



# PALISADES

## CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

### Restorative Justice Peer Mediation Class

This course is an A-G approved UCCI (University of California Curriculum Integration) course offered for the first time at PCHS this year. The course description specifies:

"In this course, students will examine the roles of social workers, mediators, advocates, and law enforcement officers as peacekeepers and problem solvers in society. Students will begin with an introspective look at themselves and inner workings of the human brain as it pertains to conflict and conflict resolution and then utilize this knowledge as they explore the ideology that drives careers in various fields of public service. Throughout the course, students will develop a deeper understanding of the specific requirements and physical and emotional demands that are unique to these career fields. Students ultimately apply the knowledge they gain throughout the course by participating in service learning projects that require them to move beyond the classroom in their outreach efforts."

What this means for Pali during our pilot year is that we are training another group of mediators on a deep and multi-faceted level to not only be effective on-campus Peer Mediators but also consider the various paths they may ultimately take, both in college and in their professional lives. Professional mediation is a rapidly growing field and many universities now have Mediation and Conflict Resolutions as majors.

During the year, the students will meet with many professionals whose jobs revolve around the concepts of Restorative Justice and Conflict Resolution. Currently, we have scheduled visits from an LAPD Police Detective, a Federal Judge, a spokesman from Homeboy Industries, Scott Martin, who trained our last group of Peer Mediators and works with Mediators Beyond Borders, and a Professional Mediator whose daughter, Emily Gross, is currently in our Restorative Justice class.

In addition, our current students are observing mediations that we are conducting on campus involving their peers both as disputants and as Peer Mediators.

Our **Peer Mediators** are one of the growing student leadership groups on campus. Some mediators are also in other groups, so there is overlap and interaction, and Peer Mediation is represented in Justice League as well. The Dean's Office has also embraced Restorative Justice and we collaborate regularly on situations that are often most effectively addressed through mediation instead of traditional methods of discipline.

In addition, academic counselor **Heather Schon** is working on her Master's in Negotiation, Conflict Resolution and Peace Building and is tracking through data the long-term efficacy of Peer Mediation. Heather is also certified with the DRPA (Dispute Resolutions Program Act) and **Holly Korbonski** is in the process of obtaining this same certification.



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The California **Association Of Student Councils** endorses **Restorative Justice** programs:

### PROVEN RESULTS

- The California Conference for Equality and Justice has found that the implementation of restorative justice has greatly decreased the number of fights, bullying, suspension, and expulsion.
- A study by Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice found that the implementation of restorative justice reduces the number of youth recidivism from 50% to 31%.
- Schools in Peoria, Illinois, have implemented dialogue circles as a form of restorative justice and now has a result of 35% decrease in referrals to detention.
- In Merced, California, six schools have implemented restorative justice and experienced a decrease in suspension ranging from 20% to 40%.
- In California, youth recidivism is proven to be lowered by restorative justice from 90% to approximately 10-30%.
- Restorative justice has been proven to lower dropout rates, which decreases the chances of students becoming financially troubled or conducting a crime. This will save schools countywide approximately \$120,000 per year.