xavier was released from prison. After being locked up for half his life, he was set free with little more than a two-week orientation to prepare him for life on the outside.

Back home on the South Side, he found that being a felon with a murder conviction didn't exactly put him in high demand with employers. But he persisted. He stayed out of the gang scene and dedicated himself to helping other young people in his community and

elsewhere to avoid the mistakes he made.

Xavier can relate to young gang members. "I think one thing that is often overlooked is that these kids are looking for some kind of recognition and respect," he said. He helps young people as a volunteer for Youth for Christ. He also does volunteer work with the Cook County Juvenile Probation Department, he speaks at

schools, and he has spoken at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, among other places. He has been to a lot of places where he was once locked up.

And he still thinks a lot about the guys he knew in prison who are still locked up and have little chance of leaving. "A lot of guys I went in with are still locked up. There's desperation, no hope for the future. That sticks with me and I think about them."

He said he likes the concept of balanced and restorative justice because it presents an opportunity for offenders to give something back to the community, and to victims, while also doing something to help themselves. "It would be beautiful if this could be brought to the awareness of all offenders," he said of BARJ.

Seeking a "normal life"

Today, he works at a Starbucks while pursuing his master's degree in mental health at Roosevelt University. He is, he said, "pursuing goals, patiently adjusting, learning what it's like to be an adult in a free society."

His goals are modest. "To live a normal life, that's my goal, just to live a normal life. And I think that's the dream of a lot of guys (in prison), and to have the means to live a normal life." ♦

(Daniel Dighton is a public information officer with the Authority.)

Technology

IJIS strategy implementation initiated

The first meeting of the Illinois Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) Implementation Board was held Aug. 14. Authority Executive Director Lori Levin was elected board chair. Illinois State Police Deputy Director Col. Ken Bouche was appointed vice-chair.

The 23-member board is comprised of key justice system officials representing local, county, and state justice agencies and associations in Illinois. The purpose of the board is to address the challenges identified in the IJIS Strategic Plan and carry out the implementation of integrated justice information systems. A committee structure has been approved which includes a steering committee, as well as four standing committees to oversee various facets of implementation work in planning and policy, technical issues, outreach, and funding.

To implement the strategic plan, the board will primarily focus on getting offender history and current status information to justice decision-makers, and facilitating justice data workflow through the local and county-level agencies, and then up to the state repositories.

PIMSNet update

PIMSNet, a new and improved Police Information Management System (PIMS), went live with the first police department Aug. 1. Two more departments have implemented the system since then, with 10 more implementations planned before the end of the calendar year. PIMSNet allows enhanced evidence management, photo accessibility, UCR access, and vehicle and personnel management abilities. PIMS serves 50 agencies. These agencies will be transitioned to PIMSNet by July 2004.



Victim advocates

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

into consideration under BARJ's three main components: community safety, accountability, and competency development. Covey-Sink said a higher level of satisfaction has been reported in exit surveys completed by the youth and families they serve since the department started applying BARJ concepts four years ago.

In materials distributed to all attendees of the BARJ summit held in Springfield in September, Covey-Sink wrote that balanced and restorative justice guarantees a safe environment for victims, and must focus on offender accountability to, and respect for, the victim. It acknowledges that crime is personal, and for some victims, working with their offender has been an essential element in their healing process.

BARJ practitioners provide information to the victim about the restorative processes available to them, and then give them the support to pursue the desired outcome. At the direction and initiation of the victim, a meeting and discussion of the crime with the offender will be facilitated. Restorative

justice processes also are in place to handle situations in which the offender refuses to participate, and in which the offender has not been identified.

Covey-Sink also noted obstacles facing victim advocates practicing BARJ. Offender-focused restorative justice practices may not line up with the victim's needs, she said, especially when offenders are provided with help to change their lives but victims are not provided help for their trauma. Also, many offenders will not offer genuine apologies for what they have done, causing some victims to again feel violated. Another obstacle is that restorative justice appears to imply that victims are obligated to assist offenders, distorting the restorative justice promise that victims can take an active role in their own healing.

"Victim participation for the purpose of offender rehabilitation may be at the least an unreasonable burden, if not outright objectionable," she wrote in the BARJ summit materials.

Covey-Sink said police and sheriff's departments might be reluctant to apply BARJ to their daily routines, as they are charged with enforcing the law, and

law enforcement "isn't about relationships." But she said their concerns could be alleviated with an understanding that BARJ isn't meant to replace the law, but to help build relationships in the community. Better relationships within the community will lead to a decrease in crime, she said.

The biggest challenge of balance and restorative justice is wading through the ambiguity of it. "It's a philosophy and a framework, it's not a program," she said. "It's a concept, and I think people struggle with concepts. You risk misinterpretations, with some people calling them balanced and restorative when they don't meet the criteria and the goals, or address the stakeholders."

Covey-Sink added that education, awareness, time, and perseverance would be necessary for balanced and restorative justice to take hold in the criminal justice system.

"We're a quick-fix society and I think that frustrates people sometimes," she said. "But it's like turning a ship around in the middle of the ocean. It takes time."◆

(Cristin Monti Evans is a public information officer with the Authority.)

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