



Northern Community Mediation

Where The Solution Is Up To You

Serving Emmet &
Charlevoix Counties

BRIDGES

November 2004
Vol. 1 No. 11

THEATRE PARTY

Save the date of Tuesday, March 15, 2005. NCM will host its first Theatre Party. For \$25 per ticket, you will be treated to heavy appetizers, non-alcoholic wine, beer and soft drinks, the potential to win a door prize, and attendance at the movie of your choice. All of this will take place at the Petoskey Cinema.

We will be soliciting underwriters to provide specific supplies and items for the event. The Village Inn, which is a delightful restaurant at the Pellston Airport, has already agreed to host one of the food tables by providing certified Angus beef.

We will also be pursuing sponsors at the rate of \$100, \$250, \$500, and \$1000. Anyone who signs up for one of these categories will receive recognition in our newsletter, in the program, and on posters at the theatre. They will also receive an appropriate number of tickets.

CLASS-ACTION LAWSUIT

A group of Michigan fathers have filed a class-action lawsuit to make joint custody the norm in divorce cases. Their premise is that the "state's family courts have violated their civil rights by awarding mothers custody and reducing them to visitors." Similar cases have been filed in 43 other states, as well as in Europe and Canada. It will be interesting to follow this case. It will also be interesting to see how it might impact mediation.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Although our mediators volunteer their time, the service they provide is above and beyond the typical volunteer effort. That is why it is important to consider our mediators as being part of the staff. Hence, a job description for mediators has been written. As is this newsletter, it is attached to this e-mail. Please, read the document. If you have suggestions to improve upon the job description, please, let us know.

ALWAYS LEARNING

We had a first. At one of our mediations where there were numerous participants, one of them failed to sign the agreement. All is well now, but it potentially could have led to a breakdown in the process. The lesson to be learned is always double check that everyone has signed an agreement.

YOUR OPINION

Our percentage of mediations that reach an agreement is down. We have several theories for this, but would very much appreciate your thoughts on this matter because you are the ones who are in the trenches so to speak. So, if you have any ideas, please, share them with us.

NAME TENTS

What a world we live in. Even in Petoskey, we have to think about safety. It has been drawn to our attention that it might be a good idea to include only the first names of the mediators on our name tents. Hence, we have adopted this practice.

TWO NEW PROGRAMS

We are underway with two new programs. We are one of four centers throughout the State of Michigan that has been asked to participate in a pilot project for post judgment cases. Several of you have already been trained to mediate these cases. The Local Administrative Order has finally come through. Therefore, we should be starting to get these cases in the near future.

The second new program that we are involved in is the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program. Previously, the two counties themselves administered VORP. We will now be providing that service. This program will not directly involve our mediators.

CHANGE IN STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

In order to accommodate our new responsibilities at the center, Karen Tank will continue as the Intake Coordinator. Additionally, she will be responsible for overseeing all data. Pat Dull will function as the Program Coordinator for VORP and post judgment cases. Additionally, she will continue assisting in some of the office duties, such as financials. We will be hiring a part-time person who will serve as an administrative assistant.

As mediators, it is important that you understand that all VORP and post judgment cases go to Pat, whereas all other cases go to Karen.

CHARLEVOIX MEDIATIONS

If you are scheduled for a mediation in the Charlevoix City Hall and arrive to find the door locked, simply go around to the fire department. They are open 24/7, and will let you into City Hall so that you can do your mediation.

Additionally, if you have not yet seen our branch office in the City Hall, give Kathy Lame a call. She would be delighted to show-off her new office.

THINKING OF YOU

If you get a chance, send a card or note to Bruce Herbert, who had surgery on his knee on October 27. Hang in there, Joyce.

PARTY! PARTY! PARTY!

Another date to save. Thursday, December 9 will be our holiday party. Save the time. From 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. we will make merry!