
Making Peace in Syracuse, New York

A Process Evaluation of the Near Westside Peacemaking Project

By Amanda B. Cissner

Center
for
Court
Innovation

Making Peace in Syracuse, New York: A Process Evaluation of the Near Westside Peacemaking Project

By Amanda B. Cissner

© January 2019

Center for Court Innovation
520 Eighth Avenue, 18th Floor
New York, New York 10018
646.386.3100 fax 212.397.0985
www.courtinnovation.org

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by a Byrne Criminal Justice Initiative grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice (award #2013-AJ-BX-0006).

First and foremost, this report would not be possible without the generous assistance of the members of the Near Westside community who shared their experiences. Specifically, thanks to the residents who spoke with me as part of the initial planning focus groups, those who provided feedback about their experiences in peacemaking and as peacemakers, and the members of the Community Impact Team who participated in a group discussion about the community benefits component of the project. Thanks also to the stakeholders and agency representatives who took the time to speak with me and provide feedback on working with the Near Westside Peacemaking Project. Without the dedication of community members and those at the partner agencies, there would be no project to evaluate.

At the Center for Court Innovation, thank you to Sarah Reckess, Lisa Vavonese, and Leah Russell for their patience, time, feedback, and support throughout the evaluation process. Thank you to Suvi Hynynen Lambson and Rachel Swaner for sharing tools and instruments developed as part of the Red Hook Peacemaking Program. Thanks to Rachel Swaner, Julian Adler, and Greg Berman for feedback on the draft report.

The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. For correspondence, please contact Amanda Cissner, Center for Court Innovation, 520 8th Avenue, 18th Floor, New York, New York 10018 (cissnera@courttinnovation.org).

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Executive Summary	vi
Chapter 1.	
Introduction & Methodology	1
What is Peacemaking?	1
The Near Westside of Syracuse, New York	3
Process Evaluation Methodology	4
Chapter 2.	
Planning the Peacemaking Project	7
Building a Peacemaking Center	7
Staffing the Project	10
Community Outreach	11
Stakeholder Outreach	13
Chapter 3.	
Implementing the Peacemaking Project	17
Peacemaking Goals	17
Program Structure	18
The Peacemakers	29
Feedback	33
Chapter 4.	
Community Benefits Projects	36
Chapter 5.	
Discussion & Key Findings	39
References	43
Appendices	
Appendix A. Focus Group Protocols	44

Appendix B. Community Outreach	48
Appendix C. NWSPP Promotional Materials	52
Appendix D. NWSPP Logic Model	57
Appendix E. NWSPP Referral Form	60
Appendix F. NWSPP Intake Assessment	61

Executive Summary

Peacemaking is a traditional, non-adversarial form of justice practiced by many different Native American tribes. It is designed to heal damaged relationships and restore harmony to the community. Peacemaking brings together the immediate parties to a conflict, along with family, neighbors, community members, and others who wish to support the participants. In a peacemaking session, the participants sit in a circle with one or more peacemakers—respected community members trained in peacemaking—to discuss the underlying causes of the conflict. Peacemaking not only seeks to resolve the immediate conflict but to foster healing and help the participants avoid future problems.

Awarded a Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) grant in 2013, the Center for Court Innovation began a lengthy process of planning and implementing a Peacemaking program responsive to local community needs in Syracuse’s Near Westside, one of the city’s most distressed neighborhoods. This report describes the Near Westside Peacemaking Project (NWSPP) and the processes through which it came to be.

The process evaluation was conducted over four years, from October 2013 to September 2017. The resulting report describes the physical peacemaking space, community outreach and need, referral sources, program intake and caseload, the program model, the peacemakers, and community benefits projects. We interviewed program staff and participants, community members, representatives from collaborating agencies, and peacemakers about their experiences with the program. Research staff also reviewed program data and other program materials.

Major Findings

Planning the Peacemaking Project

- **The Space** After nine months of searching, a location was selected: a building bordered by a school and across the street from a neighborhood park, in a primarily residential area. Once the building was identified, the Center for Court Innovation collaborated with FORUM design studio—an architecture firm committed to re-envisioning justice architecture—as well as local architects and students and staff from Syracuse University to design a peacemaking center. Community members were invited to participate in a series of design workshops; the final design reflects feedback gained during these workshops.

- **Staffing** The project is staffed by a dedicated peacemaking project coordinator and a community project coordinator, with support from the Center for Court Innovation’s Syracuse project director. Finding the right mix of experience, professionalism, and personal for the community project coordinator position interest proved challenging. Interviewees suggested that adding staff members whose racial and ethnic identities more closely mirrored those of neighborhood residents would benefit the project; project staff were well aware of this challenge.
- **Community Outreach** Community feedback was solicited via community forums, community events, and kitchen table talks—informal conversations held over dinner in community members’ homes with small groups of residents. Community members highlighted a range of issues, including public safety concerns, failing infrastructure, problematic relations with police, conflicts between neighbors, high unemployment, low-performing schools, and absentee landlords.
- **Stakeholder Outreach** Project staff were eager to offer peacemaking to a diverse range of community members, including those not involved with the justice system. Outreach to potential peacemaking referral sources included justice system stakeholders, city and county government agencies, local service agencies, the Syracuse Housing Authority, neighborhood schools, media and cultural organizations, and faith-based organizations. Building relationships and creating opportunities for case referrals was an ongoing process.

The Program Model

The peacemaking program model implemented in Syracuse’s Near Westside was adapted from the criminal court-based model implemented at the Center for Court Innovation’s Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn.

- **Peacemaking Goals** Peacemaking seeks to resolve disputes through an inclusive, non-adversarial process that empowers all affected parties. Toward this end, the NWSPP pursues four primary goals: Healing relationships, giving victims a voice, holding participants accountable, and empowering the community.
- **Program Eligibility** All participants must enter into peacemaking voluntarily. Peacemaking is not used in cases in which there is an allegation of intimate partner violence or sexual assault, where there is a known gang affiliation, or in lieu of drug or

alcohol treatment. Beyond these exclusion criteria, peacemaking is available for a diverse array of disputes.

- **NWSPP Caseload** A total of 49 cases entered peacemaking during the two-year period included in the study. Of these, nearly half (49%) were referred through the justice system, 37% were referred by neighborhood schools, and the remaining 18% were referred by community members and other service agencies active in the Near Westside.

More than half (55%) of peacemaking cases involved a juvenile; cases involving juveniles were referred through the Juvenile Justice Services Unit (5), the family court (4), and through schools (18). Disputes between neighbors were another common type of referral (8), as were disputes between family members (5).

- **Peacemaking Sessions** Each peacemaking case will involve as many peacemaking sessions as the peacemakers and the participants feel is required to reach a consensus decision for resolving the dispute. Successfully closed NWSPP cases included an average of four peacemaking sessions. All participants in a peacemaking session are treated equally, and all are allowed to speak about how the event, crime, or dispute affected them personally. Sessions include shared food; an opening ceremony; discussion; memorialized consensus decision; and a closing ceremony.
- **Completing Peacemaking** Of the 46 peacemaking cases closed during the evaluation period, 65% were considered successfully completed by peacemaking staff. School referrals had the highest rate of successful completions (78%), followed by community (63%) and criminal justice referrals (55%). Just over a quarter of cases were unsuccessfully terminated (26%); the remainder of cases (9%) were closed for other reasons (e.g., lost contact, moved).
- **Identifying and Recruiting Peacemakers** A total of 37 peacemakers had been trained over three cohorts during the evaluation period. Of these, 26 had participated in at least one peacemaking session during that period. Peacemakers are identified and recruited from throughout the community and undergo an extensive training program. Asked why they decided to become peacemakers, those interviewed shared histories steeped in community service, a dedication to social justice, and a belief that peacemaking offered a chance to address what they saw as community problems throughout the Near Westside. Peacemakers spoke positively about their experiences with the program overall. Challenges mentioned during interviews included complicated

scheduling, identifying and recruiting a diverse peacemaker pool to reflect participant characteristics, and low program volume.

- **Participant Feedback** Participant feedback was collected through a focus group. Participants who provided feedback had positive things to report about their peacemaking experience. Asked to identify the biggest strengths of peacemaking, respondents talked about learning to listen, being given an opportunity to have their own voice heard, and hearing diverse perspectives. Participants did suggest that the program could benefit from a more diverse peacemaker pool.

Community Benefits Projects

In addition to peacemaking, the NWSPP enhances existing neighborhood revitalization efforts through resident-driven community benefits projects, which are intended to bring together peacemaking participants, peacemakers, neighborhood residents, and agency partners to work on improving the neighborhood and strengthening community ties. Examples of projects included facilitating community-police dialogues, beautifying community gardens, and hosting summer movie nights in local parks.

During the evaluation period, the NWSPP planned and implemented 22 community benefits projects. The community benefits work was repeatedly mentioned by residents, peacemakers, and stakeholders alike as a notable program strength. The community projects were cited as a mark of the project's investment in the neighborhood.

Chapter 1

Introduction & Methodology

In 2013, the Red Hook Community Justice Center, a project of the Center for Court Innovation, launched a pilot project to test the viability of implementing the traditional Tribal practice of peacemaking in a state court setting. Building on the success of the Red Hook model, the Near Westside Peacemaking Project adapted the court-based model to meet the unique needs of one of the most distressed neighborhoods in Syracuse, New York.

Awarded a Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) grant in 2013, the Center for Court Innovation's Syracuse office began a lengthy process of planning and implementing a Peacemaking program responsive to local community needs and available to both justice system and community referrals. This process included outreach to community members to determine resident needs and priorities; establishing a presence in the city's Near Westside neighborhood and building on existing relationships with existing community groups; identifying an appropriate home for the new peacemaking center; constructing a space that would reflect community values and culture; adapting the Red Hook program model to a non-court setting; identifying and training a local panel of peacemakers; developing protocols for case identification, referral, and intake; and engaging residents in community benefits projects targeting public safety concerns and promoting neighborhood investment. The current evaluation describes both the new peacemaking project and the processes through which it came to be.

What is Peacemaking?

Peacemaking is a traditional Native American form of justice that focuses on healing and reparation. Some form of the practice is found among many different tribes and reflects each tribe's unique culture, religion, and collective experiences. The specific format and name vary by tribe; the most widely-recognized model comes from the Navajo Nation and is called "peacemaking." Other tribes, like the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Suislaw, call this process "peacegiving," while the Muscogee have "law menders." But what they all have in common is a focus on problem solving and an emphasis on future relations rather than assigning guilt and imposing punishment for past actions (Costello 1999; Wolf 2012). While the justice system typically relies on a hierarchical model of authority and

sanctions to maintain order, peacemaking focuses on restoring positive relationships with others through shared norms, values, and respect for tradition (Yazzie 1996).

Generally speaking, peacemaking brings together those impacted by an interpersonal conflict,¹ including the offender and victim, as well as family members, neighbors, and community members. During peacemaking sessions, a trained peacemaker leads the participants toward a “consensus” decision about how the case should be handled. Participants “talk out” the dispute in a structured manner—each participant is permitted to speak fully, without interruption, and there are no limits on the length of a peacemaking session. The ultimate goal of peacemaking is not simply to settle the immediate dispute, but also to address the underlying problems that led to the dispute, repair the relationships that have been damaged, and lead to long-term changes in behavior so that future conflicts can be avoided. According to the former Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation, Robert Yazzie, peacemaking is effective because it “gets below the surface of a problem and leads people to the heart of the matter” (Yazzie 1996).

Unlike mediation, peacemaking does not ask participants to “compromise.” Instead, peacemaking culminates in a consensus decision that all participants fully agree upon. The number of peacemaking sessions is determined by how long it takes for a resolution to be achieved (Costello 1999). The Navajo Nation’s Peacemaking guide explains:

Peacemaking encourages people to solve their own problems by opening communication through respect, responsibility and good relationships... Rather than judge people, peacemaking addresses bad actions, the consequences of such actions and substitutes healing in place of coercion (Sasson 2012).

Peacemaking sessions are led by “peacemakers,” who are respected members of the community, often elders, whose role is to help the disputants talk through the conflict and offer guidance (Zion 1998). Unlike mediators, peacemakers are not neutral facilitators. They are regular community members who have been trained to use their life experience and knowledge of the community’s history and traditions to actively guide participants to a consensus decision that is consistent with community norms and expectations. A peacemaker

¹ Not all interpersonal conflict is eligible for peacemaking. The Syracuse program excludes cases where there are drug charges, domestic violence allegations, and felony-level criminal charges. In addition to cases referred based on justice system involvement, the NWSPP accepts community- and school-based referrals. More detail on program eligibility is included in Chapter 2.

may be personally acquainted with one or more of the participants. Rather than creating “bias,” however, this familiarity is viewed as strengthening the peacemaker’s ability to facilitate the sessions.

The Near Westside of Syracuse, New York

As a whole, the City of Syracuse has 143,378 residents and has been steadily losing its population due to the decline of its manufacturing base over the past 50 years. A corresponding rise in poverty has accompanied this population loss: in 2015, Syracuse was the 29th poorest city in the country; by 2016, it was number 13 on the list.² The median household income in the city is \$31,881 (compared to a national median of \$53,889); 35% of residents live below the poverty line (compared to 13% nationally; data from the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey). Black and Hispanic residents are particularly likely to live below the poverty line compared to white, non-Hispanic residents (42% versus 49% versus 25% living in poverty). In fact, a 2015 analysis by the Century Foundation found Syracuse to have the single highest level of poverty concentration among black and Hispanic residents of the country’s hundred largest metropolitan areas (Jargowsky 2015).

Even within one of the poorest cities in America, the city’s Near Westside stands out as a particularly distressed neighborhood. Median household income among the 7,030 neighborhood residents is \$14,474. More than half (54%) of neighborhood residents live below the poverty line (Miner 2010).

Located near the heart of Syracuse, the Near Westside is a primarily residential neighborhood; the majority of homes in the area are renter-occupied. The neighborhood has a large number of vacant homes and homes in need of repair—an issue brought up frequently by residents during project planning. In addition to the one- and two-family homes, a Syracuse Housing Authority development (the James Geddes Housing Development) in the area includes 39 row houses and four senior citizen housing high rises.

Given the significant economic and social challenges facing the Near Westside, it is not surprising that the neighborhood also experiences high rates of crime and disorder. Local police report that the Near Westside has the highest number of shots fired, violent crimes,

² Rankings include the 589 largest cities in the country. Source: Weiner, M. 2016. “Census: Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester among Nation’s Poorest Cities (database).” *New York Upstate* September 15, 2016. Accessed at <http://www.newyorkupstate.com>. Original data source: 2016, 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Poverty Status in the past 12 months, S1701.

and drug crimes in Syracuse. In addition to violent crime, lower level offenses (e.g., criminal mischief, burglary, joyriding in stolen or illegal vehicles, trespassing), *exposure to* crime and violence, and resulting concerns about personal safety are commonly reported by neighborhood residents. Consequently, the Near Westside was deemed an ideal setting to implement BCJI funding targeting crime reduction and promoting community safety and neighborhood investment.

Process Evaluation Methodology

The results of the process evaluation are informed by data maintained by program staff; discussions with community members, peacemaking participants, program staff, and peacemakers; and program documents. The findings presented in this report represent a four-year period from October 2013 through September 2017, covering the 24-month planning period (October 2013-September 2015) and the first two years of program implementation (October 2015-September 2017).

Program Data Collection

Research staff created a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet to track key programmatic information. Throughout the implementation period covered by this report, program staff provided feedback and the spreadsheet was adapted in response to requests. Information captured includes:

- **Case Referrals** Comprehensive referral source information; incident and referral dates; relationship between the referred parties; demographics and other background information for referred parties; basic overview of the problem or need leading to the referral; ultimate peacemaking status (i.e., entered peacemaking, ineligible/inappropriate for peacemaking, refused, other); and alternative referrals for cases not entering peacemaking.
- **NWSP Case Information** Current status of the peacemaking case; staff/peacemakers assigned to the case; community support people involved in the case; total number of circles held; and session information (e.g., dates, attendees, intermediate results, healing steps).
- **Peacemaker Roster** Quarterly roster of active peacemakers and stipend payments.

Information tracked through the program spreadsheet was reviewed periodically for comprehensiveness and was used to report on program activity. The current report includes referral and caseload information derived from the spreadsheet.³

In addition to data collected using the program spreadsheet, program staff documented programmatic activities through referral guides and protocols, case files, a detailed activities timeline (accounting for all outreach, peacemaking, and community activities program staff attended or participated in), and program guides created for a variety of potential referral agencies. A review of program documentation also informed this report.

Resident Focus Groups

Research staff conducted focus groups with residents of the Near Westside at two points during the evaluation. An initial set of two participant focus groups was conducted in May and June 2014. Program staff recruited a total of nine community members, who were asked to reflect on neighborhood strengths and problems, perceptions of safety, need for and potential willingness to utilize a peacemaking center.

A follow-up focus group was conducted in July 2017 with nine members of the community residents group, who have taken on leadership roles in community benefits projects—i.e., voluntary efforts to strengthen the economic, physical, and social fabric of the community—undertaken by the Peacemaking Project. Again, residents were asked to reflect on neighborhood strengths and problems; residents were also asked to reflect on the work of the Peacemaking Project and the impact of the program’s community benefits projects.

Focus groups were audio-recorded; resident feedback was analyzed for themes. The focus group protocols are included as Appendix A.

Stakeholder Interviews

A stakeholder focus group was conducted during the project planning period (June 2014). Stakeholders (e.g., court officials, law enforcement representatives, local politicians) were invited to ask questions about peacemaking generally and the NWSPP specifically. The primary purposes of the stakeholder focus groups were to (1) identify potential case types for referral to peacemaking; (2) identify cases stakeholders would *not* consider referring to peacemaking; and (3) begin preliminary discussion about case identification and referral process, including potential challenges. Focus group protocols are included as Appendix A.

³ For a blank copy of the program spreadsheet, contact the author.

A total of eight stakeholders attended the session, including representatives from the Mayor's office, the Syracuse City Court, the Onondaga County District Attorney's office, the Onondaga County Department of Probation, School Based Initiatives of Onondaga County, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department, and the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (parole). Additional stakeholders who were invited but who were not able to attend included representatives from the Syracuse City School District, the Onondaga County Family Court, and the Syracuse Police Department. Stakeholder feedback was shared with program staff (some of whom were in attendance) and, along with follow-up conversations with key stakeholders, helped to shape the program structure (e.g., target population, referral process, data tracking). Specific stakeholder feedback is discussed further in Chapter Two.

Individual interviews with key stakeholders were conducted during the summer of 2017. The purpose of these interviews was to learn about stakeholder experiences with the Peacemaking Project. A total of ten stakeholders were interviewed by telephone. Stakeholders from a range of agencies were interviewed, including the family court, defense bar, corrections, neighborhood schools, and other local social service providers active in the neighborhood.

Peacemaker Focus Group

In August 2017, peacemakers were invited to attend a focus group to discuss their experiences in the Peacemaking Project. A total of nine peacemakers attended the session; an additional peacemaker could not attend due to scheduling issues, but was subsequently interviewed by telephone. Peacemakers were asked about the training they received, their experience with cases, and program strengths and challenges. The focus group protocols are included as Appendix A.

Program Participant Feedback

Four neighborhood residents who had participated in the Peacemaking Project participated in a focus group in August 2017. Together, the four participants represented three peacemaking cases (i.e., two focus group participants were involved in a case together). Participants were asked about their experience with peacemaking, how peacemaking compared to previously employed strategies for resolving conflict, intention to comply with peacemaking recommendations, and program strengths and challenges. The focus group protocols are included as Appendix A.

Chapter 2

Planning the Peacemaking Project

Unlike many projects funded by the Byrne Criminal Justice Initiative (BCJI), both the general target area (Syracuse’s Near Westside) and the program structure (i.e., peacemaking) for the Syracuse Near Westside Peacemaking Project were identified during the grant proposal stage. Based on neighborhood characteristics described in the previous chapter, as well as discussion with local stakeholders and residents, the Near Westside was viewed as a neighborhood that might benefit from the sort of innovative programming the Center for Court Innovation hoped to implement. Following the recent creation of the Red Hook Peacemaking Program in 2013, local staff were excited to introduce a similar model to Syracuse.

While the general program structure was already decided at the point of funding, staff from the Center for Court Innovation’s Syracuse office (i.e., director, deputy director, and support staff) engaged in extensive outreach with both community members and stakeholders to determine the appropriate target peacemaking caseload, given the specific needs and interests of the Near Westside community. Moreover, the community benefits project—a volunteer-driven community service component—was entirely directed through community feedback. This chapter provides an overview of the planning processes, including identifying and outfitting the physical peacemaking space, soliciting resident input and building community relationships, and securing buy-in from referral agencies and organizations.

Building a Peacemaking Center

An initial step in the process of creating the Peacemaking Project was to identify and build a physical space to house the program. The Center for Court Innovation’s existing office space was located in Syracuse’s downtown business area; neither its location nor layout was appropriate for the proposed project.

Finding a Space

The process of identifying a suitable available space located in the Near Westside took several months longer than anticipated. The program collaborated with partners at the Near Westside Initiative (NWSI), a partnership involving Syracuse University, philanthropic donors, area residents, and civic leaders. One focus of NWSI is commercial development of

the Near Westside. In collaboration with Home Headquarters, Inc., a community development financial institution funded through the U.S. Department of the Treasury, NWSI works to develop real estate in the neighborhood. Home Headquarters, Inc. had acquired several vacant properties in the Near Westside neighborhood with the purpose of rehabilitating them and offered to provide one to the Peacemaking Project at no cost to the project. However, several potential locations fell through, due to location (e.g., not centrally located or easily accessible within the neighborhood), infrastructure (e.g., renovations were beyond what the Center for Court Innovation could support), or other concerns. Ultimately, in July 2014, nine months after initial prospective site tours began, the building at 601 Tully Street was selected as the future site of the peacemaking project. The building is located directly across from a neighborhood middle school (Westside Academy at Blodgett) and kitty-corner from Skiddy Park, a neighborhood mainstay for summer time little league, movie nights, and neighborhood parties. The immediately surrounding area is largely residential, with 39 Syracuse Housing Authority row houses and four senior citizen high rise buildings.

Designing the Space

To design the peacemaking center, the Center for Court Innovation collaborated with Designing Justice + Designing Spaces, an architecture firm in California committed to re-envisioning justice architecture; UPSTATE, an interdisciplinary center at Syracuse University focused on design, research, and real estate; and a local architecture firm, Ashley McGraw. FORUM had previously developed a process—drawing on principles of peacemaking—for eliciting community input to inform the design process. This process, called the peacemaking pallet process, engages community residents and stakeholders along with program staff in a discussion about (1) peacemaking as a cultural practice and (2) the qualities they would like to see reflected in a peacemaking space. Three community design workshops were conducted during the spring of 2014. A total of 40 individuals participated in these sessions, including:

- Near Westside community residents and leaders (10);
- Youth who attend school in the Near Westside (5);
- Syracuse University students (11);
- An employee of the New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (1);
- Representatives from the Near Westside Initiative (3) and the Center for Court Innovation (4); and

- Architects and design experts from FORUM design studio (2), UPSTATE (2), and Ashley McGraw (1).

Preceding the design workshop, participants were invited to reflect on what a justice system focused on *repairing* rather than *punishing* might look like. Participants were asked to think about spaces in their own lives and communities that might embody healing, calm, and well-being and to bring an artifact—a photo or object—representing these qualities to the design workshop.

During the design workshops, participants were seated in a circle and asked to reflect on the values reflected by traditional justice system architecture. They were then invited to share the artifact they had brought to the session and to tell a story about its meaning to them. As with actual peacemaking sessions, a “talking piece”—a symbolic item used to limit speaking to the person holding it—was used to designate a single speaker. Once the speaker had reflected upon the meaning of their artifact, they deposited the item into the center of the circle, creating a pallet of stories and spaces. Characteristics of these spaces and objects, which symbolize healing, nurturing, and security to workshop participants, informed themes to be used in the design of the peacemaking space.

Following the circle process, participants broke into smaller groups to develop stories around the physical layout of the peacemaking center. Participants were asked to imagine the space from three points of view: offenders, victims, and community members. Using game pieces to represent different aspects/spaces that the peacemaking space might include, participants were asked to develop a story and a diagram reflecting a vision of the space from their designated point of view.

The primary themes identified by designers through the community-supplied artifacts portion of the workshop include:

- **Nesting** Images depicting a safe space within a wooded area, with views of nature, were prevalent among participant-supplied artifacts. The lack of people in these images was interpreted by the designers as a focus on self—creating a safe space or “nest” for individual reflection.
- **Freedom** Images of the sky and of expansive landscapes were coupled with stories emphasizing freedom, playfulness, and increased perspective.
- **Gathering** Artifacts signifying family or community meals were accompanied by stories of happiness and community.

- **Comfort** was reflected in depictions of comfortable furniture, calming colors, and soft fabrics.
- **Aliveness** was reflected in representations of the natural world, particularly in colors and textures taken from nature.
- **Wood & Stone** materials were frequently depicted in images supplied by participants.
- **Music** While music was only *explicitly* displayed in one artifact, the sounds of life—for instance, water, conversation, fire, animal life—were implicit in many of the shared artifacts and accompanying stories.

The suggestions identified through the diagramming exercise included a peacemaking center with multiple entries; a safe peacemaking space nested within—and accessible only from—shared community space; a sense of openness and transparency; an integrated multi-use space replacing a traditional lobby or waiting area; natural spaces and/or nature-inspired features; a flexible space adaptable to multiple uses; a well-lit space, drawing in particular on natural light; creation of tranquility through sounds (e.g., calm music, moving water); space for art—in particular, community-created art; common spaces available for community use in support of peacemaking activities (e.g., daycare, kitchen, events space); and a private space for reflection and solitude. The full results of the design workshop are presented in a separate report, authored by representatives of the FORUM design studio.⁴

Staffing the Project

The original NWSPP staffing plan included a dedicated peacemaking project coordinator and a community project coordinator, with support to be provided by staff from the Center for Court Innovation’s Syracuse office (director, deputy director, and office administrator). The peacemaking project coordinator position was filled early on. The initial hire has remained in that position since summer 2014 through the present. However, the community project coordinator position proved more difficult to fill. Candidates for this position needed to be able to relate to and work closely with community residents—the ideal candidate was someone who lived in or had ties to the Near Westside. Over the course of the evaluation period, 37 individuals were interviewed for the job, but finding the right mix of experience, professionalism, and personal interest was challenging. An initial hire was made in May 2015, but was terminated after six weeks when a community partner disclosed that the hire’s application materials were inaccurate. A second hire worked in the position for nine months,

⁴ Forum Design Studio. July 2014. *Near Westside Peacemaking Project Community Engagement Report*. Available upon request.

but was working on a student visa and left the program during the summer of 2016. Hiring delays resulted from requirements for several offsite directors to review and approve all NWSPP hires. At the same time, the sustainability plan to fund the position through a partner organization fell through, resulting in continued inability to fill the job. Another member of the Syracuse office staff who had already been trained as a peacemaker and become involved in the NWSPP took on the additional role of community project coordinator in the spring of 2017.

During interviews and focus groups, several interviewees raised the concern that the NWSPP staff is currently comprised of three white women. While none of the interviewees doubted the dedication of the staff to the neighborhood, they did express that adding staff members whose racial and ethnic identities more closely mirrored those of neighborhood residents would be beneficial. Both of the first two community project coordinator hires were black (one was African American, the other was a native of Kenya). The current community project coordinator is white, but lives in the neighborhood and speaks Spanish, both of which were reported by interviewees as beneficial to the project.

Community Outreach

Assessing Community Need

Community feedback was solicited via extensive staff outreach into the community, specifically intended to create both formal and informal opportunities to solicit ideas from community members. Center for Court Innovation staff invited residents to participate in community forums, volunteered with neighborhood organizations, engaged agencies already active in the Near Westside, and attended community events. Sessions were held in English and Spanish to promote participation by Spanish-speaking community members. In this way, Center for Court Innovation staff gauged community needs and interests, as well as laying the groundwork to establish the program as a community resource. Together, community feedback obtained through one-on-one conversations with community members, community forums and other outreach efforts, kitchen table talks, and research focus groups helped program staff to identify key program areas for potential peacemaking cases and community benefits projects. Feedback from community members was supplemented with hotspot mapping based on arrest data provided by the Syracuse City Police Department. A comprehensive account of community outreach activities and results is included in Appendix B.

Kitchen Table Talks⁵ One particularly noteworthy tactic for seeking resident input was the introduction of kitchen table talks. Neighborhood residents were invited to host a discussion in their homes. Hosts were asked to invite ten additional residents of the Near Westside—friends, neighbors, family members—to dinner in their home. The dinners provided staff with the opportunity to engage residents in conversations about community concerns, neighborhood strengths, and leadership in the community.

Over the period covered by this report, 94 neighborhood residents participated in a total of eight kitchen table talks. Participants identified a number of specific community needs and challenges, including:

- Safety concerns (e.g., related to public drug dealing and drug use, vacant buildings, fighting and gun violence);
- Deteriorating infrastructure (e.g., missing/inoperative street lights, garbage, potholes, broken sidewalks);
- Neighbor conflicts;
- Absentee and unresponsive landlords;
- Truancy among neighborhood youth;
- High unemployment rates;
- Run-down schools with overtaxed staff; and
- Poor relationships with the Syracuse City Police Department (including slow response times, shortage of Spanish-speaking officers, abuse by officers).

Participants also identified several community strengths that the program might leverage, reporting that the Near Westside is a diverse and tight-knit community where people know each other. The neighborhood's many parks and service agencies were also noted as strengths.

The impact of the kitchen table talks in shaping community benefits projects is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Community Member Focus Groups In addition to the intensive outreach efforts made by program staff, research staff conducted two community focus groups—one in English and one in Spanish and English—during spring 2014, with the primary purpose of assessing

⁵ A comprehensive description of the kitchen table talks, including recruitment strategies, discussion scripts, participant characteristics, and lessons learned is available in a separate white paper (Russell 2017).

community strengths and challenges. In interpreting the focus group results, it is important to remember that the sample is limited and may not be representative of the Near Westside population as a whole.⁶ However, feedback heard during the focus groups generally corresponded to feedback Center for Court Innovation staff heard during kitchen table talks, community forums, and one-on-one discussions with community members.

Focus group participants highlighted numerous community problems, including frequent disputes between neighborhood residents; nonresponse by police and miscommunication with police—particularly problematic for non-English speaking residents; crime, in particular fighting and assault, drugs, mugging and robbery, and guns; inadequate street lighting; vacant and neglected buildings; fighting, bullying, and inadequate parental supervision in the schools.⁷

Summary, Assessing Community Need A high level of mistrust of police and other criminal justice players was expressed by community members, suggesting the importance of strategies designed to identify and acquire *community-based* referrals. Community outreach further identified areas for potential community improvement projects by the project, including street lighting campaigns, targeted outreach to community youth, and neighborhood beautification projects, particularly around abandoned and neglected buildings.

Building a Presence in the Near Westside

Over the period covered by this report, peacemaking project staff attended more than 100 community events. These events ranged from volunteering to serve lunch at a local church to presentations about the peacemaking model to community organizations and resident groups to participating in neighborhood beautification projects sponsored by other organizations to handing out program materials (see Appendix C for examples) and sponsoring activities at community festivals and celebrations. In this way, the program sought to introduce peacemaking and establish the Center for Court Innovation in the neighborhood.

Stakeholder Outreach

Given the small geographic area from which justice system cases would be drawn from (and the logistical challenges of identifying court cases from a specific catchment area), Center for Court Innovation staff were well aware that they would likely need to identify additional sources of case referrals for the peacemaking project. Moreover, given early feedback from

⁶ A total of nine community members, including four members of one extended family and another three-person nuclear family, participated in the two focus groups.

⁷ Appendix B includes select focus group quotes and further discussion of findings.

community members, staff understanding of the issues facing the Near Westside, and interest expressed by agencies already active in the neighborhood, project staff were eager to offer peacemaking to a diverse range of community members, including those not involved with the justice system.

Program staff met with an array of stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation periods. Outreach served to introduce the peacemaking project to agencies and organizations believed to be potential referral sources. In some instances, this outreach additionally served to recruit potential peacemakers to the project. In general, the outreach efforts took the form of meetings with small groups of select stakeholders or presentations to stakeholder agencies. Targeted groups included:

- **Justice system stakeholders**, including representatives from the family and criminal courts, the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department, the Syracuse City Police Department, probation, parole;
- **City and county government representatives** (e.g., the Syracuse Mayor's Office, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the Onondaga County Office of School-Based Initiatives);
- **Local service agencies** already active in the neighborhood (e.g., Catholic Charities, the Center for Community Alternatives, Hillside Family Services, Huntington Family Services, Onondaga Case Management Services, the Syracuse Rescue Mission);
- **The Syracuse Housing Authority**;
- **Neighborhood schools** and administrators from the Syracuse City School District;
- **Media and cultural organizations** (e.g., CNY Latino, La Casita, the Spanish Action League/La Liga); and
- **Faith-based organizations** (e.g., Brown Memorial United Methodist Church, St. Lucy's Church, Syracuse Westside Urban Mission).

As a relative unknown in the community, making inroads with stakeholder agencies was challenging at times. Project staff reported that much of the planning period was focused on building relationships. In addition, stakeholder outreach served to identify appropriate peacemaking cases and work through the logistics of case identification and referral.

Identifying Appropriate Peacemaking Cases

Stakeholders identified four potential sources of peacemaking referrals:

(1) School referrals Several stakeholders suggested that schools would be an important source of referrals for the peacemaking project. Stakeholders cited a diverse set of school-based problems that might be appropriate for peacemaking, as well as a systemic shortage of appropriate responses to disciplinary issues. Peacemaking was seen as a useful alternative to suspension or expulsion.

[Standard school disciplinary measures] don't necessarily deal with the relationship issues. ... So I think a program like [peacemaking], especially if [the schools are] aware of it, may be able to tap on some of the issues that are dealt with and the discipline issue to work specifically with the relationships.

One stakeholder suggested that peacemaking might further act as an intervention in cases where a formal disciplinary hearing might not yet be called for, but where students and parents might benefit from some preventative effort.

[The schools are] a fantastic place to identify kids and families who might benefit from this... If we had the capability to look at... supporting this approach for kids who may not actually reach the level of a hearing, but may be kind of close to it. So things aren't going so well, ...there seem to be issues with the school or with the family or something that a child may have done that has kind of broken the trust with the faculty and staff, and so how do we repair that?

(2) Probation/parole violators Representatives from parole and probation suggested that peacemaking might offer an alternative to filing technical violations in some cases.

From a probation end, we can certainly utilize [peacemaking] in a variety of ways. I mean it can be a great alternative to filing a violation of probation. Whether... that violation is based on technical violation or on rearrests—and depending on the nature of that re-arrest, naturally—for the folks that are currently on probation.

(3) Restorative justice opportunities Program staff noted that Syracuse has fewer restorative justice centered efforts than other cities of its size. Focus group participants generally expressed agreement and suggested potential restorative justice opportunities for the peacemaking project.

[Parole doesn't] do anything with regards to, um, victim rights and restoring the victim. I mean, we're supposed to—that is a cornerstone of what we're supposed to do—and [parolees] might have conditions regarding their victim, like no contact or this or that, but for

young people in particular, I think it's really important that they recognize how they've impacted another [person]. ...I think it's really important for the victim to be involved if they want to be. ...We always leave it to the victim to kind of call the shots, but I should think for young [parolees] that that would be just a broadening of their minds a little bit on this.

(4) Other cases where the justice system spends valuable resources to not much gain

The final set of potential cases identified by stakeholders were the assorted cases that enter the criminal justice system, with little that can be done by justice system players. Specifically, one stakeholder mentioned neighbor disputes, which are not easily resolved through traditional criminal justice responses.

[T]he very first one that came to my mind was neighbor disputes. We have a very difficult time with them. The definition of them by virtue of people living next door to each other, they are just ripe for... repeating and everything else, and it's just, it's not always, you know, the most effective use of our resources.

Preventative efforts, particularly for kids or families at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system if problem behaviors continue, was noted as an additional possible source of peacemaking referrals.

On the pre-side or preventative side... you had mentioned PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision). It could be certainly utilized from a, from a pre-probation ... standpoint. Usually this is a child-centered issues and you're dealing with direct services, although not always. A lot of the kids' behavior affects other community members, whether it's throwing rocks through a window or just scratching cars. [Peacemaking] would be perfect.

Cases Deemed Inappropriate for Peacemaking

Stakeholders—particularly the representative from the Onondaga District Attorney's Office—also had some strong feeling about cases that are *not* appropriate for referral to peacemaking, including drug cases, domestic violence, and felonies. In general, stakeholders stressed the need for a case-by-case selection criteria, rather than automatic peacemaking referrals for some cases. Eligibility for peacemaking might be impacted by a variety of considerations, including the specific case type, the individual's criminal history, and victim needs.

Implementing the Peacemaking Project

Peacemaking Goals

Peacemaking seeks to resolve disputes through an inclusive, non-adversarial process that empowers all affected parties. Toward this end, the Near Westside Peacemaking Project pursues four primary goals:

- 1) Healing Relationships** Peacemaking is concerned with healing the relationships that were harmed by a dispute or crime. Peacemaking emphasizes the development of participants' sense of identity, identifying commonalities among community members, and correcting harmful behavior to ensure that it is not repeated.
- 2) Giving Victims a Voice** Peacemaking provides victims with an opportunity to express how disputes have affected them, their families, and their communities. Victims who agree to engage in the process, are invited to actively participate in the discussions leading to a resolution. Due to the sometimes ongoing and often complex nature of disputes referred to peacemaking, it is at times difficult to identify a singular victim. However, the nature of peacemaking is to empower all participants to engage in identifying harms and reaching a resolution.
- 3) Holding Participants Accountable** Peacemaking fosters a sense of accountability. Participants face other members of their community, recognize the effects of their actions, and participate in determining how to repair the harm they have caused. As noted above, the complexities of interpersonal disputes at times mean that identifying a party solely responsible for a conflict may be impossible. Therefore, the process endeavors to hold all participants accountable.
- 4) Empowering the Community** The peacemaking program trains community members to serve as peacemakers (i.e., respected members of the community who offer guidance as participants talk through a conflict), giving the community a direct and active role in peacemaking. In addition, community members affected by a dispute can participate in peacemaking sessions, offering them an opportunity to talk through and resolve disputes and demonstrating that the community shares responsibility for repairing the harm caused

by conflicts. Finally, through community benefits projects (discussed further in Chapter 4), community members select and participate in projects to improve their neighborhood.

During the initial program planning period, research staff worked with program planners to develop a logic model (see Appendix D). Logic models help projects to identify how each goal relates to specific, measurable, realistic objectives and which programmatic activities may be useful in ensuring coherence to the underlying program model. In general, such an activity is undertaken during program planning. However, it can be helpful for ongoing projects to refine and revise project goals as operations change. The initial logic model, developed in December 2013, prior to any community or stakeholder outreach, was necessarily quite general. As the program coalesced around more concrete goals, identified an amended target caseload, and heard feedback from community members, the project might have benefited from a follow-up logic model exercise. Such an exercise would enable the project to more directly link the overarching goals above to specific activities and outcomes for the cases ultimately referred to peacemaking.

Program Structure

Program Eligibility

In traditional peacemaking programs, a wide variety of cases can participate, including serious cases such as murder and sexual assault. Peacemaking experts say that anything can be dealt with in peacemaking, and that adjudication through the conventional court process can remain as a fallback option (Zion 1999). Based on the political realities in Syracuse, it was never anticipated that such a wide array of cases would be considered in that jurisdiction. After extensive discussion with local stakeholders, the project adopted the following eligibility criteria:

- **Voluntary** All participants must enter peacemaking voluntarily; no one should be mandated to participate.
- **Informed** Potential participants must be informed of the intensive nature of peacemaking and must commit to putting in the time and effort required by the process.
- **Consent for Minors** Parental/guardian consent is required for those participants under age 18, except for peacemaking cases referred through and held at the schools.
- **Mental Health** Potential participants who suffer from severe and/or untreated mental illness that would impede their ability to participate are not eligible.
- **Drug Treatment** Peacemaking is not to be used as a substitute for drug or alcohol treatment.

- **Risk of Violence** Peacemaking is not used in cases where there are allegations of intimate partner violence or sexual assault, or where there is a known gang affiliation.

Victim consent is not a program requirement for participation in the NWSPP; if one party does not wish to participate in the process, program staff may still work with the other party. The process will necessarily look different when only one party participates; for instance, NWSPP staff and peacemakers might meet with the interested party to help them develop strategies, with a focus on accountability and de-escalation strategies. However, specific referral agencies may have different criteria for referring a case. Representatives from the family court and juvenile justice reported that the other party in many cases is also the parent or guardian who must consent in order for the young defendant to participate in peacemaking. While securing family participation can be difficult, stakeholders reported that the process was much more meaningful when parents or guardians were involved. One stakeholder working with the program in the context of the family court identified engaging families and victims as the biggest barrier to NWSPP referral, but reported that there is almost always progress in cases when families agree to peacemaking. Even after just one session, this stakeholder reported observing improvements in relationships between the parties.

Referral and Intake

Once referral agencies have identified a case as potentially appropriate for peacemaking, they contact the peacemaking coordinator. Referral sources may complete a referral form (Appendix E), though this is not required. Once the coordinator learns of a potential case, she reaches out to the relevant parties to schedule an intake meeting. The coordinator works with potential participants to schedule the initial meeting as soon after the referral as possible. During the study period, the average time from program referral to the initial meeting with project staff were 11 days.⁸ The shortest time to the initial intake meeting occurred in the small handful of cases when program referral and intake occurred on the same day; the longest time was more than two and a half months (82 days).

Referral Sources As noted above, project staff sought to expand the peacemaking model implemented in Red Hook to incorporate a broader range of cases. In part, this interest was

⁸ Three outliers took more than a month between referral and intake (51, 63, and 82 days). Excluding those three instances, the mean time from referral to intake was eight days (range: 0 to 26 days). Data was missing for 14 (28%) of the 50 cases for which an intake was completed. Intake dates were available for multiple referred parties in 16 referrals; intake dates were available for one referred party in 20 referrals.

driven by the fact that the Syracuse project is not housed within the court system; in part it was responsive to community member feedback about the types of issues the community was facing. There was some resistance from the criminal court; the supervising judge for the Syracuse City Court was uncomfortable with judges mandating—or even offering—peacemaking unless the offer came directly from the district attorney’s office. Although such a mandate falls well within judicial discretion, directive from the supervising judge meant that criminal court cases never came to represent a sizeable proportion of peacemaking referrals. Peacemaking is never mandated in the family court, but is posed as an option in cases felt by the family court judge (and/or the juvenile justice representative) to be appropriate. The Syracuse City Police Department was also initially anticipated to be a frequent peacemaking referral source. NWSPP staff presented peacemaking to community policing staff and reported a high degree of buy-in from these officers. However, they also reported that the types of incidents reported to community policing staff—who are a more regular presence in the neighborhood—were too minor for peacemaking to be a viable option. In contrast, the patrol officers responding to 911 calls in the neighborhood for the types of incidents that might warrant a peacemaking referral were less likely to have an existing relationship with the community and, according to community member feedback, even had an adversarial relationship with residents. The more law-and-order approach of the patrol officers was seen as antithetical to peacemaking. In order to offset some of the negative feelings between police and community members, NWSPP staff organized several Community/Police dialogues where residents were invited to discuss police-community relations and public safety with representatives from the police department.

Table 1 presents the sources of referrals to the peacemaking project during the study period. During the two-year period, a total of 96 program referrals were made. Just over one-third (37%) of these came from justice system sources; another third (32%) came from schools or school-based programs; and just under one-third (28%) came from the community. These community referrals included walk-ins and self-referrals, those made by other service providers active in the Near Westside (e.g., Center for Community Alternatives, Hillside Family Services, Huntington Family Services), and referrals from peacemakers and other community residents.

NWSPP staff adhere to a very broad working definition of program referral in tracking referral data. That is, the total 96 case referrals represent not only true program referrals, but also less formal program contact—for instance, questions about whether a specific incident falls within the peacemaking eligibility criteria made through the NWSPP’s social media account. Program staff explain that the referral data might be more accurately conceived of

as “program inquiries.” Given this liberal definition of program referral and the program’s requirement that all participants enter into peacemaking voluntarily, it is perhaps unsurprising that just over one-half of program inquiries (51%) resulted in a peacemaking case.

Table 1. NWSPP Referral Sources, Oct. 2015 through Sept. 2017

	Cases Referred to Peacemaking	Peacemaking Cases
Total Referrals	96	49
Justice System Referrals	37 (39%)	22 (45%)
Family Court	6	4
Syracuse City Court	1	1
District Attorney's Office	4	3
Defense Attorney	2	2
Syracuse Police Department	6	4
Department of Probation	7	3
Juvenile Justice	11	5
School Referrals	31 (32%)	18 (37%)
Syracuse City School District	2	1
Neighborhood High Schools	3	0
Neighborhood Middle Schools	18	10
Neighborhood Elementary Schools	6	6
Peaceful Schools Program	2	1
Syracuse Housing Authority	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Community Referrals¹	27 (28%)	9 (18%)

¹ Community referrals include self-referrals, referrals by peacemakers or other community members, and referrals made by other community agencies.

Just under half of the 49 cases entering peacemaking (45%) were referred by justice system players. School referrals represented 37% of all peacemaking cases. The remaining 18% of cases were community referrals, made by peacemakers and other neighborhood residents, service providers active in the Near Westside, and walk-ins.

Dispute Types The 27 cases involving juveniles were referred by the Director of Juvenile Justice (5), the family court judge or clerk (4), and through the schools (18). Neighbor disputes (8) were referred to peacemaking by a range of justice stakeholders, including the

district attorney's office, private defense attorneys, the police department, and probation. Neighbor disputes were also referred by community members (4). Disputes between family members (5) and romantically-linked parties (1) were referred through community members and justice system players. In the remaining peacemaking cases, it was not possible to determine the nature of the dispute from the program database.

During interviews, stakeholders reported a number of considerations when deciding whether a case was appropriate for peacemaking. In the context of family court and juvenile cases, while the judge may recommend peacemaking for a case, peacemaking is never mandated. A representative from juvenile justice reported referring to peacemaking in two types of cases. For first-time offenders, he offers peacemaking as a method for diverting youth from involvement in the family court system. For youth on probation, he refers cases where he believes that the youth would benefit from improved relationships with their adult caregiver or guardian. A representative from Children and Family Services highlighted the adaptability of peacemaking for many cases in his caseload comprised of youth flagged as "persons in need of supervision" (PINS). He reported that the program offers a much-needed chance for the 13-16 year olds in his caseload to have a real voice: to feel encouraged to speak and to really be heard. A parent or guardian is necessarily involved in all PINS cases; beyond having both a young person and a caregiver who were willing and able to engage in the process, the PINS specialist saw no limitations to the application of peacemaking to his cases. A social worker at one of the neighborhood schools reported making referrals to peacemaking in two types of situations. First, when a dispute between students has carried over to include the families, she found peacemaking to be a useful tool to bring the families together to talk through the underlying incident and get caretakers involved in making a strategy to avoid further episodes. Second, for incidents such as bullying and online harassment, she has found peer group circles to be beneficial. Such groups have been conducted at the peacemaking center with a relatively small group (i.e., three to nine students); other groups have been conducted at the school with an entire classroom, including the classroom teacher. While the schools typically cannot mandate that students participate in peacemaking, she reports that she has a good relationship with the students and has been successful in getting students to give peacemaking a chance.

It is beyond the scope of this report to exhaustively detail the cases that have participated in peacemaking. Instead, a small selection of examples is presented below.

- **Justice System Referral** Peacemaking was recommended by the family court judge for a 15-year-old charged with a probation violation. At the time of intake, the 15-year-

old was living at a temporary shelter for homeless and runaway youth, after his parents had kicked him out of the house. The parents reported that he had been physically abusive and had stolen while living at home. Over the course of seven peacemaking sessions, the defendant moved back home, but continued to be absent from school. Peacemaking staff and the probation officer tried to get the youth back into school, providing transportation to school and registering him for summer school. During the four months following initial referral to the program, the defendant and his father met with three peacemakers, NWSPP staff, community support people, and a translator (the father did not speak English) a total of six times (a seventh and final session was scheduled two months after the sixth session). In addition, NWSPP staff checked in with the participants another six times between referral and the final peacemaking session. On average, someone from the peacemaking program was in contact with participants every two weeks over a six-month period. The case was ultimately considered successfully resolved, based on progress made between the son and father, the defendant's regular school attendance, and the successful termination of the juvenile's probation term (and transfer to the PINS diversion unit).

- **School Referral** Two students from a neighborhood middle school were involved in a physical altercation off the school grounds. A representative from the Syracuse City School District contacted the peacemaking project and requested assistance. The students were not allowed to attend school until they and their families had an initial meeting with peacemaking, which occurred four days after the fight (including two school days)—only one day after the peacemaking referral was made. Both were accompanied by community support people, including one student's mother and godmother and the two aunts with whom the second student lives as well as the second student's pastor. The group met for a total of two peacemaking sessions. The first session was scheduled 19 days after the initial program referral; the final session was completed one month (32 days) after referral. During the initial session, participants agreed on interim healing steps: the students were to attend school, say hello to each other, and avoid fighting and name calling. At the second session, the girls reported that they had resolved their issues and were now friends. Both girls were attending school.
- **Community Referral** Members of three families who were active with one of the community agencies had a loud public dispute at a community festival. Agency staff were aware there was tension between the families, but did not think it would turn into a public brawl. There were kids in attendance at the festival; the agency representative reported it was a very tense situation and she seriously considered calling the police. The

families were scheduled to attend an agency-sponsored camping trip several weeks after the incident; the agency representative did not feel comfortable allowing them to attend without some sort of resolution. She directed the families to peacemaking. Members of the three families attended three peacemaking sessions and talked through the events. The agency representative served as a community support person. Two peacemakers and the spouses of two of the primary disputants—who were also involved in the dispute—also attended peacemaking. It took just under two weeks (13 days) from referral until the initial peacemaking session was scheduled; the three peacemaking sessions occurred over the course of three weeks (22 days). The participants were reportedly satisfied with the resolution and two of the families were able to mend their relationship and remain friends. While it was reported that the third party is no longer close friends with the other families, their relationship remains civil and all three families have been welcomed back to agency activities.

Peacemaking Intake Once a case has been identified as potentially appropriate for peacemaking, the NWSPP coordinator conducts a three-part intake process.

(1) Introduction to Peacemaking The peacemaking coordinator meets with the prospective participant to explain the peacemaking process, assess whether the case is suitable for peacemaking, and obtain participant consent to participate.

(2) Intake Assessment For participants who agree to enter the program, the peacemaking coordinator completes an assessment to evaluate the participant's willingness to take part in the program, review relevant personal history, and identify other issues that might make peacemaking inappropriate (see Appendix F for a copy of the intake instrument). If there are no barriers to peacemaking, the peacemaking coordinator accepts the participant into the program. If the peacemaking program declines to accept a participant, the peacemaking coordinator will contact the referral source. The reason for declining potential participants remains confidential.

(3) Preparation for Peacemaking The peacemaking coordinator provides the participant with detailed information about the peacemaking process to help them understand what to expect from the sessions, from the peacemakers, and from the overall experience. The peacemaking coordinator also sets expectations for the participant, including goals of the process and expected behavior and conduct during the sessions. If the participant wishes to bring support people into the peacemaking

circle, those individuals will also meet with the peacemaking coordinator to prepare for the first session when possible.

In cases with multiple parties, a separate intake is typically completed for both parties. Ideally, these separate sessions occur within a few days of each other so that the peacemaking process can begin. However, sometimes participants' availability prohibits timely scheduling of intake sessions.

Peacemaking Sessions

After a case is referred and accepted into the peacemaking program, the peacemaking coordinator schedules the first peacemaking session. The average time from intake to the initial peacemaking session was just over ten days.⁹ This average represents a range of scheduling (0 to 28 days); some peacemaking sessions were scheduled within a day or two of intake, while others took nearly a month to schedule. Most frequently, scheduling delays were due to coordinating a time that worked for peacemaking participants.

Two to three volunteer peacemakers and at least one NWSPP staff member attend each peacemaking session. The average across all peacemaking cases was two peacemakers assigned; community referrals averaged closer to three assigned peacemakers (2.5) than cases referred through the justice system (1.8) or schools (1.7). The main disputants have the opportunity to invite support people to accompany them to peacemaking sessions. Some of the support people invited to sessions during the evaluation period included family members (e.g., parent, aunt, sibling, god parent); friends; and representatives from service agencies, schools (e.g., teacher, school social workers), and criminal justice agencies (e.g., probation officer, PINS specialist). Thirty-six of the 49 peacemaking cases listed at least one support person in the program database.

General Peacemaking Guidelines Peacemaking is generally guided by six guidelines.

- 1. Healing** The peacemaking process is designed to reveal the underlying issues, conflicts, and wounds that are often at the root of a dispute. Far from serving as neutral decision-makers, peacemakers actively guide the participants, encourage open

⁹ Across the 27 cases with available data. Times were calculated based on the time between the initial peacemaking session and the *last* intake date across all participants completing an intake for each case.

communication, and share stories from their own lives to help participants in the process reach a consensus decision.

- 2. Responsibility** Peacemaking requires participants to face the person or community that has been affected by their behavior. Moreover, participants are encouraged to propose their own solutions to resolve the underlying dispute. By requiring participants to face their community and actively participate in solving their own problems, peacemaking promotes personal responsibility and accountability. Participants learn to self-correct their behavior instead of relying on others to fix it for them.
- 3. Consensus Decision-Making** The goal of peacemaking is to reach a consensus decision for healing. Consensus decisions may require the participant to apologize to those affected by their harmful actions, provide restitution to victims or the community, acknowledge responsibility in a meaningful way, or address their own personal challenges by participating in educational programs or other supportive services. Specific examples of creative responses are presented below (Healing Steps).
- 4. Alternative Approach** Peacemaking combines traditional Native American practices and contemporary community. A peacemaker is not a judge, a mediator, or an arbitrator. A peacemaker does not adjudicate a dispute, assign guilt or responsibility to the parties, or engage in any kind of fact finding. Rather, peacemakers are trained to help participants talk through their issues and reach their own conclusions.
- 5. Rules and Procedure** Participants are encouraged to communicate openly, and the peacemakers to allow the discussion to take its course. There are no rigid procedural rules. However, peacemakers ask all participants to maintain a respectful and courteous tone throughout the session and may ask participants leave a session if their behavior is inappropriate or disruptive to the peacemaking process.
- 6. Ceremony** Ceremony imparts a sense of seriousness and promotes a feeling of connectedness, caring, and intimacy among participants. Ceremony emphasizes that peacemaking is focused on strengthening the community, and that peacemaking is different from other processes or modes of dispute resolution, such as mediation or arbitration.

The Peacemaking Process Each peacemaking case will involve as many peacemaking sessions as the peacemakers and the participants feel is required to reach a consensus decision for resolving the dispute.

Each peacemaking session typically lasts one to two hours. If, at the end of a session, participants are not able to fully reach a consensus decision, the peacemakers schedule additional sessions. Schedule permitting, follow-up sessions are scheduled within two weeks. The sessions continue until a resolution can be reached. An average of four sessions were completed among those cases that resulted in a successful consensus decision. Cases that were terminated prior to a consensus decision being reached (e.g., terminated due to lack of engagement, lost contact with program) averaged two sessions.

All participants in a peacemaking session are treated equally, and all are allowed to speak about how the event, crime, or dispute affected them personally. Each session includes the following components:

- **Food** Peacemaking seeks to build and repair relationships and food is an indispensable part of this process. Tribal and non-tribal cultures across the world build community by breaking bread together. At the start of each peacemaking session, participants and peacemakers will share a light meal or snacks before beginning the discussion.
- **Introduction** The peacemakers introduce themselves and review the principles of conduct governing the session.
- **Opening Ceremony** Peacemakers begin and end each peacemaking session with a ceremony intended to focus participants on intention and peace—for instance, by observing a moment of silence, reading a poem, or playing a piece of music.
- **Opening Remarks** Each participant is invited to make opening remarks, introducing what they feel is most relevant. Participants sit in a circle and speak in turn using a talking piece.
- **Discussion** Peacemakers encourage participants to discuss the dispute openly and freely. Peacemakers ensure that all participants are permitted full and fair opportunity to address comments presented by others. Discussion continues until all participants have had an opportunity to speak. Participants must hold a designated talking piece when they speak; others cede the floor to the person holding the talking piece.
- **Consensus Decision** After the participants have fully discussed the dispute, peacemakers guide the participants toward a consensus decision, allowing full

opportunity for discussion and input. Peacemakers may assist the participants by suggesting different types of restitution, community service, and healing steps that may be appropriate.

- **Memorializing Decisions** After participants reach a consensus decision, peacemakers provide a final summary of the agreement and ask the participants to document it in writing. The written agreement is acknowledged by all participants and peacemakers.
- **Follow Up** Peacemakers may require participants to return to additional peacemaking sessions to review participant progress and compliance with the consensus decision.
- **Closing Ceremony** Peacemakers end the session with a closing ceremony.

Healing Steps Peacemakers encourage participants to seek out meaningful forms of restitution. The peacemaking coordinator helps participants to schedule healing steps and/or modes of repair. While the participants may also be required to complete conventional forms of restitution, such as community service, group classes, or letters of apology, the peacemakers encourage the participants to connect with each other and their community throughout the peacemaking process. Examples of healing steps that encourage participants to reflect on their role in a larger community include creating a detailed family tree, participating in a mentoring program, volunteering at a senior center, being paired with a community elder (for youth participants), and attending a cultural event.

It is up to participants to decide whether they share healing steps with the referral source.

Program Completion

The peacemaking coordinator provides referral sources with regular attendance and compliance updates. She immediately notifies the referral source if non-compliance becomes problematic. The formal response to non-compliance is then at the discretion of the referring agency; because peacemaking is voluntary, program staff is not involved in any sanctions for non-completion.

Of the 46 peacemaking cases that had been closed during the evaluation period, 65% were considered successfully completed by peacemaking staff. Another quarter (26%) were terminated for a variety of reasons (most typically because one or more participants was not interested in engaging or continuing with the process). School referrals had the highest rate of successful completions (78%), followed by community (63%) and criminal justice referrals (55%).

Table 2. Final NWSPP Status, by Referral Source

	All Cases	Justice System Referrals	School Referrals	Community Referrals
Peacemaking Cases	49	22	18	9
Open Cases	3	2	0	1
Closed Cases	46	20	18	8
Successfully Completed ¹	65%	55%	78%	63%
Terminated ¹	26%	35%	17%	25%
Other ^{1,2}	9%	10%	6%	13%

¹ Percentages are of those cases that are closed.

² Includes participants with whom the program lost contact (1), those detained on other matters (2), and those with a new family court matter between the participants (1).

The Peacemakers

Identifying and Recruiting Peacemakers

According to program staff, the most critical qualification for peacemakers is that they be respected members of the community with a desire to volunteer their time for the good of others. The length and intensity of the training program is designed to attract volunteers who believe in a community's ability to resolve conflict and who are motivated by the underlying principles of peacemaking.

Program staff indicated that they had trained a total of 36 peacemakers over three cohorts at the time of the interviews in summer 2017. Of these, 26 had received an appreciation stipend during the evaluation, indicating that they had participated in a peacemaking session during that time period. There are several reasons a trained peacemaker would *not* have been scheduled to participate in a peacemaking session during the evaluation period. First, program staff hand-selects peacemakers thought to be a good fit for each case. For instance, a former teacher was often included in cases involving middle- or high-school students; peacemakers who were parents themselves might be included in disputes between parents and children. Second, scheduling issues precluded some trained peacemakers from engaging in cases during the evaluation period. Third, some of the peacemakers had just been trained during the spring of 2017 and may not have had sufficient time in their role to be included in a case by the September 2017 evaluation cut-off point. Two peacemakers benefited from the training and continue to participate in program events and activities, but are not a good fit for

being assigned to cases. Three trained peacemakers moved away from the area before they had a chance to sit in on any cases. Finally, two community members participated in the peacemaking training with the specific purpose of bringing skills back to their jobs and other volunteer work. While they continue to participate in monthly training and other program meetings, they did not enter the program with the purpose of taking on peacemaking cases.

Staff members reported a variety of strategies for identifying potential peacemakers, including outreach to agencies that were already active in the Near Westside. The initial cohort of peacemakers drew heavily from the faith-based communities in the neighborhood; staff posted recruitment information in the newsletters of neighborhood jail-based ministries, the Catholic church, and the Syracuse Westside Urban Mission. The subsequent two peacemaker cohorts were more secular. As noted previously, program staff engaged in some targeted recruitment, specifically seeking to train black men, younger peacemakers, and more male peacemakers. Program staff also made special efforts to engage Spanish speakers; the neighborhood has one of the largest communities of native Spanish speakers in the region. Such targeted recruitment efforts were designed to develop a pool of peacemakers that would closely mirror the population referred to the program. While not essential that peacemakers and participants are always of the same race, ethnicity, age, or gender, program staff seek to match participants and peacemakers who have some shared experiences and demographic factors can provide a good starting point. For example, targeted recruitment of Spanish-speaking peacemakers (in addition to a Spanish-speaking member of the dedicated program staff) permitted Spanish language speakers the opportunity to participate in their native language.

While not a major factor in recruitment, peacemakers who participate in a case are paid a \$50 quarterly stipend.

Peacemakers included in interviews and focus groups came from diverse backgrounds. Some were retired, several worked in (or were retired from) education, many were active members of St. Lucy's Catholic church, one worked with the housing authority, several had been active with other local service agencies. Across the entire pool of trained peacemakers, 11 are native Spanish speakers; ten are black; three are Cuban immigrants.

Asked why they became involved in peacemaking, the peacemakers shared histories steeped in community service, a dedication to social justice, and a belief that peacemaking offered a chance to address what they saw as community problems throughout the Near Westside. One peacemaker described a history of alternative dispute resolution, "I was trained in family

mediation back in Puerto Rico. I felt that I needed to look out for alternatives and ways to serve the community.” Another expressed a commitment to serving the community, “I really wanted to see what contribution I could make to relieving some of the problems in the city. There are a lot of problems, but unless people step up and want to do something about them, they’re not going to be resolved. That was really my motivation.”

Peacemaker Training

All potential peacemakers undergo an initial 20-hour training program, including sessions on the principles of peacemaking, peacemaker attributes, storytelling, vicarious trauma and self-care, confidentiality and ethics, and a workshop with Native American peacemaking expert consultants. The peacemakers participate in mock peacemaking sessions. By the end of the training program, each peacemaker should be prepared to work in small teams to conduct peacemaking sessions.

The specific training curriculum used for the initial cohort of NWSPP peacemakers was imported directly from the Red Hook program. The 20-hour intensive Red Hook curriculum was subsequently supplemented by the addition of monthly skill-building sessions to focus on specific areas identified by NWSPP staff as important.¹⁰ Particularly because the peacemakers are volunteers, staff continually reviews training materials to ensure that sessions are meaningful and appropriate, given the NWSPP caseload.

Asked specifically about the training, participants in the peacemaker focus group viewed the training favorably, saying they found it interesting and engaging and that they felt prepared to do the work of peacemaking. Throughout the training, they reported feeling supported and many voiced that they appreciated the opportunity to return to a group and work on skills through the monthly booster sessions. One peacemaker explained that these skills can take practice to develop,

Storytelling was challenging, for me, in the beginning when we very first started. They kept talking about how this is going to be such an important part of what we did, and I’m like, ‘I’m not getting this. I’m just not getting this.’ I remember we had a couple of

¹⁰ Supplemental training topics included the Community Resiliency Model, Community Health Worker training, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, field trip to the Haudenosaunee Heritage Center, community organizing 101, meeting neighborhood service providers, processing grief in the community, additional training with Native American peacemakers, and supplemental sessions in storytelling, trauma, and self-care.

exercises and I'm like, 'Still not getting this.' You know. But all of a sudden, I don't remember what it was, all of a sudden something just kicked in.

Another peacemaker explained that the training went beyond developing specific *skills* to shaping his approach to interacting with others.

The training, some of it, is like sensitivity. Learning how to relate to other people's feelings maybe... So it's kind of made me a better person, I feel, just to be able to be confident of sitting in a circle.

Peacemakers also talked about the importance of self-care and the way the program supports them in allowing space for self-care and incorporates this into the training.

One of the things that we often talked about in our training... We talked about it in our training and we've since talked about it at our monthly meetings, is self-care... Often circles will bring things up for you that aren't comfortable, that aren't resolved in your own life yet. So you need to know yourself well enough to know how to take care of yourself to move beyond it.

An important component of peacemaker training is the workshop facilitated by Native American peacemaking experts. During the evaluation period, the NWSPP brought in eight expert consultants from several Native American communities, including the Cayuga Indian Nation; the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians; the Grand Traverse Band of Odawa and Chippewa Indians; the Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohican Indians; the Navajo Nation; the Oneida Indian Nation; the Onondaga Nation; and the Seneca Nation of Indians. In addition, a peacemaker from the Red Hook program also facilitated a portion of the training.

The thing I liked about it was the, the fact that were some Native American concepts. Then we always had Native Americans to come and to educate us about the concept... the foundation of peacemaking is a Native American concept... That's one aspect of the training that I really enjoyed.

Some of the peacemakers traveled to Red Hook to observe that program; a second visit to Red Hook was made for the purposes of additional peacemaking training.

We did go to a New York—to Red Hook—and that was very interesting because they have a much more established program. They have their own court and everything, it really

was an eye-opener for us to see how... Their approach obviously is different from ours. But there are things that we could learn, you know, from the way they operated their program.

Feedback

Participant Feedback

User feedback was gauged through a focus group conducted with select peacemaking participants. Some peacemaking participants completed an exit survey at their final session, but the total number of surveys completed (15) was insufficient to include here.

Participants in the focus group noted the importance of learning to listen in peacemaking.

We know how to communicate better now, and we actually learned how to... and I've been learning how to cool down and meet somewhere in the middle later... I was taught how to listen instead of [mimes talking], you know?

Peacemaking participants also talked about the benefit brought by the peacemaker perspectives, which was removed from the specific dispute.

That's why I liked [peacemaking], because it was a mixture. It's like you're getting two, three different points [of view], and one might not stick with you... not really, but the other one makes a lot more sense, but then that third one is gonna target you. That's what I liked.

[The peacemakers] were very insightful. And to them, it was pointed out to me that I was being overbearing and overprotective, pushy. And I'm glad I heard that, because now I catch myself sometimes... I'm able to do that now because of them.

While peacemaking participants regarded the peacemakers they worked with favorably, they also suggested that the program could benefit from a greater diversity of peacemakers. Specifically, one participant reported that family members who did not speak English (or Spanish) were not able to fully engage with the program. Another participant suggested that her teenaged child might have benefitted from peacemakers near her own age. Several stakeholders mentioned specific efforts made to attract a diverse pool of peacemakers—specifically, an effort to engage men of color who might be more relatable for young men of color referred to the program. Although participants were universally positive about NWSPP staff and praised their dedication to the community, the fact that the program is staffed by

three white women (i.e., the peacemaking project coordinator, community project coordinator, and the Syracuse project director)—two of three who live outside the Near Westside—was noted by focus group participants and in several interviews.

It is worth noting that, with a limited interview pool—only four peacemaking participants attended the focus group—it is impossible to know how representative this feedback was. That is, it could be that those participants less favorably inclined toward peacemaking were less likely to engage in the focus group. That said, those interviewed were incredibly positive about the peacemaking project. The program was cited by interviewees as a community asset; the strength-based approach of drawing on the community and enhancing community members' ability to help each other drew praise across the board. Interviewees held program staff in high esteem, citing their dedication to the project and the neighborhood.

Peacemaker Feedback

Overall, the peacemakers who participated in the focus groups and individual interviews were incredibly positive about the program and saw it as a great asset for the Near Westside. However, peacemakers did identify a few challenges for the program. First, identifying and training peacemakers to match the cases referred to the program was a noted challenge. Particularly during the initial program period, it was not clear what the peacemaking caseload would look like. As it became clear that the program would work regularly with cases referred through the schools, program staff targeted peacemaker recruitment toward younger members of the community, who might be more relatable to student participants. Targeted recruitment efforts were also made to bring in more men and, specifically, black men, after the first cohort of peacemakers. Peacemakers were aware of this and expressed that finding peacemakers with whom participants can make meaningful connections was critical to program success. In particular, several peacemakers stressed the need for a group of younger peacemakers to assist with the school-based cases. That said, others emphasized that peacemakers can make connections and share insights with participants with whom they outwardly share few similarities.

As noted above, the work of peacemaking can be mentally and emotionally exhausting and may reintroduce personal trauma for those sitting in the circle. It is never certain at the outset how many sessions a particular case may require, so the work can also be time intensive. Despite this, peacemakers largely spoke of the work as being rewarding and the program did not report any burnout among the volunteers. Peacemakers spoke of the focus on self-care promoted across the program and reported feeling supported by program staff.

The sizeable pool of peacemakers was raised as another potential program challenge. Because there were so many trained peacemakers to choose from—because there was so much interest in working with the program—several peacemakers worried that un- or under-utilized peacemakers would lose their engagement with the program. While this concern was raised by peacemakers, at the time of the evaluation, neither peacemakers nor program staff reported that there had been a drop-off in peacemaker engagement among those who had not been scheduled for multiple cases. In fact, two of the peacemakers at the focus group had been expectantly awaiting their first case assignment and had just been told that the case would not be entering peacemaking. Despite at least one other instance in which a potential case had fallen through for these peacemakers, they still appeared to be engaged and enthusiastic about the program and to take the cancelation in stride.

Finally, the logistics of scheduling sessions was a challenge noted by several peacemakers. Not only did the peacemakers have their own obligations, but coordinating schedules across peacemaking participants, official agency representatives (e.g., PINS case specialist, probation officer, school social worker), participants' support persons, parents, and NWSPP staff could mean delays in case progress. In several of the school-based cases, more than two students were involved in the initial incident leading to the peacemaking referral, making for even more complicated scheduling.

Chapter 4

Community Benefits Projects

To ensure that the NWSPP contributes to the overall revitalization of the Near Westside neighborhood, the NWSPP—in collaboration with residents and neighborhood partners—sought to identify community benefits project opportunities that would strengthen the economic, physical, and social fabric of the community. Community benefits projects were intended to bring together peacemaking participants, peacemakers, neighborhood residents, and agency partners to work on improving the neighborhood and strengthening community ties.

During the evaluation period, the NWSPP (sometimes under the Take Back the Streets moniker¹¹) planned and implemented 22 community benefits projects. Projects include a range of activities, from community beautification to social events to improving infrastructure and public safety to skill- and relationship-building. Describing each of these is beyond the scope of this report; select examples are below. All NWSPP activities are free for participants; free childcare and food are frequently provided.

- **Community Garden** One of the earliest community benefits projects was undertaken in collaboration with the grassroots Westside Residents Coalition. NWSPP staff recruited neighborhood residents and worked alongside them to beautify community gardens throughout the neighborhood and to install two new community gardens in vacant grassy areas in the neighborhood.
- **Community Police Dialogues** A total of seven facilitated meetings between residents and members of the Syracuse City Police Department were held during the evaluation period. Resident feedback obtained through the kitchen table talks and the resident focus groups highlighted a strained relationship between community members and police. The community dialogues sought to break down barriers between the police and community members. The number of attendees varied across sessions, with anywhere from two to six police officers and six to eight community residents.

¹¹ The NWSPP partnered with Syracuse University’s Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion’s Take Back the Streets initiative.

- **Movies in the Park** During the summer months, the project brings a projector and audio-visual equipment and plays a family-friendly movie in various vacant lots and underutilized public parks around the community. The first of these was held in July 2015, when the NWSPP was relatively unknown in the neighborhood, but still attracted approximately 200 residents. The events continue to be incredibly popular and have been one of the biggest branding efforts undertaken by the project, with community members reporting that they look forward to movie nights. The project typically puts on three movie nights each summer.
- **Streetlight Inventory** Resident feedback obtained through the kitchen table talks suggested that missing streetlights were viewed as a threat to public safety—inviting drug deals and other “shady activity” in the area. In February 2016, NWSPP staff collaborated with the Lerner Center to conduct a streetlight inventory. Volunteers walked through the neighborhood and documented where lights were out or missing, mapped the information, and passed it on to the local utility company. The utility responded quickly to the formal complaints, where they had reportedly been less responsive to resident calls.
- **Tenants’ Rights Workshop** The NWSPP hosted two attorneys from Legal Services of Central New York, along with a Spanish interpreter, for a workshop on tenants’ rights in March 2016. About ten community members attended the session, where attorneys gave an overview of tenants’ rights, described the process for asserting those rights, and answered attendees’ questions.
- **Community Impact Team** The project stresses the importance both of resident involvement in creating lasting social change *and* in growing the local resources already housed within community members. Fourteen potential resident leaders participated in leadership training to provide them with the additional tools they needed to support and promote change within their community. As one staff member put it, “the classes give residents the tools they need to rescue their own neighborhood.” The group continues to meet regularly to plan and implement benefits projects. Members receive a small stipend for their work on behalf of the NWSPP.

The community benefits work was mentioned by residents, peacemakers, and stakeholders alike as a notable program strength. These projects were repeatedly cited—as a whole or through specific examples—as a mark of the project’s investment in the neighborhood. Several interviewees indicated that, while many agencies have been active in the neighborhood historically, there has been little coordination between them. One stakeholder

described the neighborhood as having benefited from a boon in city funding, but reported that there was a lack of collaboration between recipient agencies, lamenting that “no one knows what anyone else is doing.” However, this stakeholder and others felt the NWSPP was stepping in to fill this need, by building on the work undertaken by partner organizations and acting as a coordinator of services for community residents.

NWSPP staff and residents highlighted the importance of listening to community members *and* incorporating them in planning and implementation of benefits projects. Staff suggested that this degree of engagement was essential for empowering residents—the primary goal of the community benefits projects. Rather than viewing their role in the neighborhood solely as service providers, staff members spoke of their dedication to coordinating between agencies, facilitating resident access to skills and venues, and supporting the community to make change. As one staff member explained, “It’s not just about doing what the community wants; even if you do what they want, they might not show up if you don’t involve them in the process.”

NWSPP staff attributed the strengths of the individual residents with whom they had formed relationships as a primary reason other agencies came to them again and again to seek collaboration.

Discussion & Key Findings

The residents, stakeholders, staff, and participants who provided feedback as part of this evaluation effort generally held the Near Westside Peacemaking Project in high esteem. Undoubtedly, there is some degree of selection bias in the evaluation design; those who provided feedback were those who were willing to speak with research staff during interviews or focus groups. For that reason, it is likely that respondents were more favorably disposed toward the project than those who chose not to participate in the evaluation. That limitation noted, the feedback they provided sheds insight into program strengths *and* challenges. Not only are the findings below relevant for continued programming in Syracuse’s Near Westside, but they may hold lessons for other neighborhood-based community engagement projects in a variety of settings.

- **Case Referral Sources** Identifying the types of cases that would ultimately be referred to the NWSPP took time and ongoing outreach. Project staff were innovative in identifying referral sources beyond justice system collaborators. However, forging these new relationships—with local service agencies, schools, resident groups, churches, and so on—took time.

With such a diverse set of referral sources—even school referrals came from four different sources, each with different key players—it was difficult to streamline and standardize the case referral process. Lack of standardization is not necessarily a bad thing for a project that wants to be responsive to diverse community concerns, but it does create challenges in terms of establishing a model that is both replicable and evaluable.

- **Caseload** Even despite an extensive 15-month planning period, the project took just under 50 cases over a 28-month period. The nature of both the cases referred to the NWSPP and the peacemaking process itself means that cases frequently take several sessions to resolve; delays in finding a time that works for all participants can also cause cases to linger.

There is a give-and-take calculus between creating a program that is individualized and responsive to community desires and maximizing program capacity. While not the be-all and end-all, sufficient numbers to fulfill funders requirements and justify ongoing

operations are a real consideration for any program. The NWSPP should continue developing strategies to maximize caseload—for instance, by seeking non-traditional referral sources—without undermining the program model. Where caseload alone is never anticipated to be a compelling justification for program continuation, identifying alternative measures of success—such as community and participant feedback and continued community engagement—can illustrate program impact that reaches beyond the clear-cut number of cases processed.

- **Logic Model** A logic model helps projects to identify program goals and link each goal to specific, measurable, and realistic objectives. This tool can help programs to identify what success looks like and think through the underlying assumptions about how success would be achieved. Goals such as community engagement, empowerment, and restorative justice are difficult to measure; the logic model operationalizes such concepts and helps programs develop methods for assessing them. While an initial NWSPP logic model was developed during the planning phase of the project, it would be useful to revisit the model with the specific caseload in mind, in order to develop clear linkages between program goals and measures.
- **Staffing** NWSPP staff had specific criteria in mind for the community project coordinator position. Ideally, they wanted someone with connections to the Near Westside; someone residents would be able to relate with. Finding good candidates for this position proved incredibly difficult; once appropriate candidates were identified, the vetting and approval process took a considerable amount of time—enough that at least one potential candidate took another position while waiting for approval; and keeping staff in the position proved challenging. The Center for Court Innovation might consider ways to streamline the vetting process, weighing the requirements of an off-site project overseen by a parent organization and the desire to approve good candidates before they accept another offer. When hiring from a non-traditional candidate pool, programs might consider appealing to potential candidates with non-traditional incitements, such as flexible hours and access to training and professional development. Particularly when salary is capped, such alternative strategies may draw a larger candidate pool.
- **Establishing a Community Presence** Coming into a new neighborhood and building relationships with residents and agencies already working in the area takes time. Again, the NWSPP benefited from a lengthy planning period that built in time for this process. Moreover, program staff dedicated themselves to attending as many community events, meetings, and other networking opportunities as possible throughout the

evaluation period, as documented through the program activity log. Staff showed up to build relationships on weekends, evenings, and personal time. Feedback from residents and stakeholders suggests this outreach paid off; interviewees mentioned time and time again the dedication of the NWSPP staff members to the neighborhood. Building community benefits projects into the program model was a key strategy for building community trust.

- **Collaboration** Working with agencies and organizations already active in the Near Westside was essential to creating a community presence. In addition, collaborating provided the NWSPP with opportunities it would not have otherwise had—for instance, by providing additional funding for stipends and food, positioning the NWSPP to take over the Take Back the Streets campaign, and receiving community referrals from local partner agencies. Representatives from other agencies who had collaborated with the NWSPP spoke highly of the project, the staff, and the collaboration, which was universally cited as mutually beneficial.
- **Facilitating Community-Led Change** Beyond just coming in to the neighborhood to offer services and operate a program, NWSPP staff stressed the importance of resident action in driving change. Toward the end of empowering community members to create the changes they wanted in their neighborhood, program staff sought to create real opportunities to solicit feedback from community members and to involve them in the implementation of program activities. From the kitchen table talks to drawing peacemakers from the neighborhood to the resident impact team, the program created opportunities for community members to take the lead.
- **Recognizing Community Experience with the Criminal Justice System** As in so many communities of color and low-income communities across the country, the relationship between Near Westside residents and the police is fraught. Public mistrust of police came up repeatedly in early community engagement activities. Given the Center for Court Innovation’s history of working with and through the criminal justice system—and hopes that peacemaking might serve as a potential diversion tool for police—program staff sought to create opportunities for residents to engage with police to discuss the historically problematic relationship. Though a series of community/police forums were not enough to undo years of perceived wrongs or heal the relationship, they did open discussion. The forums also provided program staff with greater insight into the issues underlying resident mistrust of police.

- **Logistics** Perhaps more mundane than other program challenges, the logistics of planning and implementing a program of this nature warrant mention. Locating and building an appropriate space; scheduling sessions to accommodate the schedules of participants, program staff, peacemakers, and others; accessing translators to allow inclusion of non-English speaking participants—all of these eat into program time and budget. Again, the lengthy planning period built into the NWSPP timeline supported some of this work, but some logistical issues—for instance scheduling—will arise repeatedly.

References

- Costello, N. 1999. "Walking Together in a Good Way: Indian Peacemaking Courts In Michigan." *University of Detroit Mercy Law Review* 76: 875-901.
- Jargowsky, P. 2015. *Architecture of Segregation: Civil Unrest, the Concentration of Poverty, and Public Policy*. New York, NY: The Century Foundation.
- Lambson, S. H. 2015. *Peacemaking Circles: Evaluating a Native American Restorative Justice Practice in a State Criminal Court Setting in Brooklyn*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
- Miner, S. 2010. *Syracuse Housing Plan*. Syracuse, NY: Department of Neighborhood & Business Development, Bureau of Planning & Sustainability. Accessed at <http://www.syracuse.ny.us/uploadedFiles/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Content/Documents/2010%20Syracuse%20Housing%20Plan.pdf>
- Russel, L. 2017. *Kitchen Table Talks: A Report to the Community on Lessons Learned and Next Steps*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
- Sasson, E. 2012. *Feasibility Study: Peacemaking Pilot Project*. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
- Wolf, R. 2012. *Widening the Circle: Can Peacemaking Work Outside of Tribal Communities?* New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
- Yazzie, R. 1996. "'Hozho Nahasdlii'—We are Now in Good Relations: Navajo Restorative Justice." *St. Thomas Law Review* 9: 117-123.
- Zion, J. 1998. "The Dynamics of Navajo Peacemaking." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 14(1): 58-74.

Appendix A. Focus Group Protocols

Resident Focus Group

1. Intro/Warm-Up: I'd like to start by having everyone quickly introduce themselves. As we go around the room, please tell us your first name and your relationship with the Near West Side, including how long you've lived/worked in the community.
2. Community Strengths: Let's talk about some of the strengths of the Near West Side community. What are some of the best things about the Near West Side?
3. Community Weaknesses: Now I'd like you to think about problems in the Near West Side. What are some of the biggest challenges the neighborhood faces?
 - a. Crime
 - i. Do you think there is a lot of crime in the NWS?
 - ii. What types of crime are particularly problematic?
 - b. Safety
 - i. Do you feel safe in the NWS?
 - ii. Are there particular places within the NWS that you feel unsafe (e.g., specific blocks, problem addresses/intersections)?
 - iii. If so, what makes you feel unsafe in those areas (e.g., poor lighting, empty buildings, criminal activity)?
 - c. Conflict
 - i. Other than criminal activity, are other types of conflict problematic in the NWS? For instance, fights between residents, conflict with police, family conflict, etc.
4. Let's talk about Peacemaking:
 - a. What does Peacemaking mean to you? (*Follow up with brief description of peacemaking.*)
 - b. Do you think that Peacemaking has a place in your community?
 - c. What types of issues would you like to see targeted by a Peacemaking Center?
 - d. What kinds of attributes or qualifications should a community member have in order to be a peacemaker?
 - e. What is the best way to recruit peacemakers? What kinds of incentives would community members need to serve as peacemakers for the long term?
 - f. What is the best way to inform the community about this program and get the community excited about using peacemaking?
 - g. What concerns do you have about this project? About peacemaking in your community?
5. The Peacemaking Center: Thinking about a physical space for peacemaking:
 - a. What do you think the space should look like? Are there particular features you think are important?
 - b. Other than space for holding peacemaking circles, what kinds of features/services should the Peacemaking Center include?
6. Community Outreach/Improvement: What types of community improvement projects would most benefit the community?
7. Closing comments and thank you

Stakeholder Focus Group

1. Intro/Warm-Up: I'd like to start by having everyone quickly introduce themselves. As we go around the room, please tell us your name and your agency/position.

Many of you are already familiar with the NWS peacemaking project that the Center for Court Innovation is planning, from talking to [NWSPP Staff] over the past few months, but I'd like to have [NWSPP Staff] talk a little bit about the peacemaking model.

[NWSPP Staff Intro to peacemaking, how it works in Red Hook, etc.]

Now we'd like to give you a little background on the Near West Side.

[NWSPP Staff talk generally about the NWS]

[Research show maps: Community assets/services, vacant housing, crime distribution]

2. What questions do you have about peacemaking/how peacemaking works?
3. What concerns do you have about peacemaking?
4. Who do you think could most benefit from peacemaking?
5. What types of issues would you like to see targeted by the peacemaking project?
Prods: Criminal issues? Family court? School? Community disputes?
6. What types of cases would you refer to peacemaking?
 - a. What might the identification and referral process look like?
 - b. What players would need to be involved?
 - c. What are potential challenges/barriers to the identification and referral process?
 - d. What are the potential benefits of the Peacemaking Center?
 - i. For users/litigants?
 - ii. For the justice system?
 - iii. For the community?
 - iv. For stakeholders?
 - v. Other?
7. Are there types of cases that you would NOT feel comfortable referring to peacemaking?
8. How would you go about measuring success of the NWSPP? What would a successful project look like?
 - a. Justice system outcomes (e.g., crime rates, case resolutions, re-entry into the system)
 - b. Individual outcomes
 - c. Community level outcomes
9. What additional community outreach might be particularly useful in the NWS?
10. Closing comments and thank you

Participant/Peacemaker Focus Group

1. Introductions
 - a. What was your role with the NWSPP? (e.g., Peacemaker, primary participant, support person)
2. Program Goals
 - a. What do you see as the primary goals of the NWSPP?
3. Program Entry (*Primary Participants only*)
 - a. What type of case/dispute brought you to the NWSPP?
 - b. How did you hear about the NWSPP? Who referred you?
 - c. Why did you decide to try peacemaking (as opposed to more traditional case resolution strategies)?
 - i. Was entering peacemaking voluntary?
 - d. What did you hope to get out of peacemaking?
4. Training (*Peacemakers only*)
 - a. What do you think made you a good candidate to become a Peacemaker?
 - b. Describe the training process to become a Peacemaker.
 - c. Do you feel you were adequately prepared when you sat in on your first case?
 - i. What was your role on your first case? Were you the sole Peacemaker? One of several/many? Observing only?
5. The Process
 - a. Described what happened during peacemaking sessions you participated in.
 - b. How many sessions did you attend?
 - c. Was the case ultimately successfully resolved? If so, how? If not, why not?
 - d. Were there interim steps toward a resolution in your sessions?
 - e. Did you follow the recommendations/suggestions of the Peacemakers? (*Primary Participants only*)
6. Procedural Justice
 - a. Do you think the process for identifying and transferring cases for peacemaking is fair?
 - b. Was the peacemaking process fair?
 - c. Did you have sufficient changes to describe your perspective? Did other participants?
 - d. Do you think the outcome you receive through peacemaking was better or worse than what would have happened if you had gone through a traditional case process?
 - e. Did the Peacemaker(s) in your case seem to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the process to help make decisions about your case?
 - i. Were the Peacemaker(s) fair?
 - ii. Do you respect the Peacemaker(s)?
7. Sustainability
 - a. Program strengths
 - b. Challenges
 - c. Would you recommend peacemaking to a friend or family member?

- d. Would you consider being involved as a primary participant in a future peacemaking case?
 - i. As a support person?
 - ii. As a Peacemaker?
- e. Other feedback for the program

Appendix B. Community Outreach

This section is intended to supplement the information included in Chapter 2.

Community Member Focus Groups In addition to the intensive outreach efforts made by program staff, research staff conducted two community focus groups—one in English and one in Spanish and English—during spring 2014, with the primary purpose of assessing community strengths and challenges. In interpreting the focus group results, it is important to remember that the sample is limited and may not be representative of the Near Westside population as a whole.¹² However, feedback heard during the focus groups generally corresponded to feedback Center for Court Innovation staff heard during kitchen table talks, community forums, and one-on-one discussions with community members.

In terms of community strengths, focus group participants reported a strong sense of community and discussed the helpfulness of their neighbors. One community member reported, “The good thing about [the neighborhood] is that if you look for help, there is help. There are people that will help you if you look for help.”

Participants in one of the groups also highlighted agencies and organizations working in the neighborhood as a community strength. While participants in the other group did not organically introduce the subject of local organizations, participants did respond positively when prompted. Local churches, the Spanish Action League, and La Casita Cultural Center were among the specific organizations mentioned as community assets.

Focus group participants had more to say about community problems than community strengths. Frequent disputes between neighborhood residents was one noted problem.

The people here are like this. I don't know if it's jealousy or what, but people want to fight you. People here fight a lot. In general... you see a lot of fighting. It is stupid little things. People give you dirty looks.

Nonresponse by police and miscommunication with police came up in both focus groups. Participants in both groups reported that police did little to help when they were called, particularly if the parties involved in any sort of fight or altercation were non-English speaking.

¹² A total of nine community members, including four members of one extended family and another three-person nuclear family, participated in the two focus groups.

The police here are very abusive. I had a problem, the police came, and because I didn't speak English, they believed the other person who started the problem because she spoke English.

Some people won't even do anything when they're being attacked, because they know the police will do nothing. They think they'll be attacked by the police instead of the police pursuing the real attackers.

Participants cited the need for Spanish-speaking officers or interpreters to serve the Near Westside neighborhood. Participants also noted a neighborhood culture against calling the police.

Participant #1: *If it's not your family, no one tells police anything.*

Participant #2: *People only tell [police] on family members.*

Participant #3: *It's like this. [If you call the police,] they'll call you a snitch. If it's your family, you can say whatever you want. No one will do anything.*

Though respondents reported reluctance to involve the police, participants in both groups also reported that crime was an issue in the Near Westside. Specifically, participants mentioned fighting and assault, drugs, mugging and robbery, and guns.

Participant #1: *Last summer, every weekend, people would drink a lot and shoot guns off in front of their house.*

Participant #2: *They have drive-bys and shoot their guns. Police pick up bullets, investigate, but [residents] won't say anything [to police].*

Participants reported taking precautions against being out past dark and walking alone at night. They suggested that adequate street lighting would improve public safety in the neighborhood; participants reported that missing streetlights, lights that are not working, and lights that are blocked by trees or buildings are common in the neighborhood. One respondent offered to work for the Peacemaking Project for free if the moderators could get more lights on her street, saying, “[More lights would] makes us feel safe. [Now,] at night someone can do something bad to you [and] you can't see their face because it's so dark.”

Vacant and neglected buildings were also noted as a community problem by participants in one focus group. One participant in that group had previous experience working as a building superintendent and two others were currently working as a landlord/superintendent team. All three reported that many landlords in the neighborhood neglected their buildings at the expense of

all Near Westside residents. Not only do the neglected buildings have daily consequences for those who live in the buildings, but the general sense of neglect posed by vacant and uncared for buildings pose public safety issues throughout the community.

One thing I see in this neighborhood itself is it's becoming more deteriorated. The problem is with people's sense of pride in their area. [Be]cause I lived down here when I was little, and it was a whole different neighborhood.

Participant #1: *What's going on now wasn't happening before.*

Participant #2: *There are a lot of empty houses... And I don't know. Sometimes landlords don't fix their own houses.*

Moderator: *What do the empty buildings or landlords not taking care of their buildings, what does that do to the neighborhood?*

Participant #2: *It attracts drugs addicts and bad people... People hide there to mug others passing by.*

Participant #1: *Women can't walk around by themselves.*

The participant who was a current landlord noted that the City of Syracuse is taking some steps to try to hold absentee and deadbeat landlords accountable.

Well, the city has started programs that if people that own a property don't pay their taxes, the land bank will take over that house. And then they resell it in the community for someone to purchase it to be their home or purchase it to rent out, but you've got to meet certain criteria if you go to purchase that home. Like, if you're a landlord and you want to purchase that land-bank property, you have to be current on your taxes and be current on all your registry and stuff with the city. So I think the city is at least putting forth some stuff in place, but it is going to take a while for that to switch over.

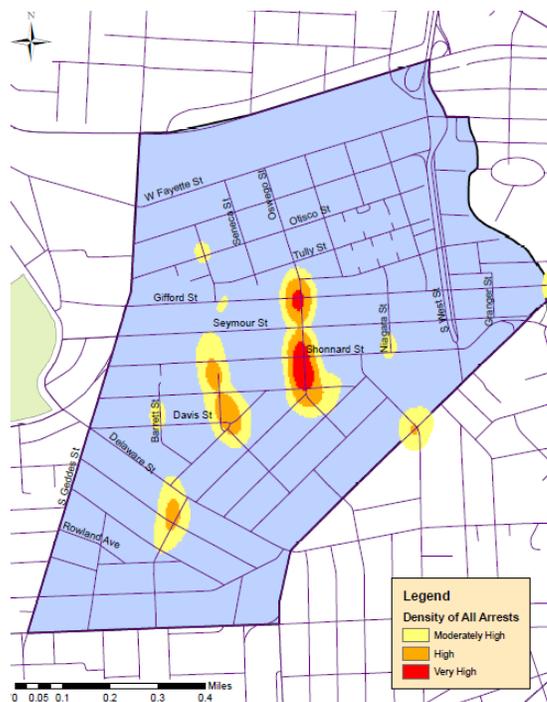
Finally, participants in one focus group—who have children currently in a neighborhood high school—talked a great deal about problems with fighting, bullying, and inadequate parental supervision in the schools.

The Westside is not a good area to raise children... There's a lot of abuse... there's bullying at [the high school]. Between the kids... Someone hit one of my daughter's friends the other day. They humiliate her ... They make her feel like she's worthless... And the teachers don't see it.

These participants talked extensively about the problem of a system where they feel teachers are not given the power to intervene in student altercations or are afraid to do so, where parents are uninvolved or, worse, encourage fighting and bullying between kids, and where fighting and bullying are normalized. They also discussed the problem of truancy and, suggested that much of this problem stemmed from uninvolved parents who did not talk to their children or know what their children were doing. The participants indicated a couple of problem spots—a bodega near the high school, the space behind the school itself—where truant kids could be found during school hours, smoking, fighting, and generally engaging in problem behavior.

Hotspot Mapping Hotspot mapping, required by the funder, was also completed. However, given the relatively small geographic span of the neighborhood, relatively low program referral, and the difficulties linking referrals to the specific areas of highest criminal activity, the program quickly adapted to incorporate the entire neighborhood into its catchment area. A crime density map is presented as Figure 1.

Figure 1. Density of Arrests in Syracuse’s Near Westside Neighborhood



Map reflects 2014 arrest data provided by the Syracuse City Police Department.

Appendix C. NWSPP Promotional Materials

NEAR WESTSIDE
PEACEMAKING
PROJECT

HOW CAN PEACEMAKING HELP ME?

What is Peacemaking?

Peacemaking is community-based conflict resolution. It brings together people who are in conflict, along with family and friends, to resolve problems in a peacemaking circle. All participants are treated equally and are allowed to speak. The purpose is to reach a consensus decision. The Near Westside Peacemaking Project is inspired by the Native American practice and our volunteers are trained by Native American peacemakers.

Who are the Peacemakers?

The Peacemakers are community volunteers who have completed an extensive training program. Being a peacemaker requires commitment to completing the training program, participating in peacemaking circles, and believing in a community's ability to resolve conflict.

What do I have to do?

You will need to complete an intake assessment with the program coordinator. The guidelines and procedures will be explained to you. Others affected by the dispute are not required to participate for peacemaking to be effective. If there are no barriers to peacemaking, and you agree to try peacemaking, you will be accepted into the program. Each peacemaking session lasts one to two hours. You may need to return for more than one peacemaking session. Everything spoken and experienced in peacemaking sessions is confidential.¹ The Peacemakers will encourage you to seek out meaningful healing steps and/or modes of repair. Once the peacemaking process is considered complete, the peacemaking coordinator will notify the referral source that the peacemaking process has concluded.

Where is the Program located?

The Near Westside Peacemaking Center is located at 601 Tully Street, first floor. Please contact the peacemaking coordinator, Lisa Vavonese, with any questions or concerns at (315) 266-4349 or vavonesl@courtinnovation.org.



¹ There are two exceptions to the rule of confidentiality: (1) reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment, and (2) imminent risk of serious harm to self/or others.

Near Westside Peacemaking Project

601 Tully Street | Syracuse, NY 13204 | (315) 266-4350 | www.courtinnovation.org
Like us on Facebook @nwspeacemaking | Follow us on Twitter @SyrPeacemaking

NEAR WESTSIDE
PEACEMAKING
PROJECT

Peacemaking is about **people**. Peacemaking is about **community**.
Peacemaking is about **changing lives**.

The Near Westside Peacemaking Project has two objectives: (1) Peacemaking, community-based conflict resolution, and (2) Take Back the Streets, a grassroots campaign aimed at promoting health and safety in the Near Westside neighborhood through collaboration among service providers and residents.

Peacemaking Program: Sam was arrested for misdemeanor assault. Latisha had persistent troubles with her neighbors. Neal was estranged from his family and living in a shelter for homeless teens. Each was referred to Peacemaking for help and participated in peacemaking circles with community members trained by Native American peacemakers to “talk it out” and move forward without conflict.

2016 Case Outcomes: Cases were referred by justice system stakeholders and community agencies.

- 26 cases accepted into peacemaking
- 87 peacemaking circles held
- 66 people in conflict
- 20 trained community members
- 35 community support people
- 70% of the cases accepted into peacemaking had positive outcomes



Take Back the Streets (TBTS): Launched in 2015, TBTS promotes community cohesion and resident leadership development in the Near Westside neighborhood. The campaign met its ambitious first-year goal of hosting 50 community events, including the mapping of broken streetlights, family movie nights, and 8 Kitchen Table Talks (informal conversations about neighborhood issues held in the homes of residents). Over 700 residents participated in these events. The Project became the lead coordinating agency of TBTS in early 2017.

315 L.I.F.T (Life Influencers Focusing Teens): In 2016, the Project partnered with Syracuse’s Good Life Foundation to launch a new initiative that combines life coaching, entrepreneurial mentorship, and peacemaking to divert youth from high-crime zip codes in Syracuse away from detention and probation.

For more information, email Lisa at VavonesL@courtinnovation.org

A Project of the Center for Court Innovation
601 Tully Street, Syracuse, NY 13204 | (315) 266-4350 | www.courtinnovation.org
Life us on Facebook @nwspeacemaking | Follow us on Twitter @SyrPeacemaking

Created 5/1/2017

NEAR WESTSIDE
PEACEMAKING
PROJECT

Y and J went from being friends to outright enemies in a matter of weeks...

Their arguments built until they were pulling hair, trailing each other home, hitting and spitting on the playground at their school. Other kids egged them on, instigating the fights and telling them that if they didn't fight, they weren't standing up for themselves. After a particularly bad fight, both girls were asked not to return to school and the police were contacted.

This is where the Near Westside Peacemaking Center stepped in. We brought together the two girls and their adults into a peacemaking circle and explained that there was a better way. We invited three community member peacemakers, people who know what it's like to grow-up in a rough neighborhood where not standing up for yourself is seen as weak.

And that's what Y and J needed. They needed adults who took them seriously. They needed community members who said, "We can help." They needed the grown-ups around them to say, "We hear you." And so they apologized. And their adults cried and hugged. And then the girls smiled and hugged. They agreed to stop the fighting. Y and J were allowed back to school. The police investigation would go no further.



Near Westside Peacemaking Project

601 Tully Street | Syracuse, NY 13204 | (315) 266-4350 | www.courtinnovation.org
Like us on Facebook @nwspeacemaking | Follow us on Twitter @SyrPeacemaking

N E A R W E S T S I D E
P E A C E M A K I N G
P R O J E C T

PEACEMAKING SESSIONS

<p>Food</p> <p>Opens with a meal to create a sense of community</p>	<p>Ceremony</p> <p>Creates sense of shared purpose</p>	<p>Talking Piece</p> <p>Equal opportunity speak</p>	<p>Healing Steps</p> <p>Consensus decision about future actions</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------

Near Westside Peacemaking Project

601 Tully Street | Syracuse, NY 13204 | (315)-266-4350 | www.courtinnovation.org

Like us on Facebook @nwspeacemaking | Follow us on Twitter @SyrPeacemaking

Center for Court Innovation

NEAR WESTSIDE
PEACEMAKING
PROJECT

Isn't This Mediation?

MEDIATION

- ✓ Issue-focused
- ✓ Neutral facilitator
- ✓ Limited to “parties”
- ✓ Seeks compromise
- ✓ Time-bound

PEACEMAKING

- ✓ Relationship-focused
- ✓ Interested facilitator
- ✓ Inclusive
- ✓ Seeks healing
- ✓ No time limits

Near Westside Peacemaking Project

601 Tully Street | Syracuse, NY 13204 | (315)-266-4350 | www.courtinnovation.org
Like us on Facebook @nwspeacemaking | Follow us on Twitter @SyrPeacemaking

Center for Court Innovation

Appendix D. NWSPP Logic Model

PROBLEM	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MEASURES
<p>The Near West Side (NWS) of Syracuse is a distressed neighborhood, with high levels of drug and violence crime, high poverty rates, and low-performing schools. Despite targeted outreach by law enforcement to curtail violent crime in the neighborhood, residents report continued concern about low-level, quality of life crimes (e.g., theft, property damage, vandalism, assault, burglary), which leave them feeling unsafe and impede community revitalization.</p>	<p>1) Creation of a neighborhood-based Peacemaking Center to enhance the community's capacity to address crime and disorder.</p>	1A) Site Selection	<p>Review possible sites with Home Headquarters; Select a facility to house the Peacemaking Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop list of site requirements/selection criteria • Site visits with architects and Home Headquarters • Annotated list of potential sites (proximity to residences, accessibility, square footage, etc.) • Final site for Peacemaking Center selected, lease signed with Home Headquarters
		1B) Site Planning and Construction	<p>Design the interior of the Center based on FORUM's Peace Making Pallet to promote cultural relevance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blueprints and documentation from FORUM Design Studio and UPSTATE • Community input/contributions received • Community input/contributions incorporated
			<p>Renovate and furnish the Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Peacemaking Center
		1C) Opening	<p>Open the Peacemaking Center for use by the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ribbon-cutting/opening ceremony and press release • # of cases referred to Peacemaking Center • Case characteristics for all cases referred (e.g., referral source, relationship of parties, case type) • # of cases resolved through the Peacemaking Center • Case characteristics for all cases resolved

PROBLEM	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MEASURES
Previous efforts to address the neighborhood's quality-of-life crime have met with limited success.	2) Empower the community to address crime and disorder through the development of a neighborhood-based peacemaking program.	2A) Peacemaker Selection and Training	Contract with peacemaking experts for training and mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with Navajo Nation Peacemakers • Contract with Onondaga Nation
			Identify and select community members to be trained as peacemakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of potential community member peacemakers identified
			Train community members as peacemakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of community member peacemakers trained • # of training hours/sessions
		2B) Policy Development	Identify target cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official records data for the target area (e.g., arrests, prosecution, court outcomes, school altercations/truancy) • # of community member focus groups conducted to identify community problems • # of community members included in focus groups
			Develop policies and procedures for the peacemaking program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and procedures manual
		2C) Community Engagement	Engage in a community outreach and education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and convene Steering Committee • # of Steering Committee meetings; # of members/agencies in attendance • # of community outreach events (e.g., town hall meetings, talks given to community groups, media advertising) • # of community members at outreach events
		2D) Case Intake	Open the peacemaking program for referrals from a broad range of sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of cases referred to Peacemaking Center • Case characteristics for all cases referred (e.g., referral source, relationship of parties, case type) • # of cases resolved through the Peacemaking Center • Case characteristics for all cases resolved
2E) Program Impact	Conduct focus groups with community members to discuss changing perceptions of community problems and experiences with peacemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of community member focus groups conducted • # of community members included in focus groups 		

PROBLEM	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MEASURES
<p>The type of low-level offenses prevalent in the NWS undermine the quality of life in the neighborhood and impede long-term community revitalization. These crimes make it difficult for the neighborhood to attract new homeowners, businesses, and investments.</p>	<p>3) Enhance existing neighborhood revitalization efforts through resident-driven community benefits project.</p>	3A) Community Partnerships	Formalize collaborations with partner agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and convene Community Benefits Task Force • # of Task Force meetings; # of members/agencies represented
		3B) Community Benefits Projects	Hire Community Benefits Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Benefits Coordinator CV, start date, job description
			Identify potential projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback received from community members during focus group • # of community benefits projects identified
			Organize projects throughout the NWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of community benefits projects undertaken • # of community benefits projects completed • # of community members participating in community benefits projects

Appendix E. NWSPP Referral Form

Case #: _____



Peacemaking Referral Form

Referral Source: _____ Name: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Peacemaking Participant Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Add. Peacemaking Participant Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Current Issue/Conflict (reason for peacemaking referral): _____

Affiliation with neighborhood: _____

Participant(s) agreed to peacemaking? Yes No

Screening Date: _____ Screener: _____

Appendix F. NWSPP Intake Assessment

N E A R W E S T S I D E
P E A C E M A K I N G
P R O J E C T

Initial Interview and Assessment Summary

Interview Date: _____ Referral Source: _____

Participant's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Preferred Method of Contact? _____

My name is _____ and I work with the peacemaking program. You have been asked to complete an assessment to see if the peacemaking program is a good fit. I ask everyone these questions in order to see if our program will be appropriate for them. If you have any questions please ask me along the way.

I want to take a minute or two to explain the basics of peacemaking, and then ask you some questions about yourself and what brought you to peacemaking. I want you to know that the information you give me will not be shared outside the program except for the confidentiality exceptions that I will explain to you. Generally, everything said in peacemaking is confidential except (1) serious risks to safety, or (2) child abuse or maltreatment. The program's confidentiality policy will be reviewed in detail at the end of our meeting today when I ask you to acknowledge and sign the confidentiality agreement.

Would you like to move forward?

Identifying Information:

1. How do you identify your gender? Male Female Transgender Other

2. How do you describe your race/ethnicity? _____

3. Have you served in the armed forces? _____

4. What is your primary language? _____

5. Marital Status? Never Married Married Divorced Separated

Employment:

- 1. Are you currently working? Yes No
- 2. If yes, Full time Part time
- 3. If no, are you looking for work? Yes No

Education:

- 1. Are you currently enrolled in school? Yes No
- 2. If yes, do you attend regularly? Yes No
If you do not attend regularly, why not? _____
- 3. What is the highest level of education you completed? _____

Living Arrangements:

- 1. What neighborhood do you live in? _____
- 2. Who do you reside with? _____
- 3. Do you have any children? Yes No
If yes, how many? Ages? _____
- 4. Do your children live with you? _____

Note for interviewer: When asking the questions below you should be screening for intimate partner domestic violence, drug/alcohol use, and mental health concerns. If any flags are raised, immediately notify your supervisor.

Current Conflict/ Case:

- 1. Who was involved?

2. What brought you to peacemaking? What led you to this situation?

Note for interviewer: Only ask bullet point questions that are relevant to the situation being presented to you. If “yes” response, add narrative content.

3. How do you feel about what happened?

- Did anything happen before the conflict occurred? Yes No
- Were the police or court involved? Yes No
- If police or court involved, how was your experience with them?

4. How do you feel about your relationship with the person involved?

- Have you ever asked for help or called the police about your relationship with this person? Yes No
- Have you ever felt afraid of this person? Yes No
- Has the other person ever threatened you or hurt you emotionally or physically? Yes No
- Do you have an order of protection against you or to protect you? Yes No
- Has there been any involvement with Child Protective Services? Yes No
- How do you feel about seeing this person? Talking with them about what happened?

5. What, if anything, would you like to do to resolve this conflict?

6. If, given the same circumstances again, would you do anything differently? If yes, what?

7. What concerns, if any, do you have about participating in peacemaking?

Mental Health: Have you ever been told, or thought to yourself, that you have a mental health problem? If so, have you ever received treatment? Is this a problem that has been bothering you lately? _____

Substance Use: Have you ever been told, or thought to yourself, that you have a drug or alcohol problem? If so, have you ever received treatment? Is this a problem that has been bothering you lately? _____

Is there anything else that may affect your participation in peacemaking? _____

Participant Preference:

1. Many people have spiritual or religious beliefs that shape their lives. Are there any beliefs or practices you would like to tell me about? _____

2. To whom do you turn to for support and guidance when faced with hard decisions or stressful times? Would it be helpful to have that person participate in peacemaking? _____

When are you available to attend peacemaking sessions?

Monday: morning afternoon evening

Tuesday: morning afternoon evening

Wednesday: morning afternoon evening

Thursday: morning afternoon evening

Friday: morning afternoon evening

Form Completed by: (print name) _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____