



## Inaugural Restorative Justice Newsletter



Welcome to our inaugural newsletter focused on learning and living restoratively with updates and information from the [Center for Justice Reform](#) at Vermont Law School.

It's an exciting time for the center, and we're pleased to create this space to share all that's happening with you.

In writing this letter, I am thinking about you – all of you, whether we've met or have yet to meet. Connection is central to everything we do and you are the fabric of our endeavors. You've helped us weave the only the only law-school based [Master of Arts in Restorative Justice \(MARJ\)](#) in the country. You've added richness to the tapestry of our professional certificate. You may be the person holding the thread

to help us suture divides in our criminal legal system, or have a unique pattern that will change how that system operates entirely. Maybe you will add multicolored embroidery to the circumference of all we do, holding our learning and work, and showing how in coming together we are stronger and more vibrant with every new strand.

As you read about our activities and hear from our students and alumni, I invite you to picture where and how you will widen our circle of colleagues, friends, and collective restorative work. I also invite your help now with a specific request: help us name our newsletter! At the link below, you will find a few names to consider. You can vote for one of those options or submit your own suggestion. You're helping us create a wondrous quilt that someday will be the blanket of change...please add the individual and powerful element that only you can bring. I, and the whole RJ Team, look forward to hearing and learning from you!

### [Help Us Name Our Newsletter](#)

*Restoratively yours,*  
Stephanie Clark  
Director of the Center for Justice Reform and the National Center on Restorative Justice



### COMMUNITY CIRCLES GUIDE THE GROWTH OF THE MARJ PROGRAM

During September and October, the [National Center on Restorative Justice \(NCRJ\)](#) held a series of circles with students, faculty, community partners, Advisory Board members, and restorative justice practitioners to reflect on the learning outcomes of the [Master of Arts in Restorative Justice \(MARJ\)](#) Program. Circle participants were asked to reflect on what MARJ students need to know, do, and value as they prepare to take on leadership roles in the restorative justice movement. The themes that emerged from this series of circles will inform the program learning outcomes and the completion of a course mapping process to guide future program development.

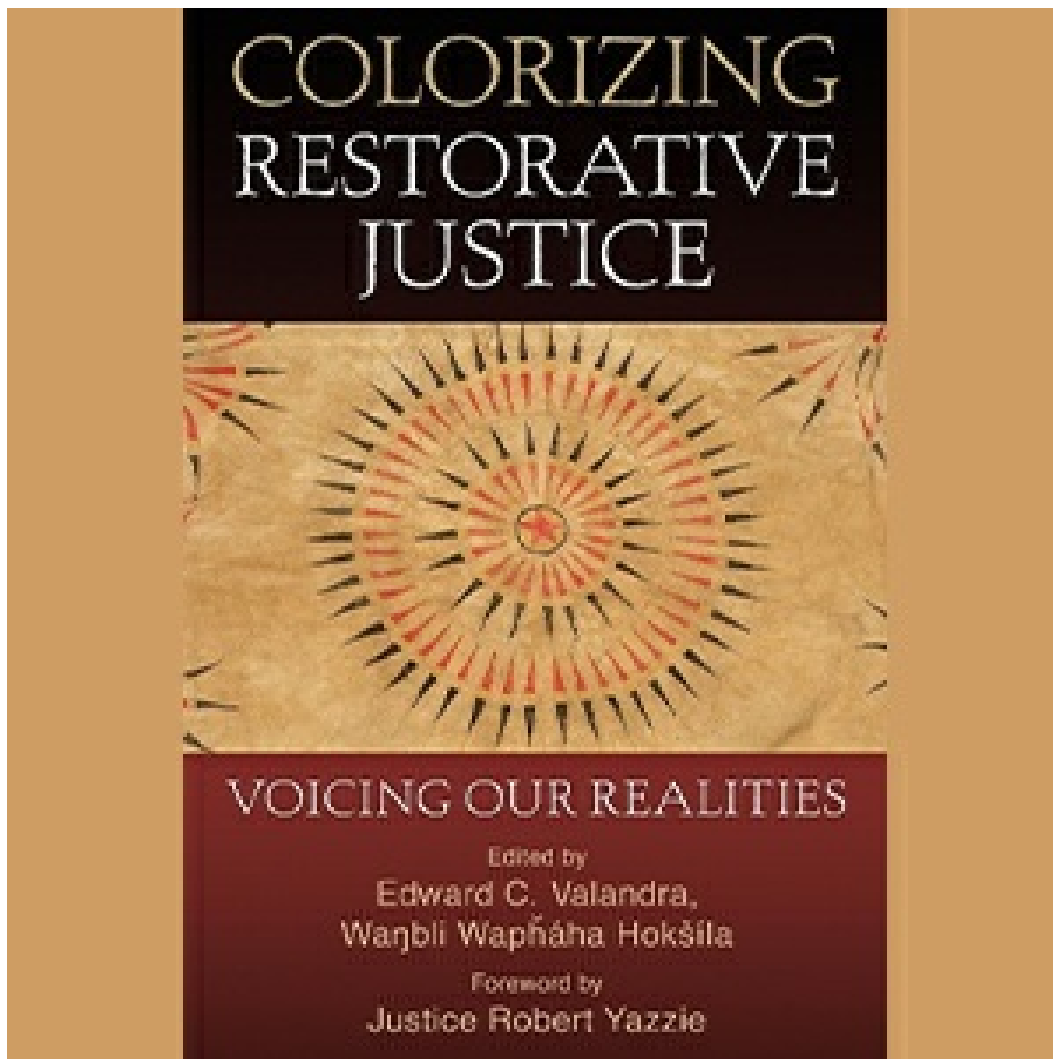
Holding these circles provided a way to use the principles and tools of restorative practices to guide the growth of the MARJ program. The circle structure allowed for all participants in the process to have equal voice and to listen deeply to each other as the community collaboratively determined the best way forward.



### FIRST RJ WORLD CONFERENCE HELD VIRTUALLY

The [RJ World 2020 eConference](#) was recently held online. This first of its kind event brought together 700 restorative practitioners and scholars from over 40 different countries. Presenters recorded their presentations and shared them to the eConference website to be viewed throughout the duration of the conference. Presenters also held live Q&A sessions and interacted with conference participants through discussion boards. The virtual structure allowed for a greater coming together of the global restorative justice community than is normally possible at in-person events and provided ample opportunities to share great work and cross-pollinate new ideas.

Lindsey Pointer, Assistant Director of the National Center on Restorative Justice, presented on [Games and Activities for Teaching Restorative Practices](#), highlighting the importance of restorative pedagogy, teaching in a way that is in alignment with restorative values and principles.



### ON OUR BOOKSHELF: *COLORIZING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE*

A recent publication that will expand and challenge your understanding of restorative justice is [\*Colorizing Restorative Justice: Voicing our Realities\*](#).

The authors draw on their lived experiences as restorative justice practitioners and scholars of color working in a field too often dominated by white bodies, colonial structures, and a prevailing lack of racial and social justice consciousness. This book calls on the restorative justice movement and each individual involved to be accountable for their shared role in these harms, to listen deeply to practitioners and scholars of color, and to work to cultivate the racial justice consciousness that will allow restorative work to be truly transformative.

We also encourage you to check out this [upcoming event](#) – a series of circles with some of the authors of *Colorizing Restorative Justice*.



### **STUDENT VOICE: CONCERNING HOPE**

**By Karla Barron MARJ'21**

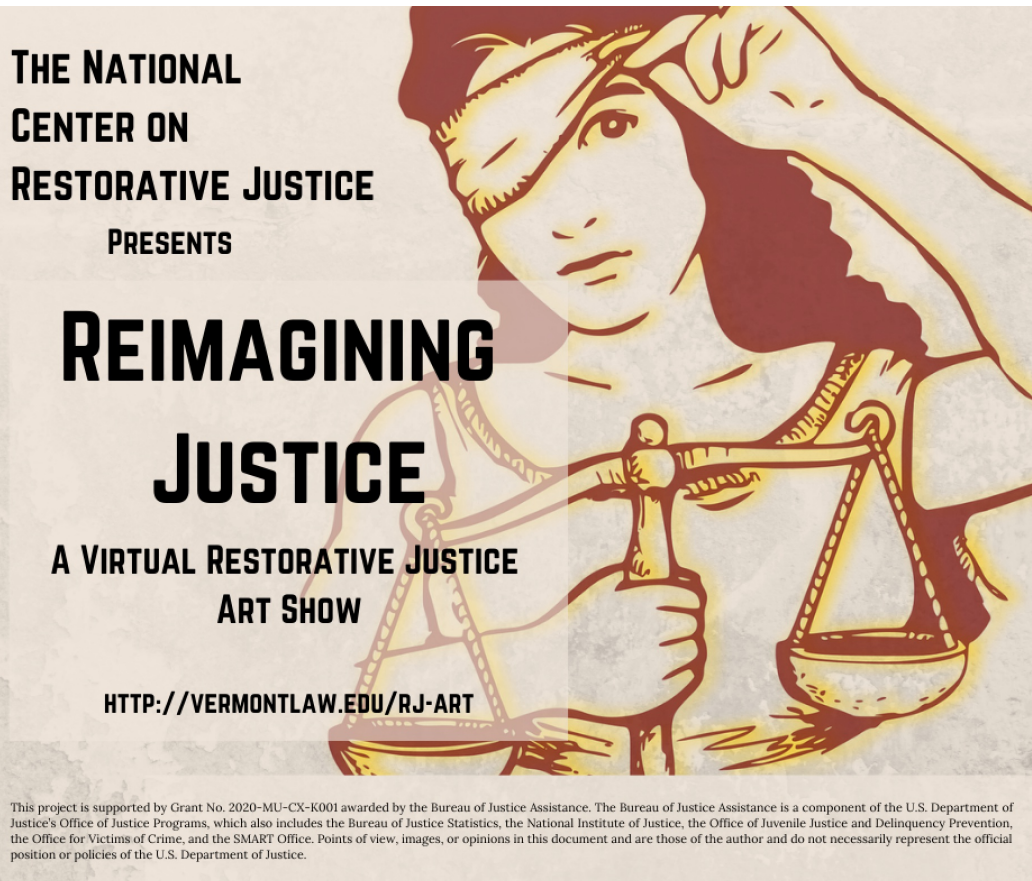
Everyone is feeling something. The uplifted weight of the false and negative rhetoric that now lies in defeat. It is a sigh of slight relief and air of hope.

I, like so many others, did my due diligence and voted because it was the most critical election I can remember during my lifetime. The culmination of burdens, injustices, struggles, fears and so much more that many of us have been carrying, gave rise to this moment.

I didn't mind the media following the results. I wasn't ready to relive the emotions of the morning after election night 2016. That time of year was a heavy one. It still is in so many ways. And I was truly afraid of a repeat. So I stayed waiting in the shadows to hear if something good would come out of 2020.

[Read More »](#)



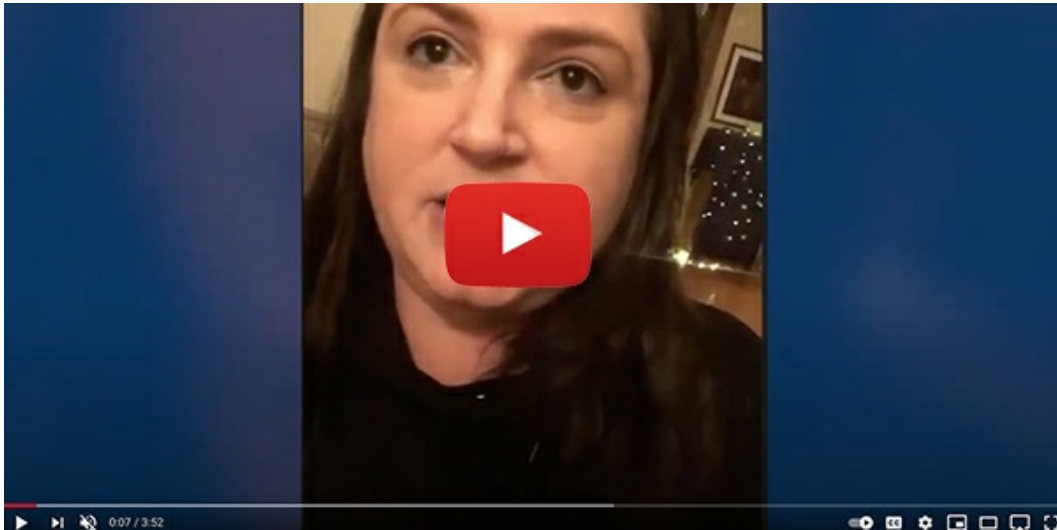


## REIMAGINING JUSTICE: A VIRTUAL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ART SHOW

Last month, the National Center on Restorative Justice at Vermont Law School launched "Reimagining Justice," a restorative justice art contest. The contest encouraged the restorative justice and art communities to consider a very important question: How can we use the power of images to communicate the concept of restorative justice and the greater philosophical shift at work to a wider audience?

A gallery of the images submitted alongside artist statements will be featured in [a virtual Restorative Justice Art Show](#) from November 18-22, 2020, in celebration of International Restorative Justice week. During this time, visitors will be able to vote for three Viewer's Choice Awards that will be awarded at the end of the week. We hope that you will visit the show and enjoy the incredible creativity of the restorative justice community!

You can vote for your favorite [here](#)



### A CONVERSATION WITH EMILY SEVERSON MARJ'19

While a growing number of MARJ students are now official graduates and have gone on to new jobs, experiences, and even time zones, we hope that ALL continue to feel connected to the RJ community here at VLS. It is so exciting to see the variety of paths MARJ alums have taken, and this alum spotlight is one way we hope to stay tuned in to those journeys.

Emily Severson was among the first cohort of MARJ students in 2018, and is now working as a mitigation specialist for the Virginia Indigent Defense Commission. Please check out the video below to hear more about Emily's story, and how restorative justice continues to impact the work she does today.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

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