

Not all programs acknowledge the benefit to the offender of Victim Offender Dialogues, but the Minnesota program does. Understandably there are victims who never want to meet the person who has harmed them. There are offenders who want to apologize but who may not be able to, because their victim has never expressed interest. These offenders can benefit from meetings with other victims who want this process in order to get on with their lives, but whose offenders are not willing to engage in or are not yet suitably prepared for restorative dialogue. These surrogate processes, (called *VOCARE in Minnesota*), while not a direct match, offer healing opportunities for both.

Umbreit and Wilson stressed the importance of self-care for facilitators of victim/offender dialogues. We were encouraged throughout the program to engage in self-care through reflective meditation, gentle stretching exercises like Tai Chi, and through external supports like music, touch for health and massage therapy. We needed this support.

To witness such pain, to hold people in the Light as they communicate with each other from their pain, to remain connected to that of God in each one, to serve as a keeper of these processes as victims and offenders move to a healing place, requires us to be centred in the nurturing love of Spirit. To do that we must be cared for by ourselves, and by others who can support us with their skills, their prayers, and their love.

I work in international human rights education which endeavors to highlight the links between restorative justice and human rights. There is a vast network of expertise among Friends that can be drawn from literature, personal connections, and conversations. Being a Friend makes that network more accessible. Friends' testimonies support the work. Distance from other Friends is the biggest challenge. It creates difficulties in communication and makes gatherings expensive and time-consuming.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated in this training. Whether or not I am ever called upon to do this deep level of facilitation, the training has deepened my practice as a restorative justice facilitator/coordinator, and provided many valuable resources to share with my team.

Sarah Chandler, Vernon Monthly Meeting



Sarah Chandler

*(Coordinator Lillooet Restorative Justice Program;
Associate of Quakers Fostering Justice)*

Quakers Fostering Justice Associate Members:

My name is Dawne Ardith Clarke. I am a member of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting. I have been involved with social justice work for ten years. I work hard to incorporate Quaker principles in all aspects of my life, including social justice work. These are: seeing the Light in everyone, working to be fair and equitable, and striving to really take into consideration, to truly hear, what everyone has to contribute. It is sometimes very hard to be an academic who is committed to social justice work. In many ways academia and Quakerism are diametrically opposed. Also, time is a considerable challenge when juggling a full-time career with full-time parenting and caring for elderly parents.

My name is Stephen John Pidwysocky. I am a member of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting. I have been involved with social justice work for approximately nine years. Being a Friend who is involved in varying degrees with social service projects actually provides me with a lot of comfort. I find both spiritual comfort and comfort in knowing that this sort of activity is something that Quakers have always done. My biggest challenge right now as a Friend is finding time to do more community-based social justice work. It is really important for me to be able to share with other people, Quaker and non-Quaker, what social justice work can bring to individuals and to communities. And it is important to be very active in many areas of social justice work. I would like to have more time to do this important work.