



Civic Justice

The Community Justice Institute at Florida Atlantic University

Civic Justice and a Civic Justice Corps

www.cji.fau.edu or
www.barjproject.org

When one member of the community harms another through theft, assault, or other means, more than just a law is broken, it is also that person's relationship with the community, community trust and peace. How can we turn something bad, like broken relationships, into something good?

- **Utilizing** the time, talents, and energy of those caught up in the justice system to address un-met community needs through the work of a Civic/Youth Justice Corps.
- **Depending** on the community to work alongside the Civic/Youth Justice Corps members to increase the likelihood of community receptivity for members returning to the community.
- **Enhancing** the employability of Civic/Youth Justice Corps members by involving them in job training that is in demand by both the public and private sectors and building a skill set

viewed to be important by employers.

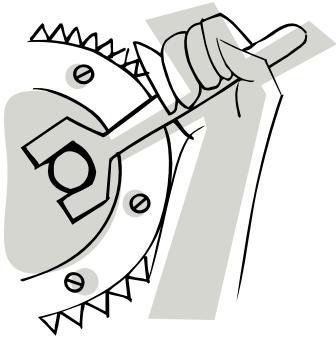
- **Growing** the sense of community connection of the Civic/Youth Justice Corps members by involving them with the community in the design, planning, development and maintenance of projects.
- **Featuring** the contribution of the Civic/Youth Justice Corps members in local, state, and national media to demonstrate the contribution made by the Corps members.
- **Making** an argument that significant community-building initiatives are a far better use of resources than over-reliance on incarceration.
- **Providing** an opportunity for persons involved in the criminal justice system to earn their way back into the community and be accepted as a contributing member.

On any given day, there are over two million youth and adults incarcerated in US jails and prisons.

Approximately 600,000 individuals will be released from state and federal prisons each year and return to their communities.

Neighborhoods suffer from the lack of fathers, educated youth, productivity, workers, and role models. Individuals returning from incarceration are not welcomed back into the community and often have difficulty finding gainful employment and even housing.

States and local governments are faced with reducing vital public services to pay for the growing cost of warehousing inmates.



A Civic Justice Corps: Service in the Interest of Others

Vision of a Civic Justice Corps

(for youth or adults)

Reparation: Crime harms and breaks the peace of the victim and the community. The corrective response should focus on the obligation to repair this harm. The person who commits the crime, with support from the community, carries the primary burden for repairing the harm.

Earned Redemption: Fulfilling reparative responsibilities can be an honorable process. People who have worked to repair the harm to both victim(s) and the community and who have curtailed their criminal behavior, should be afforded the opportunity to participate as members in good standing in the community.

Participation: Participation builds investment. Investment

builds a sense of personal responsibility. Citizens, crime victims, and people who commit crimes who participate in repairing harm and restoring and furthering community peace will increase their sense of responsibility to build a better community. In turn they will develop strong commitment to ensuring that their efforts succeed.

Building a Sense of Community: People who share a strong sense of community are far less likely to violate the trust of others. Strong relationships, both formal and informal, are the basis of community and the foundation of peaceful living. Therefore preventive and corrective measures should result in building a stronger sense of community. It is in the vest interest of the community to participate with those who have violated trust in ways that develop that person's sense of connection to the community.

Building Capacity: As law breakers participate in a process of repairing harm to victims and communities, they should gain skills and build assets that contribute to their responsible and productive participation in the community. Furthermore, as citizens and communities resolve conflict and address harm, they should be able to apply these skills to a broader range of community issues.