

Wanted: Justice Seekers

Polk County Attorney Kimberly Graham seeks people who:

- Want to help repair the harm done to crime victims and communities.
- Will give offenders a second chance.
- Believe in the transformational power of conversation.

If this sounds like you, please consider volunteering as a Community Representative.

Community Representatives engage with an offender in a restorative dialogue. In many cases, a judge orders a criminal defendant to meet with a victim. However, in cases in which the victim does not want to meet or there is no identifiable victim, a Community Represented Dialogue is a better option.

These conversations take place over Zoom, typically take 30-45 minutes, and are led by a facilitator. Community Representatives can ask offenders such questions as:

- “Did you ever consider the harm that your actions might cause?”
- “How do you think the criminal act affected the victims, the community, or yourself?”
- “What insights do you have as a result of your actions?”
- “What are you doing to better yourself and prevent this from happening again?”

As Walt Whitman (and more recently, Ted Lasso) said, “Be curious, not judgmental.” We believe people should be held accountable for their actions but not be defined by their mistakes.

The Polk County Attorney’s Office has held hundreds of these dialogues since October 2023. Facilitators and Community Representatives have reported powerful interactions with people who open up, express remorse, and begin the process of change.

An individual who was convicted of a crime sent this after a dialogue with a facilitator and Community Representative:

“Thanks again for meeting with me and all that you do for the community. I have an entirely new perspective from going through this. Most importantly, it’s transformative to see the kind souls that help behind the scenes and still show love even when at the lowest points of life for another human.”

Interested? Please contact the Polk County Attorney’s Office at 515-286-3110 or ctyatty@polkcountyiowa.gov Volunteers will receive a 90-minute training session and feedback from facilitators. We ask that volunteers commit to at least six dialogues a month.