

PARTICIPANT IMPACT 2025

This letter (edited for confidentiality) was written by a responsible person who faced felony embezzlement charges from their former small business employer. After completing the restorative justice dialogue, they served 60 hours of community service and received an excellent recommendation from the service site.

So I've tried to write this many times and I keep stopping because I keep feeling that it needs to be perfect and I've realized it doesn't need to be perfect. It just needs to be honest.

I know a lot of people had a part in this journey, not just myself and I have to say thank you to all of you. My biggest thanks to [harmed person] for giving the opportunity and the chance to go this route and seek a different form of justice. To the judge and the attorneys and the prosecutors for being open to this as well. And to the staff at restorative justice...for a long time I had lost who I was, and thanks to them and this experience I've been able to start finding that person again.

It wasn't easy by any means. There were days I didn't know if I could continue. I was completely ready to just throw my hands up and say I can't do it. But then I remembered that the reason I have this chance is because there are others who believed in me and if they could then why couldn't I believe in myself?

I also found the part of me again that loved doing things for others, and also found a way that I can make sure that my children have that ingrained into them as well. They have actually joined me on some of these volunteer community service days, and they have found a love for volunteering. Helping the community and others is something that I will continue to do with them and I'm so grateful for that as well.

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No words can express how thankful I am and the fact that [harmed person] was able to see past the horrible situation and still see in me what, for awhile, I didn't see in myself anymore. I will never be able to thank her enough. I know that I have still a lot of work to do personally, but the difference is now I believe I can do it.

[Harmed person], I am so sorry to have ever put you in this situation. I am so sorry to have broken your trust and to make you feel in any way that this was somehow at all you, or make you have any kind of self-doubt in yourself. I've always had the utmost respect for you. I never want you to ever feel that you should need to have any kind of doubt in yourself. I will never be able to express how sorry I am and how disappointed in myself that I ever put you in that situation. I'll also never be able to express my gratitude for being able to see past it.

Also a big thanks to the staff at CVCJ. They were there when I needed a sounding board. They were there to give me a dose of reality when I needed it, but they were also there when I just got ready to give up to make me see the work that they put into this situation, the way they advocated not just for me, but for [harmed person] as well. The work that they do is amazing and anyone who has the chance to go through this program has so much to hear.