



Northern Community Mediation

Where The Solution Is Up To You

Serving Emmet &
Charlevoix Counties

BRIDGES

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ANNUAL MEETING

Everyone should have received notice of our Annual Meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday, January 11 from 9:00 am to 10:30 am. As many of you recall, once upon a time, we held our annual meeting during the lunch hour. Unfortunately, that presented a conflict for many of you. Hence, we tried having the meeting in the late afternoon/early evening. Although that drew a few more people, we still were missing many of you. Therefore, we are hoping that having the meeting in the morning will be more convenient for you.

Our Annual Meeting is being held at the Community Health Education Center at 360 Connable in Petoskey. That building is across from the entrance to the hospital. If you need directions, call the NCM.

Also new this year is our approach to recognitions. Our process for selecting what used to be referred to as Mediator of the Year has changed. To begin with, we now have three awards: Veteran Mediator of the Year, Rookie Mediator of the Year, and NCM Advocate of the Year. Second, these awards are decided based upon the input of all of the mediators, the staff, and the Annual Meeting Committee, which is comprised of the past two recipients of the Veteran Mediator of the Year Award, who are Dick Hendrian and Bruce Herbert, and our trainer, Kathy Lame. Next year, the committee will consist of Bruce Herbert, Kathy Lame, and this year's recipient of the Veteran Mediator of the Year.

All of this explanation will hopefully encourage you to attend our annual meeting.

EVALUATIONS

After mediation, all of you do a great job of remembering to have the participants complete the evaluation form. The problem is that most of you do not remember to ask the participants to complete the evaluation forms when no agreement has been reached. We understand that this could be awkward, but the information that we could learn from these evaluations would be valuable. For example, we suspect that there are many cases in which the participants have felt that the process was fair, but that there simply was no way that an agreement could have been reached. We need to have documented data such as this. So, please, remember to ask the participants to complete the evaluation forms whether or not an agreement is reached.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and that the year 2007 is one of the best ever.

A NEW LOOK

Wait until you see our main mediation room. After you see it, be certain to let Bert know what a great job she did on the bookcases. In fact, she is so good we are planning on hiring her out as the Bookcase Painting Queen. Great way to make some extra money for the center!

Also, take note of the new artwork hanging on the walls. Be certain to thank Bruce and Joyce Herbert for those donations.

ANOTHER THANK YOU

Shortly before our holiday party began, we had a surprise, floral arrangement arrive. It made a beautiful center piece for our appetizer table. Thanks to Adolph Cwik for his thoughtfulness.

A thank you to June Jackson for bringing her yummy seafood dip and cocktail wieners is also in order. Her contribution was a life saver because more people came to the party than expected. She kept us from running out of food.

NEW INTERN

Beginning the end of the month, Amy Blomberg, who is a student at North Central Michigan College, will be working as an intern at NCM. She will be with us one day a week, but which day that is has yet to be determined. During the second semester of the 2005-2006 school year, we had this same opportunity. It worked out so well that when given the opportunity to do so again, we jumped at the chance.

FORTY-HOUR TRAINING

There is still space in the 40-hour training workshop scheduled for this month. So, if you know of anyone who is interested in participating, have them call the center by the end of the workday Thursday, January 4.

UPDATE TRAINING

It is the policy of NCM that all mediators must participate in at least eight hours of update training every two years in order to maintain their certification. I will be sending out notification to those of you who are in need of that training.

FRUSTRATION

You are not the only ones who get upset when participants either show up late or do not show up at all for their mediations. Initially, in the process of setting-up the mediation, the participants are told the date/time over the telephone. This is followed-up by written correspondence to all parties. Then, one or two days prior to the scheduled mediation, all parties are contacted by phone to remind them of the mediation. After three attempts of trying to talk with a participant personally, a message is left on the answering machine.