



# Talking Circles

**WCCC**  
**Washington County Community Circles**

*"Repairing harm to victims, holding clients accountable and building a better community."*

[www.peacemakingcircles.org](http://www.peacemakingcircles.org)  
[Contact@peacemakingcircles.org](mailto:Contact@peacemakingcircles.org)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Happy New Year Greetings!

The New Year closes out a productive year for WCCC, but we're also pleased that we're kicking off the New Year with some exciting developments.

First, we ended 2015 with an extremely successful Give to the Max Day in November. We raised over \$1,100, maximizing our \$500 matching grant from [Ogletree Deakins](#). We thank those of you who donated and supported our organization. These donations will ensure we are able to continue to serve Washington County in both criminal and non-criminal client referrals. We are so thankful for the support we have from our community, including all our donors.

You can also see our Annual Report for an overview of our work in 2015. While there is still much work to do to ensure WCCC's sustainability for the future, our board is very pleased with the progress we've made toward sustainability in 2015. In particular, we streamlined and secured our corporate records and client files, becoming paperless with Microsoft Office365 through a Microsoft technology grant for nonprofits. We created more documentation and guides to help our Circle Keepers process our cases. While we have fewer cases referred in 2015, we still spent over 1,000 hours with clients in circles. Read more about what we accomplished in 2015 in the Annual Report.

We are also humbled and honored to accept a gift from the Minnesota Correctional Facility- Oak Park Heights Restorative Justice Council of \$500. We are extremely grateful for their generosity, and are honored to share more about the Council, and their work, in this issue's partner spotlight.

Lastly, we kicked off the year with a Community Circle in Cottage Grove. Our Cottage Grove Community is currently in transition. We met with Cottage Grove City Attorney, Joe Taylor, to discuss ways to ensure a strong partnership during this time of transition. We are also grateful to the new volunteers who joined the Cottage Grove Community after participating in the Community Circle. If you are considering starting to volunteer, this is a great time to be a part of building a strong community in Cottage Grove. Email us at [contact@peacemakingcircles.org](mailto:contact@peacemakingcircles.org) if you want to get involved in Cottage Grove.

I hope we will continue to build on the success of 2015. If you ask me, we're off to a good start.



## Upcoming Events

- February
  - Gerten's Fundraising Spring Flower Sale Starts
- May 4th
  - Gerten's Fundraising Spring Flower Sale Delivery

### [Washington County Community Circles 2015 Annual Report](#)

Click on the above link to view our 2015 Annual Report. It is also located on our website at [www.peacemakingcircles.org](http://www.peacemakingcircles.org)

## Keeping Up With the Board...

With the New Year, WCCC is making a call for new Board Members. Those of you interested in getting involved with WCCC, but not able or interested in volunteering may make great board members! We are always open to applications to the Board, but we are specifically making a call for Board members now as we start the New Year. Several board members ended their term or resigned in the past year, so we take this opportunity to invigorate the organization with new people!

For more information, see our [Call for Board Members](#). In particular, we are looking for:

- Community leaders in Cottage Grove
- Restorative Justice advocates (not necessarily WCCC volunteers)
- Community members bringing diverse views and perspectives
- Individuals active in Washington County criminal justice system partner organizations

If you are interested in joining our board, please complete an [application](#) and submit a resume to [contact@peacemakingcircles.org](mailto:contact@peacemakingcircles.org). All are welcome to apply. Contact us if you have any questions about the Board or what it means to be a Board Member.

## OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH STUDY

WCCC is very pleased to announce Les Butler, trainer at WCCC's Training and Networking Event last October, is conducting a research study on WCCC volunteers as part of her graduate program in Criminal Justice Studies. In the following week, volunteers may receive an email on behalf of Les Butler asking for your participation in her research. Participation is voluntary, and will not be compensated. However, WCCC will receive the results of the research, and we hope to learn from the research be more effective for our clients, volunteers, and the community.

If you would like to volunteer to be a part of the research, and are a current WCCC volunteer, please contact Les Butler via email at [wb1630@hotmail.com](mailto:wb1630@hotmail.com) or by phone at (651) 497-9072.

Volunteer Opportunities are always available through WCCC.

For more information or to learn how you can join a Circle, please contact us at [contact@peacemakingcircles.org](mailto:contact@peacemakingcircles.org)



## Partners in (Repairing the harm of) Crime

Minnesota Correctional Facility- Oak Park Heights has an active Restorative Justice Council. Our Council consists of 6 offenders who have completed an extensive application process; one of which includes openly discussing with the council their biographies and the events that lead them here to OPH. At this time, the guys accept responsibility for their actions.

OPH's RJ council members provide an RJ 101 6-week curriculum to offenders who are interested in learning more about the positive effects of Restorative Justice. This curriculum provides offenders with an insight of the principles of RJ; repairing the harm to all parties involved, victim, offender and community. Offenders are provided with a better understanding of what the philosophy of RJ entails and how they too can be a part of healing within their own communities.

MCF-OPH's RJ Council recently celebrated National Restorative Justice Week in November. That week was super busy for us. We kicked off the week with an Apology Letter work shop. Greg Kraft, from the DOC RJ Unit, came to guide our men through the process of how to write an effective apology letter. Offenders are informed about the significance of the process and how the DOC has developed a process for writing letters that ensures victims and communities are not victimized.

In recognition of RJ week, OPH hosted a panel of speakers on how RJ has impacted their lives. This group was accompanied by Kris Miner, new DOC employee, who provided a background of Restorative Justice to the offenders. OPH had 37 offender volunteers come and listen to each of these stories. Each of the stories touched the men in different ways. It was an unbelievable night!

We wrapped up the week's events with a chicken wing/head phone fundraiser. Offenders in general population could purchase wings and headphones with all proceeds being donated to Victim Service types of organizations. OPH's RJ Council members has chosen to donate \$500 to the Washington County Community Circles.

On Dec 8th, MCF-OPH partnered with Mano Amiga, a Stillwater non-profit, to assist with the "Serving Beyond the Bars" mission. Mano Amiga fundraises the money to pay for supplies that allows offenders throughout the DOC to learn first-hand how it feels to give back to their communities. This is the second time this positive event has taken place here at OPH. 74 offenders and 18 staff members worked side by side in packing 22, 248 meals that will be distributed to 29 Minnesota and 28 Western Wisconsin communities. One offender said, "We just marvel at the opportunity to be able to serve," as he scooped rice into the meal packets. "I did it last year and I couldn't wait for it to come back around again. I've been locked up for 20 years and this is the most fun I've had in 20 years."

OPH's RJ council is busy encouraging the men in this community to work on becoming a better person, to give back and to also contribute in a positive way. We want to continue to grow and change lives in the spirit of Restorative Justice.

Written by: Nichole Mulvehill, Corrections Security Caseworker at Minnesota Correctional Facility-Oak Park Heights.



# In Need of a Little Spring?

While it is hard to believe based on the frigid temps we have been experiencing lately, spring is right around the corner. As many of you know, each year we hold a fundraiser to help WCCC pay for operational expenses. This year marks our Seventh Annual Gertens Fundraiser.

We will start accepting orders for flowers and plants in the middle February and all orders must be placed by April 30<sup>th</sup>. The flowers will be delivered on May 4<sup>th</sup>.


In addition to selling flowers and plants, we will also be selling plant cards! The plant cards can be used to purchase plants (annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, etc.) at Gertens Inver Grove Heights location.



We are also excited to share that this year we will be accepting orders online. We will have a website where customers will be able to indicate which flowers and/or plants they would like and then choose whether they would like to pay online via PayPal or through cash/check. We hope this new option makes the process more easy going.

We are enthused about the fundraiser this year. We thank you in advance for your support of our fundraiser and Washington County Community Circles.

If you have any questions about ordering flowers, plants, or a plant card, please feel free to reach out to Jen Lenander at [jen.lenander@peacemakingcircles.org](mailto:jen.lenander@peacemakingcircles.org).



**Washington County Community Circles**  
[www.peacemakingcircles.org](http://www.peacemakingcircles.org)  
**Thank You for Your  
 Generous Support!!!**

## phi·lan·thro·py

*Giving is the new black.*

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Or Contribute via  
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