



# ECJC Newsletter

## Spring 2021

"...because crime hurts, justice should heal."  
– John Braithwaite

### NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK IS APRIL 18TH - 25TH 2021

Dear Essex CJC Volunteers,

At this time last year the pandemic was still relatively new to us. Our office had closed to visitors and our panel and CoSA meetings had begun meeting via Zoom. In our community, schools were closed, people were losing jobs and Vermont's unemployment website crashed, there were start-up mask sewing enterprises everywhere, virtual social gatherings were becoming more popular, the National Guard was distributing MREs, we all had learned what PPE stood for, there was toilet paper hoarding, and there were debates about who should be seen as an essential worker.

*A Heartfelt Thank You*  
**TO ALL OF OUR  
AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!**  
We couldn't do it without you!

At this time last year we already missed seeing all of you in person. So now we REALLY miss seeing you in person (but we can find toilet paper in the stores).

Thank you for sticking with us during this challenging year, as a CoSA volunteer, a panel volunteer, a Community Advisory Board member, or a cheerleader. Restorative Justice is based on the idea that healing relationships addresses harm. And you did this work at a time when creating, maintaining and repairing relationships was made harder for everyone. You remained a part of the team as many of you dealt with considerable added changes and stressors in your own lives. Some of the CJC staff and volunteers needed to stop, to step back or take breaks to care for themselves or others, but we were delighted that everyone expressed an interest in coming back. Your commitment to Restorative Justice has meant the Essex CJC can keep going even as so many around us struggled to keep going. You already know you are our workforce. Thank you for also being our support and inspiration this past year. We are so grateful to all of you.

We hope we can see more of you in person soon.

Happy Volunteer Week!



What Work at the Essex Community Justice Center Has Looked Like The Past Year!!!

Staff Meetings on Zoom



Community Advisory Board Meetings on Zoom



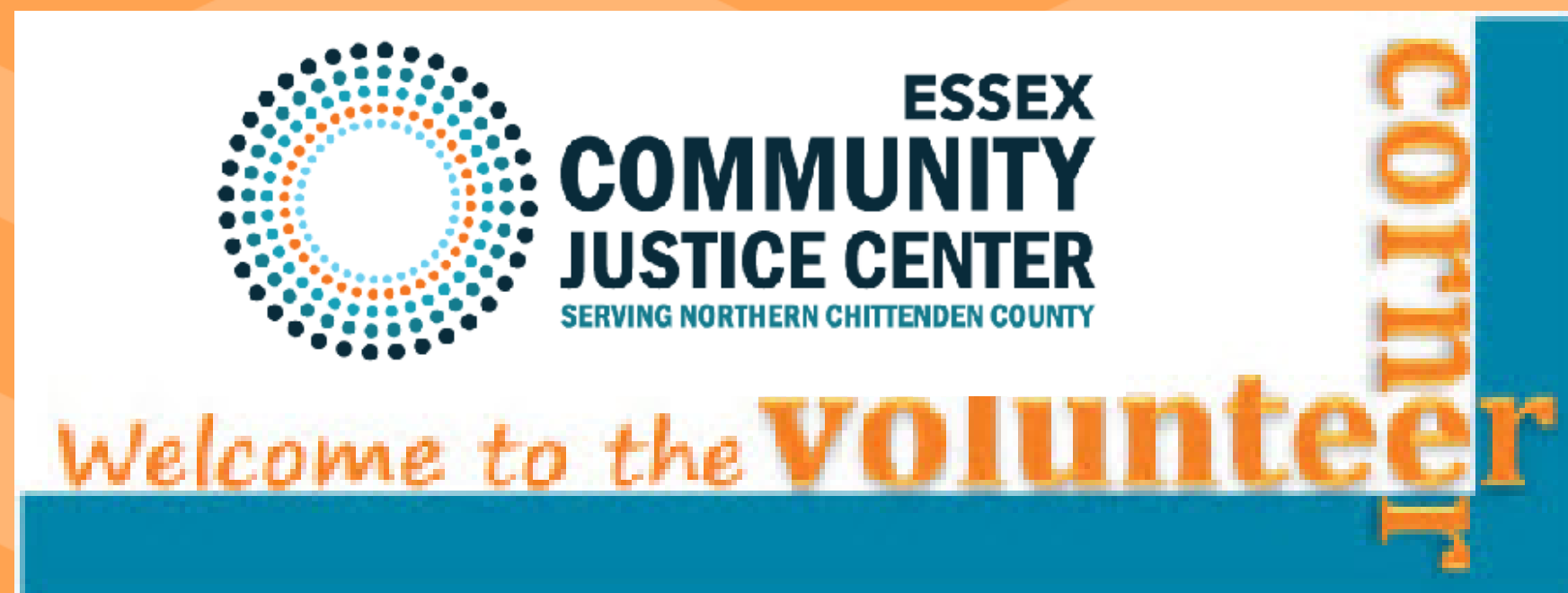
Volunteer Gatherings on Zoom



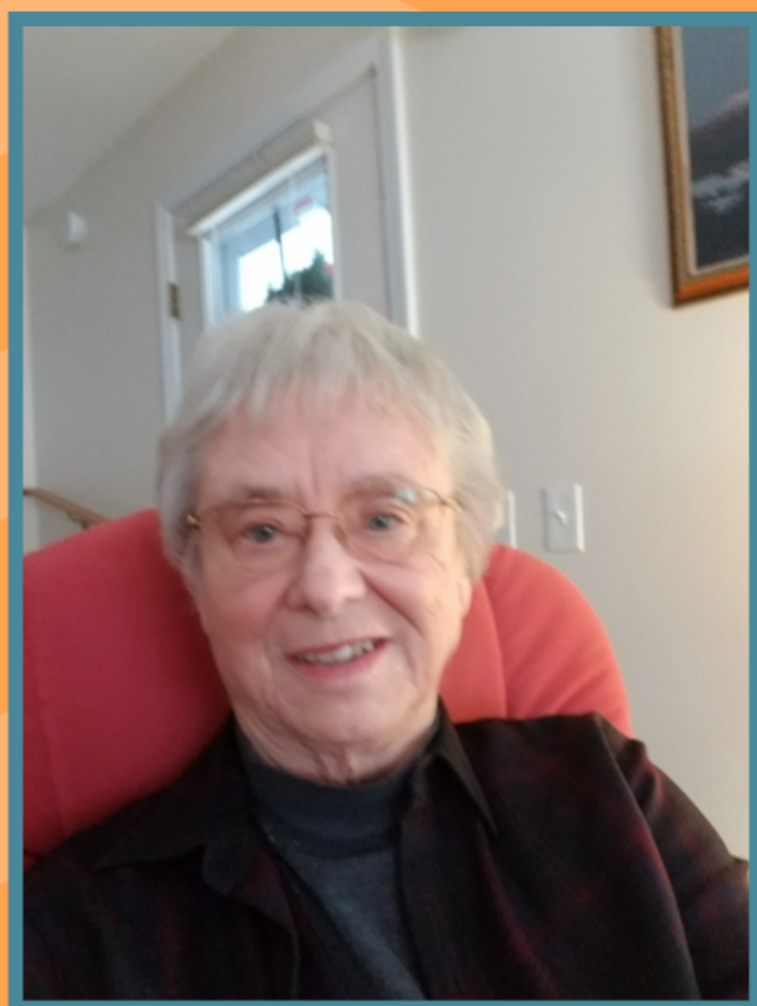


## **Please Help Us Welcome Our New and Newish Volunteers!**

(We always ask for a brief bio and photo from new volunteers to help introduce them at the ECJC. Not everyone chooses to send them to us though!)



### **Chris Hosmer - Colchester Panel Volunteer**



### **Sally Jablonski - CoSA Volunteer**

Sally grew up in Battle Creek, MI. She has outlived 2 great husbands, has a son in CA, a daughter in Iowa City, a daughter here who is a case manager at UVMHC, eight grandchildren, and a great granddaughter, Amilie, who lives in Tokyo. She owns a condo near Ft. Ethan Allen, belongs to Essex Center UMC and finds volunteering satisfying. She is a former teacher and the last ten years of her career was the guidance counselor at Hinesburg Elementary.

### **Brooke Stellman - CoSA Volunteer**

Brooke Stellman is a senior at UVM studying political science. She is interested in getting involved in her community, environmentalism, and racial justice.



### **Angela King - Milton Panel Volunteer**

Angela grew up in Colchester VT and has been living in Milton for over 20 years. She is currently employed at Milton High School as the Service Learning Coordinator in addition to investigating behavior related to hazing, harassment and bullying. Prior to this position, she worked as a Spanish teacher for 19 years.

Her role at Milton has provided her with the opportunity to use and implement restorative practices with both students and colleagues. She is a member of various professional learning communities dedicated to supporting restorative practices throughout the district. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling and recreating outdoors year-round with her family and friends.



### Josef Lavanway - CoSA and Panel Volunteer

Josef is a graduate student in the Program of Clinical Mental Health at Northern Vermont University. Josef also enjoys doing landscaping in which he has had a career for 15 years. He is excited about the opportunity to expand his engagement at the CJC, build upon his volunteer experience and engage in new career opportunities associated with his Masters degree . Josef has a passion for the outdoors and he can often be found out in Vermont's beautiful landscapes either fishing, hiking, biking, boating or walking his dogs.



### Joe Teegarden - CoSA Volunteer

Joe is a professional school administrator and believes that strongly in public school education. This is his 3rd year at Center for Technology, Essex and his 40th year in school education. Joe was the 2015 Career and Technical Education Director of the Year for the state of Vermont. He loves science and majored in chemistry at Indiana University where he also earned his teaching credential, Master of Education degree, and his Educational Specialist degree. Joe is excited to be volunteering his time at the Essex Community Justice Center.



## **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT**

Please join us in congratulating our very own Justin Pinard, Panel Volunteer in Colchester and Milton, who was awarded **2021 New School Counselor of the Year** by the VT School Counselor Association (VSCA)!!!! Justin is a school counselor at Enosburg Falls Middle School and has been a volunteer at the CJC for a year and 8 months!



VERMONT  
SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR  
ASSOCIATION



# FAREWELL AND GOOD LUCK!

In addition to welcoming new volunteers and congratulating current volunteers, we also say goodbye to some amazing members of the ECJC Team. Thank you all for your time at the CJC and we wish you the best in the next chapters of your lives!!

## **Dottie Watson - Panel Volunteer**

After just over 3 years with the Essex CJC, Dottie Watson, decided to step down from volunteering on Panels. Dottie's path to the CJC was extraordinary in that she was the victim of a very serious crime that was referred to the CJC. While opposed to the idea at first, Dottie ended up participating in a restorative process with the person who harmed her. She later went on to describe that experience as transformational in her life. She decided to become a volunteer after the experience. Dottie also began to tell her story on a panel at the VT Center for Crime Victim Service's Victim Assistance Academy each year. This picture was taken at the Annual Crime Victim's Rights Week Service Awards Ceremony, where she was awarded as Victim Survivor Activist in 2019. We miss Dottie terribly but are super psyched for her next adventure when she moves to Montana!!!



## **Sam Stanley - UVM BSW Intern**

Sam will be graduating from UVM in May!! Her last day with the CJC will be 5/6/21. Here is what Susanna has to say about Sam.

I would like to thank Sam for her work with the CJC at the weirdest time for an internship ever. While she was able to come to the office at the beginning of the internship, she spent the bulk of her time working remotely. So she missed out on the back-and-forth office banter that creates relationships and provides information that is context for the work. She missed in-person meetings without audio cutting out. She missed random in-person lunches with her colleagues. She missed months of clearing paper jams in the copier or being asked to organize the storage closet. (Ok, it wasn't all bad.)

Through all of that, Sam provided excellent support to the organization. Her ability to see the strengths of the people she worked with and find ways to help them through the process was a joy to witness. And through our discussions of her analysis of the systemic challenges she saw in the work, I may have learned more than she did. I am thankful for that learning.

Sam is now off to find a social work job in California. We wish her all the best in her next step. And if any of you have any Sacramento social work contacts and want to support Sam in finding that next step, give her a shout. I know she will do well wherever she lands.





## Kaity Tuohy - Restorative Justice Specialist

Please join Karen, and the rest of the staff at the ECJC, in wishing Kaity a bittersweet goodbye as she leaves the us on 5/24/21 to head to Colorado where she will **earn her Master's Degree in Social Work while also going to Law School!**

Kaity has been with us for the past two years, first as a social work intern and then serving in a variety of roles with the latest covering Karen's leave of absence. It has been inspiring to see Kaity take her career from classwork to in-the-field problem-solving and now full program coordination. Kaity has brought tremendous dedication, perspective and capacity to the ECJC. We will miss Kaity's welcoming energy, thoughtful questions, and can-do attitude and at the same time, we know that Colorado will also benefit from her gifts and we are excited for the professional achievements she will make for all of us after she earns her degrees.

Kaity, thank you for all that you have brought to the ECJC and please keep us posted on your journey! – Karen and the entire ECJC Staff



CONGRATULATIONS  
Kaity !!!!!



UNIVERSITY of  
DENVER

STURM COLLEGE OF LAW



# Restorative Justice Panel Highlights

The biggest trend in Panels that we are seeing since COVID is close to a **60%** increase in the numbers of referrals we're receiving from Law Enforcement and the State's Attorney's office! The increase has been a result of the Courts being closed and Chittenden County State's Attorney, Sarah George, deciding to send more case to the CJC rather than wait for the Courts to re-open. This also means that we are seeing a wider range of crimes and and more serioius crimes than we have seen in the past. The chart to the right includes all of the crimes we are working with this fiscal year.

DIRECT REFERRAL CRIMES THE ESSEX CJC IS WORKING WITH	
Attempting to Elude	Larceny / Grand Larceny
Assault on Protected Professional	LSA
Bad Checks	Negligent Operation
Burglary	Operation w/o owner's consent
Careless & Negligent	Petit Larceny
Credit Card Fraud	Possession of Drug
Disorderly Conduct	Possession of Stolen Property
Disseminating Indecent Material	Possession of Weapon at School
DLS	Prohibition of Fireworks
Domestic Assault (non-IPV)	Receiving Stolen Property
Eluding Police	Retail Theft
Excessive Speed	Simple Assault
False Information to Police Officer (FIPO)	Simple Assault by Mutual Affray
False Pretense	Traffic Offense
False Reports	Trespassing
Hate Motivated Crime	Unlawful Mischief
Home Improvement Fraud	Unlawful Trespass
Identity Theft	Violation of Stalking Order (Neighbor Dispute)

## Essex Panels

- The number of pre-charge cases we receive in Essex continues to increase over time. This is partially due to the States Attorney's Office sending us cases rather than taking them for prosecution. 31 percent of our pre-charge cases have been kicked back by the States Attorney's Office.
- The Essex panels continue to see some higher level cases. Right now we are working with one case involving the crime of Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon, and another where the listed crime is Grand Larceny.
- The average age of the Responsible Party in pre-charge cases continues to rise over time. For years the average age of pre-charge referrals was under 18. In fiscal year 2019, the average inched up to the age 21. In Fiscal year 2020 the age was 27. So far this year the average age is 29.
- It has been harder for Responsible Parties to find short-term community service activities. We theorize that this relates to the myriad ways COVID has impacted our communities. These changes include: special fund-raising events are not taking place in person, many non-profit groups have moved to remote work so supervision of volunteers is less possible, and many organizations that support people with basic needs have received a lot of support from community members who can offer longer-term commitments. We are less likely to suggest that a Responsible Party put community service in the Restorative Justice Panel Agreements. Additionally, Responsible Parties are concerned about their own exposure to the virus while interacting with other people.
- There were 19 different crime types referred to Essex from all of our referral sources. Unlawful Mischief it the crime that was referred to the Essex CJC most often.
- The use of Zoom continues to bring a number of new challenges to panel work. Some of the people we work with do not have access to a computer or smart phone with video capacity. Some panel participants are not familiar with video conferencing and need support to use the technology. Some staff, volunteers and panel participants struggle with unstable internet connections



## Colchester and Milton Panels

Transition has been the name of the game in Colchester and Milton panels. The past several months have shown the adaptability and genuine skill that volunteers hold in our panels as the number and complexity of referrals never slowed. The following shifts created hurdles to navigate in 2020 but the end result is a dedicated and focused set of panels for 2021.

- In December, Dottie Watson stepped down as a volunteer to have more time with family. Dottie's experience as an Affected Party in panel prior to becoming a volunteer was an invaluable voice and perspective in the work. We wish Dottie all the best with her family and will leave the door open in case she is ever able to return.
- With Dottie's departure, we had two panel spots to fill in addition to the spots that were already vacant. Fortunately, we had a number of volunteers in the wings. Pat Hechmer, who lives in Westford, joined one of our Milton panels. And Helen Wagner, who moved away a few years ago, is back (via Zoom) and taking a spot on a Colchester panel.
- Additionally, three new volunteers completed their training in January and are set to start in regular panel slots. Please welcome Chris Hosmer to Colchester Panels and Angela King and Carol Cushing to Milton Panels.
- Then to top off the transitions, Karen started her leave of absence in January and Kaity is now coordinating all Colchester and Milton panels until she returns in June. Fortunately, Kaity has a wealth of experience with the panels from her experience as an intern and employee of the CJC for the past year and a half.

Karen



By Sam Stanley

My favorite part of being an intern at the Essex Community Justice Center has been volunteering on Panels. This is what I enjoy the most because I really appreciate being able to connect with community members and give them space to talk and work through something that most of the time, greatly impacted them. Eventually I want to become a clinical social worker, working with populations of people affected by the criminal justice and carceral system. Something I want to bring to my future work is the idea that everyone is complex and that clients are experiencing oppressive systems on an individual level. For example, many participants have a charge of theft while they are struggling to afford food and stealing was their solution to that problem at the time. Lack of access to food can be a result of so many system failures, especially capitalism. Communicating with individuals who have been referred to us is such a learning experience for me. I am able to see such great strengths in our participant's; despite life's difficult circumstances and systemic injustices that impact all of us in different ways. Interning here makes me value and even seek out complexity, as I think Restorative Justice aims to do. Complicating society's understanding of people is imperative. We are not just one thing, our identity is a culmination of our experiences, values, and so much more. Even among the terms "affected party" and "responsible party," there are so many nuances and contexts. One of my goals for each panel is to further complicate each label of "affected party" and "responsible party" as we are all not just one or the other but are living flawed powerful and complex human beings.



# Reentry and CoSA Highlights

We are "Zoom"ing along in our CoSAs. We had a record 3 CoSA referrals in a 7-day period over the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021! In February and March there were a few that ended, so things were slower for a few weeks and now the referrals are pouring in again! I now have 4 CoSA referrals that needs teams—2 now and 2 before June. Good thing I like being busy. As 3 CoSAs ended, the snow was disappearing, and now that the flowers are popping up, I have 3 active and 1 ending by the end of the month.

As mentioned in the Fall, we had a CoSA Core Member transfer mid-CoSA from St. J to Winooski and I am happy to report that it was a successful transition. The individual found employment and successfully completed in March.

Last October marked my first successful CoSA Core Member completion followed by a second successful completion in November. As Zooming is our recent theme, I'll soon have the 5th completion. I'll stop counting now because my head is spinning. The New Year has been a little crazy—who would have thought we'd still be working from home with the Pandemic continuing?! I am happy to report that some of the individuals reentering I have helped get jobs in the last few months, some have developed friendships through work, and earned back Drivers Licenses.

Looking forward to a busy and hopefully in-person summer. I really want to say THANK YOU so very much to all of the volunteers and your dedication! We truly could not make even a fraction of the impact without YOU!!! You are the superstars and you are appreciated for your time that you give us.

Kristina



A CoSA Team celebrating a core member's graduation from the program - masked, distanced and outside last Fall!!!g



## **V.I.E.W. Update – Voices for Inclusion in Essex in Westford**

In order to achieve the essence of community, the voices from every race, religion, socioeconomic group, and marginalized set of folks need to be heard. The Voices for Inclusion in Essex and Westford (VIEW) is a growing group of diverse community members who are working to create events and opportunities for Essex and Westford residents that allow for these outlying voices to be heard and understood. VIEW wants to strengthen our community by looking at it through the various lenses of people we live and work with. VIEW is co-facilitated by the Essex Community Justice Center and staff from EWSD.

VIEW held an LGBTQI+ storytelling event in the fall that was a big success. Over 50 community members came out to Maple Street Park, with masks and socially distanced, to hear stories of joy, challenge, and connection.



There is interest growing interest in the work of VIEW and after a COVID related pause in activity, there is much planning underway. A recent Orientation was held that brought on 3 new members! Another orientation is scheduled for Monday, May 10th at 5:30pm. If you are interested in learning more about VIEW and would like to attend the next orientation contact Michelle Teegarden at [mteegarden@essex.org](mailto:mteegarden@essex.org) or (802)876-6797.

As a way to solidify the work of the group, a sub-committee is exploring the potential for VIEW to become it's own entity. In the meantime, the community group is meeting monthly, with facilitation assistance from the CJC, to engage Essex and Westford around topics of diversity and equity.



**Essex Community  
Justice Center Staff**

**Karen Dolan**

Colchester/Milton Panel  
Coordinator

**Jill Evans**

Director

**Kristina Nunn**

Restorative Reentry  
Coordinator

**Michelle Teegarden**

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<https://www.facebook.com/Essex-Community-Justice-Center-173196699551434/>

**Vision:**

The Essex Community Justice Center envisions safe, expansive and resilient communities in which the response to conflict and crime is restorative and healing, enhances community and reduces further harms.

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**Mission:**

The Essex Community Justice Center creates opportunities with the communities we serve for restorative approaches to crime and conflict that;

- Promote justice for those affected by crime by focusing on the harm caused
- Allow those responsible for harm to accept active responsibility for addressing and repairing the harm they caused
- Educate, build empathy, restore dignity, and enable healing
- Support the needs of those reintegrating from prison into a more connected community life
- Strengthen individuals and the communities we serve through education and support to prevent further harms

**Values:**

We believe that all people living in a community are **interconnected** through a web of relationships, and that conflict and crime harms and affects people—victims, family members, community members, offenders and others. We believe that conflict and crime damages relationships, and disrupts peace and **safety** in the community. We believe in the inherent worth and **dignity** of every person and that no one should be defined by their biggest mistakes. We believe that justice is more likely to be achieved when victims, affected parties and the community are engaged in and central to the justice process. We believe that all victims of crime should have access to restorative processes upon request. We believe that effective **restorative** processes build **empathy**, restore dignity, **re-empower** victims, enable **healing** and strengthen communities as we strive toward a just society in which all lives have equal value. We believe in **reintegration**, supporting the needs of offenders and removing barriers to successful reentry while also encouraging **accountability**/acceptance of **responsibility** for harm caused. We believe that restorative justice nurtures **hope** – the hope of healing for victims, the hope of change for offenders, and the hope of greater civility for society.