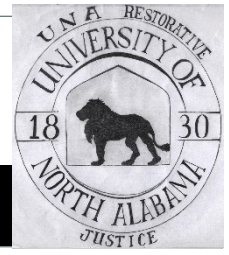


RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



UNA NEWSLETTER

EXPERIENCES IN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Personal experiences of Inside UNA Students

Story by UNA student:

“When I started this Restorative Justice (RJ) program, through the University of North Alabama, here at Limestone, I did not know what RJ was. I had heard of it before, but I did not understand it at all. I have always been interested in education, but before coming to prison, I simply could not afford it. This program is one opportunity for me to achieve something that I have always felt was out of reach for me, an education. The classes offered through the RJ program are serious classes that are taught by college professors that see people like me as students, nothing more or less.

RJ has helped me focus on things that are important to me. Things like values, which I have always had, but I did not understand them. This program has helped me identify the values that I had that were not ‘good’ values. It has helped me understand why I should care about what is important to me. RJ is a lifestyle, it is a choice. To be restorative, you

must be intentional, and to be intentional, you must be aware. Just helping me be aware of things about me, such as values, or what is important to me, has changed the way I think. I choose to no longer stumble around blindly, but to focus on who I want to be and intentionally walk in that direction. RJ has taught me how to better relate to people, actually listen to what is being said, see the good in someone, be focused on an outcome, regardless of the moment, and a myriad of other benefits that affect my everyday life, as well as the people around me.

All my life I have been self-centered. I have not always known this about myself, but it has always been true. RJ not only helps people understand how to become others-focused, but why it is important, for whom are the benefits, and what the benefits are. RJ teaches a person how to become an influencer. RJ teaches the value of communication. It helps a person build and hone the

WHY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

FOR THESE ARE ALL OUR CHILDREN. WE WILL ALL PROFIT BY, OR PAY FOR, WHATEVER THEY BECOME!

JAMES BALDWIN

JUSTICE

IN MATTERS OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LARGE AND SMALL PROBLEMS, FOR ISSUES CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF PEOPLE ARE ALL THE SAME!

ALBERT EINSTEIN

HEALING

HURT PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE. HEALED PEOPLE HEAL PEOPLE!

skills that are required to be a good communicator!”

Story by UNA student:

“What has Restorative Justice done for me so far?”

When we first started our first semester of last year, 2022, Introduction to Restorative Justice, I only knew but a few concepts of what RJ really meant. I had previously been introduced to the values aspect of RJ in a non-teaching way. Meaning, these concepts were taught under another program perception. While being in the college course, it has helped me understand those terms, definitions and the pillars that RJ is founded on.

Learning RJ now makes you go back over your life and upbringing, you find out that a lot of those teachings that was taught to you at a young age, tend to somewhat run into each other because of the moral aspect of the value that was taught, not realizing it is restorative. When applying the RJ practices to your life and in your very own walk

throughout life, the restorative practices help ground you in life and grounds your thinking, maturity level. You start to learn different aspects of communication and different forms of self-help, for instance, with doing self-inspections. Your family begins to notice the change in your talk and the way you communicate with them. Not only that, the people around you begin to notice the change in your appearance, your walk and your talk, and your association. People, as well as Officers tend to respect you on more levels, a lot of times, because they have witnessed themselves, the change in you and your attitude. People will notice you and oftentimes, you will find yourself answering questions pertaining to RJ or how, if possible, the next class is available.

Don’t get me wrong, there are a lot of advantages in taking this college course and having a Higher Education in Prison. It will not be easy and you will have to work hard toward reaching the greater goal of living

restoratively, to be able to pass on the torch that will be passed on to you. The world is starting to recognize RJ; however, WE are the ones that can make a difference in Alabama!”

(PARADIGM SHIFT)

“A person can tell the truth as he knows it, but be mistaken in what he knows!”

It’s safe to say that we are all products of our experiences. However, while our experiences are our personal truths, they may not equate actual facts. In other words, just because we believe something, usually with conviction, does not make what we believe factual. We, as incarcerated individuals, must be willing to challenge our beliefs. If not, we could be doomed to repeat the same behavioral patterns that led us to be incarcerated in the first place!