

*How can we build on
our collective strengths*



*to create a restorative
community?*

*On June 4-6, 2012, forty people who live
gathered at the Portiuncula Center in Frankfort, IL to learn the Art of Hosting Conversations That Matter.
Together, we explored the hope and the possibility for sustainable restorative justice in the south suburbs.*

This document presents a “harvest” of the ideas, concepts, concerns, shared joys, obstacles, and future visions that emerged from our conversations and practices. Retreat participants identified three core themes that defined those three days: **coming together**, **learning together**, and **lighting and tending the fire together**. This harvest document provides a glimpse into our process, a sampling of the practices we are using to make Stone Soup, and some of the key questions raised by the group. We offer it as a reminder for Stone Soup participants of the fire that is burning in all of us and as an encouragement to others interested in creating sustainable change through restorative practices.



Welcome to the Stone Soup Project

The Stone Soup Project is a community-led initiative to build and expand **restorative justice practices** in the **south suburbs of Cook County** to reduce delinquency and increase positive youth development. The Stone Soup Project is funded by the United Methodist Church of Evergreen Park (UMCMG, Inc.) and guided by the Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Project (IBARJP) in collaboration with the South Suburban Restorative Justice Coalition (SSRJC) and many other organizations. Our ultimate vision is one where south suburban communities co-create and act on their own visions for **widespread, sustainable restorative justice in their communities**.

Why “Stone Soup?” The work we’re doing in the South Suburbs reminds us of the story of Stone Soup and its moral that, when we work together, especially in a time of scarce resources, we can create something wonderful and nourishing for all! **To read the fable of Stone Soup, visit our Facebook page:** on.fb.me/N2mgi6

Where we’ve been Members of Stone Soup gathered dozens of times in the first year of the Project to learn about restorative justice, share their thoughts and hopes for the south suburbs, and begin to build a vision for Stone Soup. Gatherings included informational sessions, Appreciative Inquiry interviews, Core Team meetings, RJ demonstrations, and more. This culminated in our largest gathering yet: the Art of Hosting Retreat, where participants learned how to host group processes that generate connection and release wisdom within groups of people. With the help of seasoned trainers Chris Corrigan, Tuesday Ryan-Hart, Kelly McGowan, and Chris Foster, the group learned about this process guiding the Stone Soup Project, held meaningful dialogues that inspired change, and learned to host conversations that matter. **For more information on the Art of Hosting, visit:** www.artofhosting.org

Restorative justice (RJ) maintains that those who have a stake in an offense must be involved to the extent possible (victim, offender, and community). When guided by evidence-based practices, stakeholders can collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.

Hosting is an emerging set of practices for facilitating group conversations of all sizes, supported by principles that maximize collective intelligence, welcome and listen to diverse viewpoints, maximize participation and civility, and transform conflict into creative cooperation.

Coming together

The Harvest Team invited written responses to our guiding questions...

**Exploring our
connections,
building
relationships,
discovering
possibilities
together**



Guiding Question:

What's the possibility that you hold? How does your object speak to this possibility?

Many of our conversations were held in Circle around a **center** made up of meaningful tokens and words offered by each of us. These demonstrated our **purpose**—why we are called to do the work we do—and **what's possible** if we work together. The center of the Circle grounded us by reminding us of our common goal during all three days: to build a safe and restorative future for our youth in the south suburbs.



What's possible? This question carried us throughout the Retreat and is clearly something that drives Stone Soup participants in the work they do and lives they lead. The responses to our first Check-in Circle generated an improvised **poem**, as well as a **Wordle** (or word cloud) made of the words that we used to describe what's possible.



What brings us here?

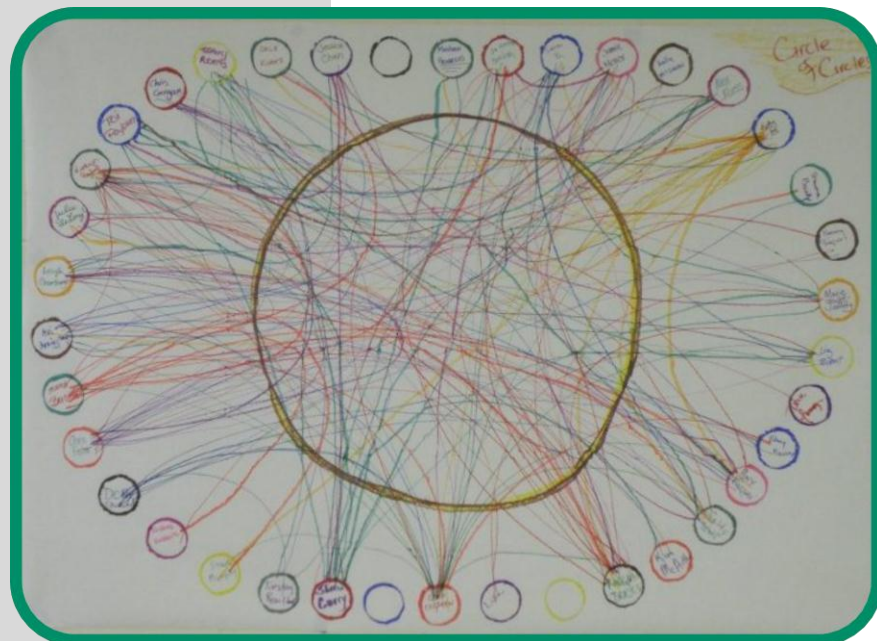
Our Check-in Poem

There is a possibility
that we will be loud and proud
strong long voices for restorative choices
a family created from the voices
that call, the soft and the small
the voices of all those
who stop and think, link youth
with peers and others, free of the fears
that smother their talents.

Keep reading: goo.gl/a6Ddu

How are we connected?

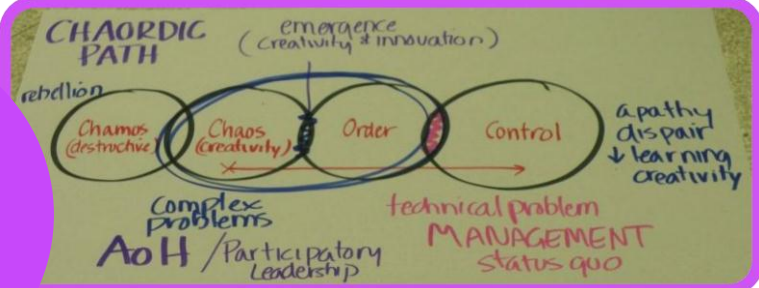
The **connections chart** activity shown here was a way for people to visualize their connections to one another. Participants drew lines to all those they were connected to and wrote how they were connected. As you can see, this shows how **interconnected** we really are!



Learning together

We know that when we **learn together**, we understand how to **work** together. During the Retreat, our trainers offered wisdom through teaches and texts. But mostly, we learned about the philosophies and methodologies of AoH by **practicing** them.

Practicing methods for convening and engaging others in restorative justice



How do we solve complex problems? How do we lead change when the world around us is in a constant state of flux? Chris Foster provided a teach on the **Chaordic Path** as a model for navigating our chaotic world and co-creating truly innovative solutions.

The Chaordic Path suggests that we:

- Appreciate **chaos** as a positive force for innovation and change
- Realize that sustainability requires **adaptability**
- Create the conditions for creativity by **balancing** chaos with just enough order (e.g., structure, good process, etc.)
- Engage a **diversity** of perspectives (e.g., youth, adults, law enforcement, teens) and deep participation to figure it out together

The **Four Fold Practice** was explained by Chris Corrigan, who invited us to explore how these practices already show up in our lives. The four essential practices for hosting conversations that matter include:

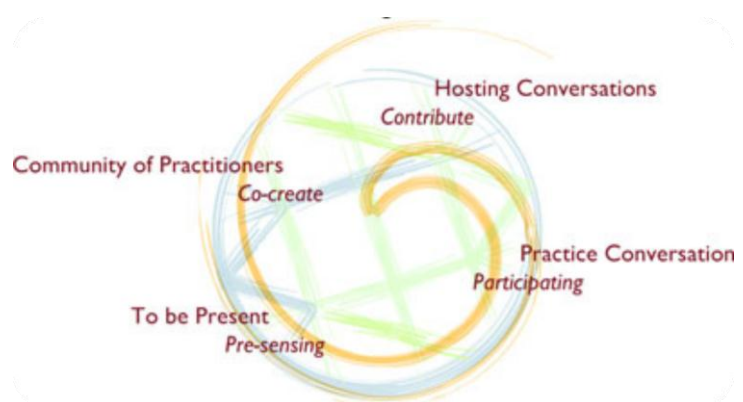
1. **Be present.** Host yourself first. Be willing to endure chaos. Keep the possibilities open.
2. **Practice conversations.** Be willing to listen fully, respectfully, and without judgment. "Curiosity and judgment can't live within the same mind."
3. **Host conversations.** Be courageous, inviting and initiating powerful questions.
4. **Co-create.** Become a community of practice by co-hosting with others in partnership.



Watch the video:
goo.gl/0NVmL



Watch the video:
goo.gl/KGW3b





Watch the video:
goo.gl/n79Ee



We learned the theory of **Co-Revelation** from Tuesday Ryan-Hart and Kelly McGowan. Co-revelation is described as a "river" that flows back and forth between the truth of commonality and the truth of difference, both being necessary and relevant to the work we do and the people we work with. Key practices within this theory include extending grace to ourselves and others, honoring differences, working in multiplicity, developing a "safe enough" space, reconceptualization of power, and shared work.

The group reflected on what parts of Co-revelation we found most important and relevant to our work:

- What does it take to host grace? And how do I maintain my own grace and motivation?
- What is the possibility of diving into shared work?
- Multiplicity means including my story
- How can I use my story to serve our work?
- How do we give grace to ourselves and others?
- Unlearning things we have already learned
- We stand in the middle of truth and commonality; embrace the difference and the commonality



Watch the video:
goo.gl/vw3oK

Kelly taught us **Divergence and Convergence**,

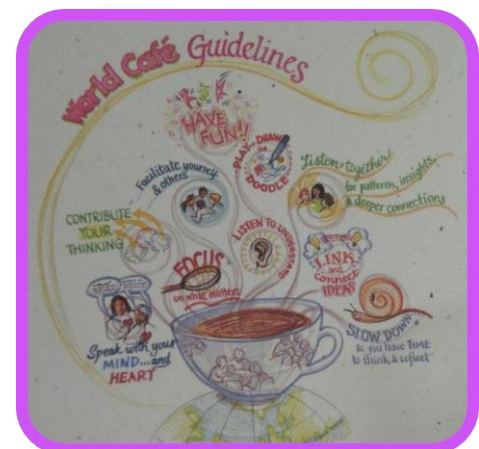
a model that reminds us of the importance of deepening our conversations to explore all possibilities (divergence) before narrowing them down and taking action (convergence). This represents a shift from the mindset of solving the "problem" immediately, using solutions we already know that produce familiar outcomes, to **being in inquiry** and experiencing what we call **the "I-don't-know"** before moving forward into innovative action.

These models set the foundation for us to learn core Art of Hosting **processes** for inviting and holding the conversations we need to have in our communities. These processes included:

World Café, in which participants move among conversations at tables to create a living network of **collaborative dialogue** around questions that matter in real-life situations. A team of Retreat attendees designed and hosted the café, developing questions to help our group further explore the **possibilities** that were already emerging for our shared work.

Open Space Technology, which allows participants to call conversations around questions relevant to their work. Retreat attendees helped answer one another's questions about their work in the south suburbs using our diverse experiences and collective wisdom.

Pro-Action Café, in which participants have action-oriented conversations around their burning questions. Nine Retreat attendees invited the rest of the group to engage in conversations around their specific restorative projects in the south suburbs.



On the last day of the Retreat, our hosts offered **Knowledge Camps**—sessions that provide in-depth learning about additional core Art of Hosting practices. Below are the sessions and three takeaways from each session:



Dialogue Basics

Chris Foster

- Dialogue is a way of being in conversation that emphasizes “both/and” rather than “either/or” thinking.
- Dialogue encourages inquiry and curiosity over advocacy and certainty.
- Dialogue supports deep listening and reflection that surfaces judgments, assumptions, and the greater wisdom that connects and holds diverse perspectives.

Cynefin: A framework for understanding complexity

Chris Corrigan

- Working in the complex domain is completely different from the simple/complicated domain.
- Small safe to fail probes are the way to move ahead in the complex domain.
- Evaluate as you go in complexity—summative evaluation is a trap.



Invitation and Powerful Questions

Tuesday Ryan-Hart

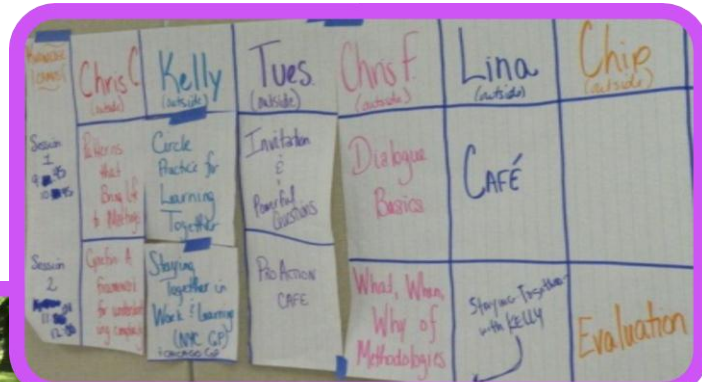
- Invitation is an ongoing process and practice, not a document. We're never done inviting!
- People grow in the direction of the questions we ask—make sure the direction is a good one!
- Crafting questions with a partner is so, so, so helpful. Others can help us make our questions more powerful and relevant.



Patterns that Bring Life to Meetings

Chris Corrigan

- Not all patterns work in all situations. Be sensitive to the context.
- The right pattern applied lightly might make all the difference.
- The cards are a useful tool for prompting creative thinking in design.



Staying together in Work and Learning – NYC and Chicago Communities of Practice

Kelly McGowan and Lina Cramer

- CoPs are a great way to practice the tools, continue learning, and connect to global practitioners.
- Everyone is invited to join the Illinois Art of Hosting Community.
- Everyone is invited to join the Art of Hosting listserv. Contact [Lina Cramer](#)

Lighting & tending the fire together

Engaging in conversations about what's possible regarding restorative justice in the south suburbs

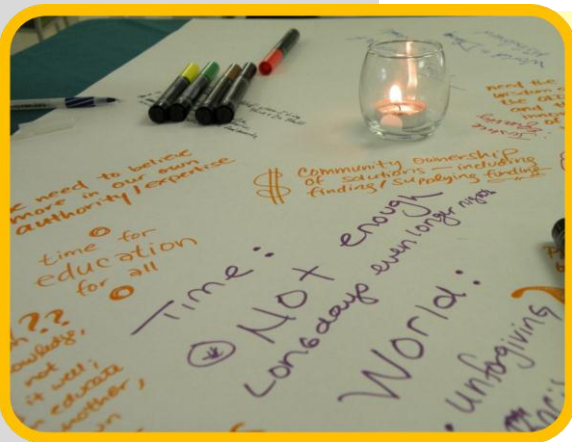
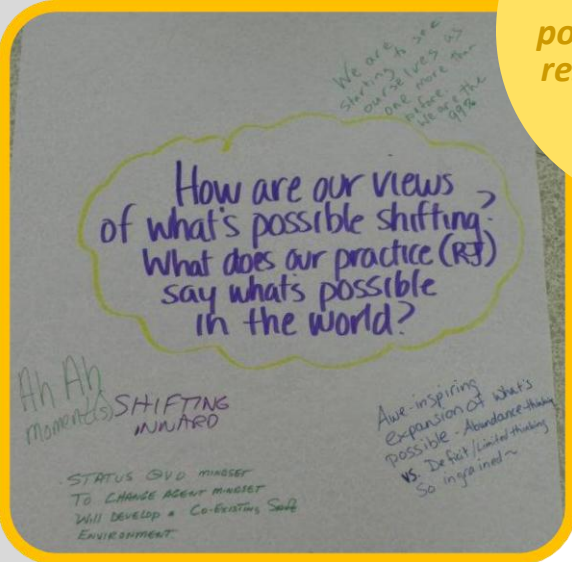
While learning Art of Hosting methods throughout the Retreat, we thought deeply about how to **apply** our learning to our restorative work. We shared ideas about how we might **maintain our momentum** and begin to **engage our communities** in conversations that will generate wise action. Art of Hosting processes like World Café, Open Space Technology, and Pro-Action Café made it possible to have these initial conversations with each other around the possibilities for restorative justice in the south suburbs.

These were the **World Café** questions designed by a team of Retreat attendees to guide our table conversations:

- **Rounds 1 & 2:** What time is it in our world?
- **Harvest Round:** What surprises, insights, and patterns are you noticing?

- **Round 3:** What opportunities and dilemmas are starting to emerge?
- **Harvest Round:** What becomes possible together that we can't achieve alone?
- **Reflection:** As a result of our conversations, what are 3-4 things that are alive for us now? What do we want to remember as we move forward?

See the next page for Café responses!



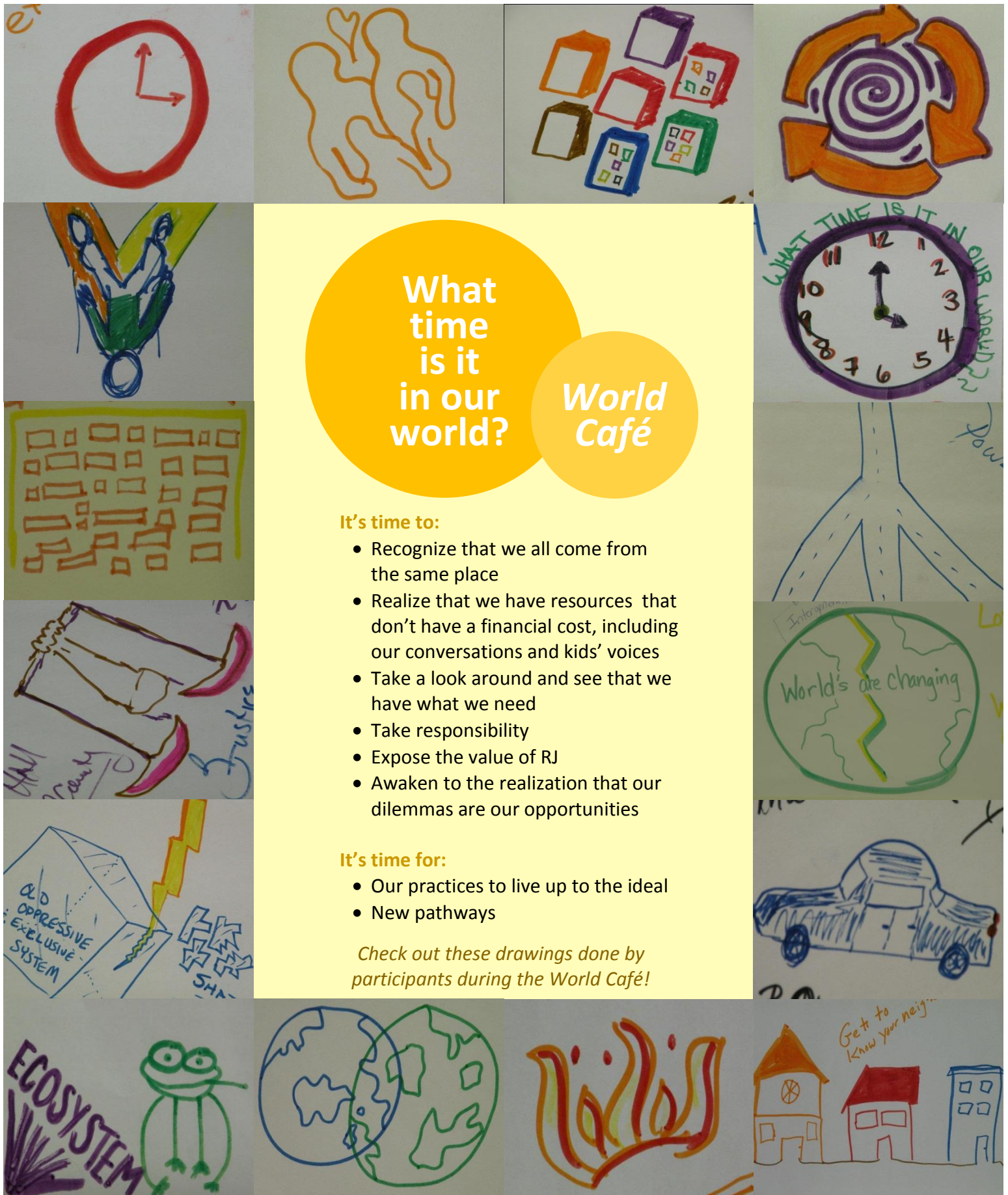
By continuing these conversations, we're keeping the fire burning together...



These were the **Open Space Technology** sessions called by Retreat participants:

- How do we teach grace in the workplace?
- How will we develop teams to spark community conversations?
- How do we keep our conversation alive?
- At what age should RJ be introduced?
- As a host, how do we get the community involved in the cause?
- How do we get RJ in schools and communities?
- How do we involve youth?
- How can we experience a live demo of a RJ activity?
- Who will we have our next conversations with?
- What resources and timeline do we need to bring those at the margins into conversations that can bring about change?
- How do we invite more grace upon ourselves?





What
time
is it
in our
world?

World
Café

It's time to:

- Recognize that we all come from the same place
- Realize that we have resources that don't have a financial cost, including our conversations and kids' voices
- Take a look around and see that we have what we need
- Take responsibility
- Expose the value of RJ
- Awaken to the realization that our dilemmas are our opportunities

It's time for:

- Our practices to live up to the ideal
- New pathways

Check out these drawings done by participants during the World Café!

Wicked Question: If we have everything we need...

...why aren't we connected to it?

We held a **Pro-Action Café** to begin having action-oriented conversations around our burning questions. Nine participants invited the rest of the group to engage in conversations around specific questions relevant to restorative work in the south suburbs. The focus question for the Café was: **What work would you like the collective wisdom of this group to help you with?** These conversations focused on keeping our momentum, deciding what comes next, and planning how to apply what we'd learned from the Retreat.



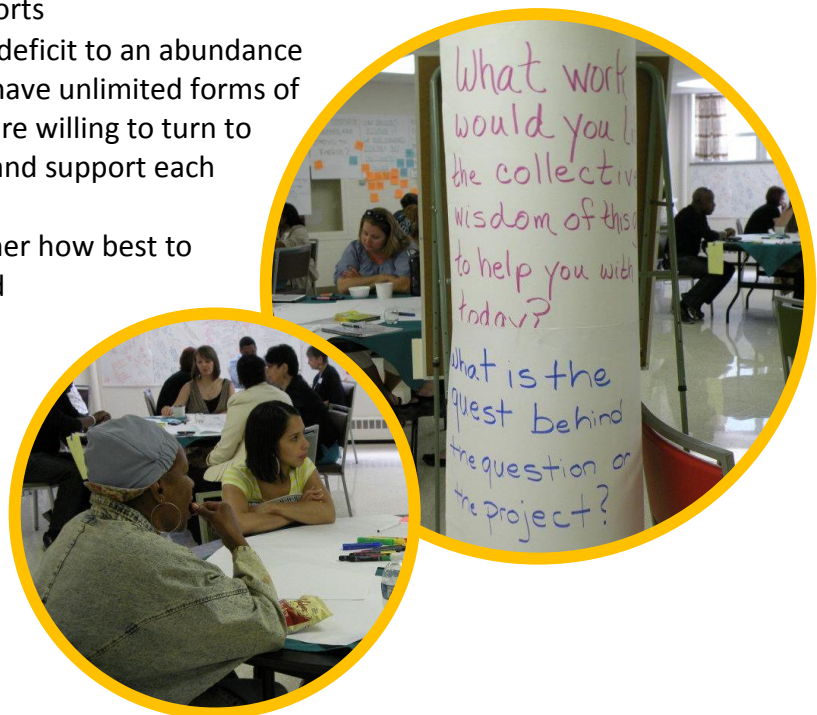
Hosts and Their Questions:

- **Chris** What's next/ emerging for Stone Soup?
- **Jamie** How can we get the community to volunteer?
- **Joanne** Setting up projects to integrate women back into the community from jail using knitting/ crocheting?
- **Avi** How do we promote or market RJ to impact the criminal justice system, especially concerning youth?
- **Charli** How do we bring RJ to the Calumet City Faith-Based Community?
- **Tiffany** How could we get the whole community on board?
- **Shaun** Violence prevention
- **Kathy** How can the city of Markham become a restorative justice city?
- **Miles** How can we create a positive environment at SPEED?

The Pro-Action Café was a great opportunity for the group to pool its wisdom on how the Stone Soup Project itself should continue to grow. Chris Foster, AoH trainer and IBARJP Team member, asked, **What's next/emerging for Stone Soup?**

Here are some group responses:

- Continue to support formal and informal networks of interested stakeholders at all levels
- Continue to convene conversations with broad and diverse stakeholder groups
- Convene Community of Practice gatherings for anyone interested in restorative justice to foster connections, learn together, support each other, and provide more training
- Identify common opportunities and needs across individual community or organizational efforts and focus our collective efforts there; follow the energy
- Redefine "community partners" to mean anyone who self-identifies with Stone Soup; community partners will support each other in their various RJ efforts
- Move from a deficit to an abundance mindset; we have unlimited forms of support if we're willing to turn to one another and support each other
- Decide together how best to move forward



There's more

to our harvest...

As we left the Retreat, we knew we would continue to be *in inquiry* together and hold the following *burning questions*:

- What does it mean to be a Community Partner? And what does this mean for how we support one another in our various restorative pursuits?
- What are the conversations that we need to be having, and with whom?
- How do we continue to strengthen our relationships and connections with each other?
- If we have all the resources we need, why aren't we utilizing them?
- How do we expand our capacity to offer RJ in the south suburbs?
- How do we continue to build our individual and collective capacity to engage community stakeholders?
- How do we continue to learn together? What might a Community of Practice look like?

"The animals of Harmony were a happy, if diverse, bunch..."

During Retreat itself, our volunteer Harvest Team developed ways of preserving and deepening the many enduring questions and preliminary conclusions that emerged from those three days. This included a **fable** that captures the spirit of Stone Soup and a **slideshow** of photos taken at the Retreat.

Check out the many great things that came out of the Stone Soup Art of Hosting Retreat!



click: goo.gl/ICbon

9:16

Raegan reads "Living in Harmony," a fable about the power of community



click: goo.gl/6kody

4:25

The Art of Hosting Retreat Harvest Slideshow



click: goo.gl/AwRth

"Are You Hosting?" check-in song (Day 3)

The Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter

Presented by: Lisa Pickens and Mildred Andaluz
click: goo.gl/Rt2AH

See what one team learned from their participation at the Retreat!

Stay up-to-date with Stone Soup and connect with others by visiting us online:



facebook.com/stonesoupproject



twitter.com/stonesoup_ss

The Art of Hosting Retreat was both a **culminating** point for Year One of the Project and a **launching** point for Year Two. Greater clarity about the **possibilities** for restorative justice in the south suburbs, stronger relationships and **connections**, and increased **knowledge**, skills, and aspirations for moving forward together are just a few of things that we've taken from these three days. With a strengthened **commitment** to engage **youth** in our efforts, we enthusiastically return to our families, workplaces, and communities to bring **restorative practices** more fully to the south suburbs.