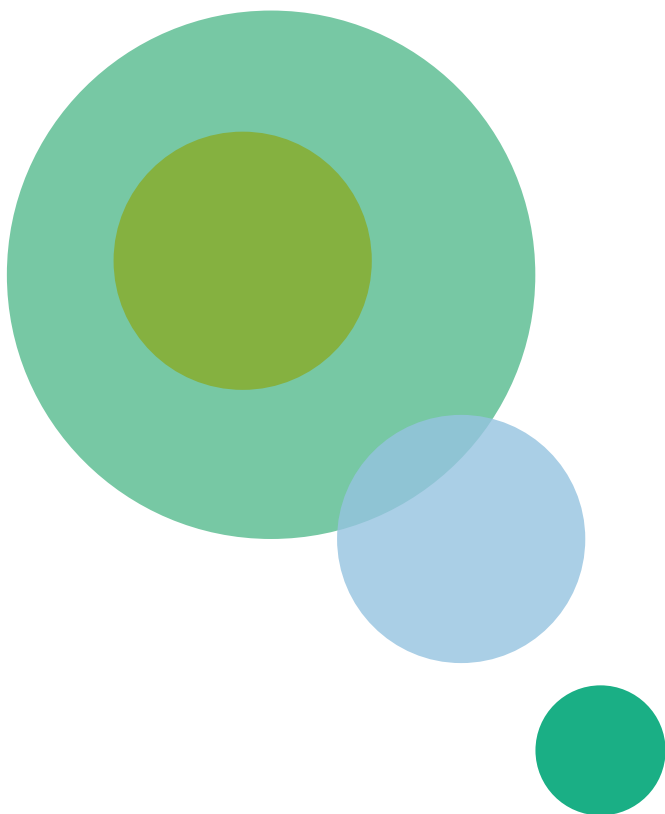


CREATIVE RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021





Creative Response to Conflict

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CRC Mission

Creative Response to Conflict's mission is to educate individuals and groups to transform conflict into positive and constructive experiences toward a just and peaceful world.

CRC History

Creative Response to Conflict (CRC) has educated teachers, young people, and communities to constructively address conflict and prevent and repair harm for nearly 50 years. Our trainings have helped break the cycle of violence and punitive discipline, encouraged student growth, and strengthened and transformed hundreds of schools in large, racially and economically diverse school districts in the New York Metropolitan Area.

Founded in New York City in 1972, funded by the Quaker Project on Community Conflict, and a program of the Peace and Social Action Program of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), our initial focus was providing nonviolent conflict resolution skills to children at the youngest possible age. We went on to expand our work to include people of all ages in schools, organizations, and communities.



CRC THEMES

Cooperation skills are essential in today's collaborative school and workplace environments. CRC cooperation activities build group spirit, support team building, and help participants learn the skills they need to work together towards positive common goals.

Communication skills are fundamental to productive interactions. CRC communication activities provide practice and foster skills in listening, speaking, and observation. CRC's participatory and interactive approach develops oral language skills while literacy connections support reading and writing.

Affirmation builds on cooperation and communication to help participants feel positive about themselves and others. CRC's approach validates each individual's contribution and highlights strengths and commonalities.

Conflict Resolution principles frame conflict as an expected, natural part of life and a pathway to growth, learning, and connection. CRC conflict resolution activities help participants expand their "toolbox" of strategies for responding to conflict. Skills include de-escalating conflict, looking at others' points of view, and developing win-win/fair-fair solutions.

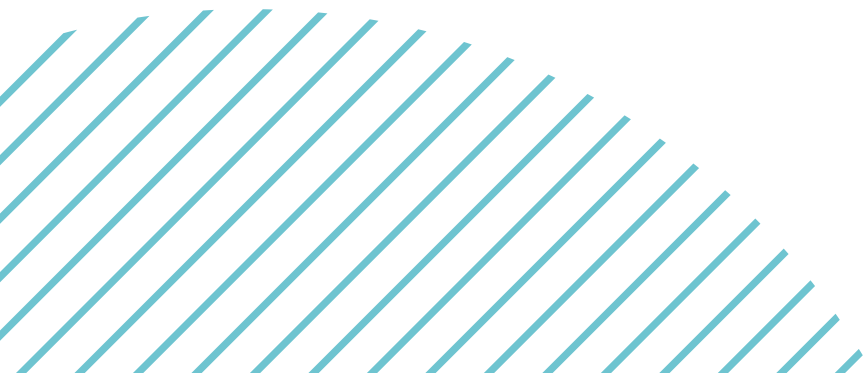
Creative Problem-Solving skills enable participants to generate creative solutions to conflict. CRC problem-solving activities develop critical thinking capabilities for fluency, flexibility, and elaboration as well as creativity and imagination.

Bias Awareness / Anti-Bias, including anti-racism, is key in understanding and responding to conflict. CRC activities create a safe environment in which participants explore and celebrate their cultures, examine power differentials, identify personal, cultural, and institutional forms of oppression, and develop strategies to effectively respond to discrimination.

Mediation is an approach in which facilitators help those in conflict communicate about a problem and develop creative solutions. CRC has helped many schools establish peer mediation programs, an approach shown to be useful in improving school climate and reducing disciplinary referrals.

Creative Response to Bullying incorporates a range of strategies appropriate to a wide variety of bullying situations. CRC's holistic approach takes into account the needs of bullies, those they bully, and bystanders, as well as issues of power imbalance and bias. Both prevention and intervention are addressed.

Restorative Practices are intervention measures CRC uses to create and sustain supportive environments. Our staff incorporates circle keeping practices at a school-wide level to build students' empathy and self-regulation, support teachers' classroom management, and nurture positive school culture by cultivating a growth mindset.



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Judith Meikle, *Conflict Resolution Facilitator*

Terry Murray, *Professor, SUNY New Paltz*

Dr. Barbara Nagle, *Professor and Author of Conflict and Resolution*

Lori Santo, *Program Officer, Frieda Grove Program / Robert Woods Johnson Foundation*

**In memoriam.* CRC mourns the loss of Richard Deats, former Creative Response to Conflict Board President and Advisor. Deats was Editor of Fellowship Magazine at Fellowship of Reconciliation and a life-long advocate for nonviolence and justice. We are grateful for his years of devotion to CRC.



CRC Staff

Priscilla Prutzman, *Co-Founder & Executive Director*

Tara Fishler, *Director of Learning & Development*

Karen Heuer, *Office Coordinator*

Elizabeth Roberts, *Director of Programs & Communications*

2020-2021 INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

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Kathryn Aschliman
Carolyn Ashton
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Mary Tyszkiewicz
Caroline Besse Webster
Loren Weybright
Barbara Wright
Jeanne Yurk



2020-2021 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

American Arbitration Association

Cornell Cooperative Extension/PATH

JAMS Foundation/JAMS-ACR

Lindley Murray Fund/NY Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

Satyagraha Fund/RSF Social Finance

United Way of Rockland

Wallace/Daniels Fund

2020-2021 PROGRAM REPORT

OVERVIEW

CRC provides customized workshops to public and private schools (K-12), colleges, faith-based and non-profit organizations, community groups, and businesses. Our workshops focus on resolving conflict, restorative practices, bullying prevention and intervention, social-emotional learning, communication, problem-solving, and bias awareness (including anti-racism and LGBTQ+ awareness). Young children, teens, and adults participate in our workshops which are largely experiential. Our trained facilitators use interactive activities, cooperative games, and role-playing that help build skills in handling the many kinds of conflicts individuals face throughout their lives.

CRC continues to expand its restorative practices work in schools throughout the New York Metropolitan Area. We've worked extensively in New York City Schools and schools in Rockland and Orange counties.

We foster healthy relationships through the use of community-building circles, and training school staff in the use of re-entry and

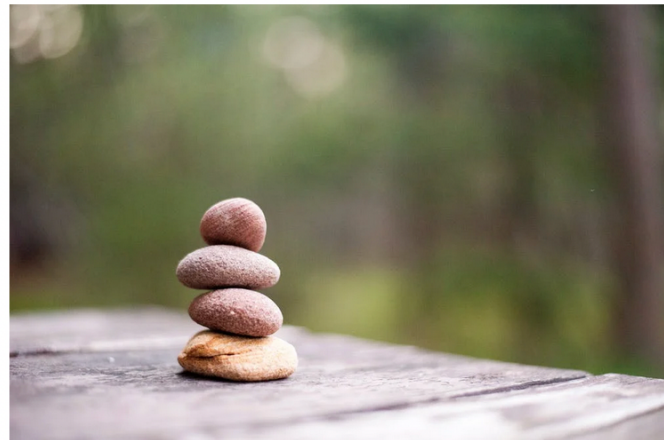


Photo by Nicolazzi Xiong courtesy of Pexel

conflict circles to address disciplinary issues in more restorative ways.

We conduct restorative circles to address community-building and harm-repair for groups. Our restorative work includes circles to support people in prison and in re-entry.

We provide mediation for family, elder, workplace, and community disputes. We also offer workshops on preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. CRC offers workshops for families dealing with separation or divorce to support peaceful change in family dynamics. We provide a safe space for mediation, confrontation, argument, strong emotion, and discussion of uncomfortable subject matter.

Many of our workshops and trainings take place in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. We also present at conferences around the U.S. and internationally, including at peace and nonviolence conferences in India, Spain, and Peru.

PROGRAMS

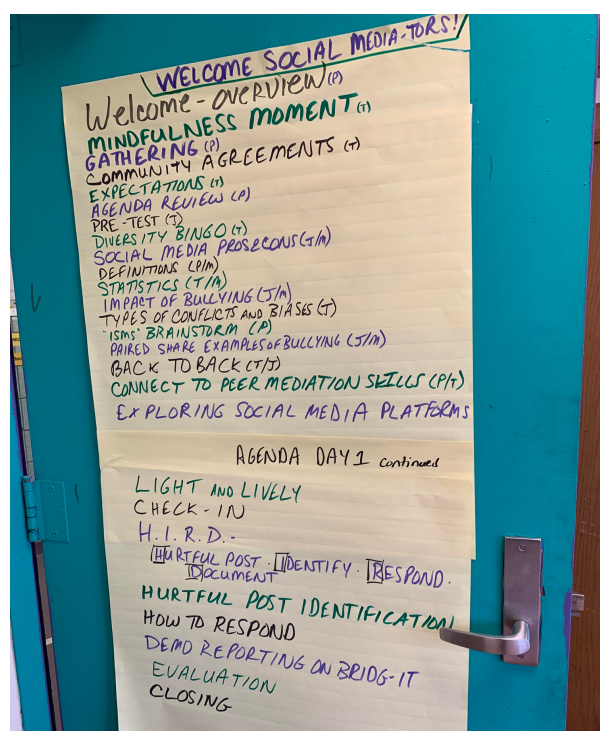
Amidst the ongoing global pandemic, we continued to do all of our programming online this year. Though NYC Board of Education funding remained on hold, existing grants, donations, and federal payroll protection funds enabled us to continue training educators and students and working with people returning to their communities after incarceration. We also focused a great deal of our time on applying for many grants.

CRC in Schools

Rockland and Orange County Schools

We completed our social-emotional learning (SEL) and restorative practices grant from the NoVo Foundation by offering several more workshops for educators in the East Ramapo Central School District, Haverstraw-Stony Point Central School District, and Newburgh Enlarged City School District. We provided administrators, teachers, and support staff in the Newburgh district with several sessions focused on successfully implementing restorative practices and SEL in their classrooms. Overall, the NoVo grant enabled us to train over 800 educators. We saw an increase in participants' knowledge from pre- and post- tests and educators found the work extremely valuable. Attendance for most of our sessions filled up quickly and we were able to respond to increasing requests for workshops on SEL and restorative practices, thanks to the NoVo grant.

NoVo funds also enabled us to offer our new Peace Restored course, developed in partnership with Peace Peddlers. We ran the course twice for local teachers through the Rockland County Teachers' Center. The first series was in August and the second series was in October. The purpose of the course is to



give teachers an introduction to using restorative practices in their classrooms. They learn about the relationship between the SEL competencies and the three tiers of restorative practices as well as community-building activities they can use, both online and in person with their students. Participants were given an opportunity to practice experiential activities on themes including cooperation, communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, affirmation and bias awareness. They developed tools to build relationships with

students, decrease conflict, increase connection, and create a safe environment to maximize learning. This virtual, interactive course was taught via Zoom.

New York City Schools

We did a series of virtual meetings, circles and mediations to support the counseling staff at Bronx Academy of Software Engineering, a public high school focused on strengthening a school culture of transformative justice. CRC helped them resolve some issues and used transparent restorative processes to further their goals and their strategic planning process.

Due to COVID-related school closures, we had to suspend our restorative work at The High School for Arts and Technology (Manhattan), The Urban Assembly for Media Studies (Manhattan), Catherine and Count Basie Middle School 72 (Queens), Manhattan Business Academy (Manhattan), IS 126 Albert Shanker School for Visual & Performing Arts (Queens), and MS 217 Robert A. Van Wyck (Queens). We hope to be able to support teachers and students in these and other schools again in the fall.

Peer Mediation & Social Media-tors!

While NYC Board of Education funds were unavailable, we were fortunate to have a JAMS-ACR grant, enabling us to continue



Social Mediators! training at MS 217 just before the pandemic

our Social Media-tors! program at MS 217, which has been in partnership with Bridg-It and researcher Tricia Jones of Temple University. CRC continued to train 6-8 grade students at MS 217 in peer mediation and social mediation, equipping them with skills to support their peers in solving conflicts and intervening in online bullying.

As part of CRC's leadership development model, we prepared previously trained students to train a new group of 6th graders in peer mediation and social mediation. These young leaders did an excellent job preparing, and the peer trainings were very successful. We continued to guide faculty and administrators, so students are well supported in helping their classmates constructively navigate conflict and a culture of peer mediation can successfully take hold.

The students used the Bridg-it app to give *shout-outs* to their peers and were trained to report negative incidents. Surprisingly, the students indicated there was a reduction in bullying. Despite the many challenges of COVID, the school closures resulted in fewer negative incidents among students. Our research on bullying during this time was one of only 7 studies world-wide. It showed a reduction in online bullying, mainly due to students being able to choose their peer groups and not face retribution in person, since schools were largely closed and only

attended by 20% of students when opened.


Students who participated in these mediation programs have grown and developed a sense of confidence in their ability to promote more constructive behaviors and dispute resolution methods. Students were extremely proud and excited they were invited to present at faculty meetings on Mediation Day, as declared by their principal. They've indicated a sense of empowerment and we acknowledged their contributions to building a positive school culture by presenting them with certificates as school leaders during their 8th grade graduation ceremony.

Conflict Resolution Graduate Course

Once again, we offered this course, which is part of the Humanistic/Multi-cultural Education program for the State University of New York at New Paltz. Students of elementary education and social work take this course to help teach their prospective students and clients that conflict is not negative, but a natural part of life. The course helps soon-to-be practitioners teach



Social Mediators! partners Michael Gillespie (left) and Jeff Ervine (right) at Social Mediators! training before the pandemic.



productive communication and affirmation skills, appreciation of diversity, empathy, and creative solutions to problems.

Objectives of the course include:

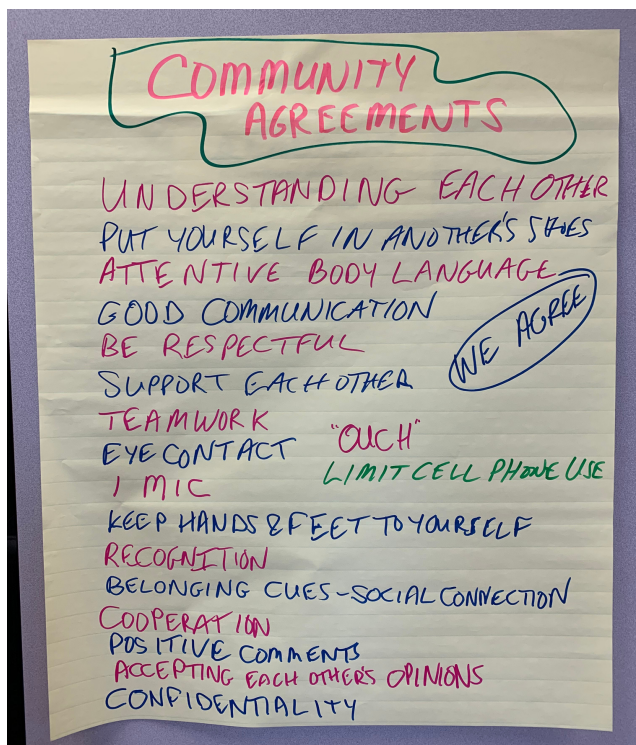
- Examining our own attitudes and values regarding conflict. (Intellectual growth);
- Studying the rationale for conflict-resolution in schools and examining a variety of approaches and skills for dealing with those conflicts. (Inquiry, intellectual growth, professionalism, and democratic citizenship);
- Exploring peer-mediation programs and developing understanding of how to implement them. (Diversity, and democratic citizenship); and
- Examining the implications of nonviolent conflict-resolution for both educational and social change.
- Some of the textbooks used in the course are CRC publications, including *The Friendly Classroom for a Small Planet* and *The Friendly Classroom Mediation Manual*. The course has been very well received at SUNY New Paltz, so CRC is exploring other area colleges to expand this program.



Photo by George Milton courtesy of Pexel

Community Workshops, Circles, & Mediation

Our Peace Restored course for teachers went so well, we adapted it and developed an additional training-for-trainers series as a pair of fee-for-service workshops. We ran the introductory and advanced series in the Spring and had a lively group of participants from various fields and backgrounds. We will offer it again this fall. We also ran a bias-awareness workshop through the Westchester Community College, a restorative circle for the Flushing Quaker Meeting, and a mediation for the Nyack YMCA.



has mainly been functioning as a support and bereavement group. One of the participants demonstrated initiative to apply the experience of participating in circles to becoming a circle-keeper. She has been attending our trainings and transferring her new skills to her public school students and fellow support group members. Our turn-key training and her stepping into leadership will enable us to step back and allow the circles to continue.

Restorative Practices

Support Group for Women Impacted by Incarceration

United Way of Rockland funded another year of CRC's weekly support group for women and children with incarcerated family members. We have 5 women and 6 children in the program. We offer participants restorative circles that cover communication skills, anger management, conflict resolution and deescalating violence, mindfulness, and strengthening self-esteem. We have attended plays and movies by and about African-Americans and discussed the subjects raised. The children have sessions that focus on art, music, dance, bullying prevention, conflict resolution, and building self-esteem. Online since the onset of the pandemic, the group

Circles for People in Prison & Re-Entry

With funding from the American Arbitration Association, we had year-long support for restorative circles for people returning to their communities after incarceration. While the grant originally also included programming in prisons, COVID restrictions made it impossible for us to work with people inside the Bedford Hills and Taconic women's prisons. We reallocated those funds to extend the number of circles at two new re-entry sites.

Because we understand the role systemic racism plays in mass-incarceration –from profiling, the criminalization of poverty, and the school-to-prison pipeline– we understand those harmed often include

incarcerated people. One set of re-entry circles was done in partnership with MADE Transitional Services, for men in Rockland County. Initially, circles were held outside with social distance and masks. When the weather changed, we switched to holding circles online via Zoom. We completed this series after 10 months. The second set of re-entry circles has been in partnership with My Mother's House (MMH) and is for those coming out of Taconic Women's Correctional Facility. The AAA funds enabled 6 months of circles at this site and another donor has given funds to continue these circles through the summer of '21.

As part of this grant we also provided two 2-day trainings: introduction to circle-keeping and intermediate circle-keeping. We provided several of the MADE and MMH residents with these trainings to give them skills to help with listening and creating safe spaces for sharing stories in any situation. And, because our funding was limited, we hoped providing these skills might enable the circles to continue without us. We also included a small number of people involved in local social change projects aimed at finding alternatives to mass incarceration and policing. We wanted to help foster their understanding of restorative justice as a viable option in transforming communities.



Photo by Tima Miroshnichenko courtesy of Pexels

We were asked to submit an article to the AAA's Dispute Resolution Journal about the work we did under this grant. It will be published in 2022.

International Restorative Circle

We continued to convene our monthly online gathering, with participants around the country and world, to explore restorative practices. Most attendees have experience or are especially interested in this very specific work, and how to apply it. This circle is meant to provide an opportunity for mutual support and sharing of ideas and strategies.

For much of the year, we used the restorative format to discuss white supremacy, Black Lives Matter, and working to dismantle systemic racism. We had small and large group discussions and did role playing on circle-keeping, with a focus on successfully maintaining dialogue and respect in circles when discussing difficult and polarizing issues.

Nonviolence & Social Justice

Hudson Youth Leadership Academy (HYLA)

Since 2009 CRC has held HYLA, a five-day social justice-themed summer camp, designed to give young people leadership skills, confidence to create change, and the opportunity to become active in their local communities. The pandemic has prevented us from hosting HYLA though we hope to find additional ways to promote social justice and leadership skills among teens.

True Justice Screening & Discussion

For Martin Luther King, JR. Day, we hosted a well-attended online screening of the film "True Justice: Bryan Stevenson's Fight for Equality". The film focuses on how systemic racism built into the criminal justice system has resulted in mass incarceration, criminalization of Black people, including youth, and a disproportionate number of Black people being wrongfully convicted and executed. We followed the film with small group discussions, and reconvened for closing thoughts. We had a dozen co-sponsors from anti-racism groups in Rockland.

Conference Presentations

Despite the pandemic, many conferences took place online. We presented on our Social Mediators! program, our online training methods, and our restorative practices work for people in re-entry at several: Association of Conflict Resolution's conference, NoVo's conference on social-emotional learning in education, New York State Dispute Resolution Association's conference, and the Pennsylvania Council of Mediators annual conference.



CRC's virtual circle used in online trainings and restorative circles.

UNIQUE
ENGAGEMENTS
WITH PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

1,460

ADULTS

246

STUDENTS

1,706

TOTAL

MONTHLY NUMBERS

Month	Number of Participants	
	Adults	Students
July 2020	88	5
August 2020	46	0
September 2020	101	0
October 2020	90	41
November 2020	102	0
December 2020	364	33
January 2021	89	53
February 2021	71	58
March 2021	96	25
April 2021	90	3
May 2021	117	17
June 2021	206	11
Subtotal/ Students	-	246
Subtotal/ Adults	1,460	-
Total/ Participants	1,706	

FINANCIAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2020- JUNE 30, 2021

REVENUE & SUPPORT

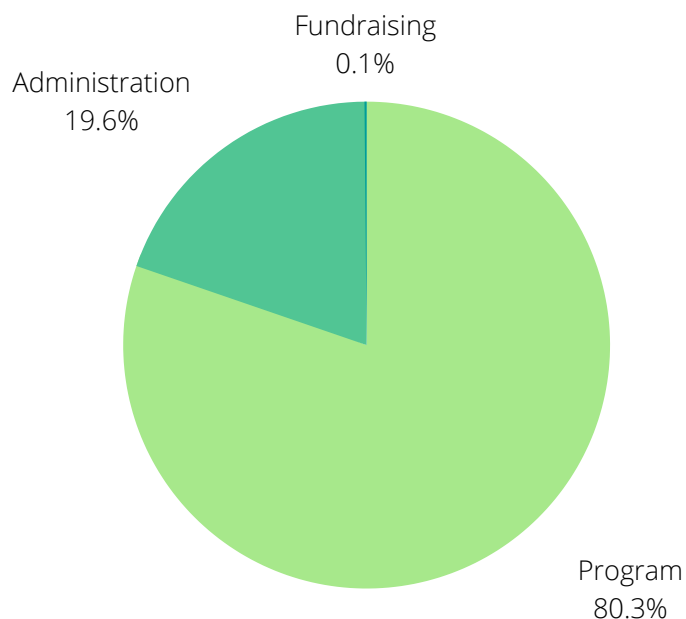
Individual Support	15,054
Institutional Support	78,550
Carry-over from '19-'20	208,932
Workshop Fees	48,510
PPP Loan*	139,282
Total Income	490,328

EXPENSES

Program	359,935
Administration	87,620
Fundraising	627
Total Expenses	448,182

You may also obtain copies of our prior year's 990, the annual filing with the IRS, from the New York State Charities Bureau at www.charitiesnys.com

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES



For nearly 50 years, CRC has been supporting young people, educators, and communities thanks to contributions from supporters throughout the U.S. To sustain our work to transform conflict into an opportunity for growth and give more people the much-needed skills to restore harm and build community, please contribute as generously as you're able: crc-global.org/donate

*Paycheck Protection Program low interest loan made by the U.S. Small Business Association at the onset of COVID-19. (The first of these was forgiven and this one has a high likelihood of forgiveness as well.)