

AN ANCIENT IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

# NEIGHBORHOOD ACCOUNTABILITY BOARDS

*A Guide To Learn More About Neighborhood Accountability Boards*

APRIL 2003



*This guide introduces you to Restorative Community Justice —Neighborhood Accountability Boards in particular — and a call to acknowledge a need for increased individual and collective responsibility to and for one another.*

*The idea is not new, but it is novel. Our hope is to let you see if the idea speaks to you so that you will move forward to explore and advocate for a similar approach in your community.*

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## 1. Dee Dee and the Mango Tree ~ 1963 & Today

**1963** — Dee Dee is a girl of 10, and more than a little full of mischief. She just loves to run around the neighborhood, play with the kids, even asking if Mrs. Brown's dog can come out and play. Growing up in La Belle, she has lots of room and lots of time to run and play. And lots of neighbors who look out for each other.

The mango tree in Mr. Clark's backyard is full and almost ready for the first picking. Everyone knows Mr. Clark's mangoes are his pride and joy. After he picks the first few ripe ones of the year, he shares the rest with the neighbors. After all, it's just him now, since his wife passed away 3 years ago.

Dee Dee also has a passion for mangoes. In fact, this day she could not resist the low-hanging fruit, just begging to be picked. And so she did. Mr. Clark saw her through his kitchen window. "Dee Dee, what are you doing?" Mr. Clark called out. Dee Dee panicked, grabbed the fruit and ran straight to her own back yard.

Mr. Clark called Dee Dee's mom and told her what happened. "Thank you, Mr. Clark, Dee Dee will bring that mango back over this minute." After the three of them discussed the incident in full, it was also decided that Dee Dee would help pick 2 bushels from the tree, as well as weed Mr. Clark's garden every Saturday for the next month.

**Today** — Mr. Clark yells at a young girl (who chances are he doesn't even know) that just picked a mango from his tree. As he dials 911 he watches her jump a fence and run into a nearby house. As the girl's Mother runs outside to confront this man who made her daughter cry, the police arrive just in time to take their report of a disturbance that originated from a petty theft. After the reporting is finished and summonses are issued, one last bit of instruction is given... "All of you, stay away from one another."

**WHAT HAPPENED?** Times have changed. Relationships have ceased to exist. It used to be that neighborhoods worked together to handle community issues. They worked together to raise the children of their community. They worked together to see that children understood what they did wrong and that there were consequences to their behaviors.

Many communities are saying, "We want our kids back!" Through Neighborhood Accountability Boards using Restorative Justice Principles, we are able to do just that.

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## 2. What is Restorative Justice?



Restorative Justice is a new movement in the fields of victimology and criminology. Acknowledging that crime causes injury to people and communities, it insists that justice address those injuries and that the parties be permitted to participate in that process. Restorative justice programs, therefore, enable the victim, the offender and affected members of the community to be directly involved in responding to the crime. They become central to the criminal justice process, with State and legal professionals becoming facilitators of a system that aims at offender accountability, reparation to the victim and full participation by the victim, offender and community. The restorative process of involving all parties is fundamental to achieving the restorative outcome of reparation and peace.

Restorative justice is different from contemporary criminal justice in several ways. First, it views criminal acts more comprehensively — rather than defining crime as simply lawbreaking, it recognizes that offenders harm victims and communities as well. Finally, it measures success differently — rather than measuring how much punishment is inflicted, it measures how many harms are addressed or prevented.

*From Prison Fellowship International, February 2000*

### 3. What's the Difference Between Restorative Justice and Traditional Justice?

TRADITIONAL JUSTICE	RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
Crime is an act against the State, a violation of a law, an abstract idea.	Crime is an act against another person or the community.
The criminal justice system controls crime.	Crime control lies primarily in the community.
Offender accountability is defined as taking punishment.	Accountability is defined as assuming responsibility and taking action to repair harm.
Crime is an individual act with individual responsibility.	Crime has both individual and social dimensions of responsibility.
Punishment is effective. A. The threat of punishment deters crime. B. The punishment changes behavior.	Punishment is important, but alone is not effective in changing behavior and is disruptive to the community harmony and good relationships.
Victims are peripheral to the process.	Victims are central to the process of resolving a crime.
The offender is defined by deficits.	The offender is defined by capacity to make reparation.
Focus on establishing blame, on guilt, on past (did he/she do it?)	Focus on problem solving, on liabilities/obligations, on future (what should be done?)
Emphasis on adversarial relationship.	Emphasis on dialog and negotiation.
Imposition of pain to punish and deter/prevent.	Restitution as a means of restoring both parties; goal of reconciliation/restoration.
Community on sideline, represented abstractly by State.	Community as facilitator in restorative process.
Response focused on offender's past behavior.	Response focused on harmful consequences of offender's behavior; emphasis on the future.
Dependence upon proxy professionals.	Direct involvement by participants.

(Zehr, 1990)

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## 4. Addressing the Harm Caused by Crime

Restitution is the payment by an offender of a sum of money to compensate the victim for the financial losses caused by the crime. It is justified in a restorative perspective as a method of holding offenders accountable for their wrongdoing, and as a method of addressing the victim's harm. Restitution can be determined in the course of mediation, conferencing or circles; it can also be ordered by a judge. In other words, it is a potentially restorative outcome that may result from either a restorative or a conventional process.

Studies have shown that restitution increases victim satisfaction with the justice process. Some studies have shown that the use of restitution was associated with reductions in recidivism. Other studies have shown that when restitution is determined during mediation, it is more likely to actually be paid than when it results from court order alone.

Restorative Community service is work performed by an offender for the benefit of the community. It is justified in a restorative perspective as a method of addressing the harm experienced by communities when a crime occurs. However, it can be used instead for retributive reasons or as a means of rehabilitating the offender. What distinguishes its use as a restorative response is the attention given to identifying the particular harm suffered by the community as a result of the offender's crime, and the effort to ensure that the offender's community service addresses that particular harm. So, for example, offenders who put graffiti on buildings in a neighborhood can be given the community service of removing graffiti from buildings in that neighborhood.

*From Prison Fellowship International, 2001.*

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## **5. What is a Neighborhood Accountability Board?**

Neighborhood Accountability Boards involve the community of people most affected by the crime (known as the stakeholders) — the victim and the offender and the family, friends, and key supporters of both — in deciding the resolution of a criminal incident. These affected parties are brought together by a trained facilitator to discuss how they and others have been harmed by the offense and how that harm might be addressed. To participate, the offender must admit to the offense. Participation by all involved is voluntary.

### **5.1. Neighborhood Accountability Boards – A Model of Restorative Group Conferencing**

In this model (the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice program), the facilitator contacts the victim and offender to explain the process and invites them to the conference; the facilitator also asks them to identify key members of their support systems, who will be invited to participate as well. The conference typically begins with the offender describing the incident, followed by each participant describing the impact of the incident on his or her life. Through these narrations, the offender is faced with the human impact of the behavior on the victim, on those close to the victim, and on the offender's own family and friends. The victim has the opportunity to express feelings and ask questions about the incident. After a thorough discussion of the impact of the behavior on those present, the victim is asked to identify desired outcomes from the conference, and thus help to shape the obligations that will be placed on the offender. All participants may contribute to the problem-solving process of determining how the offender might best address the harm he or she has caused. The session ends with participants signing an agreement outlining their expectations and commitments.

This type of conferencing was developed from a Maori tradition in New Zealand, where it is currently used for most juvenile offenses. The process was adapted by police in Australia, and then introduced to the United States, where it is currently used by some police agencies, schools, and probation. Conferencing is most often used as a diversion from the court process for juveniles, but can be used after adjudication to address unresolved emotional issues or to determine the specific terms of restitution. The process has been used in adult cases as well. A variety of offenses have been resolved through family group conferencing including theft, arson, minor assaults, drug offenses, and vandalism.

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## **5.2. The History of Neighborhood Accountability Boards in Florida**

As of Spring 2003, 33 neighborhoods in Florida have Neighborhood Accountability Boards. Citizen-volunteers in 13 counties, trained by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice in conjunction with Florida Atlantic University's Balanced and Restorative Justice Project, are listening to the cases of first-time juvenile offenders and the plights of victims. They weigh how to bring peace and justice to victims and the community, while addressing appropriate sanctions for offenders, such as community service and restitution. The Neighborhood Accountability Boards are receiving about \$550,000 in grant funding from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. The 13 counties involved to date by the program are Alachua, Collier, Duval, Gadsden, Hillsborough, Lee, Leon, Miami-Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, Pinellas, Sarasota and Volusia.

Florida's introduction to Neighborhood Accountability Boards can be traced back to 1999. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice in its commitment to giving a greater voice to victims of juvenile crime and providing additional, appropriate opportunities to divert minor first-time juvenile offenders from the formal juvenile justice system supported the creation and funding of Neighborhood Accountability Boards. Planning grants for Florida's first Neighborhood Accountability Boards were provided in 2001.

### **5.2.1. Why Is There a Need for Neighborhood Accountability Boards?**

Florida has more than 1.72 million youth, and its 10- to 17-year-old population will increase about 10.6 percent during the 2000s. Most Florida youth will not commit delinquent acts, however in FY 2001-02, there were 97,362 youths involved in 149,658 arrests. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice is interested in opportunities for non-judicial sanctions for many of the 60 percent of juvenile offenders who will be arrested only once. Neighborhood Accountability Boards can provide that alternative to the formal juvenile justice system.

Preventing victimization of citizens remains a top priority. The Department's first goal in its Long-Range Program Plan is to protect Florida's citizens and visitors from violence. Neighborhood Accountability Boards are Florida's new neighborhood justice approach to reducing victimization by juvenile offenders, thus supporting the Department's Leadership Agenda to implement Restorative Justice and Victim Services.

### **5.2.2. What is the Fiscal Impact of Reducing Juvenile Crime?**

The savings to taxpayers and victims of crime from reductions in juvenile crime are substantial, according to a research project by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. By getting involved in Neighborhood Accountability Boards, citizen-volunteers help produce some of those savings.

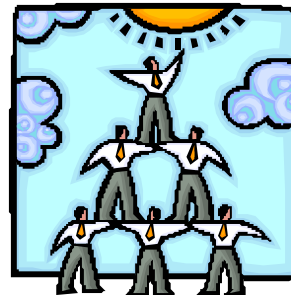
A one percent reduction in juvenile crime, for example, saves an estimated \$15.6 million, including \$10.3 million in criminal justice costs and \$5.3 million in victim costs. Preventing one percent of chronic offenders from re-offending saves \$7.8 million annually. And reducing the percentage of juveniles who re-offend after release from residential programs by one percent would save an estimated \$3.3 million annually.

## 6. The Goal of Neighborhood Accountability Boards

The goal of Neighborhood Accountability Boards is to implement community restorative justice principles and victim services within communities.

The following objectives outline the components of restorative justice that will achieve the goal:

- Increase feelings of citizen safety and confidence in the juvenile justice system.
- Address the harm
- Use of citizen volunteers
- Increase the skills and knowledge opportunities for juvenile offenders.
- Encourage offender accountability by increasing community involvement and support.
- Provide the opportunity for victims to be the focus of the juvenile justice process.



## **7. A Story of a Community Coming Together: The West Tampa Neighborhood Accountability Board**

This board is comprised of six to ten of the most knowledgeable, faithful and sincere volunteers that I have ever had the pleasure and honor of meeting, much less working with! Combined, there are over 500 years of experience in life skills, working with children and community totaled among this board. They lovingly, but firmly, guide children (and their families) in issuing sanctions (assignments) and follow through of the sanctions to completion. Their wisdom and maturity allow the board to use “tough love” when necessary. I have seen children totally turn around under this board’s careful guidance. They also assist in directing the entire family when it is appropriate and needed. I always come away from the NAB hearings refreshed, rejuvenated and awed by these wonderful community volunteers.

One of these terrific volunteers is 80-year-old Hallique Ransom, sharp as a tack, always present, spry, full of wisdom and great suggestions to redirect children’s lives. Hallique is an inspiration!

My hat is off to you, West Tampa Neighborhood Accountability Board!

*Neighborhood Accountability Board Staff*

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## **8. Getting Started with Neighborhood Accountability Boards: Is Your Community Ready?**

How do you know if your community is ready for a Neighborhood Accountability Board?

The community is important in the Neighborhood Accountability Board process because it supports victims, monitors offenders, is involved in crime intervention and prevention, collaborates with police, and shapes policy. By looking at these factors, you can determine your community's readiness to have a Neighborhood Accountability Board.

Using an "Asset Map" (see page 14) will help you determine who you already have available right in your own community that can help.

### **Supports the Victim**

Under restorative justice, there is a recognition that the justice system cannot meet its objectives entirely by itself. Rather, the community retains a vital and expansive role. One of these roles includes the support of victims. Members of the community provide direct and comprehensive support for victims when one of their neighbors falls victim to crime. The support includes, for example, emotional encouragement, reassurance, safety assistance, listening, and practical help, such as bringing over meals, watching a family's children while the victim attends to court, or helping with other obligations.

### **Supports the Offender**

As with victims, the community has a responsibility to provide direct services to offenders through such means as monitoring, supporting, and providing opportunities for integration back into the community's good graces. Community members who volunteer to hold the offender accountable to the agreed-upon conditions gain a fuller understanding of the difficulty in changing behavior and of the need for community support. Relationships are developed, which increases the longer term potential for the offender to want to stay connected to the community in a prosocial way. Examples of community support include family group conferencing, one-on-one friendship programs for institutionalized offenders, community monitors and mentors.

### **Community Stakeholders are Involved**

For the community to own its responsibility and provide the necessary support and direct services for victims and offenders, community stakeholders such as businesses and faith communities need to be involved. These institutions provide critical resources and messages that support community-based efforts. The best solutions to individual cases or general programs and policies often come from the community. For those solutions to be viable, community stakeholders need to be willing to assist by contributing their knowledge, resources, and commitment.

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### **Community Members Participate as Volunteers**

Community members can participate in a variety of ways, through direct services within a correctional agency, advisory councils, or policy development. The use of trained volunteers not only assists those benefiting from the service, it also helps an agency avoid isolation from community guidance, values, and input.

### **Communities Collaborate with Local Police**

Community policing and problem-oriented policing have significantly improved the relationship between police and citizens and have enhanced policing outcomes. Better information exchange occurs, and efforts to improve the conditions that cause crime are advanced as communities become more involved and are asked to assist. Police and other justice system resources can be prioritized and targeted to address those issues deemed most important to local citizens.

### **Community Members Can Set Justice System Priorities**

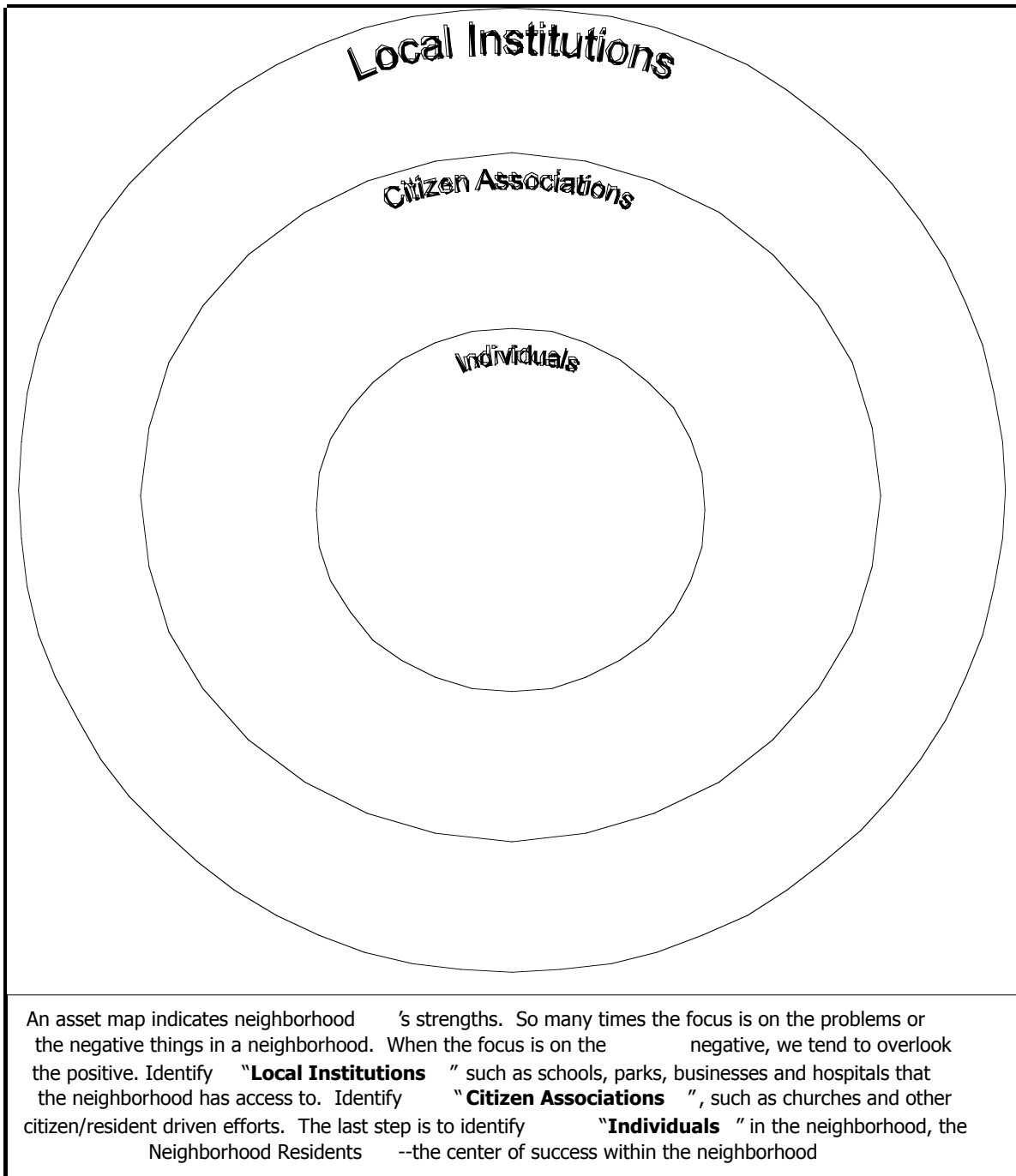
For restorative justice to work properly, the justice system cannot develop policy in a vacuum. Ongoing dialog is needed between justice system personnel and community members to establish acceptable levels of risk, set resource priorities, and target activities. The justice system that views the community as its ultimate customer will want to know what is important to citizens and be responsive to their needs.

### **The Community is Involved in Prevention**

Community responsibility does not center solely on individual case resolution, but rather is broader in context. Community members recognize their responsibility to prevent crime and to address quality-of-life issues, which, if left unmanaged, can create an environment whereby crime conditions can fester. The act of dealing with victims and offenders can produce a community-building effect, which increases the community's capacity to deal with other issues. Examples of community involvement in crime prevention include prevention councils; cleanup campaigns; neighborhood block parties, newsletters and association activities; and economic, recreational, and health promotion activities.

*From the Restorative Justice Inventory:  
An Organizational Assessment for Juvenile Justice Agencies  
September 2000  
BARJ Project, Community Justice Institute  
111 E. Las Olas Blvd. 613, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301*

## 8.1. Asset Map



**If you are thinking about starting a Neighborhood Accountability Board, copy this page and try this tool with a group of your neighbors to see just how many resources you already have in place!**

## **9. Where do the Cases Come From?**

Each community will probably set up their Neighborhood Accountability Board program tailored to their justice system, social services system and community make-up.

No matter the system, cases are referred by a justice system organization, such as the Department of Juvenile Justice, law enforcement, or schools, indicating that a crime has been committed by a juvenile resident of one of the targeted neighborhoods OR a crime has been committed in one of the participating neighborhoods.

The Neighborhood Accountability Board members then conduct a meeting, for example, a Restorative Justice Conference, reviewing the accounts of the crime or harm committed.

- The offender tells his/her story of the offense
- The victim(s) and neighborhood tell how the offense affected them
- Neighborhood Accountability Board members complete a case plan and contract that addresses the harm.
- The outcome of this process is that the Neighborhood Accountability Board provides recommendations to the referring source and enters into an agreement with the offender to address the harm (e.g., community service projects related to the crime, financial restitution to the victim). Once the agreement is fulfilled, and the referring source is notified, the process is complete.

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## 10. What a Neighborhood Accountability Board Meeting Might Look Like

A Neighborhood Accountability Board meeting is held in a comfortable, safe, yet formal setting. The environment of the meeting sets the stage for the rest of the process. These meetings should always be facilitated by a properly trained Restorative Group Conferencing facilitator.

A Neighborhood Accountability Board agenda might include the following:

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Cover ground rules such as no interruptions, treat one another with respect, speak honestly, and be brief and to the point. Discuss confidentiality (what is said in this meeting and room is not discussed with anyone else.)

### **State the Purpose of the Conference**

The primary focus of the Neighborhood Accountability Board meeting is on the harm done to the victim and the community by the offender's behavior. It explores how the crime affected others and how that harm can be addressed. It also takes time to talk about the offender's strengths and make suggestions for improving these so he/she can increase his/her skills and have a stronger bond to this community. The offender has acknowledged his/her part in the incident. The offender is reminded that their participation is voluntary and that they can leave at any time. Leaving the conference, however, will result in the case being referred back to juvenile justice system.

### **Discuss the Offender's Strengths and Assets (home, school, community)**

This helps the Neighborhood Accountability Board get to know the offender better. What is home like? How are they doing in school? What subjects do they like? Are they on any teams or clubs? Are they involved in any community organizations or leagues?

### **Discuss What Happened, What Was the Harm, Who Was Affected, How Will the Harm Be Addressed**

*The offender* has the chance to tell the story of what happened, what led up to the incident, what was going through their mind. They can voice who they see as the victim of their actions, why that victim was chosen, and what the impact has been on their lives. It allows the offender to take responsibility and voice regret for the harm he/she has caused.

*The parents* can talk about what the experience has been like for them, how they reacted when they heard about it, how they have been affected.

*The victim* has the opportunity to speak to their experience, loss and emotions. The victim may also ask questions of the offender and others involved. The victim should have been interviewed and prepared prior to the Neighborhood Accountability Board meeting and must have come to the meeting voluntarily. It is important to have a support person there for the victim and this support person should be a trained victim

advocate. If the victim speaks, they should be given ample time and every consideration and support.

If the victim is not present, then a staff member, victim advocate or a Neighborhood Accountability Board member may either speak for the victim (after having a conversation with the victim previously) or may review the victim impact statement.

*The Neighborhood Accountability Board members may talk about such things as when this kind of crime/activity happens where I live, I feel... or I think this affects our neighborhood by...*

They might ask the offender, “If this happened to you, what would you want to have done to address the harm?” or “What can you do to address the harm done by your actions?”

Neighborhood Accountability Board members might ask the parents, “What are the things that your child does best and how can these strengths be used in addressing the harm to the victim and the community?” or “What do you feel is appropriate for the harm to be addressed to the victim and the community?”

### **Concerns Identified by the Probation Officer's Assessment**

In reviewing the reports of the probation officer, the Neighborhood Accountability Board might find that there were concerns about different issues and make mention of them during the meeting.

### **Negotiating the Contract**

Now it is time to explore what can be done to address the harm and address the issues brought up. A contract is developed for the offender that all involved can agree upon and support. The contract will include competency development activities that might be helpful and reasonable for the offender.

### **Closure: The Neighborhood Accountability Board Agreement**

Once the group agrees on how to hold the youth accountable, address the harm and build competency and skills, the terms of that agreement will be written into the Neighborhood Accountability Board contract for the youth. The Neighborhood Accountability Board contract should be no more than 6 months in length. The length will depend on the length of the programs and services that the offender is to complete. It will specifically address the activity required, the time frame, and who is responsible for the supervision to ensure that the action is completed. The consequences for violating the agreement are also discussed. Follow up and monitoring is requisite to successful completion of the Neighborhood Accountability Board process. This is included in the Agreement.

## **11. Stakeholders: Who Has a Stake in a Neighborhood Accountability Board?**

Restorative justice is three-dimensional in its view of crime and focus on the needs of the victims, the community, and the offender.

The restorative process is an effort to find “common ground” between victim, community and offender.

We ask three questions when a crime is committed:

1. What is the harm?
2. What needs to be done to address the harm?
3. Who is responsible for this?

The answers require the involvement of the stakeholders. Working together they find the “common ground” among the victim, the offender, and the community.

Stakeholders can include families, neighbors, community-based service providers, code enforcement, business leaders, local government, faith community, school community, and law enforcement, as well as the victim and the offender.

## **11.1. Stakeholder Benefits**

The Neighborhood Accountability Board process works because it provides so many benefits to all the stakeholders.

### **11.1.1. Benefits to the Victim**

- Empowers the victim by allowing him/her to feel a part of the solution
- Allows the victim to present to the offender the personal impact of the offense and express his/her thoughts regarding the offender and/or offense
- Allows the victim to get answers to his/her questions (that only the offender could answer — Why did you do this to me? Could I have prevented it?)
- Provides restitution to the victim (beyond, and not necessarily including, monetary restitution)
- Obtains closure/ even if only partially/ that may bring peace of mind and the feeling that justice has been done
- Allows the victim an opportunity to be seen as a person rather than an object or target
- Provides a framework for the relationship, especially where the victim and offender are part of an interpersonal an on-going relationship or are likely to come into contact with each other in the future
- Allows a sense of satisfaction with the criminal justice system given an increased sense of involvement in the process

### **A Victim's Point of View**

*I'll never forget the day I came home only to find it had been wrecked. Broken glass everywhere, family pictures smashed, paint sprayed everywhere. I thought I would never be able to sleep in my home again.*

*The second day I'll never forget is the day I came face to face with the guy who did it. I didn't have to do it, some people in my neighborhood wanted to give me the chance and I wanted to give the creep that did this a piece of my mind. My friends were saying they had heard of these Neighborhood Accountability Boards and I shouldn't be letting it happen this way. They said all it would do is get the guy out of trouble.*

*So check this out... on the day of this conference I was so nervous, I almost chickened out. But I'm so glad I didn't.*

*When it started the six other people at the table asked me to talk about what had happened to me. They encouraged me to express every emotion I felt. At the time all I wanted to do is jump across the table and smack the guy. When I was done they asked him to talk about what was going on inside his head when he trashed my home. When he was done talking I got to ask him questions.*

*You know what? This guy didn't even know I lived there (not that that makes it okay). Ever since this happened I just thought he did this to "me" because I did or*

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*didn't do something. And get this... he's got to pay me back my \$500 insurance deductible. He really wants to do it. He also hooked up with some organization to kick his crack addiction.*

*My friend who had a similar situation... the one that bad mouthed me for getting involved in the NAB... she still doesn't know the who, what, or how. All she knows is that when she calls to find out about her incident, they tell her that the person who did it was caught and given probation.*

*Now all my friend wants to know is if people are doing this in her neighborhood. She wants to get involved.*

*Victim  
Lee County, Florida*

### **From a Local Business Owner**

We sometimes forget that business owners are also victims. Even if it's "just jacking a shirt," it impacts us all. Prices go up, store owners become more suspicious, the community wonders if they are safe shopping there.

*One store owner was quoted as saying, "I can't believe it, until the conference, that young girl didn't even realize she stole from people; from me. In her mind I was just a big store chain. She didn't even know how she hurt me, but she listened to everything I had to say. When she began to cry at the end, I could tell it wasn't a show. I could really tell she was sorry about what she had done. She herself was the one that added the most powerful item to her plan to address the harm she caused.*

*After going through hundreds of kids caught stealing from my store, this is the first time I've been asked to participate in the outcome. Not to mention, the first time anyone has offered to make amends for what they did.*

*I hope anyone caught stealing in my store will have to go to this Neighborhood Accountability Board.*

### **11.1.2. Benefits to the Neighborhood**

- Lessens the impact of crime on the neighborhood by increasing restoration of losses
- Reduces the likelihood of recidivism by holding offenders accountable for their actions and presenting them with the impact their actions had on the neighborhood
- Allows the neighborhood to be involved and have an impact on crime in their community
- Allows a sense of justice and satisfaction with the criminal justice system
- Allows involvement from neighborhood residents

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## From Neighborhood Accountability Board Members

*“Our community wants our children back! They do something wrong and they are just taken away. Off they go in the back of a squad car. They don’t even have to be accountable for what they did. It’s almost like they can hide in the law... doesn’t even have to face us. That’s why we started our NAB, to raise our children up ourselves.”*

*Ms. Nettie Roundtree  
Charleston Park Neighborhood District Community Chair  
Ft. Myers, FL*

*In Town and Country we had a case where a teen had stolen from their neighborhood Wal-Mart and the security officer walked across the street to the Hillsborough County Sheriffs substation to attend the NAB hearing on Saturday morning.*

*He spoke to the offender and family about how everyone working at the store lives in the same community as they do, that all those shopping in the store (children and adults) seeing the offender walking out handcuffed, escorted by the police, reside in Town and Country and are affected by one of their own getting into this kind of trouble.*

*It is a hard concept to convey to people that the victim being there in person helps reach the kind of accountability we were grasping for.*

*One of the solutions reached that morning was that the defendant would, accompanied by his parent who could drive, stake out abandoned carts throughout Town and Country belonging to this and other stores. This map was then turned into the NAB and forwarded to the Wal-Mart*

*This was the kind of solution that could only be reached by a group in a NAB setting. Few courts would find a way for the offender to assist the store without violating a trespassing order. Only with the child and parent present together and in a dialogue would we learn that the child could not drive alone but that the parent was willing to spend a day with them locating these carts as a way to help address the harm.*

*Neighborhood Accountability Board Staff*

### 11.1.3. Benefits to the Offender

- Allows the offender to make amends and right the wrong rather than focus only on punishment
- Demonstrates to the offender the actual harm caused and allows the offender to truly understand the consequences of the offense
- Allows the offender an opportunity to learn from his/her mistakes and develop a positive self-worth
- Allows the offender to be seen and treated as a person rather than a criminal
- Provides a framework for the relationship, especially where the victim and offender are part of an interpersonal and on-going relationship or are likely to come into contact with each other in the future

#### From an Offender

A 15 year-old offender, one of Hillsborough County's first Neighborhood Accountability Board's first "graduates," wrote the following letter to the Neighborhood Accountability Board —

*Helpers of the Community,*

*I thank you for caring about what happens to your youth of your community. You take time to be away from your family and friends to help and make a difference. For this I look up to you.*

*This is something to be very proud of. To be given the chance to have another chance is great! To know that there is someone out there besides your family and friends who care about you feels good. To know that perfect strangers want to help someone they don't even know is better. If the whole world was made up of people like you we would have no war.*

*And, to know or think that maybe one day there is hope that this will spread and some day the whole world might be like that is very reassuring at night. We know that no human is perfect but to receive a second chance I repeat is something that is not just a thought but knowledge of knowing someone is caring for you who does not know you. To be one of the first people in this program is something I feel is luck and I show my gratitude to this.*

*I thank you all for listening to my case and giving me the chance to forget and move on with a better life. This letter maybe be short but it holds something more than that, love to a person in the eyes of another who gives and receives.*

*Thank you*

#### 11.1.4. Benefits to the Justice System

- Allows victims more involvement in the criminal justice system which increases victims satisfaction with the process
- Reduces the time and expense required to process offenses in the traditional adversarial manner
- Reduces court dockets and caseloads of the courts/ police and probation officers making these resources more available for the cases that most need them

#### A Law Enforcement “NAB” Ah-Ha Moment

While names have been changed, this is an actual account.

*Officer Campisi had been introduced to a Neighborhood Accountability Board training some 2 months ago. It was ordered by his commander and Campisi didn't think another thing about it until the morning of November 20th 2000.*

*For Officer Joe Campisi, the crying woman standing before him was nothing more than routine — your run-of-the-mill Monday morning burglary report. Had it not been for the woman's son, perched in the family room smothered in awe, her tears would have only proven to be an obstacle standing between Campisi and his first cup of coffee for the day.*

*The boy looked hauntingly familiar. As officer Campisi slowly closed the distance between them, the boards underfoot creaked and moaned, yet the boy didn't turn his eyes from the open window. Having only ten more paces to go, Campisi's memory slapped him in the face. “Jason?,” he whispered.*

*The boy turned toward him confirming Campisi's suspicion. Although Jason hadn't changed physically, he did not appear to be the same self-confident, cocky juvenile Campisi had arrested just 15 days ago for the burglary of a home not so far away. All Campisi could think about was the old cliché what comes around goes around. Reveling in the thought, he smugly asked in a disgusted tone, “what's your problem?” After 30 seconds of silence it seemed Jason would say nothing at all, so Campisi turned to walk back into the kitchen.*

*“I can't believe I make people feel this way,” came a humbled voice from the family room behind him. Campisi just froze in the hallway. His arms tingled with goosebumps, as he realized he had just heard the voice of a “criminal no more.”*

*As the officer drove away from the home that morning he couldn't stop thinking about what had just happened. He began to dust off the restorative principles he had picked up some time ago at a local NAB training and stuffed far in the back of his mind.*

*He couldn't stop saying to himself, "that's it, how else can an offender possibly feel the pain they have caused without being led by a victim of the same experience?" Campisi couldn't help but feel the answer had been there all along, lying dormant in all of that now dusty information on the restorative practices of Neighborhood Accountability Boards.*

### **11.1.5. From A County Commissioner**

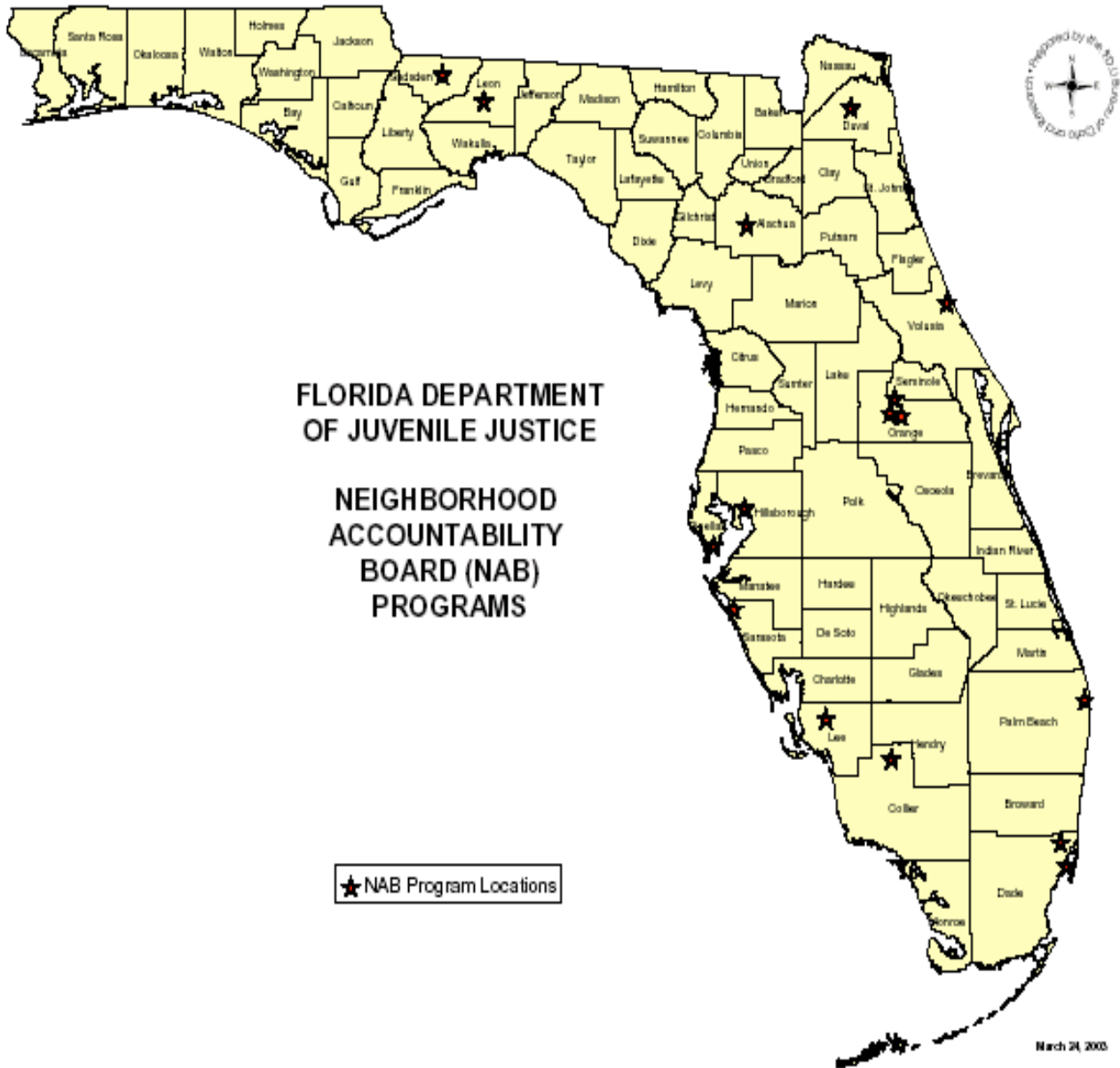
*Lee County Commissioner, Bob Janes, was quoted in a local paper, The Citizen, as saying, "Maybe there's a better lesson to teach a child than simply to avoid juvenile court. Maybe he or she should be learning how their actions affect other people as well as themselves."*

*"Not many people have struggled through their formative years without some poor decisions. Making choices—especially bad ones – and learning from them — is part of the process of growing up."*

*"Restorative Justice teaches offenders that their decisions affect not just some incomprehensible system, but other people. Restorative Justice also emphasizes making amends, not just punishment."*

*The Neighborhood Accountability Board seems like a winning program all the way around. The victim is compensated, the community becomes more active in it's well-being, taxpayers are saved some expense, the courts have less cases to deal with, and the child learns responsibility and discovers strengths that will help him and, perhaps, the community in the future.*

## 12. Florida Neighborhood Accountability Board Locations



## **12.1. Florida Department of Juvenile Justice -- Neighborhood Accountability Board Programs**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Telephone #</b>	<b>Locations Served</b>
Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (H.Q.) (Office of Prevention and Victim Services)	2737 Centerview Drive, Suite 220 Tallahassee, Florida 32399	(850) 488-3302	State of Florida NABs
Hillsborough County Neighborhood Accountability Board	419 Pierce Street, Second Floor Tampa, Florida 33602	(813) 272-5369	Town & Country, West Tampa, Palm River Point, Plant City
Lee County Neighborhood Accountability Board	83 Pondella Road, Suite 1 North Ft. Myers, Florida 33903	(239) 652-7911	Charleston Park, Dunbar, Harlem Heights, Page Park, Pine Manor
Neighborhood Accountability Board	990 Orange Avenue Daytona Beach, Florida 32114	(386) 671-5419	Daytona Beach
Riviera Beach Neighborhood Accountability Board	600 W. Blue Heron Blvd. Riviera Beach, Florida 33404	(305) 292-2102	C-17 to West, Old Dixie HWY to East, Silverbeach Rd. to North
Implementation of Sarasota County Neighborhood Accountability Board	2051 Ringling Boulevard Sarasota, Florida 34230	(941) 954-7002	Sarasota County
Restorative Justice Neighborhood Accountability Board	19 West Flagler Street Miami, Florida 33130	(305) 579-3618	Liberty City & Carol City
Neighborhood Restorative Justice Program	2000 E. Michigan Street Orlando, Florida 32801	(407) 836-7508	Apopka, Ocoee, Maitland, Eatonville
Leon County Community Justice Project	400 Foote Hilyer Adm. Center Tallahassee, Florida 32307	(850) 599-3456	Jake Gaither, Apalachee Ridge, Bond, Frenchtown, Silver Ridge
Quincy Neighborhood Renaissance	221 N. Monroe Street Quincy, Florida 32351	(850) 875-7344	Gadsden County
Faith-Based Neighborhood Accountability Board Project	501 West Orange Avenue Tallahassee, Florida 32310	(850) 576-7501	Pinellas, Alachua, Orange, Dade, Duval,
Florida Gulf Coast University	10501 FGCU Blvd. S. Ft. Myers, Florida 33965-6565	(941) 590-7835	Collier County
NEED Neighborhood Accountability Board	989 W. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 103 Orlando, Florida 32810	(407) 661-9004	Orange County

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## 13. Contributors

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## 14. Key Contacts & Resources For More Information

Below is a list of various contacts and resources you can use to look into Neighborhood Accountability Boards.

### 14.1. Web Sites

#### *Places to find general information:*

[www.MyFlorida.com](http://www.MyFlorida.com) – A major resource for residents of the State of Florida

[www.barjproject.org](http://www.barjproject.org) - Balance and Restorative Justice Project (FAU)

<http://ssw.che.umn.edu/rjp/> - Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking (University of Minnesota)

<http://www.restorativejustice.org> - Restorative Justice Online

<http://www.voma.org> - Victim Offender Mediation Association

<http://www.fnvws.org> –Florida Network of Victim Witness Services: Provides support and technical assistance for advocates in the field of Victim Assistance and Witness Management.

#### *Places to find community information and demographics:*

[http://www.myflorida.com/owa\\_redi/owa/redi\\_www.main\\_page.search](http://www.myflorida.com/owa_redi/owa/redi_www.main_page.search)

[http://www.fl-counties.com/msp/FLMap\\_beta.htm](http://www.fl-counties.com/msp/FLMap_beta.htm)

[http://www.flcities.com/flc\\_city.asp](http://www.flcities.com/flc_city.asp)

<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>

<http://tiger.census.gov/cgi-bin/mapbrowse-tbl>

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/>

<http://www.floridacensus.com/census/>

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## **14.2. General Neighborhood Accountability Board Information**

- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, <http://www.djj.state.fl.us>
- Community Justice Institute, Florida Atlantic University, 954-762-5668
- <http://dhs.lee-county.com/nghbldg/nbp.asp> - Neighborhood Accountability Boards of Southwest Florida
- Florida Gulf Coast University, Sandra O'Brien, Ph.D., 239-590-7835, <http://www.fgcu.edu/>

## **14.3. Potential Partners & Volunteers**

- Local Residents (contact through Civic Associations, Neighborhood Watch, & other groups)
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Local Department of Juvenile Justice Probation Office
- Local Victims Advocate Groups
- Youth mentoring programs already established in a target community
- Local Churches
- Local Law Enforcement

## **14.4. Funding Ideas**

- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice grants, <http://www.djj.state.fl.us>
- Local Government
- Urban League
- Faith Communities
- Businesses
- Private donors

## **14.5. Training Opportunities**

- Community Justice Institute, Florida Atlantic University, 954-762-5668
- Balanced and Restorative Justice Institute, [www.barjproject.org](http://www.barjproject.org)
- Restorative Justice Academy, <http://www.barjproject.org/trainings.html>
- Center for Peacemaking and Restorative Justice - University of Minnesota
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Division of Training and Technical Assistance, <http://www.nttac.org>
- Local networks, organized NABs in the county

### **14.6. Further Reading**

Bazemore, Gordon and Mara Schiff (2001). Restorative Community Justice: Repairing Harm and Transforming Communities. Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson Publishing

Braithwaite, John (1989). Crime, Shame, and Reintegration. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Clear, Todd and David R. Karp (1999). The Community Justice Ideal : Preventing Crime and Achieving Justice. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Van Ness, Dan and Karen H. Strong (2002). Restoring Justice (2nd ed). Cincinnati, Ohio : Anderson Publishing.

Zehr, Howard (1990). Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.