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News Release

Belmont Police Enter into Partnership with C4RJ (Restorative Justice)

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Belmont- The Belmont Police Department is pleased to announce that the Department has entered into a partnership with C4RJ. C4RJ is a community-police partnership that offers restorative justice to those affected by crime. The organization is driven by a group of trained volunteers and is guided by a 14-member board that recognizes crime is a violation of people and relationships, not just a violation of law.

Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ) is a non-profit organization that builds strong, respectful communities by responding to crime in ways that heal, hold accountable, and put right. C4RJ listens to victims, holds offenders accountable, and restores trust in communities. The focus of the organization is to assist victims and offenders of a crime through a healing approach outside the court system.

Through C4RJ's process, victims of a crime respond to an incident by directly addressing the person who committed the crime. In turn, offenders are given the chance to rectify their actions and avoid a potential criminal conviction on their record.

Partner police departments, like the Belmont Police Department, recommend cases to C4RJ. If the victim and the offender agree to the process, the matter is given to C4RJ, which facilitates a meeting between both parties, putting the decision making into the hands of those directly affected.

Together, under the guidance of the board of directors and law enforcement officials, the victim, the offender and their loved ones and supporters, along with community members discuss the crime and find a way to move forward. The process is as follows:

- Victims of crime address the person or people who have harmed them, to ask questions in a safe environment, and to share ideas on ways that the offender can repair the harm.
- Offenders better understand the impact of their actions, are held accountable, and encouraged to make amends to those they have harmed.
- The community offers support for the process, addressing matters of public safety and strengthening connections with the police department.

At the end of the meeting, the offender pledges to change his or her actions, which are often accompanied by completing a number of service hours for an appropriate organization. In 60 to 90 days, all parties meet again to check in and reassess the situation.

"By giving victims and offenders of a crime the opportunity to express themselves in a safe environment, we can have a dialogue that yields positive results for both sides," said Erin Freeborn, Executive Director of C4RJ.

You can learn more at www.C4RJ.org and the next volunteer training is February 8th (6-9pm) and February 9th (9am-4pm). The first step is a volunteer application found at <https://bit.ly/2ya8z5K>.