Youth Justice Committee Program

**YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER**

**ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & ESSENTIAL QUALITIES**

# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Youth Justice Committee is a “conference” process, legislated under Section 18 of the ***Youth Criminal Justice Act.***  It involves up to three community volunteers meeting with the young person, their parent(s)/guardian and the victim to discuss the offence, the harm caused, the impact to the victim and the community, and to work out ways to make amends for what they did.

Victim participation may include direct and indirect victims. Indirect victims are parties who have also been affected by the crime, such as loss prevention officers or school administrators and teachers. In cases where there is no victim participation, community volunteers will represent the interests of the victim and the community in the conference process.

# VOLUNTEER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Youth Justice Committee volunteer roles and responsibilities include:

* Conducting case development meetings with youth and victims to prepare them for the conferencing process
* Meeting with the Youth Justice Committee Program Coordinator and other Youth Justice Committee volunteers prior to the conference, to review the case and issues identified during intake or case development in preparation for the conference
* Facilitating the conference process
* Encouraging and supporting the dialogue between conference participants
* Acting as the voice of the victim and/or community where the victim is not present at the Youth Justice Committee conference
* Facilitating the negotiation of meaningful, relevant, timely, and proportionate “sanctions” for the youth to repair the harm caused
* Preparing a written Agreement outlining the assigned sanctions and instructions and timelines for completion
* Other duties as may be assigned by the Youth Justice Committee Coordinator

# ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A YJC VOLUNTEER

* Active listening and communication skills
* Ability to understand and work with resistance and resolve conflict
* Non-judgmental and impartial approach with no personal agenda for outcome of the conference
* Empathy and caring
* Facilitation skills, demonstrated by assisting the parties to hear and understand each other throughout the conference process
* Effective co-facilitation, sharing space and supporting co-facilitators
* Cultural sensitivity
* Ability to set boundaries by preventing harmful, threatening or destructive behaviour and language and creating an environment of calm, acceptance and safety
* Professionalism, by conveying to participants the competence and experience required to handle issues that arise
* Knowledge of individual cases, participant’s options, and the Criminal Justice System