

DISSERTATION

THE USE OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES IN A SCHOOL COMMUNITY
TRAUMATIZED BY AN INCIDENT OF PLANNED SCHOOL VIOLENCE:
A CASE STUDY

Submitted by

Susan Carol Mateer

School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Fall 2010

Doctoral Committee:

Interim Director: Jean Lehmann

Advisor: James Banning

Co-Advisor: Ellyn Dickmann

Jennifer Cross

Bill Timpson

Copyright by Susan Carol Mateer 2010

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

THE USE OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES IN A SCHOOL COMMUNITY TRAUMATIZED BY AN INCIDENT OF PLANNED SCHOOL VIOLENCE:

A CASE STUDY

In 2001, less than two years after the Columbine High School shootings, a plan to copycat the Columbine shooting in a junior high school was interrupted by police. This was one of the first documented cases of interrupted school violence and the school where this was to occur was traumatized both by the fact that students were planning violence and the attention given to the event by the media. Even though no one was physically hurt, the school community was shocked and victimized. Eventually, three junior high school students reached plea agreement through the courts for their part in the incident and were sentenced to juvenile corrections. The school was left to pick up the pieces and attempt to understand how this could have happened.

This study uses a case study format and interviews with involved administrators, teachers and juvenile justice practitioners to document how the school community recovered from this event - restored and transformed. It looks at how the responses to the trauma were based in restorative justice values and beliefs and why restorative justice played such an important part in the recovery. The school used restorative justice practices that were uniquely suited to the event and responsive to the healing needs of the

community at the time. These responses; the Tree, the community meeting, the Summit, the talking piece rock, the mascot statue; all served a purpose at the time and all were steeped in restorative values. In time, a traditional restorative justice conference was held in which two of the offending students responded to the concerns of the school and were welcomed back to the community.

Restorative justice has traditionally been about repairing the harm caused by crime. In this situation not only was the harm repaired, but the community used the pain created by the harm to create transformation, a transformation that resulted in a very good school becoming even better. What was transformational is that each of the actions taken by the school served not only to repair the harm caused by the event but served to raise the community to higher levels of safety, interdependence, respect, and inclusivity. This research documents how one school community used restorative practices to bring about transformational social justice.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my own children who are a source of joy, inspiration, and support for me always, and to all children across the globe who each have the right to inhabit a world of peace. And it is dedicated to the restorative justice practitioners in classrooms, schools, justice systems, communities, and nations who strive to make the world a more peaceful place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper would not have been possible without the support of the school community who graciously offered to respond to my phone calls and e-mails, sit for interviews, and genuinely reflect on the incident that happened eight years ago but so profoundly affected us. My workplace was generous in many ways in the support of my degree; I truly appreciate their making this possible. Colorado State University School of Education was open to new ideas, supportive in my quest and accepting of my non-traditional status. My advisor Dr. Jim Banning and methodologist Dr. Ellyn Dickmann went absolutely over the top with their guidance, knowledge and personal attention - doing everything humanly possible to see this ten-year journey to a successful end. I deeply appreciate you both. Thank you to my committee members who have been many and varied over the years especially Dr. Bill Timpson, Dr. Jennifer Cross, and Dr. Don Quick who saw me through the final years. I appreciate the support of my friends; you know who you are, for the laughter and wine. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my family who helped in too many ways to list; my Dad who did not live to see this day but backed me one hundred percent no matter what; my Mom, always present with her gentle, supportive ways; my sisters, Nancy, Mary, Gwen, and Tracy; my brothers, Jim, Tom, Dick, and Gerard and last but not least, my children, Neil and Nikki, now starting their own journey in the world. May we all find peace, joy, and love.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
CONTENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	1
Purpose Statement	6
Research Questions.....	7
Definition of Terms	8
Study Delimitation.....	9
Study Assumptions	10
Significance of Study.....	10
Researcher Perspective	11
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	13
Overview.....	13
Critiques of Restorative Justice	17
Restorative Justice in Schools	20
Restorative Justice and School Safety	22
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	25
Research Design	25
Research Questions.....	27
Participants and Site	29
Data Collection	30
Data Analysis.....	31
Goodness Criteria	34
Triangulation	35
Validity and Reliability	35
Issues of Bias.....	36
Additional Goodness Criteria.....	36

Contributions to Field of Study	37
Summary of Methodology	38
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS	40
Section One.....	43
Section Two.....	49
Section Three	57
Section Four –Was The Harm Repaired?	84
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	91
Interpretation.....	92
Conclusion	99
Recommendations.....	100
Future Research	102
Summary.....	104
EPILOGUE: PERSONAL NARRATIVE.....	108
REFERENCES	121
APPENDIX RESEARCH STUDY PROTOCOLS	130

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

“To do a Columbine”

April 20, 1999 – At that time, the date of the most fatal school shooting in the United States. The tragedy that occurred that day in Littleton, Colorado and the consequent attempts to make sense of, heal, and attempt to forestall similar tragedies from occurring have changed the face of not only school security but schools themselves (Langman, 2009; Bartels & Crowder, 1999).

April 20, 2001 – Two years later a small group of junior high school students in a junior high school west of the Mississippi were planning another school tragedy set to occur on the second anniversary of the Columbine shooting (Police Records, 2001).

Originally the name of the state flower of Colorado, then the name of a high school in suburban Jefferson County, Colorado, the word Columbine had experienced a semantic change. It now had a new millennium meaning: “To do a Columbine” (Kenneth Trump, 2008). In a nutshell, this describes the context of the event that forms the basis of this case study. This study, however, went beyond an examination of what led up to this type of event or the destruction following a school shooting. This study considered the responses to the harm experienced by the school community after events of this type and examined how these responses were restorative in nature.

The effects of school violence are varied and far-reaching. An event involving school violence such as the one forming the basis of this study, which does not occur but

is planned and becomes public knowledge through media exposure, has a detrimental effect on the school community. Three junior high school students were accused of planning “to do a Columbine” (Police Records, 2001). In this case, the planned school shooting was interrupted several months before it was to take place and the planners, junior high school students, were dealt with strongly by the juvenile justice system. The case became very public and was heavily covered by both local and national media. The effects of this situation on the families, school, and larger community were far reaching, severe and in some cases, life changing. The resulting investigation and court proceedings caused shock waves that rippled through the school and eventually, the community at large. Even though the planned attack was interrupted months before it was to occur and no one was physically harmed, the school community was still traumatized. The scope of this study focused on the responses to that trauma, in particular those responses that fall within the parameters of restorative justice philosophy.

Through the use of a case study method within a qualitative paradigm this research investigated the harm caused by the actions of those junior high students, the responses to that harm, and how those responses were restorative in nature. The methodology of the case study allowed for a particularistic, naturalistic interpretation of events using thick, descriptive data (Merriam, 1988). Through in-depth interviews with involved parties and a narrative reporting of their experiences, this study remained faithful to the philosophical underpinnings of restorative justice, which value individual experience and the peaceful expression of those experiences (Johnstone, 2002; Zehr, 2005).

Because this event was one of the first Columbine “copycat” cases to come to light, it was widely reported in the media and closely scrutinized. This study took an approach to the subject of school violence that sought to determine how recovery becomes possible. The planned violence in this incident was interrupted by a report to law enforcement. While the effect on the school community was nowhere near as devastating as if it had occurred, there was still substantial harm. By exploring how restorative justice principles can inform the behavior of those responding to these types of harmful incidents, it is hoped that others may use similar processes. The responders in this case were school administrators and juvenile justice personnel. The events are presented through the eyes of some of those who lived it: a principal, an assistant principal, a teacher, a school resource officer, a parole officer and a community restorative justice facilitator. The experiences of these persons were gleaned through an in-depth interview with each. The interview relied on storytelling to get to the heart of the matter (Riessman, 1993). As an emergent study, it looked at how restorative justice practices were used in conjunction with and following the criminal investigation and prosecution. The study probed the circumstances surrounding a traumatized junior high school community and asked what were the benefits of looking at this situation through a restorative lens (Zehr, 2005).

The case studied was bounded in space as including the school community present at this junior high school in a community west of the Mississippi. In time, it was bounded from the time the report of threatened violence at the school became public knowledge in January 2001 to the time of the restorative justice conference in which the school participated in 2003. The determined delimitation of this study included just this

one case with which the researcher is acquainted. The interviewees were restricted to adults from the school staff as well as juvenile justice personnel who were involved during the incident and its aftermath. Juvenile victims, offenders and their parents were not included in this study.

Being aware of the context of a case allowed the researcher to develop a holistic picture of what was to be studied (Patton, 1990). This case study took place in an upper middle class community. At the time of this event, the junior high school was not particularly diverse, either racially or ethnically, and ranged economically from lower-middle to upper class. The legal case consisted of a police investigation of a “planned Columbine-like” attack on a junior high school, the court case and the subsequent rehabilitation of the juvenile offenders through the state juvenile corrections system (Police Records, 2001). The focus of this study was the steps that were taken to heal the community, concentrating on how those steps fit within a restorative justice philosophy. Thus the embedded analysis of this case study looked at restorative justice practices (Yin, 2003). Because the focus was on restorative justice principles, the case fell within the preview of an instrumental case study (Stake, 2005 as cited in Creswell, 2007). This case study became a vehicle to better understand restorative justice practices. It should be noted that this intersection of school violence and restorative justice was intrinsically interesting to the researcher and unique in the literature. This is discussed further in the section on researcher perspective and unique in the literature.

Concurrent yet unrelated to the increase in school violence alluded to earlier, is the growth of what was once considered a somewhat radical movement in the juvenile justice system called Restorative Justice. Restorative justice is a philosophy of social

justice that is focused on repairing the harm caused by crime. It looks at crime as an act that damages relationships between persons and within communities rather than as an affront to the state (Zehr, 2005). It seeks to repair relationships, heal the harm, and restore the affected parties and their community to pre-crime conditions if possible. A central tenet of restorative justice is the use of storytelling to develop empathy and build bridges of understanding between people (Pranis, 2002; Kay, 2006). A working definition of restorative justice may be taken from Howard Zehr (2002, p. 37):

Restorative justice is a process which involves, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.

Modern restorative justice began on this continent in 1975 in Canada (Gehm & Umbreit, 1985). Although it started in the area of juvenile justice it later came to be used in cases involving adult offenders, and in crimes against persons as well as property crimes. Restorative justice practices then expanded to cases of severe violence, family dysfunction and abuse, and lastly sex assaults and homicides (Umbreit, Coates & Bradshaw, 1999). Its use in these areas provided challenges to overcome and tension to the field.

In addition to the controversial areas listed above, much of the focus of current literature is restorative justice's movement into the schools. The use of restorative practices in cases involving extreme violence between individuals is well documented (Umbreit, 2000), but the use of restorative practices within schools in cases of the threat of extreme violence is not. For that reason, this research contributes to a fledgling field where little has been studied or documented. The research drew on practices that have

become standard now in school settings such as peace circles and mediation (Hopkins, 2004).

What is unique about this research is that it is an intrinsic case study concerning a situation of planned school violence, examining how a community repaired the harm of a traumatic incident using practices that are restorative in nature. During this inquiry, other elements came to light, which also seemed to play a part in strengthening the school community. These elements were looked at through a restorative lens. This event happened to take place in particularly fertile restorative justice ground. This study explored why that was so and how that environment and the restorative experiences of the participant leaders contributed to the restorative responses.

Purpose Statement

“And the first one now will later be last, for the times they are a-changing”

Bob Dylan

The purpose of this study was to examine, through a storytelling form of interview, an incident of planned school violence and how restorative justice practices were used to affect its aftermath and heal any harm experienced by the school community. The purpose and investigative focus of the study adds to the restorative justice field of study as it is applied within schools and as it is used in severely traumatic events. It also adds discourse to the field of school safety and violence reduction. In addition to continued cases of actual school shootings, there continue to be reports of threats of school violence:

Berlin (Reuters) March 13, 2009 - German police have received more than half a dozen threats of violence at schools.

Joliet IL (NBC5) March 9, 2009 - A student who threatened a Columbine-style attack at the school on his Facebook page was arrested Thursday police said.

Manchester NH (New Hampshire Union Leader Staff) Aug 21, 2008 -The 17-year-old city resident who threatened to "do a Columbine shooting" at West High School last February...

How does a school community begin to heal from incidents such as these of real or planned violence? One answer may be restorative practices. Using this case as an example, how were restorative justice practices applied to the healing process in this circumstance? This was the overarching problem addressed in this study. The purpose was to gain insight and understanding as to how restorative justice can be incorporated into the response to future events of this type. This study examined many types of restorative practices and the many forms these practices took. Interviews, storytelling, and an examination of records were used to give the reader a feel for what was happening at the time and the effect it had on persons involved. The research documented a type of event that sadly continues to exist even today, that of a violent outburst in a school setting. The accumulated wisdom of the participants in this particular event documented the potentially positive effect that restorative justice had on the healing process and on the community's sense of security.

Research Questions

“You must learn to be still in the midst of activity and to be vibrantly alive in repose”

Indira Gandhi

In keeping with the stated purpose of this study, the questions were designed to maximize the understanding of the key issue in this event (Stake, 2005). The central

question of this research was: “How did a restorative justice philosophy inform a community’s response to harm caused by an act of planned school violence?” The secondary questions developed and enlightened the primary question:

1. What specifically occurred and what was the effect (harm) of the incident?
2. What was done to repair the harm, specifically what restorative justice practices were employed?
3. Did restorative justice help restore a feeling of safety and control to the school community?
4. What background skills did the responders possess that led to a restorative response?

Definition of Terms

“There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.”

Dalai Lama

The following terms were used in this proposal and are relevant to this field of study.

Restorative justice. A response to crime that focuses on restoring the losses suffered by victims, holding offenders accountable for the harm they have caused, and building peace within communities.

School safety. School safety includes personal, physical, social, cultural and political safety. Factors that impact these safe areas include drug activity, gangs, weapons on campus, non-students on or about campus, school curriculum, parental/community involvement, inter-agency networking and support, environmental design of the school campus, school climate, and school leadership.

School violence. School violence refers to unacceptable social behavior in an educational setting, ranging from verbal aggression to violence that threatens or harms others, and goes beyond highly publicized incidents of mass bloodshed to include acts, such as bullying, threats, and extortion. Therefore, school violence spans a broad range of antisocial behavior that school and law enforcement must address.

School culture. Culture can be defined as the product of the shared values, beliefs, priorities, expectations, and norms that serve to inform the way in which an organization manifests itself to the world. Culture only has meaning when it is given expression, which is expressed in tangible forms (West-Burnham, 1992). School culture includes everything in school surroundings that is made by human beings, consisting of tangible items as well as intangible concepts and values. The basic idea of culture, including school culture, is that it consists of shared meaning and common understanding. School culture can vary from school to school.

School community. The school community includes all those associated with a particular institution of learning. Commonly included are administrative staff, clerical and support staff, teaching staff, students, parents, and neighbors.

Study Delimitation

“Traveling is one expression of the desire to cross boundaries.”

A. B. Yehoshua

One incident was examined in this case study, involving one school community at large, specifically a junior high school located in a school district west of the Mississippi. There were three juvenile perpetrators who pled guilty to planning a school shooting. The research looked at those responses to the harm the school community experienced from

that incident which fall within the realm of restorative practices. The incident occurred in 2001 and the responses examined here continued for about one and one half years into 2003. It should be noted that even though restorative justice practices generally include the offenders involved in an event, this study delimitated the juvenile offenders and focused primarily on the responses including and affecting the school community.

Study Assumptions

“Peace begins with a smile.”

Mother Teresa

It was assumed that the participants in this case study spoke honestly about their participation in the event and offered their unique perspective on the outcome as it relates to restorative justice. It was assumed that the interview subjects, by being present at the event and its aftermath, were qualified to offer their assessment of harm and healing. It was also assumed that the researcher, through her background in restorative practices was able to identify restorative principles when they were discussed and described.

Significance of Study

“The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things,
but their inward significance.”

Aristotle

Based on the literature review, school violence exists, it is still with us, and the fact that it occurs is becoming an accepted part of modern life. Such violence is of the most heinous kind, affecting a place of innocence where the expectation exists that children are able to grow and learn without fear or intimidation. While every effort must continue to be made to ensure that schools are safe centers for children, we must also

look at best practices in the event that an act of violence does occur, or as in this case, an act of violence interrupted. The documentation provided in the police report in this case indicated that plans were being made; plans that had the potential to end violently. When this situation became public knowledge it had a lasting effect on both the culture and psyche of the school and the school community members. This makes even the act of planning - an act of violence in and of itself. However, being cognizant of restorative practices, having personnel trained in restorative principles, and having agreement between the stakeholders that restorative justice was a valid, ethical and effective way to respond this situation, allowed the outcome to take on a more positive aspect. Indeed, the actions taken following this event served to elevate the community to a better place than before; a place of strength, inclusivity and forgiveness.

Researcher Perspective

“We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves.”

Dalai Lama

Acknowledging researcher perspective is crucial when evaluating the goodness criteria of a research project. In this case, the researcher was actively involved in the situation that formed the basis of the research. The purpose of this section is to outline the researcher’s involvement in the study subject and detail the researcher’s bias.

As the school resource officer at the school where this incident took place eight years ago, I was very involved in the investigation and compilation of the police case. Concurrent with the police investigation, was a school discipline investigation, conducted by the school administrators, in which I was not a part. Additionally, there was a District Attorney’s review of the case in which I gave information and was questioned about the charges, although I had no decision-making ability. All three defendants reached a plea

agreement, so the case never went to court. Eventually the case was referred to the juvenile corrections system or juvenile parole. Again, I was not involved in the decisions made at that point. This research however only considers the criminal case and eventual disposition as background to the purpose of the research, which is how the community responded to any harm caused by the incident and how those responses were restorative in nature.

My perspective on restorative justice and restorative practices as a means of healing the harm caused by crime is that it is a positive response. I have been involved in restorative justice in my community and on a state and regional level for more than twelve years and was involved in mediation prior to that. Restorative practices and philosophy are integral to how I see the world. In one respect that allows me to critically examine the responses and actions taken at the time of this incident. My past experiences with restorative justice as a practitioner, trainer and program developer have given me a wealth of experience on which to draw.

In the school where this event took place, I was not in a leadership position and the responses undertaken by the school were without input from me. I noted at the time however, that what was occurring was unique as well as strongly restorative. My observations at that time were the seed from which this research grew. As my research progressed, I saw that upon reflection, others saw the same unique transformations taking place. It is an honor to report here what occurred at that time.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

“A woman's guess is much more accurate than a man's certainty.”

Rudyard Kipling

This study's literature review inquired as to how restorative justice values have been used in cases of actual or planned school violence. To get to that point, the roots of restorative justice were examined as well as its growth from the juvenile justice forum to areas of severe violence. The literature review also looked at the philosophical underpinnings of the restorative justice movement and what specific criteria determine restorative practices.

Overview

“Restorative justice is not a map but a compass.”

Howard Zehr

An early philosopher in the field of restorative justice, Howard Zehr, titled his 1990 book *Changing Lenses*. This gives an indication of what is necessary to understand restorative justice - a shift in perspective or a new lens through which to view justice. When restorative justice practitioners first approached the criminal justice establishment, the ideas and practices they presented seemed a radical shift in what had been established and was current practice in western societies (Johnstone, 2002; Zehr 2005). It required a paradigm shift, a reevaluation of some of our basic assumptions about justice. If one accepts that the criminal and civil justice systems in this country are somewhat lacking then perhaps a paradigm shift is a necessary part of its improvement. Thomas Kuhn in

The Structure of Scientific Revolutions has attributed major changes in scientific thought to paradigm shifts. Chaos theory and string theory represent paradigm shifts that affect our very idea of reality (Kuhn, 1970). So too may a paradigm shift inform our ideas of human justice. If one accepts that schools, once thought to be among the safest spaces our children could be, are now frequently places of fear and violence, the need for change becomes apparent. In addition to the lens of restorative justice, an ethical school leader will make all decisions through a lens of right values and ethics (Johnson, 2009). Kay Pranis, a prolific writer and practitioner in the field of restorative justice, described her lens as being informed by the following values (2006):

- All human beings have dignity and value
- Relationships are more important than power
- The personal is the political.

What is interesting about the growth of restorative justice is how practice preceded theory (McCold & Wachtel, 2002). Restorative justice practice happened in the form of a grass roots movement sprouting up almost simultaneously around the United States as a response to a criminal justice system that was seen as ineffectual (Pranis, 1999).

A working definition of restorative justice taken from Howard Zehr and used earlier in the introduction bears repeating here (2002, p. 37):

Restorative justice is a process which involves, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.

The United Nations in 2002 adopted a definition put forth by Tony Marshall:

Restorative justice is a process whereby all parties with a stake in a particular offense come together to collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offense and its implications for the future.

Restorative practices, as different from restorative justice, include a much wider range of issues. The following is a further definition of restorative practice:

Restorative practices is a new field of study that integrates developments from a variety of disciplines and fields -- including education, psychology, social work, criminology, sociology, organizational development -- in order to build healthy communities, increase social capital, decrease crime and antisocial behavior, repair harm and restore relationships (Wachtel, 1999).

The roots of restorative justice stretch back to early civilization. Much has been researched and written about the Maori contribution, but restorative ideals were practiced in a range of diverse cultures. Navaho peacemaking circles (Yazzie, 1998, Zion, 1985), the African concept of Ubuntu (Louw, 2006), the Tibetan greeting of Namaste; all inform one of the underlying conceptual truths of restorative justice - we are strongly connected to each other within a community. In addition, modern Christian social justice movements have had an impact on changing traditional criminal justice as well as impacting human rights movements which in many cases have adopted restorative principals (Cunneen, 2006).

As stated earlier, modern restorative justice began on this continent in 1975 first in Canada and then shortly afterwards sprouting up in several locations around the United States (Gehm & Umbreit, 1985). Juvenile justice was the natural place for restorative

justice to take root. The existing juvenile justice philosophy of rehabilitation, early intervention, assets development, and true focus on youth reintroduction to society provided fertile soil for the growth of restorative justice (McGarrell, 2001). As restorative justice grew and bloomed in locations from New Zealand, Canada, Europe, and the United States to the Middle East and Africa, it also expanded into areas beyond juvenile justice (Sullivan, 2006). The Victims Rights Movement provided tension but rigor to its growth (Akester, 2002). Restorative justice began to be used in cases involving adult offenders, in crimes against persons as well as property crimes, then to cases of severe violence, family dysfunction and abuse. Sex assault and homicide are two areas recently affected by the growth of restorative justice (Umbreit, Coates & Bradshaw, 1999).

Although the early restorative justice programs in the US and Canada started within the juvenile justice system in cases where harm was caused by the commission of property crimes by juveniles (Weitekamp, 1999), child and family welfare issues and conflicts also adopted restorative practices such as family conferencing as early as 1981. Uses of restorative justice continued to expand, out of the criminal justice system into non-traditional arenas such as schools, the work place, and national governments (Strang, 2001). Internationally, the United Nations adopted a philosophy of restorative justice in 1996 (Dandurand, 2006). The most recent study on the matter showed that restorative justice is now in use in at least 70 countries worldwide, employing a wide range of practices (Umbreit, 2001, 2000). Restorative practices are now at the point where the underlying theory is being critically evaluated (Lokanan, 2009). Since the 1990's theories have been presented which attempt to explain the success of restorative justice

(Braithwaite, 2002). These theories look at issues of shame, rehabilitation and inclusion within a community, issues that may be of interest to school leaders.

Critiques of Restorative Justice

“If you can, help others; if you cannot do that, at least do not harm them.”

Dalai Lama

Restorative justice practices are not without their critics. It is important that any restorative justice practitioner be aware of the criticism. Much of it is reasonably based in an examination of programs with poor practices or a misunderstanding of its philosophy (Wright & Masters, 2002). Constructive criticism will generally serve to improve programs and practices. Braithwaite presents an exhaustive review of the possible shortcomings of restorative practices (2002). Although he acknowledged his bias in favor of restorative justice he listed the following as areas that may present problems for a restorative justice program:

- Offenses without an identified offender
- Offenses without an identified or willing victim
- The potential for increased fears on the part of victims
- The victim who wants to “cut his costs” and not invest any more time or effort
- The unlikeliness of a restorative justice process having any significant effect on years of competing influences within the home life
- The tyranny of the majority
- Restorative justice becoming a shaming machine
- The fact that restorative justice relies on community which is not often present

- The lack of procedural safeguards
- Its failure to adequately promote a social justice agenda
- The possibility of it being unresponsive to cultural norms.

One of these concerns, the lack of community, is not as relevant when restorative justice is used in a school setting. If anything, the community that exists within a school makes it a prime environment in which to practice restorative justice. The question of whether restorative justice can have an effect versus a home or street life of competing influences is one that comes up often in school settings in a variety of ways. Schools generally acknowledge that they will model good citizenship, appropriate behavior, and ethical values despite the fact that these may not be occurring in a student's home life.

Several of these concerns however should be studied carefully to ensure that they do not happen in a school-based restorative justice program. These are the tyranny of the majority, issues of shaming, and the lack of procedural safeguards. When examining social justice issues, restorative justice advocates understand that conflict is relational in nature. In this way, it very much addresses some social justice concerns (Mika & Zehr, 2003).

A Stanford Law Review article points out that restorative justice offers little in the way of consistency, there is a lack of metrics upon which appropriate punishment can be based, and that our justice system is based on the philosophy that a person is innocent until proven guilty (Wright & Masters, 2002). This viewpoint ignores the fact that some people are guilty of what they have been accused of and want the opportunity to set things right. It also ignores the fact that uniformity of response is counter to the restorative justice philosophy, which attempts to look at each situation as unique and all

persons involved as individuals. Restorative justice proponents point out that reparations are what are sought through a restorative justice process, not punishment. Another consideration which must be taken into account when evaluating a system that deals with wrongdoing is how it affects deterrence in persons who may be considering the same actions (Cornwall, 2002). Within the closed setting of a school, deterrence is a powerful concept and any response to wrongdoing should have a deterrent effect on future wrongdoing.

One of the most exhaustively critical reviewers of restorative justice is Acorn. She sees restorative justice as developing out of a “new age, self help, pop psychology, soft religion” environment (2004). She questions the sustainability of the changes that restorative justice is supposed to foster in participants. Although she acknowledged the shortcomings of a traditionally retributive justice system, she argued that justice and society would be better served if changes were made to the existing system so it more closely mirrors its highest intent (Acorn, 2004). On the other hand, some think the “utopian, idealistic and ambitious” agenda of restorative practices should be considered an advantage rather than a weakness (Thomas, 2003). To return to Kuhn’s evaluation of paradigm shifts and change, it can be noted that it is not a question of which system is correct but which works best in a given environment (1970). Based on the philosophical underpinnings of restorative justice, it is believed by this researcher that restorative justice, despite its critics, is the preferred method of response to harm caused within a school community.

Restorative Justice in Schools

“Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs
of those who would be affected by it.”

Marian Anderson

In addition to the controversial areas listed earlier, much of the focus of current literature is restorative justice’s movement into the schools. Restorative practices form the philosophy behind some anti-bullying work, it is used in classroom circles, and in school discipline cases (Restorative Justice Online, 2003). Literature concerning restorative justice and its intersection with the occurrence or threat of serious school violence is very obscure. This literature search found no published material on this subject. The use of restorative practices in cases involving extreme violence between individuals is well documented (Umbreit, 2000), but the use of restorative justice within schools in cases of the threat of extreme violence is not. What is unique about the research forming the basis of this study was that it is an intrinsic case study concerning a situation of planned school violence and examining how the community repaired the harm using practices that are restorative in nature.

Restorative practices have come to include a much wider range of issues than those present in the criminal justice system. A further definition of restorative practices is:

Restorative practices is a new field of study that integrates developments from a variety of disciplines and fields - including education, psychology, social work, criminology, sociology, organizational development - in order to build healthy

communities, increase social capital, decrease crime and antisocial behavior, repair harm and restore relationships. (Wachtel, 1999)

Restorative justice is a way of dealing with conflict in schools through promoting peace and understanding (Hopkins, 2004). In her groundbreaking book, *Just Schools*, Hopkins laid out a framework for implementing restorative justice practices within a school (2004). Based on her work in schools in Great Britain, she suggests the use of a variety of restorative practices:

- Restorative communication
- An ethos of care and justice
- Building inclusiveness skills
- Mediation
- Emotional literacy
- Peace circles
- Peer mentoring
- Restorative conferences.

Although much of what has been studied and written about restorative justice in schools occurs at the K-12 level, restorative approaches have also been shown to be effective in the early years of life; play group and nursery school age. Equal Voice is one such program which uses drama based techniques presented to pre-school children to build self esteem and reduce conflict (Liebman, 2007). Additionally, restorative justice is now commonly used on college campuses as a way to heal relationships and deal with crime and disorder. Schrage and Giacomini examine restorative justice and outline how it

can be used in resolving student conflict. In *Reframing Campus Conflict: Student Conduct Practice Through a Social Justice Lens* (2009), they examine conflict on campus and advocate for a strong university presence in providing channels to resolve that conflict. These types of conflict may range from domestic violence, workplace misunderstanding, roommate discord, harassment and bias crime. They offer numerous ways these practices can be incorporated into student life and judicial affairs. Some of these are integrity boards, restorative conferences in cases of alcohol abuse, academic dishonesty hearings, community reparation boards, and restorative practice in relation to Greek life and athletic misconduct.

In 1996, a study done in Australia looked at traditional school discipline and compared it to a more restorative approach. Data from that study was overwhelmingly in favor of a restorative approach with approval of the process ranging from 84% - 99 %. Interestingly, one hundred percent of school administrators thought that restorative conferencing reinforced school values and improved feelings of school safety (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001). When restorative practices occur in schools they are operating in an explicitly pedagogical environment. The focus then is on more than simply seeking a solution to a problem or conflict. A restorative school intervention seeks to develop competencies in conflict resolution and social-emotional intelligence (Walgrave, 2007).

Restorative Justice and School Safety

“If we really want to love we must learn how to forgive.”

Mother Teresa

The history of school violence in this country has been well documented with an emphasis on the epidemic of school violence in middle schools/high schools since 1996.

The research generally falls into one of three categories; seeking similarities between individuals, (developing a profile), looking for reasons or trigger points just prior to the shootings, and looking at the immediate response of schools and law enforcement (Vossekuil, et. al., 2002).

State governments meanwhile have been passing legislation designed to encourage the use of restorative justice in juvenile cases and in schools. For example in Colorado, support for this policy has already been generated from the Colorado Network for Peace Justice and Sustainability and the Colorado Forum on Community and Restorative Justice. Colorado Governor Ritter has indicated his support, stating that this policy builds upon his restorative justice approach, signed into law in 2008, with overwhelming bipartisan approval (Juvie-nation 2008).

Less is available regarding planned acts and it is probable that many more planned acts exist than are verified and studied. For whatever reason, many of these planned acts never come to light. It's also impossible to say which of the planned acts that did come to light would have progressed to an actual shooting. Because of the implications of a plan being carried out are so great, juvenile planners of school violence are usually dealt with rather severely. Developing a list of warning signs and a profile of a typical shooter are all good parts of a school safety overview (Dwyer, et. al., 1998). Making sure a solid response plan is in place is also a necessity in today's climate (IACP, 2003). However, what this study looks at more closely is the fall-out down the road after a plan is made public. Some work has been done with the psychological and emotional effects. After all, schools have been traditionally perceived as a place of great safety and the emotional response to having that perception shattered is often greatly disturbing.

Since this is not a psychological study, this case study looks at how the basic restorative justice question can be answered, how can the victims of a harmful incident be restored as close as possible to the pre-incident state? What is unique about this research is that it is an intrinsic case study concerning a situation of planned school violence and how the community repaired the harm using practices that are restorative in nature. There is little if anything in the literature addressing this topic.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

I'm ... Irish, I'll deal with something being wrong for the rest of my life."

Colin Sullivan in "The Departed"

The purpose of this study was to look at ways restorative justice principles were used in a response to an incident of severe violence in a school. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology. Early qualitative analysis relied heavily on data analysis methods adapted from quantitative theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As qualitative study developed, a richness of both method and analysis followed. The ability to delve deeply into the topic, and to be able to present the results in a rich narrative form is part of the rationale behind the choice of analysis methods particularly since it corresponds with restorative justice philosophy. This chapter presents in more detail what has been introduced as the research design and methodology, the research questions, sampling processes and criteria, the means of data collection and the assessment of methodology.

Research Design

A qualitative paradigm fits well with the phenomena studied here. A qualitative process allowed for thick, rich descriptions and texture, explanation of processes, plus insights and discoveries (Miles & Huberman, 1994). When this research project was designed, restorative justice philosophy was also considered in the design. Restorative philosophy considers story, both the importance of telling and of hearing each other's stories (Weitekamp, E. 1999). It is relevant here to look at Hopkins (2004), who in her

discussion of restorative inquiry lists the following questions as critical components of restorative inquiry:

- What happened?
- Who has been affected and how?
- What can we do to put things right?

Some of the characteristics of qualitative analysis that influenced the choice to use a qualitative paradigm are (Creswell, 1994).:

- A natural setting, in context
- The researcher present
- The use of multiple and varied sources of data
- Inductive data analysis
- An interpretivist inquiry.

Within the qualitative paradigm, the method used was that of an intrinsic case study.

When discussing case studies, Creswell (1994, p. 73) describes them as: “A type of design in qualitative research, an object of a study, as well as a product of the inquiry.”

This study was bounded in both time and space as detailed below. Multiple sources of information were accessed. The theme of restorative justice included here was case-based and rich in context, all of which make this a good fit for a case study method (Merriam, 1988). This research contains an embedded analysis which concerns not only the initial event but the restorative justice response to the event (Yin, 2003). The data collection methods for this case study included a review of documents, interviews with involved parties and personal recollections and observations of the author. Additionally,

each chapter begins with a quote chosen by the researcher to reflect a restorative viewpoint.

Research Questions

The healing responses to the harm caused by this incident arose organically from many places within the community. These responses were seeped in restorative justice philosophy (Zehr, 2002). The research questions, outlined in this section, developed organically as well. Although there may be generalizations to be gleaned from this case, the questions were developed with the understanding that this is an intrinsic case study. In keeping with the stated purpose of this study, the questions were designed to maximize the understanding of the key issue in this event (Stake, 2005). The primary question of this research was: “How did a restorative justice philosophy inform a community’s response to harm caused by this act of planned school violence?”

The secondary questions developed and enlightened the primary question as follows:

1. What specifically occurred and what was the effect of the incident?
2. Was harm caused to the community and what was that harm?
3. What specific practices were employed to reduce or heal the harm and were they restorative in nature?
4. Did restorative justice practices help restore a feeling of safety and control to the school community?
5. What skills are needed and what backgrounds are necessary for a restorative justice response?
6. How can this case inform similar situations which may occur in the future?

These questions were designed to examine the intersection of school violence response and restorative justice. The questions also focused the inquiry so that responses relating to restorative justice became part of the collected research data. They fell into three of the categories of case study questions outlined by Patton: “Experience/behavior, opinion/value, and feeling questions” (1990, p. 290). Questions of why were avoided as well as leading questions, although what was investigated was designed to focus on restorative justice responses (Patton, 1990). Although the why was not asked, interpretive elasticity may allow for the “why” of a situation to surface (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). The questions were designed to tease out the responses that are in line with restorative justice philosophy. It was expected, through these questions, to place a strong social justice focus on this incident. Accepted policies and practices were open to discussion and change based on how this event unfolded and the responses and experiences of the participants (Charmaz, 2005). An interpretation of the data presented a social justice view on the results and looked for “lessons learned” with respect to the outcome of this case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Creswell, 1994).

The research questions were addressed through a review of written record, interviews with involved persons and personal observations by the researcher. Data collection was bounded to this one incident and its aftermath, and further focused by its interest in the restorative justice responses to the harm. As written reports were reviewed and interviews documented, they were reported with respect to restorative practices. This type of inquiry illuminated the responses to the incident that fell within the framework of restorative practices. In this case study, examination analysis was used hand-in-hand with observations and interview. All processes informed the others as the research

proceeded and analysis was simultaneous with data collection (Creswell, 1994). The pattern developed through interpretation of the data was the use of restorative justice practices in this very narrowly defined event. All research informed the theoretical proposition at the core of this study, which was, "How were restorative practices used to respond to this incident?" (Yin, 1984).

Participants and Site

Initially, the following were identified as potential interview subjects and are listed below by the roles they played at the time of the event:

- School Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Teacher (now an administrator)
- Parole Officer
- Restorative Justice Facilitator
- School Resource Officer

These subjects were treated in accordance with the outlines set forth by the Regulatory Compliance Office regarding Human Research. Every attempt was made to gain and present an accurate representation of their recollections. The interview subjects were all adults and no contact was made with any person who is currently or was a juvenile at the time of the incident. Interviewees had the opportunity to review their interviews, once typed.

The primary site was the junior high school mentioned earlier in this proposal. It was the central location of this event and the harm was focused there. There were other sites that are related only tangentially to the study; those would be the Police Department

and Courthouse, and the Juvenile Department of Corrections locations. Some interviews were conducted at the school, although not all interview subjects are still employed there. Sensitivity to the needs of the interview subjects was considered when determining interview locations.

Data Collection

The data collection for this study included the following elements consistent with the requirements of a bounded single case study (Yin, 1984):

- Written reports from the criminal justice system
- Interviews with the subjects mentioned earlier
- Historical observations from the researcher's perspective.

Because of the researcher participation in this event that formed the basis of the study there was some pre-existing knowledge of some of the documentation that existed regarding this incident and this is acknowledged here. These included written reports from law enforcement and the school, public records from the Office of the District Attorney, juvenile court and juvenile department of corrections, and newspaper and television reports of the incident. Regarding the interview subjects, an initial contact, then an interview and follow-up contact was conducted with each interview subject in accordance with human subject's treatment criteria. In addition to the University's Regulatory Compliance Office regarding Human Research, the local school district also required disclosure forms to be completed and filed in their office. The reports containing these forms were filed in each case with the appropriate university and school district offices. Researcher perspective drew from personal recollection of the event, informed by the previously published reports.

Data Analysis

As discussed earlier, the data collection methods for this case study included a review of documents, interviews with involved parties and personal recollections and observations of the researcher. This section considers analysis of that data and the presentation and form of results. Early qualitative analysis relied heavily on data analysis methods adapted from quantitative theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). As the field of qualitative study developed, a richness of both method and analysis followed. The ability to delve deeply into the topic, to obtain thick, rich impressions and to present the results in a thick, rich narrative form is the rationale behind this choice of analysis methods. Strategies for analyzing data obtained from mixed method inquiry include data transformation, where quantitative data is transformed to qualitative to make one merged set of data (Creswell, 1994; Wolcott, 1994). The researcher may assess patterns across differing sets of data and compare the patterns by conducting a higher order analysis such as N-Vivo or other software using data of different forms (Greene, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 2007). These analysis methods meet the purposes of triangulation, complementation, development, initiation and expansion. With the stated interest in a narrative presentation of results and the importance of storytelling, another, more narrative, method of data analysis was used here as it is more aligned with this research and with the values of restorative practices.

First considered then discarded was a mixed method type of analysis. Mixed method data analyses are used in studies that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research methodology of a single study or multiphase study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). It tends to lend legitimacy and adequate representation to

the results of mixed method studies. The strengths of both analytical techniques are used to more fully understand the phenomena being studied (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Again, in an attempt to align with restorative principles, this method was eventually discarded in favor of a strictly narrative reporting, a story telling in which the restorative practices rise to the surface (Leonard, 2006).

The identification and categorization of data is at the basis of most quantitative analysis (Patton, 1990). Whole systems have developed to meet this need. In the qualitative paradigm however, other interpretations come forward. Thus data collection and analysis inform each other. This is in comparison to studies that report data directly from a subject, such as historical narrative where the subject speaks for herself with very little analysis by the researcher. Of course there are a range of other analysis methods, including computer-aided or manual coding, of either descriptive, interpretive or pattern formats (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Descriptive coding attributes a class of phenomena to a specific text. Interpretive coding allows the researcher to attribute background motives to a particular text, thereby differentiating one from another. Pattern coding can be developed as the researcher develops a deep understanding of the subtext in a subject's narrative (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This study uses a strictly narrative form of reporting which brings out the subtext of restorative principles in the participant's story using the interview subjects' own words. This case study, grounded as it is in restorative justice practices, relied heavily on storytelling to get to the heart of the matter. The analysis then used a thick narrative to present the results of the study, again using restorative principle and allowing the reader to interpret the outcomes.

Research questions were answered through a review of written records, interviews with involved persons and personal observations of the event. Data collection was bounded to this one incident and its aftermath, and further focused on the restorative justice responses to the harm that was caused. As written reports were reviewed and interviews documented, restorative practices were highlighted. This type of inquiry illuminates the responses to the incident, which fell within the framework of restorative practices. In this case study examination, analysis was used hand-in-hand with observations and interviews (Creswell, 1994). The pattern developed through interpretation of the data is the use of restorative justice practices in this very narrowly defined event. All techniques informed the theoretical proposition at the core of this study, which was, "How was restorative justice used to respond to this incident?" (Yin, 1984).

A within-case display was the means used to present findings and tables were developed detailing the responses from each interview subject. Based on the founding principals of restorative justice, a matrix outlining these principles was aligned with the responses to the incident to determine how restorative were the responses. Because responses to the event changed with changing needs over time, a chronological order was superimposed using a time-ordered display (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Through the interview process, it was found that most of the interviewees self-imposed a chronological display when storytelling. To represent and systematically summarize the data collected, display formats consistent with restorative justice writings and common in that field were employed in Chapter Five. One of the pillars of restorative justice is inclusivity as symbolized by a circle or series of circles. In restorative justice processes,

the circle, overlapping circles or a triangle - signifying equality- are often used to present restorative premises. Displays contained in the final chapter were designed in line with these ideals to present the matrices developed.

Another foundational element of restorative justice is the importance of storytelling. A person telling his or her own story and hearing another's story is considered critical to the development of empathy and understanding (Zehr, 2005). In considering the audience for this research, the descriptive case study presented in primarily narrative format in the words of the interview subjects best honors the experiences of the participants (Merriam, 1988). Apart from the filtering (analysis) that goes into determining what actions are restorative based, this study is primarily descriptive and strongly narrative in presentation (Wolcott, 1994). Each interview subject is identified at the beginning of his or her narrative. The narrative was presented chronologically to follow the development of events and the restorative responses to those events. The experiences of the participants were then presented in a thick and rich format. It was heuristic with regards to school violence and restorative justice. Finally, the data were summarized in ways that address validity and goodness criteria.

Goodness Criteria

Whether or not goodness criteria are objective or judgmental will not be addressed in any great detail in this study (Marshall, 1990). What were constantly assessed, however, were the goodness criteria of the research, whether it was feasible to conduct this study. Previous knowledge shows that the key participants and the documents were available and much of the background information was public record. It

was considered therefore that this study was feasible. There was also a sizable pool of potential interview subjects who could be expected to have memories of this event.

Triangulation

The validity of results was assessed through triangulation. There was a natural triangulation of information in the categories listed earlier. The three legs of this triangulation were; documentation, interviews and personal recollections and observations. Triangulation has been shown to be an important way of strengthening both the study design and the outcome (Patton, 1990). Triangulation was continually assessed throughout the research. Through the use of five interview subjects and the meshing of their recollections, it was felt that the results meet the highest level of goodness criteria (Stake, 2005).

Validity and Reliability

The possibility of such criteria as validity and reliability standing up to critiques necessitates a second look (Robert Burgess, 1989 as cited by Miles & Huberman, 1994). In evaluating a situation in which the outcome is dependent on participants' thought and feelings towards the incident in question, it was accepted that the truth (if it exists) was necessarily filtered through each participant's total experience. What was important to the overall goodness of the research was informational accuracy. As researcher and participant it was necessary to seek to represent the experience of each participant as accurately as possible. This was accomplished through tape recording the interview and later reporting the interview outcomes in narrative form. All interviews were transcribed and returned to the interview subjects for comment. It may be noted here that no changes were necessary based on any comments coming back from the interview subjects. Edited

out for clarity were words such as “okay, um” and repeated phrases that tended to interfere with the clear reading of the interviews and obstructed the interview meaning. At times the contents of the interviews were condensed for ease of reading but when that occurred it was noted.

Issues of Bias

When considering goodness criteria it was necessary to recognize that public media such as newspaper and television interviews have a high probability of bias (Barzun & Graff, 1977). While striving to be impartial and not prejudicial, documents relating to court cases need to be looked at with a critical eye as well. Paperwork for the defense or the prosecution may hold a bias, which would tend to present their own case in the best possible light. In this study however, much of this documentation provided only background to the integral research question. Therefore any bias that was recognized need not materially affect the outcome of the research. Police records were consulted only to provide background in describing the event that caused the harm. The focus of the research was the response to that harm caused by the incident and those responses were gleaned from participant interviews. The personal bias of the researcher will be detailed in the researcher perspective section.

Additional Goodness Criteria

The five criteria developed by Guba and Lincoln were used to judge authenticity in a naturalistic inquiry such as this one are (2005, p. 191):

- fairness
- ontological authenticity
- tactical authenticity

- education authenticity
- catalytic authenticity.

Fairness was primarily concerned with ensuring the report was balanced and included all participants' views without omission. Of particular concern here was catalytic and tactical authenticity, which referred to the ability of research to prompt social action. Earlier allusions have acknowledged this researcher's lack of bias and subjectivity with regards to restorative practices. It was hoped that this research might inform and prompt further social action in the restorative justice field. In social action research, credibility, validity and reliability were measured by how willing participants or others in the field are willing to take action based on the results of the study (Greenwood & Levin, 2005). Charmaz offered four areas of criteria for studies in social justice (2005):

- credibility
- originality
- resonance
- usefulness.

It was her contention that, "A strong combination of originality and credibility increases the resonance, usefulness and the subsequent value of the contribution" (2005, p. 528).

Contributions to Field of Study

The use of restorative practice in cases like these are of interest to school safety personnel as well as restorative justice practitioners. Schools worldwide are turning more and more to restorative justice to solve problems of unrest, bullying and violence (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007). As the overall expansion of restorative practices was occurring, restorative justice moved into areas, perhaps more consistent with its early

roots in the juvenile justice system, that of school discipline and disorder. This was a natural move, as more and more offenses committed in schools were sent to the juvenile justice system and also as mediation, peer support and counseling programs were gaining a foothold in the schools. Many times these programs were started as a response to bullying, hazing, harassment, and disorderly events occurring in schools (Morrison, 2007). Some research has suggested that a culture where these minor incidents were overlooked was a culture ripe for larger school violence. Restorative justice was one of the potential answers to the question: “How can I make my school a safer place?” This research contributed to both the restorative justice and school safety fields by linking them to each other through their natural intersection in the event which forms the basis for this research.

Summary of Methodology

A within-case display was used to present findings. Based on the foundational principals of restorative justice, a matrix outlining these principles was aligned with the responses to the incident determining that they were restorative in nature. Because responses to the event changed with changing needs over time, a chronological order was superimposed using a time-ordered display (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To represent and systematically summarize the data collected, display formats consistent with restorative justice writings and common in that field were used.

Another foundational element of restorative justice was the importance of storytelling. In considering the audience for this research, a descriptive case study presented in primarily narrative format best honors the experiences of the participants (Merriam, 1988). Apart from the filtering (analysis) that went into determining which

actions were restorative based, this study was primarily descriptive (Wolcott, 1994). The narrative was presented chronologically to follow the development of events and the restorative responses to those events. The experiences of the participants were presented in a thick and rich format. It was heuristic with regards to school violence and restorative justice. In an effort to maintain confidentiality and protect the identities of all involved the interview subjects were referred to in the following ways:

- School Principal- Lead Administrator 1 (A1)
- Assistant Principal – Lead Administrator 2 (A2)
- Teacher (now an administrator) (TE)
- Parole Officer (PO)
- Restorative Justice Circle Facilitator (HC)

The other person whose input was considered in this study was the researcher who was the School Resource Officer at the site where this event took place. Her input was given in the form of a first person narrative and is found in the epilogue.

Finally, the data was summarized in ways that address validity and goodness criteria through the use of triangulation, the use of multiple interview subjects, validity, reliability and the acknowledgment of bias. Additionally, Charmaz's criteria for studies in social justice; credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness were considered and held in regard throughout the research process (2005).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

“When you find peace within yourself,
you become the kind of person who can live at peace with others.”

Peace Pilgrim

In this chapter, the findings of the research are presented in a narrative form, in the words of the interview subjects; persons who were present at the event and active in its aftermath. As stated earlier the central question of this research was:

“How did a restorative justice philosophy inform a community’s response to harm caused by an act of planned school violence?”

The secondary research questions develop and enlighten the primary question:

1. What specifically occurred and what was the effect (harm) of the incident?
2. What was done to repair the harm, specifically restorative justice practices were employed?
3. Did restorative justice help restore a feeling of safety and control to the school community?
4. What background skills did the responders possess that led to a restorative response?

The interview questions were designed with these research questions in mind. The interview questions used in this research and asked of each interview subject were:

1. Please discuss your training and experience in restorative justice.
2. What was your role or involvement in this incident?

3. What were your thoughts, feelings, and reactions when you heard about this incident?
4. Was harm was caused to the school community as a result of this incident? If so, what was that harm?
5. Did you take any actions or participate in any actions that were designed to heal whatever harm may have occurred? What were those actions?
6. Do you believe the actions taken addressed the harm? Why or why not?

The responses to these interview questions are itemized in the four sections of this chapter. As outlined in Chapter Three, the arc of the research will follow the format of restorative justice conferences or inquiries (Hopkins, 2004). The format of restorative justice conferencing is commonly accepted as including:

1. What happened?
2. Who was harmed by what happened and how were they harmed?
3. What can be done to repair the harm?

Correspondingly, Section One in this chapter details what happened and addresses research question one. In order to determine what happened, the police report is referenced as well as the interviews of the involved persons taken at the time by police investigators. Also addressed in this section is the role of each interviewee as well as any past training in restorative justice or restorative practices they may have received, as asked in interview questions one and two. Table 4-1 outlines the restorative justice background of each interview subject. The background and past restorative training of the interview subjects may illuminate how certain responses developed.

Section Two addresses who was harmed and in the opinions of the interview subjects, what that harm was. Question four asked in the interview begins with determining whether or not harm occurred. In the interest of goodness criteria, the question was put in such a way as to not assume that harm occurred. All of the interview subjects concurred that harm did indeed occur as a result of this incident and its aftermath. The information in this section was obtained through the personal interviews of the five persons chosen to represent the school community and the community response to this incident. These persons were either present at the event or the aftermath. All of them had knowledge of the event and each of them expressed that they observed in some way the harm that was caused. This section addresses interview questions three and four specifically and correlates to the restorative conference question two.

Section Three continued to follow the parameters of a restorative justice conference and addressed the question of what was done to repair the harm. Section Three contains Table 4-2 enumerating the type of actions that were taken to repair the harm. The interview subjects most commonly mentioned three actions taken to repair harm: the communication tree, the school summit and the restorative justice conference. These as well as other actions taken are explained in detail from the interviewee's point of view. This section corresponds to interview question five and contains the central focus of the research.

Section Four concerns answers to a question that is not usually a part of a restorative response. This question however lies at the heart of restorative philosophy. As will be shown, the answer to that question is particularly thought provoking. Interview question six is "Do you believe the actions taken address the harm, why or why not?"

The interview subjects' responses are presented again in a narrative format in Section Four. Table 4-4 contains the interview subject's analysis of harm repaired.

Section One

“Good intentions aren't enough”

Howard Zehr

This section addresses and answers the question, “What specifically occurred in this situation?” The police report will be used as the primary source of data regarding what happened. The police report detailed a report made to police in January of 2001. The following information came from that report. The initial report was made by four teenage female informants who alleged that there were at least three students in their junior high school who had been actively planning and taking steps to commit an act of violence against their school. The act of violence specifically included shooting certain groups of students. It included plans to attack staff and students in certain areas of the school. Mention was made of specific weapons that were to be used. At least one of the informants had knowledge of the situation because they were friends of the suspected shooters and they had heard first hand these plans being made. The informants were able to detail to the responding police officer where they were when they heard the plans being discussed. They were also able to report the approximate times and dates that they heard these discussions taking place. These students decided to report this situation because one of the members of the group of three male students planning the attack had threatened one of the young women. Specific threats were made against the school and against one of the young women. The informants reported that their friends were going to “Redo Columbine” (Police Records, 2001). This had alarmed the young women, and they

decided to make a police report. The report started a chain of events in which search warrants were obtained to search the three suspected students' lockers. At least one notebook was confiscated showing a drawing that appeared to represent stick figures shooting other stick figures in an area of the school. The police then conducted searches of the students' houses. Several items were confiscated including weapons. The three suspect students were interviewed by police and at least two students admitted to the discussions which were described by the female students. Initially the male students claimed that they did not intend to follow through with the plans. However, further interviews show that they did, at that time at least, seriously consider following through with their plans. It should be noted that this event took place in early 2001, less than two years following the Columbine High School shooting. At that time there was a heightened sense of concern regarding threats made by students. The circumstances of this situation were very similar to what had occurred in the school shooting at Columbine High School. Police correspondingly took this report extremely seriously and when the investigation was nearing completion, the three male students were arrested and charged with a variety of crimes including conspiracy to commit homicide. The initial police investigation lasted approximately three days with further investigation continuing after the arrests were made. The school district and school staff were informed of the situation after school had returned from the holiday weekend.

In the course of events, after the arrests were made, the families or the attorneys of the juvenile defendants spoke with the media and some of what had occurred in the investigation was released through the attorneys and families of the defendants. This began a chain of events that can only be described as a media circus surrounding the

situation. Media camped out in front of the school, attempted to make entry to the school, and contacted students, staff, or anyone else they could find who was willing to comment on the situation. Naturally because the defendants were juveniles, little could be released by police or the juvenile justice system.

Question one which was asked of the five interview subjects was, “What was your role in the situation?” Three of the persons interviewed during the course of this case study were closely associated with and employed at the junior high school in which this event took place. Their roles and the interview designation were as follows: Lead administrator (A1), assistant lead administrator (A2), and classroom teacher in special education (TE). They will be designated in the narrative sections as A1, A2, and TE respectively. It is interesting to note that the classroom teacher who was involved and interviewed, was at the time of the interview (eight years after the event), the lead administrator at that same school, having attained the principal-ship position when the former principal retired.

Table 4.1

Past Experience with Restorative Justice

Interviewee	Past Experience With Restorative Justice
A1	School mediation project and restorative justice
A2	Mediation and the Discovery process
TE	Special education teacher and Discovery training
PO	Workshops and trainings in restorative justice
HC	Real Justice class, implemented a restorative justice program, started to use restorative justice practices, gave trainings

The two additional persons involved and interviewed were both members of the juvenile justice system. One of those persons was a parole officer (PO), supervising one of the offender students who had been assigned to juvenile corrections. The second person interviewed was a supervisor of a school resource unit in another school district who also happened to be a very active restorative justice facilitator and trainer (HC), both in her own community as well as surrounding communities. Interview question one asked, “What was your background and training in restorative justice?” It appeared that all five persons interviewed and participating in this study had some sort of background or training in some type of restorative practices or mediation. In the case of the conference facilitator, who was also the school resource officer supervisor, she had extensive training in restorative justice and facilitation. She had attended facilitation training organized by an association called Real Justice, now affiliated with the International Institute of Restorative Practices. She reported that she used it in daily encounters with juveniles and parents in the community. She also implemented a program within her city to use restorative justice practices for victims of minor crimes all the way up to larger offenses. This program was initiated through the municipal court and was in place prior to this incident and continued for many years following this incident. Additionally, she was a restorative justice trainer and participated in many conferences as a facilitator and in multiple training sessions as a trainer (from HC interview).

The parole officer (PO) representative stated he had begun work with parole in 1997. At that time, restorative justice was part of what parole officers were expected to incorporate into their dealings with juvenile offenders. It was a philosophy that underpinned how parole officers were to bring juveniles under their supervision back into

the community. He said he was aware of the restorative justice concept prior to that time, but upon his start in 1997, he went to several workshops and trainings with the Department of Youth Corrections. At the time of this incident, he had approximately a year to a year and a half to find out more about restorative justice in the community and determine how he could use it in this specific case. To clarify that, the juvenile parole client was under his supervision for about a year and a half before being involved in the restorative justice conference, which the PO and his co-parole officer instituted. He told me a little bit of his background prior to working in parole. He said originally his education was as a therapist, and he had worked in the mental health system mostly with adolescents and families. He also worked at a residential program for drug and alcohol treatment for adolescents. In that situation there was community service which was done in a manner in which the youth in the facility were able to give back to the community. What he recognized about the work he was doing there was that the young people were asked to give something back to the community and provide some service in order to repair some of the harm caused by their actions. After learning more about restorative justice he relates that situation to repairing the harm used in many restorative practices (From interview with PO).

The background and training of the three persons associated with the school also contained some element of restorative training. The lead administrator participated in some mediation training as well as training in a student mediation program in Colorado. He also participated in a community training specifically geared towards restorative justice in his home community. He stated that he had received certification in restorative justice and had a manual with which to work. He related how he had used that specific

model in which he was trained in several incidents, which had occurred earlier in a junior high school he had previously been assigned to as an administrator.

The assistant administrator initially stated during the interview that he had not had any formal training or experience with restorative justice prior to this incident in 2001. However, upon reflection he realized he had been trained in formal mediation and his experiences with mediation and as a mediator were extensive. In his past school in another state, where he was the lead administrator in a high school, he had used mediation and was also trained in a process called the Discovery Program. In that program there are peer mediators in the school and his prior school provided training in that program as well as used it in their program. So although, he did not have restorative justice training, he was trained in mediation and used it frequently.

The teacher who was interviewed had also been trained in the Discovery Program. This program uses peer mediation as well as a circle discussion with students to resolve conflict and as a part of classroom management. None of what is used in the Discovery Program is specifically called restorative justice, however, several of their practices are restorative in nature and the underlying value system and goals for both programs are similar. It appears then, that each of the five persons interviewed had varying degrees of exposure to either mediation, restorative justice facilitation, or the Discovery Program. In some cases, particularly with HC, the person who eventually facilitated the restorative justice conference, that experience was quite extensive. In other cases, such as the classroom teacher, the experience and training was only in the area of the Discovery Program.

Section Two

“In a mere quarter century, restorative justice has grown from a few scattered experimental projects into a social movement.”

Howard Zehr

Section two addresses interview questions three and four, “What were your thoughts, feelings and reactions when you heard about this incident?” and “Was harm caused to the school community as a result of this incident? If so, what was this harm?” Table 4.2 details some of the responses of the interviewees when asked about harm.

As stated earlier, three of the interview subjects were onsite at the school when this incident occurred. The other two interviewees got involved with the incident at a later date. We will first look at the reactions of the restorative justice conference facilitator who was the last person to get involved in the situation. She reported that she first became involved with the incident more than a year afterwards. She worked closely with the probation officer when it came time to prepare for the restorative justice conference. She did not report any feelings or thoughts when she first heard about the incident.

However, she did discuss what harm she thought was caused to the school community as a result of the incident “Overall, the thing was fear. Fear to come to school, trust, and I think confusion as to why.”

Table 4.2

Harm Caused by Incident

Interviewee	Harm Caused by Incident
A1	School is a place you expect to be safe...this totally disturbed and broke that belief for awhile.
A2	It was polarizing.
TE	The impact the media had on how the students felt...It became a huge issue for the kids.
PO	People ...were shocked and fearful of what could have happened The school was extremely shaken as well as the community.
HC	Fear to come to school , trust and ...confusion as to why.

HC: "Trust in that the systems in schools failed the students. That they have programs, these anti-bullying programs, they have peer-to-peer. They have..... all had these things in place, how come you didn't utilize them? There was, if I recollect correctly, there were some comments of being a snitch or telling on somebody else. It just wasn't as comfortable as the school had hoped that it would be. So, there was a distrust in that program as well as the protection that it would offer the students if they used it."

The parole officer who was involved in this incident noted that he also had children in this school district. When asked what his thoughts, feelings or reactions were when he first heard about it, he said, "My first thought was this is huge."

PO: "This is a big case, in a sense, and it's a serious, serious crime that was committed and this was going to be something that I was going to have to stay on

top of and really make sure the kid was being held accountable for what he did. It came off of not to long after a huge incident in one of the other schools, a school shooting, where there were actual deaths that were committed as the result of kids going into a school. So, it was extremely significant. Feeling wise, it was oh my gosh, you know, this could have happened in our community. It just happened in another community and now it could have happened in our community and it could have just created so much damage and heartache when you see what other families are going through as a result of that other incident and thinking what it could have done in our community and what could have done not just to the community, to the parents, to the kids, to the employees working with these kids. It just affects everybody and I think that's what triggered me to say we got to do something a little different with this kid."

When asked what the harm was and who was harmed, he related this event to the Columbine shooting. Again, as a parent, he was able to relate how community members felt about the school and the school district as a whole when news of this event became public.

PO: "You know, because it came so close after that other huge incident in the other area that involved the school shooting and all the death that happened (Columbine shooting), I think it was just so much more intensified. Because there was no shootings in this situation and if that other situation never happened, I think people would have looked at it and had been shocked and somewhat fearful of what could have happened, but because of what we came off of what we

already saw it did happen. I think it just magnified the situation tenfold. I think the school was extremely shaken as well as the community in the sense of, again, how could it happen here. I think we hear it all over the country when it happens. You hear people say how could it have happened, the kids looked so normal, the things were going so smoothly, how could we get to this point and I think it when it happened in our community being that, you know as I said earlier, that it came off of another bad situation, I think the school was harmed in the sense of, in a lot of area, they were worried about their students, they were worried about the families, they were worried about the community. I think they also worried and did some self-reflection on did we miss anything? What could have we done differently? If these kids felt bullied, if they felt like they were outcast, how do deal with that now? I mean, this is a serious situation that if a kid is being put down or being made to feel like they are not part of something, how far could this really go? And I think it just brought to light in our area that it's here and it's all around and it can happen everywhere. So I think it scared a lot of people. I think it made a lot of people nervous about them sending their kids back to school. I know as a parent, I was extremely concerned about, you know, my kid going back into the school system in the sense and how being in the field that I'm in and that if I can't protect her and I can't see that it's going to happen or project that it's going to happen, how can I keep her safe? Honestly, we personally talked about do we home school now? Do we look at pulling her out of the system and just home schooling, which we decided against, but it's those thoughts that, you know,

came up. So, I think it affected everybody, especially the schools in significant ways.”

Those were the thoughts of the Facilitator and the Parole Officer. Next the interviews of the school personnel were considered. When the administrator was asked about his thoughts or feelings when he first heard about the event, he stated that he felt “We can be swift and serious with our consequences, and yet maintain calm and order, and not escalate the situation by overreacting.” He elaborated, however, that as time passed and the media got involved and formed a correlation to the Columbine High School shooting, the incident took on a whole new life. The thoughts, feelings, and reactions of the lead administrator are as follows:

A1: Well, my original sense was that nothing had occurred because the matter in which I received the information was second or third hand in a phone call to my home the weekend prior to and so it was my belief this was just one of those rumors that had kind of grown by however amount because it had been passed on through children and ultimately to an adult. So that was the original feeling, was that it was really nothing, but when I realized that, indeed, there was something significant as more information came out, the feelings began to mutate. So, at first, going from let’s keep a lid on this, let’s keep it as low key as possible, no one has been hurt, we can keep, we can certainly not sweep it under the carpet. We can be swift and serious with our consequences and yet maintain calm and order and not escalate the situation by over reacting, but as time passed and the story did get out and there were key elements to the story that media was able to

form a correlation with Columbine, it then took on a whole new life and then my feelings began to mutate as well. I'm in my first year in the position that I was in after having followed a successful administrator, really being cautious about my words and my decisions and the way I conducted business and this incident didn't allow for any real time to process, or to get advice, or to strategize because it was happening so quickly. So the feelings then, Oh, I don't know if it was anxiety, a little bit of fear about how does this reflect on me. Anger didn't really come in to play until there was lack of cooperation by one set of parents. That was real because I knew that I had a sense they knew and yet they were going to do everything they could do to keep their kiddo out of the system or with limited consequences within the system. I don't know if there's more that."

The teacher related how he felt about this incident when he first heard about it.

"Well, I have always been a believer that you can take conflict and try to meet it head on and as I went through this process... we were taking a situation that was negative and looking for the positive in it."

When asked about whether or not harm was caused to the school community by this incident, all three school personnel opined that they felt there was a significant amount of harm caused. The teacher, felt that in reflecting on this incident, he can look at it from both viewpoints that of a staff member, and now that of an administrator. When he looks back on it, he looks back on the impact the media had on how the students felt. He states "Very quickly it became a huge issue for all the kids."

TE: “I mean ... as I reflect on it and this maybe more now as it impacts me now in the leadership role, is when I look back on that is the impact the media had on how the students felt. Very quickly, it became a huge issue for all the kids. Had it not been for the media, I don’t know that 980 students would have been as engrossed in as I think they were.... Once the talking started, there were shirts in the building where people were supporting the boys and that there were others who were supporting the girls. I think some of the young ladies ended up leaving because initially there was some issues that they had talked.”

The second administrator reports that there was a very strong community response to this incident. He reports this incident appeared to affect the school community as a whole and also indicated that there were questions and concerns from parents.

A2: “Well, there was a community response and it was really, really interesting ...It was interesting because kids really chose sides. They were either for the group that did this or they were against them. It was kind of polarizing in some ways....

Well, anytime there’s a threat to safety, there’s nothing more important to the community than the lives of the children and the community collectively. So anytime there’s a threat to that, it creates a ripple of unease through the whole community and it erodes the confidence of the community and of its schools. So that’s a big one. We could work through that. To make kids be afraid about coming to school. Listen, people still have the right do that. Kids should not

have to worry about coming to school. So, I would say those are the things that pop in my mind, just the general of the erosion, it erodes trust is what it does. This took, personally, this takes hours and hours and hours to process this. The police department, DA's office, administration, school board, the investigation, the lost instruction of time. It's a big, big splash when this kind of thing happens."

The other administrator, when asked if there was harm caused by this incident stated that there was "Tremendous harm." To this administrator, this incident disturbed the belief that school is a place you expect to be safe.

A1: "You know when it took off, when the story began to multiply itself, there was tremendous harm. We went from a very orderly, safe, high reputation environment and I say that not in any way trying to minimize that there were things going on in school that weren't healthy. There were kids that were teasing one another. There were kids that were feeling minimized. These folks that were involved in this incident, had reached a point of wanting to do something to make other people hurt because of the hurt that they had felt in our hallways and in our building and in a number of the cases had occurred in elementary school. So those feelings just grew. So the damage that was done, was a shock wave that went through the building, on into the community, on into other schools, and then, of course, it made the news that it did. Because we were being featured in such a poor light, it was very disruptive because it was upsetting to teachers, it was upsetting to parents, and it was upsetting to kids. It began to make teachers think twice about what they were doing. The fact that they may have been in harm's

way if something occurred, that they could have been hurt or killed and they began to think about their families, the ramifications of this job that they had felt so passionate and loved doing and was, indeed, truly what they ought to be doing because in the end something bad could happen. I mean, it created some doubts in people's minds. So yeah, it was quite disruptive as we didn't have control over what might be reported or how it would be reported and it wasn't long before there were names and pictures of the individuals because of the severity of the allegations and the charges that were coming forward. Lots of things that we just weren't really prepared to deal with, but I don't know even with a plan in place that it wouldn't haven't been a very disruptive event anyway, it just is. There's certain places where we expect to be safe, schools, church, shopping malls, neighborhoods. There's other places we know that can be dangerous so we try to avoid some of those places or time of the day or night to avoid being certain places. School is a place where you expect you are going to be safe and your kids are going to be safe. This totally disturbed and broke that belief for awhile."

Responses from all of the interview subjects indicated that there was harm caused and that an important element of that harm was the disruption of the belief that school was a safe place to be.

Section Three

“Restorative justice practices provide innovative, sound approaches and are cost-effective.”

United States Department of Justice

Section Three addresses interview question five, “ Did you take any action, or did you participate in any action that was designed to heal whatever harm may have occurred? What were those actions?” In reporting the answers to this interview question, they are looked at in a chronological manner. The administrators who were interviewed were all on-scene at the time of the incident. The parole officer and the restorative justice facilitator entered into the incident at a later date. Initially looked at were what actions were taken in the building as soon as the incident was made public. As is common with any crisis, which occurs in a school, there are action plans and crisis response modes which are put into place. While those responses were undertaken, this incident, however, also had several unique responses. Those unique responses were specifically aimed at healing the harm caused both by the actual incident as well as the very public and media driven response to the incident. By this is meant that part of the harm caused, as indicated by the interviews with the administrators, was a direct result of the heavy media coverage of this incident, so that instead of dealing with just the responses of the involved parties, the responses were magnified due to the fact the incident became very public and the media coverage was maintained for a significant period of time.

One of the initial responses, while putting in place standard crisis response teams, also looked at the fact that there were varying opinions among the students regarding the incident. One of the administrators stated that the student body was somewhat split in

that, some supported the rights of the offender students, and did not support the students who had reported this issue. Administrators, then, were not only dealing with the fact of the police report of the threat, but were now dealing with a conflict that had arisen from that report. That conflict was between students who supported the arrested students and students who did not support them. The response of school administration to this conflict was a somewhat risky one. It was referred to by all three school based interviewees as “the Tree.” Following, are the descriptions from each of the administrators regarding the Tree, its purpose, the ideas behind it, what they felt it was expected to accomplish, and whether or not it did accomplish this.

The restorative basis of the Tree will be discussed further in the next chapter, however it is germane to report here that the Tree allowed anyone in the community who had an opinion regarding this incident, or wanted to express their thoughts and feelings about this incident, or about how they were affected by this incident, had a chance to do so in a public forum in a way that was non-confrontational and that respected the voices of the diverse student body.

TE: “There were several things that happened though, fairly quickly. One was a tree that we built out of just a wooden thing, where the puma sits now, that we allowed for students to talk. Once the talking started, there were shirts in the building where people were supporting the boys and that there were others who were supporting the girls. I think some of the young ladies ended up leaving because initially there was some issues that they had talked. The staff gave this opportunity for students to talk to say the things they needed to say, but to do it in this central location so it truly became a place of reflection, a place of kind of

letting your feelings lay out there. I don't remember the timing of it all. (The principal) may remember timing, but the tree and then the summit and then we did a bonfire to kind of culminate that whole thing where we had the tree and burned it. Again, I can't remember how long we had it out there, but we culminated with the whole student body came together and we took the tree out back and burned it to symbolize the kind of cleansing of the building. You had a chance to throw everything that you wanted and then we are going to cleanse and then we are going to move forward and kind of rebuild ourselves. There was some symbolism there were, and I don't know where the symbolism came from, the tree turned out to be a very good symbol of that."

A2: "We gathered a crisis team together to take care of communication and process it with the students. One of the things we did is, we wanted to give kids a voice so we one of the teachers, ... built a tree out of wood and paper mache and several of us helped put that tree together and that became where kids could post messages. It was interesting because kids really chose sides. They were either for the group that did this or they were against them. It was kind of polarizing in some ways. As we processed the students, we could identify who was making comments and we used that then to process with them and say, "Well what can we do to make this better instead of worse?" So that tree was up for about a week. This is just one of the activities. We had counselors and we did our typical crisis response. But eventually we had a school wide assembly where we took the tree out and burned it; all the kids were there. We said this is the old and there's going

to be a new symbol we eventually became the ... puma that's out here, which is rock that is formed under extreme heat and pressure. We felt like what we had experienced was that heat and pressure. The other thing and another spin off was we communicated a lot, we talked, we let people vent, we let kids vent.

A1: "I think there were at least three events that were significant, kind of markers. One was what we called the unity tree. A second was, oh my gosh, I just lost my thought. There was the summit, the original summit that we had and, oh, the third would be the restorative justice conferences, meetings that we had with two of the individuals of the three that had the charges brought against them. Of the first, the unity tree came about, we had regular updates with our staff to give them information about what was going on, what was being done, what we knew, what we could indeed share at that time. So much of it was out of sequence because what we So much of it was out of sequence because what we thought we might share later would be in the newspaper that morning so we would have to call an emergency meeting and sort of process what was out there because it was pretty significant what was coming out and my efforts to give small amounts and to keep the lid on the place and to keep people from going to hysteria, I couldn't do that because lots of information was coming out kind of un-distilled through the media, but it was in an afternoon meeting, I want to say it was probably on a Friday, the Friday of the week when we first had the incident break. So I'm thinking the situation may have come to our attention on Monday morning, Martin Luther King's birthday holiday. Tuesday, there would have been some

investigation around it. Wednesday, may have gotten into the newspapers. Then Thursday and Friday, some more follow-up. So I was in a meeting after school on Friday, we were trying to bring some closure to the week and to talk about some things that we would be doing that some of the staff members began to brainstorm how we could do something on campus that would give the kids and staff something to rally around. One teacher in particular spoke of a stump or a tree on campus that they had attended where messages or poems or around the war, and around government and around the situation and what was going during that time could be posted and out of that came out of why don't we create a similar sort of stump. Was there something out in the community that we could move in, an actual tree stump and then that grew into another staff member saying let's create it, let's make it, let's build a paper mache. You know, we've got chicken wire, we've got wood, we can build it and put it in the center of the entry way of the school and it can rise up to the ceiling and it can be real rallying point for the school and a handful of people got behind it and they were excited about it. The next morning, they started building on a Saturday. On Sunday, they were putting paper mache on it. They were painting it. They were running fans. When we walk in Monday morning, there's this huge tree rising up to the second floor in the entry way that greeted everyone. I made an announcement that morning about what it was. It was a unity tree. It was put up in an effort to help us post our feelings, our emotions, to support one another because there were students on campus very upset because their friends, in their opinion had been falsely accused, and could not come to school at that time. There were other people that

were very angry because these people had threatened or made threats and had put the school or themselves in bad light. There were teachers who were angry and scared. I mean, it was a community that was in sort of some chaos. So over the announcement, I shared that please feel free to put down a quote, or your thoughts, or something that you feel can help bring our school together, it's the unity tree. That was it. Within a couple of passing periods, there were only couple of pieces of paper up on the tree. Those couple of pieces of paper were up on the tree and those pieces of paper were from good friends of the three individuals that were out of school talking about their innocence, they didn't do it, they would never do it, and this was almost like salt on the wound. I had some adults approach me and say you got to tear those down. Those things can't be up there. I said no give it time. You know, everyone has their right to their statements that challenges or calls anyone out. These kids are doing exactly what we asked them to do and that is to put their voice out there. A short while later, there was a beautiful picture that had been drawn that had a couple of, like an inappropriate statement, maybe in reference to the young ladies who had originally called the police, something about them being snitches or something negative. I don't even recall what it was, but I was able to identify who the artist was, to meet with them. They understood that the message was going to cause conflict and friction and it was totally opposite of r opinion. There's nothing on the statements that's threatening. There's nothing on the what we wanted the tree to be of and this person agreed to modify their quote that was on the picture. It was awesome that all they had to do was hear that it was having a negative effect

and it didn't require me tearing it down or blackening out like many adults were encouraging me to do. It was an opportunity for a kiddo to change their words up and still have the same message and the beauty of the picture. By the end of the day, the statements that were positive for the individuals, the boys, far outnumbered the others. At the end of the day, the meeting on Monday, staff was really encouraging me to start screening and taking some things off. Again, I said just give it time. You just have to trust that this is and over the course of the week, lots of things started to come up, beautiful creative CD cover or CD case that spoke to the school and the songs were all positive, things about the school. I mean, it's just these visual images, poetry that students were writing, staff members were putting things up and scripture began to show up. And at that time, there was a church that met on campus on Sundays, well, they began to post scripture and positive messages. Before you know it, things were overlapping one another as you would see on a college campus or on an announcement post and the tree really served its purpose ten fold beyond anything we could ever imagine. I think some of the items were archived. I believe that some of those items might be in the media center in the staff only resource area on campus. Originally, we had intended on preserving some of those. I don't recall what may have occurred with some of those items, but we did have, this may have been close to Spring Break now in March. So this incident came to light in the middle of January. Towards the end of January, the tree was created. Through February, postings and then I believe shortly before Spring Break as a result of the summit that had occurred, some of those student leaders and staff that went on that retreat decided

that a school wide assembly where we burned the tree to burn any negative sort of connotation of the past and also sort of a time of renewal. The tree had served its purpose, it was time to move on as a result of the first summit, the students came back in a far different frame of mind and these are students that were friends of the kiddos and in some cases, students who had made threats towards those three young men that were no longer in school. There was a school wide assembly where the tree was burned, ... and it was gone.”

The second significant action taken that all three mentioned was referred to as the community meeting. The community meeting was a one time meeting that occurred within two weeks of the incident. The two administrators describe it below.

A2: “We did have a community meeting and it was really, really cool because I remember, personally, just remember (the district Attorney) coming out to our little school which may or may not be a big thing in his world, but he took the time to come out and answer questions of parents. I think when you open yourself up for honest discussion and questioning, that helps rebuild some of the trust that is lost.”

A1: “It was at a community meeting possibly two weeks after the incident had been brought to attention, maybe a week and a half. At that time, there were twelve or fourteen individuals that were at the front of the meeting room. They were school resource officers were present. The District Attorney, some individuals out of that office. I believe the police chief may have been present.

The superintendent of schools, associate superintendent maybe, director of safety for the school district, myself, my assistant principal. So individuals that could address literally any question that the audience may have had. There was a good turn out. It was in our commons. Some of the questions were being answered, thankfully, by police and by the district attorney because there were specifics around the charges, will these students return?, and safety sort of and those. The community meeting contained elements of restorative practices, in that it was open to all who were affected by this incident, it was inclusive, and it attempted to provide information and answer questions to any that may have been affected. Given the circumstances of this incident, i.e. three juveniles arrested, it was highly unusual that the criminal justice system would make itself available to the community to answer questions. However, this is exactly what happened.”

The next response to this incident occurred somewhat later, probably within six weeks, however the idea for it germinated in the community meeting just discussed. The lead administrator describes how the idea for what came to be called the Summit originated.

A1: “(During the community meeting) some of the questions ... were out of my realm and out of my areas of expertise, but there was a parent, and I remember her clearly, that stood up and pointed her finger and said now what are you going to do about this. And out of nowhere, I do believe it was divine intervention and there was a lot to be said about that because the way the whole incident occurred and the safety and all, but what came to mind was summit. Maybe I had thought

about it before, I don't know. I hadn't told anyone about it, but now that I'm in on the spot in front of this power team from the community and parents that were facing me and I described something that I didn't even know what it was. That it would be a summit where we would bring student leaders with very diverse backgrounds, but who ultimately may have a common goal in making our school a better place and we will take these student leaders off campus and I'm describing the event without having even put a plan together and yet, shortly after having said that, I realized now I've said I'm going to do something, I'm going to have to create this event because I've said we were going to do it, but it was beautiful because there were definitely the students that I had faith in that could go and spend a day together finding common ground. Even without the incident, every school can benefit from this. We were deadly there because we were raw, we were hurt, we were wounded, and people didn't like feeling that way and they were ready to talk because I had heard many of their stories through the investigation and I also knew we had staff members that had great relationships with kids whom the kids trusted that could help with the process and thankfully, I also knew a couple of the people in the community who this is their stuff, this is there, they love it. So I made a contact to both individuals and invited them to facilitate, it was like I had just invited them go on a Caribbean cruise or something. So we couldn't organize quickly enough. We were able to find a place to host the event. We had it within our budget to provide food and treats to make it really comfortable for all the participants and they spent a full day using some Discovery skills and circling up with a talking piece, which was a stone."

The Summit was a meeting of students and was designed to encourage students to develop a response to this incident and look at ways the school could heal. It was somewhat unique, in that contrary to the crisis response plans that are generally put in place, this summit asked and guided the student body itself to come up with a response to the thoughts, feelings and harm that may have been caused by the incident. All three of the administrators who were in the building commented on the summit and the effect it had on the student population both that year and in years to come.

A1: “Rob, one of the facilitators, had pulled off a fourteener I believe, the weekend before the summit was held. So this metaphorical piece, the rock, became really significant because when these kids and staff members came back from the day off campus kind of resolving some of the stuff, putting some things out there, setting up some action plans of what to do once they got back. The rock was something they wanted to bring back and have everybody in the building touch the first day back to school and they created a live video feed to the whole building, close to 1,000 individuals, every classroom and they did this live feed from an area where they hadn’t done live feeds before, which was the main hallway stairs, and all the participants were sitting there, arm in arm, and talking about the summit they had attended and the rock and the significance of the rock and how heat and pressure had combined elements to form this rock and indeed the school had been under tremendous pressure and tremendous heat from the outside, media, and conflict, and students themselves. and yet, It was going to solidify us. It was going to bring us together to be a better stronger place and they challenged everybody in the school to please make an effort to touch the rock.

We want everybody in the school to be a part of this. Kids talking to kids, they bought into it. You couldn't get near the rock the first couple of passing periods. In the lunch room, if kids hadn't gotten to the rock yet, they were coming up and touching it. We were able to capture a picture of when they made the announcement so all the participants were on the stairs. We created a trophy with the picture of the first summit. We set the rock on that trophy and it's still in the showcase of the school and as a result of that rock metaphor, I began to think about a permanent piece that we may be able to have at the school that would represent the unity that we have at the school."

A2: "The other thing and another spin off was we communicated a lot, we talked, we let people vent, we let kids vent. We also got an assortment of students from all the different groups in the school. We had athletes, we had the scholastic types, we had the kind of artistic types, we had skater types, we had whatever kids and we spent a day with Eric L from Centennial High School and they talked about what the school and what they and all of us could do as a school to make this a safe place to be, a good place for kids to be.... Now the other symbol, the first rock is in the display case. That came from the summit, the group of kids that went out and went through this process of what can we do to understand each other cause this was just jealousy and anger that had developed between the individual groups of kids and that's what the whole plot was about. That group of kids kind of went out and said, "You know, we have a lot more in common than we have to disagree about. Let's work for understanding rather than separation."

...Well, that's just a symbol. Their symbol of their unity. Their time of heat and pressure. You know, when you get a group of real, real different kids together, they are going to disagree.”

TE: “I was asked to be a part of the beginning, as I look at the rebuilding that the building went through. I was asked to be a part of a summit group. What (the lead administrator) did at the time was put together representatives from all the groups in the building, including staff members. Ironically, we met with the teachers of Discovery with the facilitators of the summit that we did and the approach of the summit really was to talk about differences and similarities and what we wanted to become. So I was a part of that group and got to know many of the students through that process much better than I had as a teacher on staff. That really began the re-building process of that building. ...Well, I have always been a believer that you can take conflict and try to meet it head on and as I went through the summit process, that's what I felt like (the) school was doing, taking a situation that was negative and looking for the positive in it. I remember thinking as I sat around the circle at the summit thinking it's phenomenal what we're hearing from the youngsters about how they feel about the school and what their expectations are for each other and many of them at the time, some were friends and some were not friends, and it was pretty cool to see the expectations that they had of each other and so it was a neat process to be a part of. I remember thinking this is what needs to be done with a challenge. There's a need to address it and try to turn it into a positive.... I mean, I can see faces of kids that I was impressed

with. I remember one particular student, who now would be considered the Goth with the spiked hair and the blue hair, I think at the time. I remember him being just sincere about the expectations that he had for his peers and what he was willing to do and I remember seeing, what I would think would have been labeled at the time one of our best athletes and this other gentleman, who going into the summit were not friends, who came out and then the remainder of the year were very good friends. That was the kind of stuff, there were tears in the circle. ... I think it was a result of hearing the expectations they had for each other. So, as I think back to that day where we really talked about what are some of the similarities, what are the similarities that we have with each other and the kids began to reflect on that we are way more similar than we are different. As they heard that, I think it really was impactful for all of them to know that we do have similarities. I remember just things like music. They talked about common interest in music, common in interest in clothes, common interest, so these kids started to look at each other differently at the end of the day than they did at the beginning day. It began to break down walls that I think had been in place at many schools, but certainly at (the) school. Prior to this incident, there were a lot of cliques if you will. I remember as a staff, we were able to identify prior to that, locations for these groups, as they were out in the hall during passing periods. We knew where they would hang and that began to break down. After this, the kids began to know and started seeing some of these students who were moved back and forth and became amoebas in the building and all of sudden, it became a culture as opposed to many different cultures.”

The Summit was another action that corresponded to the part of a restorative justice conference, which asked the question, “How can the harm be repaired?” What was put in place during the Summit is continuing today. One of the persons interviewed as a teacher and now an administrator was present at the original Summit and he described, in a general way, what the thoughts and feelings of the students who participated. He also mentioned how the ideas of the Summit were brought back to the school to be incorporated into school culture, these ideas were symbolized by the rock.

TE: We had a talking piece at the summit that we used. I remember B (the facilitator) saying as we started that heat and pressure are what caused this. I think it was granite maybe. I can't remember what the stone was, but it was caused through heat and pressure and what he felt that, at that time, was that (the) school was under an immense amount of heat and pressure and out of that, it would create this new something. At the time, we didn't know what. We just knew that we had a group of people that were invested in trying to create what. So I think the harm was damage to individual students, maybe the perception of (the) school for a period of time...It (the rock) came back and members of the summit took it around and eventually the belief was that every student in the building had laid hands on that stone. It still sits out in one of our cabinets in the front as a representation with a picture of those who participated in the summit, but throughout the lunch periods and other times during the day, every student was part of this symbolism, that all students are important at the building and we are all one rather than several factions in one. Then shortly thereafter, we had a gentleman that donated the puma statue made out of the same type of rock and

created the puma that now sits in the front entry way as kind of a symbol of that whole event.”

The next response to this incident was symbolic in that it sought to memorialize what the school went through in the aftermath of this incident. This response was referred to as the statue which was a sculpture made of the school mascot. The school commissioned this project, and it was paid for by a school benefactor. The statue was installed in the entry lobby of the school towards the end of the school year at the location where the tree had stood. The interview subjects each referred to the particular type of stone, which is forged under great heat and pressure. One of the administrators told me it was carved with a chain saw.

A2: “...(the) artist that lived up by Cripple Creek that sculpted in this stone. It looks like pumice, but when you strike it, it rings like glass. It’s not a real colorful rock, but it’s called? So,...the principal ... ran by Cripple Creek and talked to the artist and said this what we liked to do and he said I’ll carve one for you. So, it took him a few months to get it done. He carves it with a chain saw. It is glass carved with a chain saw, so he must have gave gone through quite a few saw blades....So that was delivered. (The principal) arranged to have the granite base made. He paid somebody to do that and then a local philanthropist, who had students in the school, paid for the sculpture and didn’t donate it to the school, but it’s on permanent loan to the school. Now the other symbol, the first rock is in the display case. That came from the summit, the group of kids that went out and went through this process of what can we do to understand each other cause this

was just jealousy and anger that had developed between the individual groups of kids and that's what the whole plot was about. That group of kids kind of went out and said, "You know, we have a lot more in common than we have to disagree about. Let's work for understanding rather than separation." ... Well, I like to tell the story about the puma because I think it's a good story. It helps me remember, but hopefully the community will remember a kind of a lesson learned. The lesson learned is that these relationships take maintenance. The relationship between the school and the community, the school and parents, parents and the school, parents and kids, kids with kids, adults with kids. All those relationships take maintenance and part of maintenance is when you get it, that you take steps to make it better."

A1: "We created a trophy with the picture of the first summit. We set the rock on that trophy and it's still in the showcase of the school and as a result of that rock metaphor, I began to think about a permanent piece that we may be able to have at the school that would represent the unity that we have at the school. One of the staff members had heard what I was talking about with sculpture possibly, two staff members. One brought a picture back from Europe because the staff member had taken students that summer and following summer to Europe and it was of a black jaguar, but it was a cat, it could look like a puma. Excuse me, a cat that is our mascot. Another staff member saw at a home and garden show an artist above Cripple Creek that has beautiful pieces of volcanic ash, of all things, a rock that is formed by heat and pressure. So I began to interact with that artist,

sent some pictures, met with them in a subsequent home and garden show in Denver a year later and commissioned that artist to make our mascot in this volcanic ash and that's what sits in the entry way now. So where the unity tree was, the mascot and the pride of the school is now embedded in that sculpture. It is really cool because the students who went on the original summit were 9th graders. When they were seniors in high school, that would have been 3 years later, this is when we unveiled the sculpture. And we were able to bring back all but two or three of the forty individuals that were at the summit to an assembly that we had right before Thanksgiving break so the whole feeling of giving thanks and being appreciative of what we have was the theme. We had the artist there, he's Native American, to talk about our mascot and the significance of our mascot within his tribe and his culture. We had students from the original summit team speak to the student body about how significant the event was that they went to, how proud they were that we continued to have summits, and how thankful and proud they were to be there to unveil this dream that had come to light and had been fulfilled of leaving a permanent sculpture. And so it ran a lot of hoopla, all the student participants from the first summit that were there, and they had come from various high schools. They hadn't seen one another in quite some time, took a piece of the three part cloth that we had. Our school colors were draped over the mascot and they pulled it away and the place just erupted. It was just really, really a positive sort of bringing closure, moving ahead, moving on. It was another one of those healing opportunities and for the 7th and 8th graders who were there, they were elementary kids that were kind of freaked out about maybe

having going to school that maybe wasn't safe, but it wasn't nearly as powerful or significant as it was for the adults, the teachers, the staff members, and also the high school students that had been part of the original summit team.”

The final event that occurred at the school that was concerned with the healing of the school community was the actual restorative justice conference. The conference was coordinated by the parole officers of two of the young men under supervision. The restorative justice facilitator assisted in bringing together the young offenders, their families and some of the juvenile justice personnel. The meeting was held at the school after hours and was open to any staff member who wished to attend. There were several pre-conference meetings held prior to the conference and all interview subjects commented on this event.

Table 4.3

Responses to Harm

Interviewee	Responses to Harm
A1	First was the Tree, then the Summit that led to action plans at the school, then the restorative justice conference.
A2	The Tree, ...a new symbol became the puma...a rock formed under heat and pressure...we communicated a lot (about) what all of us could do as a school to make this a good place
TE	The Summit was to talk about difference and similarities and what we wanted to become...The puma statue ...as a symbol of that whole event
PO	Restorative Justice Conference
HC	Restorative Justice Conference

A2: “So that is really part of everything that’s got to do with kids, is always how you clean up the mess? How do you get back what you’ve taken away? And then, to treat that person as a full member of the community again. So, one of the comments that came up that I wanted to bring up was that this process boils down to three boys. Three boys and two of the three boys took responsibility by participating in a restorative justice conference here in school and that was well attended. There were probably thirty people at that conference. That’s when I became committed to the process of Restorative Justice. Although, I wasn’t a player in that one, I have used it a lot since. It occurred about a year later and so I felt like those individuals went back, took care of business, and took responsibility. I’m concerned that one of them didn’t. So since that time, I’ve used restorative justice, really, in a lot of cases that end up being adjudicated. It is one of my first recommendations if possible. ...I think with the boys that did it, at least part of them anyway, had an opportunity to own it publicly. To give back, contract, that everybody agreed to that’s how you give back and I can’t think of a better way of handling that. That’s a good thing. What you don’t want, is you don’t want the kid feeling like he’s made the big mistake and now he can’t ever move on. That’s just not the way I wanted it. I don’t want to leave anybody without an option, do you like this? So no, could we have done things differently? Maybe, but I think the big picture for me that it was pretty well wrapped up.”

A1: “Then the third significant event. First, was the tree, second was the summit that then led to some action plans at school would be the restorative justice

conferences that were held with two of the three students that were expelled from our building. The two that had been incarcerated and really had some significant interventions with the judicial system, the boot camp and some other things, helped them sober up and kind of own up to their part and really take responsibility for what they had done what the end result was on the campus. We had staff members that were concerned about being part of it, they didn't know if they could handle listening or re-living the events. We encouraged those who wanted to participate and those who were directly affected by it to consider doing it and in the end, it was, I think, two very, very special events because each of the individuals, the perpetrators, had an opportunity to see people, to speak to people they had hurt and to hear the effects that it had on other individuals. The families of the students had also a chance to hear and to speak and to be a part of the process and as most Restorative Justice conferences go, there is a tremendous magic to the circle, to whatever emotions that are generated with the fact that typically, there is pretty emotional times with individuals, for the perpetrator to get it out, for those individuals that they may feel that they have been wronged to have a chance to listen and to also share their piece. I really walked away from those conferences and from that event with a real sense of everybody is in a better place. We had a chance as a school community to make tremendous growth, to take advantage that had been brought to our attention and to try to make a difference and to improve on those things. For the students, they had gone through tremendous growth. Some of the family members as well, owning up to some things that had been going on and improving some skills and working

on some things that, I believe, hopefully have helped them to continue to be alive and productive today. So in the end, that these conferences were held in the late Spring. No, that would have been the following year because the boys would not have been doing their time. It occurred quite some time later. That kind of helped bring closure to that event, but it kept us in tune to a number of things so the benefit to the community.”

PO: “Yes, what I did was, and again with my colleague who that had the other co-defendant the case, we sat down and talked about what can be done in our community and at that point, what had happened is that about a year prior to that, I had done a three day training or two day training. It was called trainer of the trainers to be trained in Restorative Justice and how to do peace circle and that kind of work and getting much more aware of what Restorative Justice was and what were peace circle about, how do you incorporate the victims into the situation and how people are affected by the harm that was caused by the actions of these young men and so after completing that and then talking with others in Restorative Justice and doing some other training. I talked with my colleague about you know what we need to do something with our community and with these kids because they are going to be coming back into our community. They are going to be living in their own homes. They are going to be living with their families and the community, the school are extremely affected by this. How can we make it a better entry and a safer entry into the community? So then I approached the Restorative Justice program in our area and in the neighboring

city that does Restorative Justice and started talking about how can we do this? So, I searched it out in that sense while I meant with the director of our local Restorative Justice program and then the one in the community down the road and talked about how can we do this? How can we get this taken care of? I've also been working with the kid in his treatment program about this is where the direction where we need to go in and the kid, I'll give him credit and when it was first approached that I think it's important that we look at the Restorative Justice piece. He jumped right on it. At the beginning, obviously not, at the beginning it was a lot of, you know, it's never going to happen and you know, a lot of not taking responsibility for it, but once he started getting into treatment and started really taking responsibility for what he did and owning that he was part of it and that, you know, it could have actually been carried through, even though, it was at the talking stages or the planning stages, he honestly said I don't know if I would have actually done it or not, but there was a possibility that I could have actually gone and shot some kids because I was so angry, but he did jump right on board, as well as the other kid did, about wanting to be apart of the peace circle and being able to give back to the community and talk with the schools about what they did and what they were going through and wanting to hear what the school had to say about what they went through as a result of what they did and so once we kind of had that in place where we had the buy in from the kids and the families and talking with the families and the families were just a little bit more hesitant just because it had been so public. I mean, these kids hadn't been in trouble prior to this and the first trouble they get into, it's front page on the

newspapers and so the families are being identified and the kids are being identified. The pictures are being shown, even though they were underage. Their pictures were shown in the papers and so the family, you know, one day they are just regular normal families as normal as can be and then the very next day, they are this huge, huge news story. So the parents at the beginning were a little hesitant not knowing what it looked like, but once they were educated on what Restorative Justice was and the importance in doing that, they jumped on board also and then we got involved with their local Restorative Justice community and then started the process in getting the peace circle and getting the meetings in order and it was basically taken care of by the two restorative people that we chose to do this is going through the process of meeting with the perpetrators and questioning them. Two or three different meetings, I believe, we had in really identifying and filtering out what was the reason behind this. What are your motives for wanting to do this, to make sure it was pure and not just, if I do this then I won't be in as big of trouble and then it will look better on my record if I did this versus I really wanted to do this because it is important. So, in those two or three meetings, it was really filtered out and really worked on to assess whether or not these kids were genuine and I believe that it came out that the teen felt like they were genuine and wanting to do this. We then had a couple meetings with the families, the parents the same way just to figure where their are at with it and if they are okay with the situation and what we are doing and what the plan is. Then, I believe, we met them with the parents and the kids and the restore people and myself and the other client manager/parole officer and did a couple of

meetings with the whole group together and then we met with the school and it was decided at that point that we were not going to include the students. That it would be the teaching staff or adults who were affected by this rather than bringing it to the students that the school wanted to do more with the students on their own and not have these kids come back to the students because, I think, they were feeling like that these kids maybe can come back three, four, five years from now and talk about what had happened and where they were at and how they've changed their lives, but coming right after being near the end of their commitment time, it might have been too soon and they might have been too young to be able to face other kids. Our kids were wanting to do that. They were looking at being able to go, in kind of an assembly kind of thing and talk to the school and say we're sorry and whatever, but the school felt like it was too soon and it might not be appropriate for all the kids."

HC: "I had worked closely with the parole office, the probation office, and an officer that was involved in that incident. It was just kind of one of those things, talking about it and through the progressive thought of the parole and the police officer, it was brought to fruition to have a (restorative justice) conference and I was an outside entity, unbiased, and they asked if I would facilitate it. I merely facilitated the conference.... You know, I'm looking at it in a big scheme of things it was more of an honor to be there and watch it work. So, I don't see that piece is all that big because it was more of a circle doing the work. Well, hopefully this is what answers that question. During the process of the conference, the participants

were able to ask direct questions as to why (this occurred). Some of the school personnel were looking for answers as to why the offenders didn't use the programs or why they felt that they couldn't use them or why they felt they needed to target certain individuals or target the school. They got those answers. Whether they agreed with them or not, they at least had closure with those. The students that felt victimized by the incident were able to ask really pointed questions rather than getting second hand information from the court system or from an adult and they were able to face them. The parents were able to see these kids for who they were, kids. Not three headed beasts with forks, they were kids and empathy was there. The way the offenders were able to articulate or the way they sometimes had a difficult time articulating their reasoning and their actions. I think that brought everybody back to a place in their own childhood and with the students it was, oh I can see that, I've been there. These kids just took that extra step. When it first began, the tension was very palpable. There was a lot of defense. You could just feel it. It was very divisional. It was very isolated. Everybody sat in their own pockets pretty much. If you could visualize it, everybody was just sitting in their own little space. We had, I believe it was a library, it was a large space and every chair was taken. As the conference began, it wasn't so much story time, it was justification and then as the barriers broke down as people started listening and looking, the offenders became more and more open and the emotions came out, which allowed people in. It was like watching cold butter melt."

Section Four –Was The Harm Repaired?

“No, try not. Do or do not. There is no try.”

Yoda

Section Four addressed the question, “Do you believe the actions taken addressed or repaired the harm?” Each of the interview subjects was asked this question, which was the final question of the interview. When referring to the actions what was meant were the actions described in Section Three. The first responses following were those from the three interview subjects who had been associated the school district. Not surprisingly each of those persons had a slightly different take on how the harm was repaired. One interview subject, TE, refers to the fact that “If you’re not dealing with your culture, then your culture is going to deal with you and it’s usually not pretty.” He concludes that the actions taken and the symbolic gestures which were a part of those actions, were “A brilliant move.” Another interview subject, A2, stated that “You can’t put toothpaste back in the tube. When it’s out, it’s out.” However, he said that there could not have been any better way to handle the situation. He mentions specifically that the students who had pleaded guilty were given the chance to move on in a positive direction. He also believes that the actions taken were a part of the trust building that the school needed to accomplish with the community. He refers to some of the actions taken as being “redemptive.” The interview with a school administrator, A1, showed that although he would not want to go back to that situation again, he felt “We elevated the things we do outside the three R’s.” He thought the school became a better place because of the actions that were taken as a result of this incident.

TE: “I am a firm believer that if you’re not dealing with your culture, and that’s your students, that’s your staff, that’s your community. If you’re not dealing with your culture, then your culture is going to deal with you and it’s usually not pretty. Its job one to do culture and if you have a safe environment then you provide the support for learning to happen. If the students come to school feeling good about school, feeling safe, they can take in the information that they are involved in. If they are not, Maslow’s hierarchy would say they are going to get those needs met first and they are not going to get higher up on the chain. So I think it’s critical. I believe that the steps that (the administrators) and the district administration took at the time were very insightful and that the step to do the summit, which I don’t know how popular it was with everyone because it took 30 some students out of class for that period of time, had wonderful outcomes and I think it really did in a rapid way help to begin to heal the building. I think you can begin to heal from something like that over time by having successful days, but you can encourage it to happen in a much more rapid way by dealing with the conflict, by having the conflict put out on the table and having kids talk about what’s going on and what are our expectations for each other and what are we willing to do as individuals to make sure that happens. It was a brilliant move. I think the opportunity for the building to cleanse itself, the group of people that represented the building to come together, again, the symbolic gestures with the rock, and the tree, and the burning of the tree. I don’t know if you could write a book and do it much better than our leaders did at that time.”

A2: “You can’t put toothpaste back in the tube. When it’s out, it’s out. I don’t think that there would be any better way to have handled this than how it was handled. I think with the boys that did it, at least some of them anyway, had an opportunity to own it publicly. To give back, contract, that everybody agreed to that’s how you give back and I can’t think of a better way of handling that. That’s a good thing. What you don’t want, is you don’t want the kid feeling like he’s made the big mistake and now he can’t ever move on. That’s just not the way I wanted it. I don’t want to leave anybody without an option. So no, could we have done things differently? Maybe, but I think the big picture for me that it was pretty well wrapped up....When I think of restorative, I think legally restorative justice process in and of itself is awfully redemptive. I think of what I would call a redemptive process as a chance to buy back, it’s a chance to pay back, to give back and to become restored to the community. I mean, in the religious community there’s absolution, there’s forgiveness. There’s that need, even though the community is not a religious organization, that’s a need that we have and we could formalize that from a community, that’s redemptive. That’s buying back a young person that could spend the rest of their lives feeling alienated and that’s not going to do anybody any good. So if they (a young person) can hear a message that they are part of us again and I think tribal groups get this, they get this in a different way than a community like this, but I think they’ve got something for us.”

A1: "I think in the end all the three events that I spoke to did that (repaired the harm). I know that as the site leader, I was not going to turn my back on that fact that there was something really dangerous that was being planned that was going on unbeknownst to any of us and when it came to our attention, it really shook up a lot of folks, but I think that we provided many venues and opportunities for community, for staff, for kids to vent and to address situations that were wrong and in the end, we didn't shy away from those things that needed to be done and if it meant resources going towards certain opportunities, we invested in those opportunities and I think even today at the site, the fact that there is a web organization where everyone belongs shows a significant amount of resources have gone into that training for facilitators and staff to do that training so that there are events every Spring where web leaders are chosen, student leaders that represent a diverse group, who then are part of a welcoming team that do activities for students through out the school year that are incoming, in this case, this will be 6th graders. I do believe that in the end, we can look back and although the event, we can bring back to mind and to memory the feelings come back, the images come back, it isn't what the community continues to dwell on. So it's not like oh gosh that's where X Y Z occurred and we get that bad feeling. The school got back to functioning well and high performing and it never lost a beat it seems like and that is something I'm so thankful for because it was a very, very good school and a bad thing almost happened and it took us off course briefly in terms of our jobs and our curriculum, but we knew where we had been and so to get back on that track, it was not difficult. We just had to not sweep

things under the carpet or pretend like something hadn't happen, but at least we could get back to that place of order, instruction, positive, successful because it was there. It was there in our hallway, our archives, the banners, the images of student work. It's a great place and I feel really badly, even to this day, when I hear about something happening in a low performing school or in an environment that isn't on the right track, and you know when something bad happens, the expectation is that it gets all the way back to a place it hadn't even been before. I mean, even getting back to the norm in some of those areas is a bad place. So the best of the world would be to get back to a point where we would never want our school to be in the worst of times, but we are very fortunate in that we not only got back to a good place, but I think we elevated the things that we do outside of the R's, the reading, the writing, the arithmetic, the academic piece that lord knows there's a lot of plenty of emphasis and stress on testing and that sort of thing, but it's the other intangibles that we improved on that continue to keep the place to be a very attractive place to be."

The interview with the restorative justice facilitator, HC, addressed the short-term repairing of harm. Although she was unable to address the long-term outlook since she was not a member of the school community, she felt positive that the conference was successful at the time.

HC: "Long term I don't know. I haven't been in communication with anyone that could tell me the long-term effect. I can tell you that after the conference was over, I don't think there was a person that didn't hug one of the offenders and

there was not a person that the offenders did not go up and approach and apologize to. They weren't turned away, they were accepted back in. So, I would have to say yes, it addressed it. At that particular moment, very well....I think it all goes back to the energy of feeling and the energy of acceptance and the energy of being able to have closure no matter what that closure looks like. It may not be the closure you want, but the mind and spirit needs closure and thinking about it now after all these years, there was closure that night.”

Table 4.4

Comments Regarding Repair of Harm

Interviewee	Responses to Harm
A1	I think in the end, all three events...(repaired the harm)...We elevated the things we do.
A2	(It) helps rebuild some of the trust that was lost. ...It's redemptive...If they can hear a message that they are part of us again.
TE	Students came to school feeling good...safe dealing with the conflict...having the kids talk about what was going on...It was a brilliant move.
PO	Our kids wanted ...to be able to go in...to an assembly...and talk to the school and say we're sorry.
HC	(The harm was) addressed...at that moment very well. There was closure that night.

The five interview subjects all agreed that the response to this incident was beneficial for the school community and might have made the school community a better place than it was before. If there were cultural reasons embedded within the school culture that may have originally lead to this incident, the three persons who were at the school at the time of the incident felt that those areas had been well addressed by the actions described here. In that way, the school became a better place as a result of the incident and the restorative actions that were taken as part of that aftermath.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

“Wayfarer, there is no way. We make the way by walking.”

Antonio Machado

This chapter looks at what was learned through this study and the implications for restorative justice use in schools and following traumatic incidents. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these types of incidents continue to happen. A newspaper report dated March 11, 2010 lists the latest threat to be interrupted:

Okanogan, WA. Police were alerted Feb. 27 to a Facebook conversation between M. and a 14-year-old girl in British Columbia about a Columbine-style attack on April 12, 2011 — 12 years to the day after shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado.

In addition to the implications for restorative justice, Chapter Five includes recommendations for other uses of this information as well as suggestions for further research and study. One of the first findings to become evident was that a background in restorative practices, mediation, or the Discovery process on the part of all persons interviewed tended to create fertile ground for restorative practices in this case. The restorative practices implemented in this case were creative and particularly suited to the climate in the school building at the time. The school leaders did not fall back on established responses but, being informed by their past training and experience, developed responses and took actions that were designed to directly address the harm at

that particular time in ways that were unique to that situation. One recommendation coming out of this research is that training and exposure to restorative justice take place across disciplines, particularly in school settings. Even if a person's position was not primarily focused on restorative justice, having the exposure to those values allowed him or her to use restorative principles when the need arose.

Another finding was that the actions taken; the Tree, the Summit, the sculpture, and eventually the restorative justice conference, helped to heal the harm according to the recollections of the interview subjects. The lessons learned through this research and contained in the recommendations are that restorative practices can be used in creative ways and that staying true to restorative principles allows a wide range of processes that may be designed to fit the circumstances. Emotional healing consistent with restorative justice philosophy may then occur. This chapter ends with recommendations for further research and implementation and a summary of what was learned in this research project.

Interpretation

“True genius is saying what is in your heart, because it is in everyone's heart.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In interpreting the data from this study, it first becomes apparent that persons playing a leadership role in this situation were well versed in restorative justice practices. Although in all cases restorative justice work was not their primary job function, each of the persons interviewed here had received some sort of training in restorative justice or programs closely aligned with the restorative justice philosophy. The lead administrator received substantial training in restorative practices, even though that was not the main function of his job as a junior high school administrator. The assistant administrator was

trained in mediation practices and used mediation successfully in his current role as assistant administrator as well as in a previous role as a high school administrator. Additionally he was versed in the Discovery process. A conclusion can then be drawn that he was a skilled mediator and comfortable in its common ground philosophy. The teacher, who was a part of the Summit meeting, while not in a leadership role, had just received training in the Discovery process. This process relies heavily on mediation and other types of conflict resolution including using circle formats for classroom meetings. These types of processes are heavily restorative in nature. Hopkins in her book, *Just Schools, A Whole School Approach To Restorative Practices* emphasized the importance of mediation and circles by devoting a chapter to each process (2004). Regarding mediation, she stated that mediation can span the spectrum from peer mediation, and facilitated mediation between students to mediation between student and teachers and staff to staff mediation.

Leaving the school district personnel and moving into the juvenile justice system, it can be seen from the narratives that the statewide effort of the Division of Youth Corrections to train and incorporate restorative practices into its programs certainly paid off in this case. The Parole Officer suspected from the start of his involvement in the case, that it might someday culminate in a restorative justice conference and he prepared for that day for more than a year. The restorative justice facilitator for that conference was involved in a school resource officer program in a supervisory capacity. Restorative justice was something she used in her day to day interactions; however it was not the main focus of her position. The conclusion can be drawn from this information that when persons are aware of restorative practices, or when they incorporate restorative

philosophies in their day to day interactions, they are very likely to draw upon restorative practices when a traumatic situation arises.

The following timeline of events was constructed using the participant's recollections and may be useful in situating the responses chronologically. Although all subjects' recollections were consistent in recalling the actual events, there were slight variations in time. This is not unusual considering the amount of time that has elapsed since the events. What is of interest is the strong recollections the subjects had of the events.

Table 5.1

Approximate Timeline of events

Approximate Date	Event
Fall 1994	New school opened in new building
January 12, 2001	Plan to attack school reported to police
January 22, 2001	Tree erected and students started posting thoughts
January 31, 2001	Community meeting with District Attorney
February 2, 2001	All school assemble and Tree bonfire
February 16, 2001	Summit meeting
Spring 2002	Restorative Justice Conference held at school
November 2003	Puma statue unveiled at Thanksgiving ceremony
Spring, 2010	School is reported to be a vibrant, inclusive place of learning

What would be of interest is a timeline of changes related to this incident that occurred at the school in the years following this event. As discussed later in this chapter, the school seems to have been changed in very positive ways as a result of this event and the actions taken to heal the community. Although not the focus of this research, how these changes came about are questions for future research.

As mentioned earlier, apart from the conference which was held at the school approximately a year and a half after the accident, the other actions that were taken do not, strictly speaking, fall into the realm of what is commonly referred to as restorative justice practices. However, looking beneath the surface of these actions, it is very clear that a restorative justice philosophy informed those actions (Pranis, 1999). In the first case, the Tree represented the ability for all community members involved in this situation to be heard. It was an innovative way of having these people heard, since because the criminal investigation and the disciplinary investigation were continuing, there was very little opportunity for the school administration or the justice system to offer a standard restorative justice conferencing response. It was also impossible for the offenders to meet with the community and make things right, because they were involved in a criminal investigation which was ongoing. Leadership at the school, however, recognized that the community needed to speak out and be heard and this was accomplished through the posting of thoughts, poems, pictures, and songs on a paper-mache tree that was open and available for all to use, whether to post or to read. This seemed to allow the emotional pressure that had been building up, to dissipate in a healthy way. Although, strictly speaking, the Tree was not narrative, it was certainly an open, safe, and respectful means of communication. And in this case, it fit the bill

perfectly. It also fulfilled a basic premise of restorative practices, in that all persons in the community have a right to be heard with respect and that the community has a responsibility to hear all with respect (Zehr 200).

Not all the interview subjects mentioned the community meeting which was held within a month of the incident. However, it is important to note the significance of this meeting. This meeting included the District Attorney in this community as well as representation from law enforcement, juvenile justice and the school district. Being held so soon after the initial incident occurred is certainly an anomaly given the juvenile participants and the confidentiality usually afforded them. However, this meeting also addressed a primary facet of restorative practices and a value held strong in restorative circles, that is, the idea of safety, both in a community and safety as it applies to discourse. The variety of views expressed in this open meeting was reported to have been heard respectfully by all parties. This meeting provided a forum similar to the Tree but was addressed more toward the community at large, meaning the community outside the actual school building. Persons were encouraged to express their thoughts and concerns regarding the incident and regarding the justice system's involvement in the situation as well as to ask questions. Additionally, I believe the juvenile justice system and those participating in the investigation and prosecution of the case both needed and wanted to hear from the community about what they thought about this situation. Having been present at that meeting, it seemed as though this also provided an emotional release valve for community members, parents, neighbors, and other interested parties; a release valve that allowed them to be heard, they could ask questions directly, and they could have their feelings of insecurity regarding the safety of the school addressed.

The next action, which according to the lead administrator came out of an idea he had while at this community meeting, was the meeting of students commonly referred to as the Summit meeting. Again, restorative justice philosophy underpinned this meeting and the thoughts and values behind it. The lead administrator spoke very eloquently about how the idea for this Summit came about. The Summit was one of the first responses to the restorative justice question, "How can the harm be repaired?" Additionally it sought to address how a situation like this could be avoided in the future. Both these ideas are basic restorative justice philosophies (Pranis, 2007). While the actual Summit was conducted in a way consistent with Discovery process practices, there were also many elements of restorative justice present as mentioned earlier. The Summit meeting can perhaps be most closely compared to a peace circle (Stuart & Pranis, 2006). Like what traditionally happens in a peace circle, plans were made to extend the power of the peace circle as well as what was learned and decided in the peace circle to the larger community, in this case the junior high school student community. School administration helped the students involved in the peace circle to incorporate their ideas into the mainstream student body. An example given was the fact that the talking piece, which was a piece of rock from the mountaintops, became representative of a touchstone. The students' idea was that through touching this rock, a person was committing to participating in a safe, inclusive, and peaceful school community. The current administrator who was a teacher at the time of the Summit and who attended the first Summit, equates the work done at the Summit with the adoption of Rachel's Challenge and other programs that are today active at the school such as the WEB; Where Everyone Belongs. He mentioned specifically the mentoring of younger first year students by older

students, and a welcoming attitude at the very beginning of the school year so that all students are brought into the school community on an equal basis and all students are shown that the school is a safe and peaceful place. What was particularly significant about the Summit is that it was a grassroots effort by students. Although the administration was instrumental in helping to set it up, it was not something that was determined by staff, teachers, or administrators. All the school administration did was give students the space and time to come up with their own suggestions and their own vision of what they wanted their peaceful school to look like. The eventual dedication of the statue of the school mascot remains a touchstone for the school community. Although the original talking piece rock is still present in a display case at the school, the sculpture is a much larger symbol of the trauma the school went through and more importantly, the strength that developed as part of the healing and rebuilding process. The school mascot, a puma, carved in stone that is formed under heat and pressure, may be seen as a daily reminder to students that negative situations can be turned around so positives circumstances can result.

The eventual restorative justice conference happening as it did a year and a half after the event provided a final place for healing and closure to occur. The conference was perhaps the first public acknowledgment of the offenders in this situation. By participating in the conference, two of the offenders acknowledged their part in the events that led up to the incident. The school community acknowledged that they were welcomed back into the school community they had left a year and a half earlier. The facilitator recalls the energy of acceptance and closure, no matter what that closure looks

like. She said that the mind and spirit needs closure and that looking back on the conference, she is sure there was closure that night.

Conclusion

“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling down
but in rising each time we fall.”

Nelson Mandela

The in-depth examination of this incident and the responses to the harm caused by the incident show that on many levels restorative philosophy infused the responses both of school district personnel and juvenile justice personnel. The interview of the teacher, who is now the lead administrator at that building, showed that restorative justice practice provided healing in this case. His view of the school community is strongly seeped in inclusion, in providing a safe environment, and in recognizing and holding dear the lessons and the symbols of lessons learned from past experiences. The culture of the school was changed by that incident, but changed for the better. Attempts were not made to restore the school to pre-incident condition but steps were taken to improve the school community, to critically examine what had happened. Then, taking input from the student and staff community, action was taken to devise ways to address issues such as exclusion, bullying and clique behavior which were seen as detrimental to the school climate.

This study did not address the eventual outcome as it regards the offenders in this situation. The community was the focus here; the harm caused to the community as well as the community’s response and need for healing. In that way, this situation is similar to restorative justice practices used in large-scale political conflict such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (Froestad and Shearing in Johnstone and

Van Ness, 2007). In cases such as these, community as a whole is harmed. This study concludes that restorative principles infused the responses of the school community in repairing the harm and setting the school on a better footing concerning inclusivity and true community. The conclusion is that the Tree, the first community meeting, the Summit, the sculpture, and the restorative justice conference were restorative in nature and helped to repair the harm the school suffered as a result of the plans act of violence.

Recommendations

“Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.”

Goethe

The recommendations that come out of this study have to do with the importance of receiving restorative justice training prior to any time when trauma or conflict occurs. The organic way in which the responses to this situation came about may be result of the fact that decision-makers, both within the school and the juvenile justice system, had some restorative justice background. There did not seem to be a conscious decision made by the school administration to use restorative practices to recover and heal from this event, however, prior trainings and experiences allowed for administrators to be comfortable with the quite unique ideas they implemented. Additionally, administrators mentioned that they had used mediation and restorative justice on a daily basis in their interactions at school. It seems to be the consensus of the persons interviewed here that these ideas and the actions taken that led to restoration were more successful for having been informed by restorative principles. The first recommendation, therefore, is that restorative justice training be extended across disciplines particularly in school settings.

Even if there is not a specific restorative justice program in place, an exploration of restorative justice philosophy should be available, especially to those in leadership roles; in schools, communities, law enforcement and the criminal justice system. By doing so, restorative justice philosophy will inform the response when there is a need for it, as in this case of a traumatized school community.

The next recommendation is to acknowledge the importance of the Discovery program in the school response to this incident. This was an exiting finding, in that it was unexpected. All three school based interview subjects mentioned the important role their knowledge of Discovery played in the response to the trauma of this incident. More detail regarding the Discovery process may be found at www.thediscoveryinstitute.com.

The final recommendation outlined here is that the importance of school memorials and the symbolism associated with them should not be overlooked when responding to and healing from traumatic incidents. The interview subjects currently at the school referred to the rock and later the statue as a memorial, not of what happened but of how the community healed. By memorializing the healing, one necessarily needs to look at the precipitating incident and commit to a new future. One interview subject referred to “not sweeping it under the rug”. A failure to acknowledge that anything happened would be harmful to the healing process and disrespectful to the suffering of those involved. Schools however may be tempted to keep unpleasant happenings quiet, to project a facade that everything is fine. Report cards, issued by the State comparing individual schools, attempt to quantify safety and schools feel the pressure to project positive ratings in these comparisons. In the case researched here, the harm was acknowledged and plans were made to recover. Over time an even stronger school

community developed and was marked by the commemoration of the school mascot carved in stone.

Future Research

“Man’s mind, once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimensions”

Oliver Wendell Holmes

There are several areas into which future research regarding this situation could probe and five areas will be mentioned here. It would be of interest to hear from the actual offenders and perhaps to hear from the female students who were the original reporters of this incident. These female students suffered both at the hands of some of these offenders and the student body as a whole. They were not rewarded for the fact that they came forward and made the report. Quite to the contrary, they were ostracized and this situation probably influenced the rest of their secondary school career to some degree. The female students were perhaps the unseen victims in this situation and unless they participated in some personal counseling, it did not seem as though they were included back into the community. They relayed to me at the time that they felt unsafe and unwanted in their school after reporting the incident. In retrospect, they were not included in any of the healing processes and should have been.

The Discovery program was mentioned by all school interview subjects. Future research into the connection, if any, between the Discovery process and restorative principles and values may explain why that is so. It would be valuable to hear from the developers of Discovery to see if restorative justice informed the Discovery program during its development. If not, were there common roots from which both processes originated?

Future research is also needed in the area of determining what happened in other similar circumstances. In other communities experiencing interrupted school shootings, did those communities suffer harm? Were there unseen victims and how were the offenders in those situations brought back into the school community? A larger field of future research might examine responses in communities in which school shootings did occur; what types of restorative processes were used to assist in the recovery of those communities? Are there similarities between these groups? What other actions were or could be taken that were informed by restorative justice philosophy?

The field of international restorative justice in political conflict has grown over the past several years. Much has been written about these processes which are often very public and quite large in scope, given the fact that some of the types of incidents such as genocide that have occurred (Miers, 2007). Additionally some of these political conflicts have occurred over a series of years, leading to long term victimization and harm. A future area of research would be to determine what has been learned in these large-scale processes that could be applied to communities dealing with the harm of a specific incident (Chankova & Van Ness, 2007).

A final area mentioned here is the actual use of restorative justice in schools. Restorative justice is becoming more and more widespread in schools around the world (Morrison, 2007). How effective is its use? What type of impact has restorative justice had on creating safer, more peaceful, and more inclusive schools? Some of this research is already going on, however, in order to implement the best practices, more research needs to be done, while best practices are disseminated. In addition to how restorative justice affects the schools, research needs to be conducted into how restorative justice

philosophy affects students and their social and emotional well being and development. Are students who are educated in a school infused with restorative justice philosophies better able to succeed in the larger world? Will these students be more likely to bring those restorative justice philosophies to the outside world in their post-school environment, therefore leading to a more restorative society as a whole?

Summary

“ At the end of all our journeying, we shall return to the place from which we started and know it for the first time”

T.S. Elliot

In summary, this research showed that restorative principles could be used to repair the harm caused by this incident of planned school violence. The five subjects interviewed were fairly consistent in their recollections of the event. They all had background knowledge and experience in one of these areas; restorative justice, mediation, or the Discovery process. It was not surprising to determine that they had knowledge of restorative justice. The inclusion of the Discovery process, however, was unexpected and further research regarding the connection between restorative values and Discovery is recommended.

Research also showed that the incident of planned school violence caused harm to the school community. The interview subjects thought the harm stemmed primarily from a loss of trust in the school and fear regarding whether the school was a safe place. Additionally it seemed that these issues were traumatizing to the community. School leaders recognized this trauma and steps were taken to address it. It is the researcher's assertion that the previous restorative justice training and experience of the school

leadership played a part in determining a restorative response. Future research could explore the benefits of restorative justice training in other circumstances in school settings or in other venues such as higher education, workplaces, or international relations.

Looking at the responses in detail showed that the actions at the school; the Tree, the community meeting, the Summit, the talking piece rock, and the symbolic sculpture of the school mascot, all addressed members of the school community as potential victims of this event. Restorative values of respect, inclusion, mutual care, truth telling, listening and understanding infused these responses. Much has been written about restorative values and the beliefs underlying those values. The underlying beliefs outlined by Pranis also were present in the responses studied here; the importance of relationships, interconnection and interdependence, the fact that wisdom resides in each person, and the understanding that justice is healing (2007). The offenders were not involved in any of these processes however, which differs from most restorative processes. In fact for most of the actions taken immediately following the event, it would have been impossible to include the offenders because the criminal court proceedings were still in process. The school leadership recognized, however, that something needed to be done to start the healing process at the school. The restorative justice conference held at the school, more than a year after the event, included adult community members who felt victimized and two of the juvenile offenders. This conference was for the joint benefit of the victim community as well as the offenders. Future research could probe into the immediate as well as the long-term outcome of that conference. The conference facilitator revealed that from what she observed, the immediate result for all parties involved was positive. One

of the administrators referred to how the offenders, former students at the school, were welcomed back to the school community and could then move on and put the situation behind them. Overall, the effectiveness of the juvenile corrections process with all three offenders is an area for future research.

The final area of interest was whether these actions, which were rooted in restorative values, actually helped heal the harm experienced by the school community. The interview subjects were unanimous in asserting that the actions did help heal the harm. The subjects who were part of the school community went one step further. They articulated that the school is now a better place because of the community building responses to this traumatizing incident. It is interesting to note here that the words *restorative justice* refer to justice which restores the victim, offender, and community, as much as possible, to pre-crime conditions. In this case, the community, guided by the actions of the school leadership, went beyond restoring - to actually developing a new vision of what they wanted the school to be. In this situation, the school community actually experienced *transformative justice* (Harris, 2006). Morris writes on the subject of transformative justice and talks about victims and communities recognizing that they can “transform the world positively from their pain” (2000, p. 19). The word transformation means to change in composition or structure, to change the outward form or appearance, or to change in character or condition. Transformation has meaning in the fields of mathematics, natural science, computing, law, warfare, anthropology, spirituality, fiction, and the visual and auditory arts. In the field of social justice which is the area into which this research falls, transformational justice is often a goal but seldom achieved. In the introduction of this paper, Kuhn’s description of a paradigm shift was discussed. It

became apparent through this research that a paradigm shift occurred within this school community. The shift was based on the knowledge, experience, and capacity of the school leaders and served to enlighten the response to the trauma they saw in the school. This type of paradigm shift is often what leads to a transformation. A transformation seems to be exactly what the administrators and the teacher referred to when they talk about the positive steps that were taken as a result of the Summit, steps that led to a school that is perceived as safer, more welcoming, and more inclusive of all students.

This research recognizes that restorative practices were used to heal the harm of this traumatized school community and that actual healing occurred. The truly exhilarating outcome of this research is that the process was transformative for the school community. Transformations of this kind are rare and it has been an honor to document this incident and the community of people who played an active part in the school's transformation.

EPILOGUE:

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Each day has trouble enough of its own.”

Matthew 6:34

In April 1999, I was attending a seminar, which would be my first exposure to the world of school safety and school policing. I had been a police officer for more than 14 years working in a variety of capacities but never devoted exclusively to children. My own two children were elementary students in the school district where I would now be a school resource officer.

Prior to my police career, I had obtained a degree in forestry from Colorado State University, then while employed as a university researcher in another state, I obtained my MBA degree. Life took over as it does sometimes, here I was in my mid 30's, employed as a police officer and a good one, although I sometimes found my take on life did not always mesh with that of my fellow officers. I remember being chastised by an officer who stated that it was problematic for me to “sit on the fence” by which he meant being able to see and empathize with both sides of a situation. I realized then that my ability to do that is a benefit in many circumstances. I obtained training in mediation and when a grass roots movement began looking at ways to incorporate restorative justice into the local juvenile justice system, I represented the Police Department in those discussions. Eventually with the blessings of the Police Department, in 1998, a restorative justice

program was started and continues today in our community - handling most juvenile shoplifting offenses, most juvenile first time offenses as well as more serious cases and the occasional incident of severe violence.

To get back to April 1999. I was en route to a beautiful mountain town for a three-day seminar on child welfare. It is a wonderful time to be in the mountains, still cold but with wonderful clear blue-sky days. We had stopped in a large city to attend a meeting when someone looking very distraught, interrupted the meeting, asking if anyone present had children attending Columbine High School. Watching the media coverage over the next three days, I became acutely aware of what it was exactly that I had signed up for when I accepted the assignment of school resource officer. At the time I heard about Columbine, I realized that I was accepting an assignment that might require me to use deadly force in a school. I spent the next seven years working in a junior high school as a school resource officer. It is my view that the vast majority of people in a community have very limited experiences with the police. But many more people have, had, or will have, children in public schools. It is here in the schools that police have the greatest impact on the safety and security of a community in a way that affects the greatest number of people.

“To do a Columbine”

Kenneth Trump

April 20, 1999 – At that time, the date of the most fatal school shooting in the United States.

April 20, 2001 – Two years later, having survived Y2K, a small group of junior high school students in Fort Collins, Colorado were planning another school tragedy set

to occur on the second anniversary of the Columbine shooting. Originally the name of the state flower of Colorado, then the name of a high school in suburban Jefferson County, the word Columbine had experienced a semantic change. It now had a new millennium meaning: “To do a Columbine” (Kenneth Trump, 2008).

I have written about my involvement in this incident, which occurred at the Junior High School where I was the school officer. After the planned attack was reported to a patrol officer over a holiday weekend, I was involved in the investigation. My perspective regarding the incident is from the point of view of the school resource officer working at the school where this event took place. I was involved and the incident affected me. I remember watching an interview in which one of the young offenders was asked how he planned to deal with the armed school officer (me!). He paused, looked down, then looked into the eyes of the interviewer and said, “We were planning to do it when she wasn’t there.” I wondered at the time what - if anything – they were really planning. I had had no interactions with one of the students, minimal interactions with another one of these students, and somewhat significant interaction with a third. Surprisingly, the one I had significant interactions with was the student who reached a plea agreement with the least significant consequence. He was also the one who did not participate in the restorative justice conference, because he was not involved with the juvenile corrections division.

Although I was affected by the incident, eight years have passed. I looked back through time. I did not attempt to filter out my experience; I was a part of the event as much as the students and staff. I attempted to allow my experience to stand for what it is. Another important theoretical perspective I have made known is my very active

involvement in the Restorative Justice Movement dating back at least twelve years. I am a restorative justice facilitator and trainer and have been involved with the community restorative justice program since its inception. Obviously, I am a proponent of restorative methods. As I wrote about my experiences, I reported how restorative justice practices were used in this particular case. My knowledge and understanding of these practices made me an ideal researcher to identify those practices.

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams”

Eleanor Roosevelt

My background as a police officer affected my choice of narrative incident and the way I reported on it. Being involved in law enforcement for more than 20 years, I have developed the ability to see situations in shades of gray, rather than black and white. I am also frequently called upon to employ problem-solving skills, which require me to fully explore an event. As a restorative justice facilitator, I have learned to listen to people’s stories and what lies beneath the story.

“You lose a lot of time hating people.”

Marian Anderson

No one ever expected the case to take on a life of its own the way this did. I initially saw things too narrowly; a crime, victims, offenders, a criminal prosecution, school safety. All within the realm of what I had done and experienced before. As the criminal case was progressing I saw some things happen at school that were unexpected. There was a backlash of feeling and those feelings were going to be expressed.

The victims - who were they really? The teenage girls who first made the report to police were themselves friends with the suspects, which is why they knew what was

planned. Things had changed for them however when a third boy became a member of the group. I don't think this third person had the trust of the girls. They had seen him act out violently before. And when they had a falling out and he threatened one of them, they became uneasy. The girls were together one night when they decided to call police.

The offenders - were they themselves victims of harassment? Perhaps they felt so. How many junior high school students feel harassed at one time or another? How many wish they were somewhere else in the social hierarchy? It's hard to say exactly, when so much is a matter of perception. Although friends, each of the suspects had other friends in different social groups. To adults in the school they seemed like any other junior high school students.

The school – really new, built five years earlier had a reputation as a “Prep” school. But a large part of the school population came from areas of town with farms and homes with country property. A large mobile home community was also within school boundaries. Certainly there could have been a diverse school population. How was the climate of the school set up when it first opened? How did it develop in the first few years? Why did the school have the reputation it did? I had a parent tell me at the time that his child had very specific clothes that he would wear to school. It did not include the cowboy boots and jeans he normally wore. The student told his father he would be harassed at school for wearing “cowboy” clothes. In the junior high school I saw very few students wearing cowboy boots, although in the high schools, students did. It seemed to me that for the students, junior high was a time to get through and not draw attention to oneself. But who in the school set the parameters of what was acceptable?

“Life shrinks or expands in proportion to ones courage”

Anais Nin

It was a three-day weekend and very cold, just a little snowy. The school resource officers were all working. We had been called the night before when our supervisor was made aware of the harassment report involving students from the junior high school and we told to report in early on Monday. There was no school that day, so we met and got briefed by Officer D. Although he usually worked night shift late week, he had been assigned to the school resource officer unit to finish out the investigation that started when he took the harassment report on Saturday night.

The school that was involved was one of the junior high schools I was assigned to and had been at for two years. We checked records on the three boys involved. One boy I remembered charging with attempted assault. The other had been given a marijuana ticket some time back. The third student had no criminal contacts. The records for the girls were clear except for one who had a shoplifting arrest. We read their statements and collected demographic information on everyone involved.

It was decided that based on the information we had so far, we would apply for warrants for the lockers of the students and then go to their homes. One student lived with his mother, sister and stepfather on the edge of town. One lived mostly with his mother and younger sister in town but spent time at his father’s apartment and the third student lived with his mother, father, older brother, and younger sister. After having the warrants signed, we went to school with the head of security from the school district. The assistant principal was in the building and we told him we were serving warrants on the lockers. He got us locker numbers and we searched the lockers. Lockers in a school are

property of the school and it is commonly understood that school district personnel may enter any locker any time for any reason. If police want to enter a locker however, we need a warrant.

“In the practice of tolerance, one's enemy is the best teacher.”

Dalai Lama

As we walked up to the school we passed the purple paw prints painted on the sidewalk each year by the class moving on to high school. We met the assistant principal coming out of the building. It was a holiday but not unusually, he was at school. Holidays are good days to get uninterrupted work done. The police sergeant had already notified the school district head of security and he was with us. We now notified the assistant principal of the search warrants we had obtained telling him that we would leave copies on his desk and let him know what, if anything, we were taking with us. The look on his face was one of shock and disbelief. Again not unusually, he did not say much, but asked to be kept notified and came back into the building to be of assistance. Because of the extreme delicacy of this investigation it had already been decided that at this point the only school district person who would be involved was the head of security.

Three lockers were gone through. Notebooks were the main points of interest. Notebooks were taken from some of the lockers so they could be gone through later at the police station. One thing stood out before we transported the notebooks and that was drawings of stick figures, drawings that showed what looked like guns being shot at stick figures near the stairs in the north hall of the school building. Based on what was found in the notebooks, we applied for a warrant for the homes and computers of two of the students.

The first home was a large horse ranch on the south edge of town. It was mid-morning now and still bitterly cold. When we arrived we spoke to the student's mother. She was obviously concerned but did not think her son was up to anything unusual. He was a bright student and very talented in art and drawing. The student lived there with his mother, sister and stepfather. The student also spent time with his father who lived in an apartment in town. The ranch provided a treasure trove of items commonly found on ranches; guns, ammunition, gas canister, targets. A downstairs family room had been converted to a recreation room for teens. It was adjacent to the student's bedroom. There were couches, mattresses, a TV, and video games. Also lying around the room were a handgun, a 9-mm and an assault rifle. Ammunition for these weapons was also found in the room although the guns were not loaded and we could not be sure at the time which if any guns worked. Guns in other parts of the house were locked and generally inaccessible. Barns were searched but nothing much of interest found except gas canisters. Everything of interest was photographed and confiscated. I remember the mother asking if her son could go to jail for this. Since I had just seen another student who had stabbed someone be given probation I thought it unlikely that anyone would serve time even if they were convicted of making plans to shoot students. However those decisions were not mine, so I told her I didn't know and couldn't hazard a guess.

The next house was the home of a student who was doing poorly in school. He lived with his mother and younger sister in a house on the southeast side of town. Not much was found in his house. He also spent time with his father who lived in an apartment nearby. Except for evidence of his heavy marijuana use, nothing else was found. This young man was a below average student, quiet, probably depressed and a

heavy marijuana user. We took the computers from all residences to be searched for future forensic analysis.

The third student, the one that made the threats that led to the police report, had been privy to the plan later than the other two. There were hunting guns in his house but it was unlikely that he had access to them. He lived with his mother and father. His older brother and younger sister were in the home as well and both of them were very active soccer players, playing at the highest level. This student was not involved in sports at all.

After serving the search warrants, and entering the items recovered into evidence, the school resource officer team started with interviews. We had made appointments with each family to bring the young men to the police department. They were separated, advised of their rights and interviewed. When confronted with the drawings, two of them admitted to talking about how they would do it if they ever were to shoot up the school. From their viewpoint, the large crowd of “jocks” that hung out at passing periods at the base of the north stairway was harassing them as well as others in the school. The “jocks” frequently made comments, shoved, or barred the way for other students going to class. That stick picture drawing represented where and who would be involved if there was ever a school shooting. It was idle talk they said, nothing they seriously thought of carrying through.

When questioned though, they said when they talked about it, they had a date in mind. That date was April 20. In addition to the videotaped interviews of the four boys, taped interviews were conducted with the informing girls as well. Really only one of them knew much about this. She was a close friend and confidant of the two main planners and she was involved in the plan as well. When the third boy threatened her

because she would not go out with him, she told the other girls of the plans. She told of weekend sleepovers at the ranch where they would go outside and target shoot at night, sometimes sitting on a hill waiting for coyotes to come by. They would shoot at coyotes.

At this point, after some acknowledgment was forthcoming from the students as to at least the existence of a plan, we contacted the Juvenile District Attorney and filled him in on what we had learned. Then began an examination of the facts that continued throughout the early stages of the prosecution. At this time there were very few if any “Columbine copycat” cases. The laws, which were later written to cover student shooting plan-making, were still relatively silent when it came to plans that had not yet been carried out. It was not unusual to find student hand drawn pictures of guns, bombs and general mayhem. In fact, therapists sometimes told their teen clients to express their aggression safely through drawing. Teen on farms sometimes had access to guns. The girl who had reported this incident certainly felt threatened and seemed to think this was a solid plan that was to be carried out. How credible was she? Would something happen between January and April 20 to either increase the likelihood of the plan being carried out or to derail it entirely? Would the students just lose interest? It all boiled down to what was in the minds of the young men involved and it is particularly difficult to know what is in a teenager’s mind.

“A human being is part of the whole called by us universe,
a part limited in time and space.

We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings
as something separate from the rest.

Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening
our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures
and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

Albert Einstein

The district attorney’s office had never dealt with this type of case before. In fact, as mentioned earlier, nationally this type of incident is somewhat rare. Suffice it to say however that between the three families of children charged with serious felony crimes, their attorneys, and the intense media scrutiny that was in some cases courted by the offenders, this case soon became, in my mind, blown out of all proportion. The juvenile justice system made every good faith effort to review this incident fairly, to hold those accountable if laws had been broken. The end result was that two of the subjects charged with crimes were committed to the state juvenile correction system. One of the subjects reached a different agreement with the District Attorney’s office, but also plead guilty to similar crimes. When it was finally over, meaning that the court cases were resolved through plea bargain agreements; there was still the school community which had experienced a breakdown in trust with its community. In confusion to as how this could have happened in the first place, it was this community, the girls who had originally reported as well as the three offenders, who needed healing. The actions that were taken and outlined in Chapter Three detail primarily what was done to try and repair the harm

to the school community. As all this was going on in school, my life as a school officer continued with its everyday onslaught of harassments, assaults, and drug abuse cases. I was only peripherally involved in the school's response to the crisis. I remember looking at the tree, reading some of the postings, and being grateful that there was that type of a forum for students and adults to make their thoughts and feelings known. The end of January, February and the beginning of March were very dark months for me personally at that school given the media spotlight and the seriousness of the offense and I was not alone. Many at school questioned their careers, and I questioned and was questioned whether or not the students would have gone forward with their plans. However, I eventually realized that the question was perhaps not relevant. What was relevant was that they felt the need to make those plans. No teenager should be in such an emotional state that he or she feels the need to even talk about such a tragic act. Even the planning of such a horrific scenario falls way outside a normal teenage behavior and certainly outside acceptable legal behavior.

It was well into early spring of the same year when I arrived at school early one morning. I remember seeing the eastern face of the mountains behind the school, a school that was located in the most beautiful setting in town. The sunrise had illuminated the mountains to the west of the school. It was an absolutely beautiful and peaceful scene, a scene that seemed as though it could never be marred by violence.

Observing the beauty of the natural world that day made me realize that the ice was slowly melting and eventually, it would be all right. This research project documents this time of crisis, of trauma, of healing and finally, of transformation. To arrive at the end of this journey and face the transformation that has taken place is an unexpected yet

exciting conclusion. It continues to be my hope that the restorative justice movement expands and transformational justice truly comes to pass. This study shows it can exist, even thrive, alongside the existing school discipline and criminal justice systems. Can it not also thrive in other areas such as neighborhoods, workplaces, government, and international relations? All that is needed is compassion for other sentient beings and a desire to leave the world a better place for all children.

Little darling, it's been a long cold lonely winter
Little darling, it feels like years since it's been here
Here comes the sun, here comes the sun
and I say it's all right

Little darling, the smiles returning to the faces
Little darling, it seems like years since it's been here
Here comes the sun, here comes the sun
and I say it's all right

Little darling, I feel that ice is slowly melting
Little darling, it seems like years since it's been clear
Here comes the sun, here comes the sun,
and I say it's all right

From the lyrics of *Here Comes the Sun* -The Beatles

REFERENCES

- Acorn, A. (2004). *Compulsory Compassion: A Critique of Restorative Justice*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Akester, K. (2002). *Restorative justice, victims' rights and the future*. Retrieved July 2, 2009, from: <http://www.lag.org.uk/>
- Bartels, L. & Crowder, C. (1999). *Fatal friendship*. Denver, CO: Denver Rocky Mountain News.
- Barzun, J. & Graff, H.F. (1992). *The modern researcher*. (5th ed.). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.
- Braithwaite, J. (2002). *Restorative justice and responsive regulation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cameron, L. & Thorsborne, M. (2001). Restorative Justice and School Discipline. In H. Strang & J. Braithwaite, (Eds.), *Restorative Justice And Civil Society*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Chankova, D. and Van Ness, D.W. (2007). The global appeal of restorative justice: Themes. In G. Johnstone, & D. W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of Restorative Justice*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.
- Charmaz, K. (2005). Grounded theory in the 21st century. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Colorado State University. Retrieved July 26, 2009, from <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/humanresearch/>

Cornwall, T. (2002). In E. G. M. Weitekamp & H. Kerner (Eds.), *Restorative justice: Theoretical foundations*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design, quantitative & qualitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cunneen, C. (2006). Reviving Restorative Justice Traditions. In G. Johnstone, & D. W. Van Ness, (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Dandurand, Y. & Griffiths, C. (2006). *Handbook on restorative justice programmes*. Vienna: United Nations Publications.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2008). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Discovery Program. Retrieved September 10, 2010 from:

<http://www.thediscoveryinstitute.com/overview.html>

Dwyer, K.P., Osher, D., & Warger, C. (1998). *Early warning, timely response: A guide to safe schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Justice (DOJ).

Dwyer, K.P., & Osher, D. (2000). *Safeguarding our children: An action guide*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Justice (DOJ).

- Fort Collins Police Records. (2001).
- Froestad, J. & Shearing, C. (2007). Conflict resolution in South Africa. In G. Johnstone, & D. W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of Restorative Justice*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.
- Gehm, J. & Umbreit, M. (1985). *National VORP directory*. Valparaiso, CA: National VORP Resource Center.
- Greenwood, D. J. & Levin, M. (2005). Reform of the social sciences and of universities through action research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Guba, E. (1990). *The paradigm dialog*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gubrium, J. E. & Holstein, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of interview research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hangman, P. (2009). *Why kids kill: Inside the minds of school shooters*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Harris, K. (2006). Transformative justice. In D. Sullivan, & L. Tiff, (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice*. (pp. 230-245). New York: Routledge Publishing.
- Holstein, J. A. & Gubrium, J. E. (2005). Interpretive practice and social action. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hopkins, B. (2004). *Just schools: a whole school approach to restorative justice*. New York, NY: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- I.A.C.P. (2003). *A public safety response to critical incidents*. Retrieved April 16, 2010 from: <http://www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=rQSQ9%2b0gB5U%3d&tabid=378>

- Johnson, C. E. (2009). *Meeting the ethical challenges of leadership - Casting light or shadow*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Johnstone, G. (2002). *Restorative justice, ideas, values, debates*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.
- Johnstone, G. & Van Ness, D. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of restorative justice*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Juvie-nation. (2008). *Colorado enacts restorative justice law*. Retrieved April 16, 2010 from: <http://juvienation.wordpress.com/2008/04/01/Colorado-enacts-restorative-justice-law/>
- Karp, D. R. (2004). *Restorative justice on the college campus: Promoting student growth and responsibility, and reawakening the spirit of campus community*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.
- Kay, J. (2006). Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation. In D. Sullivan, & L. Tifft, (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice*. (pp. 230-245). New York: Routledge Publishing.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Leonard, L. (2006). *Restorative justice as storytelling*. Retrieved July 2, 2009, from <http://www.lulu.com/content/multimedia/restorative-justice-as-storytelling/2189877>
- Liebmann, M. (2007). *Restorative justice: How it works*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Lokanan, M. (2009). An Open Model for Restorative Justice: Is There Room for Punishment? *Contemporary Justice Review*. 12 (3).
- Louw, D. K. (2006). The African concept of Ubuntu and restorative justice. In D. Sullivan, & L. Tifft, (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice*. New York: Routledge Publishing.

- McCold, P. & Wachtel T. (2002). Restorative justice theory validation. In E. Weitekamp & H. J. Kerner (Eds.), *Restorative justice: Theoretical foundations* (pp. 110-142). Devon, UK: Willan Publishing.
- McGarrell, E. F. (2001). *Restorative justice conferences as an early response to young offenders*. Rockville, MD: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.
- Merriam, S.B. (1988). *Case study research in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Inc. Publishers.
- Miers, D. (2007). The international development of restorative justice. In G. Johnstone, & D. W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of Restorative Justice*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.
- Mika, H. & Zehr, H. (2003). A Restorative Framework for Restorative Justice Practice. In K. McEvoy & T. Newburn (Eds.), *Criminology, conflict resolution, and restorative justice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Miles, M. & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Morris, R. (2000). *Stories of transformative justice*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.
- Morrison, B. (2007). The School System. In H. Strang & J. Braithwaite, (Eds.), *Restorative Justice And Civil Society*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Morrison, B. (2007) Schools and Restorative Justice. In G. Johnstone, & D. W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of Restorative Justice*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

National Institute of Justice. (2010). Restorative Justice. Retrieved 04/16/10 from:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/courts/restorative-justice/welcome.htm>

Paine, C. K. (2007). *Hope and healing: Recovery from school violence*.

Paper presented at the Confronting Violence in Our Schools: Planning, Response, and

Recovery symposium of the Public Entity Risk Institute. Retrieved July 2, 2009, from:

<http://www.riskinstitute.org/PERI/SYMPOSIUM/>

Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Pranis, K. (1999). *Restorative justice - reflections on national and international developments*.

Saint Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Corrections, Community and Juvenile

Services. Retrieved July 2, 2009, from: [http://www.corr.state.mn.us/rj/publications/](http://www.corr.state.mn.us/rj/publications/reflectionsonnational.htm)

[reflectionsonnational.htm](http://www.corr.state.mn.us/rj/publications/reflectionsonnational.htm)

Pranis, K. (2002). Restorative Values and Confronting Family Violence. In H. Strang & J.

Braithwaite (Eds.), *Restorative justice and family violence* (pp. 23-41). Cambridge,

UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pranis, K. (2007). Restorative Values. In G. Johnstone, & D. W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook*

of Restorative Justice. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Real Justice. Retrieved September 10, 2010, from: <http://www.realjustice.org/>

Restorative Justice Online. (2003). *Restorative justice in schools: Web resources*. Retrieved

July 2, 2009, from: <http://www.restorativejustice.org/>

[editions/2003/October/RJschools1](http://www.restorativejustice.org/editions/2003/October/RJschools1)

Schrage, J.M. & Giacomini, N.G. (Eds.). (2000). *Reframing campus conflict: Student conduct*

practice through a social justice lens. Unknown Publisher.

- Stake, R. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Strang, H. (2001). The Crime Victim Movement as a Force in Civil Society. In H. Strang & J. Braithwaite, (Eds.), *Restorative justice and civil society*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Stuart, B. & Pranis, K. (2006). Peacemaking circles. In Sullivan, D. and Tifft, L. (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice*. New York: Routledge Publishing.
- Sullivan, D. and Tifft, L. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of restorative justice*. New York: Routledge Publishing.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Thomas, J. (2003). Critiquing the Critics of Peacemaking Criminology. In K. McEvoy & T. Newburn (Eds.), *Criminology, Conflict Resolution, And Restorative Justice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Trump, K. (2008). *Columbine's dark legacy haunts teens*. Retrieved July 2, 2009, from: <http://tetens-counseling-center.org/Columbine.pdf>
- Umbreit, M., Coates, R. B. & Bradshaw, W. (1999). Victims of severe violence in dialogue with the offender. In E.G. M. Weitekamp & H. Kerner (Eds.), *Restorative justice in context*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.
- Umbreit, M. S. (2000). *Family group conferencing: Implications for crime victims*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime.

- Umbreit, M. S. (2001). *The handbook of victim offender mediation: An essential guide to practice and research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Vossekuil, B., Fein, R.A., Reddy, M., Borum, R., Modzeleski, W. (2002). *The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: United States Secret Service and United States Department Of Education*. Retrieved March 15, 2010 from:
http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi_final_report.pdf
- Wachtel, T. (1999). *Restorative justice in everyday life: Beyond the formal ritual*. Paper presented at the "Reshaping Australian Institutions Conference: Restorative Justice and Civil Society," The Australian National University, Canberra, February 16-18, 1999. Retrieved July 2, 2009, from <http://www.realjustice.org/index.html>
- Walgrave, L. (Ed.). (2002). *Restorative justice and the law*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.
- Walgrave, L. (2007). Integrating criminal justice and restorative justice. In G. Johnstone, & D. W. Van Ness, (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.
- Weitekamp, E. (1999). *Restorative justice, repairing the harm of youth crime*. Unknown location: Willow Tree Press.
- Weitekamp, E.G. M. & Kerner, H. (Eds.). (2002). *Restorative justice: theoretical foundations*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.
- Wolcott, H. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wright, M. & Master, G. (2002). Justified Criticism, Misunderstanding or Important Steps on the Road to Acceptance? In E.G. M. Weitekamp & H. Kerner (Eds.), *Restorative Justice: Theoretical Foundations*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

- Yazzie, Robert. (1998). "Navajo Response to Crime." *Justice as Healing* 3(2) (1998)
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Native Law Centre, University of Saskatchewan.
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research, design and methods*. 3rd ed. Newbury Park PA: Sage Publications.
- Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.
- Zehr, H. (2005). *Changing lenses: A new focus for crime and justice*. (3rd Ed.). Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.
- Zion, J. W. (1985). "The Navajo Peacemaker Court: Deference to the Old and Accommodation to the New." *American Indian Law Review* 11 (1985): 89.

APPENDIX
RESEARCH STUDY PROTOCOLS

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: The Use of Restorative Justice Practices in A School Community Following an Incident of Planned School Violence - A Case Study

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: [REDACTED] Associate Professor, School of Education
 Contact information
 E-mail: [REDACTED]
 Phone: [REDACTED]

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Susan Long, Graduate Student, School of Education
 Contact information
 Email: Susan.Long@colostate.edu
 Phone: [REDACTED]

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you held a leadership position during an event that affected the perception of safety of a school community.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

Under the guidance of [REDACTED], Susan Long, a doctoral graduate student and the Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI), is doing this research for her dissertation. There is no outside funding attached to it.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of the study is to explore the school community's response to an event in which school safety was threatened and to look at how restorative justice practices were used in that response.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

After the initial recruitment and consent, each subject will participate in one interview lasting between 1 - 2 hours at a mutually agreed upon location. The interview will be conducted by the Co-PI, Susan Long. Each participant will be re-contacted once more through e-mail, within 3 months of the interview, in order to review the transcript of their interview. You will have the opportunity to discuss any miscommunications with the Co-PI so the transcript best reflects your thoughts on the subject.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked to talk about the way you responded to the event, which occurred in 2001, and what actions were taken in an attempt to heal the harm caused by the event. You will also be asked to discuss ways in which you observed the community respond to this event with an emphasis on restorative measures.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no known reasons why you should not take part in this study.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

There are no known risks or discomforts to this study.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no direct benefits to individual participants. Our hope is that by looking at what actions were taken after this event in 2001, there may be benefit to others facing similar events.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?

We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your name will be kept separate from your research records and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if we believe you have abused a child, or you pose a danger to yourself or someone else.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There will be no compensation for taking part in this study.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH?

The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Susan Long at [REDACTED]. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact [REDACTED], Human Research Administrator at [REDACTED]. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

"This consent form was approved by the CSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on October, 2009."

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

The Co-Principal Investigator, Susan Long, will contact you by phone or e-mail, and set up a 1-2 hour appointment during which she will interview you. The interview will be audio taped. After the interview is transcribed, she will mail or e-mail a copy of your transcript to you for review. You may comment on the transcript and return it. Your name will not be used in any way during the research, although the position you held may be identified in a general way. The location of the event will only be identified as a [REDACTED].

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of person providing information to participant

Date

Signature of Research Staff

Initial Recruitment Script

Hello (name of participant),

I am a doctoral student working with [REDACTED] in the School of Education at Colorado State University. My name is Susan Long. I am conducting a study that is looking at how restorative justice practices were used in the response to an incident of planned school violence which occurred at [REDACTED] high school in 2001. The purpose of this research is to determine what practices were used and assess their effectiveness. I would like to interview you regarding your role in this event and how you perceived the restorative justice practices. The interview will most likely take between one and two hours of your time and can be conducted at a mutually agreed upon location. I plan on tape-recording the interview and will have the audio tape transcribed. The transcription will be available for you to review and make any changes you think will more accurately express your viewpoint. Your total time commitment is expected to be about 4 hours. There are no risks or benefits to you and your participation is voluntary. You can contact me at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] at CSU at [REDACTED]-

Thank you.

Interview Questions

In February 2001, a report was made concerning an incident of planned school violence at [REDACTED] School. I would like to talk to you today about some of the responses to that incident.

1. Please discuss your training and experience in restorative justice.
2. What was your role or involvement in this incident?
3. What were your thoughts, feelings, and reactions when you heard about this incident?
4. Was harm caused to the school community as a result of this incident? If so, what was that harm?
5. Did you take any actions did you take or participate in that were designed to heal whatever harm may have occurred? What were they?
6. Do you believe the actions taken addressed the harm done? Why or why not?