



NEWS RELEASE –

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Denver’s Restorative Justice Program More Than Doubles Case Load *Recidivism Rate of One Percent is Testament to Program’s Sophomore Success*

DENVER—Two years ago, the innovative [Restorative Denver program](#) began accepting clients with the support of Denver County Court judges, prosecutors, victim advocates, public defenders and community members. Restorative Denver is a restorative justice program that allows offenders to take responsibility for their actions, but avoid having a criminal record, while also increasing empathy and repairing the harm they caused to victims and to the broader community. The program will celebrate its second year of success by holding a [virtual fundraiser](#) on Tuesday, December 7th from 5:30 – 6:30 pm. The money raised will help expand Restorative Denver’s capacity to serve more people through this partnership between the Denver District Attorney’s Office and [The Conflict Center](#).

“People often ask me what we are doing to stop crime and I always include Restorative Denver as an example of a program that works,” said Denver District Attorney Beth McCann. “When victims, offenders and the community collectively decide how to repair the harm done, the results are often transformational.”

In 2021, increased funding enabled Restorative Denver to expand its capacity and serve more than three times the number of participants than it did in 2020: 148 total participants and 145 cases for this year thus far. In the second year, Restorative Denver was also able to take on more serious cases involving felony charges such as theft, menacing and burglary. In addition, resolving a case through Restorative Denver costs Denver taxpayers 30% less than if the case were to go through the traditional court process. Coupled with an impressive recidivism rate of only one percent, the cost savings per case is even greater over time.

Additional Restorative Denver program highlights include:

- Persons who caused harm (defendants) reported that participating in the program increased their knowledge, empathy for others, and feelings of self-improvement
- Persons who caused harm (defendant)’s understanding of how their offenses harmed the victim, community and their family increased significantly after participating in Restorative Denver
- Persons harmed (victims) shared that after participating in Restorative Denver they experienced clarity, resolution and a sense of closure



- Community members stated that after participating in Restorative Denver they experienced a new perspective and knowledge, increased connection to the community, and new appreciation for restorative justice programs and processes.

Restorative Denver serves a diverse group of offenders. Of the program's offender participants, 62% were male and 38% were female. The program also served a racially diverse group of participants who were 44% white, 30% Latino or Hispanic, 21% African American, 3% Asian and 2% other. Participants ranged in age from 13 to 82.

Feedback on the program from participants includes:

"I feel like I tried to help someone rather than punish them – redemption deserves more time and money than retribution, which is small-minded." (victim)

"As I made my way through the process it was interesting how much healing I could feel happening. Life feels lighter, more resolved, and more grounded. Nothing short of a miracle. I can't express enough gratitude for having this opportunity." (defendant)

"This conference made me further believe in the restorative justice process & I want to continue to participate." (community member).