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Northern Community Mediation Grows

Much has happened since our last newsletter. Here in brief are some of the highlights:

Annual Dinner

In November 2000, we had the pleasure and privilege of hosting Prof. Harry Mika, at our Annual Meeting. Prof. Mika has long been involved with mediation. His assessment of the Community Dispute Resolution Program (CDRP), helped us to get funding from the State Legislature. He has provided guidance for the success of the CDRP and our center in particular. Prof. Mika is very active in Restorative Justice work. This is a movement whose goal is to work with perpetrators and victims and to have the perpetrators be held accountable not only to the judicial system but also to the victims of the crime, and to the community in which they live. His most recent work has been with two community dispute resolution centers in Northern Ireland. He has been working with the centers on issues of punishment for youth offenders. Rather than having the youth punished with beatings or worse, the community works to hold the youth accountable and to make amends. The goal is to reintegrate the youth in a proactive way. Several of the youth have said that the restorative process was much harder than the beatings, because they had to rebuild relationships and work hard to fix or pay for any property damage which they may have caused. His talk was very informative and filled with hope for breaking the culture of violence in Northern Ireland.

New Programs

We are piloting a new program for Divorce Mediation. We received a grant last year from Judges Mulhauser, Pajtas and Johnson. The grant allowed us to train four of our mediators in Divorce Mediation. Leah Green is overseeing the progress of this program and has put in a lot of work coordinating the process and paper work for filing the cases. Her work is paying off. To date, we have mediated 10 cases, 8 to agreement. The cases have been referred from three sources: the court, private attorneys, and self referrals. This program is off to a good start and promises to grow.

New Board Members and Officers for 2001

Our New President is Rev. Tom Cook, Vice President is Gail Gruenwald, Treasurer Joe Kanine, and Secretary Jim Perricone. We are pleased to welcome the following new board members:

Ken Winter, brings his experience and expertise in journalism and management to the board. We look forward to learning ways in which we can best market our services to Emmet and Charlevoix Counties.

Patricia Bloom joins us from East Jordan. Pat is a true-blue native of Northern Michigan. Pat worked for many years as a teacher for talented and gifted students. Pat will add much to our growing program for youth mediation.

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A thought for mediators:

The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function— F. Scott Fitzgerald

Shannon Brower has served her community well in public office as well as on the boards of several organizations. Shannon will help us to grow and to raise our profile both locally and state-wide.

Graham Hagey comes to us from the world of engineering and energy. We look forward to Graham's fresh perspective and ideas for our organization.

Catherine Atchison another true blue native, brings extensive experience with non-profits. Catherine has a background in conflict resolution, and we look forward to her help with new programs.

The Center is developing a new project in conjunction with other community organizations on peace education, and we hope to include both Catherine and Pat.

New Office Space

Our big news is that the office has moved. In order to accommodate the additional staff needed to cover our increasing case load, we have moved to office space above Trademark Clothiers on Bridge Street in Charlevoix. Our mailing address remains the same.

40 Hour Training

In April of this year we trained fifteen new mediators. The class was offered to business people and the general public as well as to those wishing to volunteer for the center. We have six attendees who will be volunteering for the center. The next step is to help the new trainees to complete their internship. We look forward to having them on board.

Frequently Asked Questions

I am often asked how we pick mediators. There are several factors that go into assigning mediators. First, we consider the type of case, ie. Does it need mediators with advanced training? Second, we look at the key issues in the case. Do we have mediators with a knowledge base or experience that is relevant and that would be helpful in guiding the discussions? Third, we look at schedules. Who is available? The majority of our cases are mediated Monday - Friday 9:00-5:00.

Fourthly, we look at geography. Who lives closest? Finally, we look at preferences the mediators have shared with us, ie. Prefer family mediation or prefer to do consumer cases.

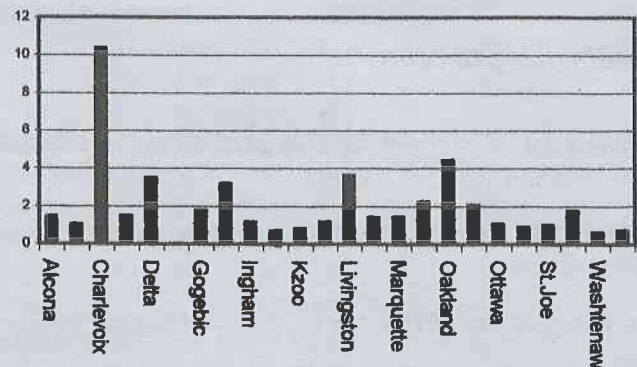
Facts and Figures

You will find to follow updates on our statistics for 2000. Although our agreement rates have dropped (the average for 1999 was 80%), this must be considered in the context of the fact that the cases which we are mediating continue to be complex. The complexity of a case is measured by the number and types of issues, the number of people at the table, and the willingness of the parties to engage in generating options for a resolution. Our Center is doing very well, and continues to be considered a leading center in the State.

	2000		2001	
Jan. 1--June 30				
Mediated Agreement	58	77%	60	78%
Mediated No Agreement	17	23%	19	24%
Conciliated Agreement	4	100%	31	97%
Conciliated No Agreement	0		1	3%
Cases opened:	70		156	

The most recent set of statistics to come out of the State Court Administrator's Office indicate our standing with reference to the rest of the state as follows:

CHART 2: NUMBER OF CASES PER 10,000 POPULATION



"Kudos to all the mediators, board members, and the community who support our success!"

Evaluation Feedback from Mediation Participants 2000

These responses reflect cases mediated to agreement as well as those mediated without agreement.

	<u>Agree</u>
1. <i>Knew what to expect, the mediation process was explained to me.</i>	83%
2. <i>I had the opportunity to express my views.</i>	87%
3. <i>The process was fair to me.</i>	81%
4. <i>I was treated with respect.</i>	88%
5. <i>Everyone came to an agreement.</i>	69%
6. <i>The process helped me with the problem I was having.</i>	62%
7. <i>I am satisfied with how my problem was handled at the center.</i>	69%
8. <i>I would recommend the center to someone else having a problem.</i>	79%

What people are saying about Northern Community Mediation:

"Outstanding effort and persistence of the mediators, after long sessions, produces a favorable for all concerned."

"On behalf of me and my family, my sincere thank you. Mediation has lifted a huge burden off of us. I was so relieved after it was over and knowing I was going to be paid for the work I had done."

"In 1 1/2 hours the mediators helped us resolve a 4 year dispute, and we avoided a suit and counter suit in court. Thank you!"

"It could be helpful to someone even if not in my case."

"It beats going to court."

"I have a lot of respect for the gentlemen in charge of the mediation."

"The process helped me testify before the judge."

"The Two Women from Northern Community Mediation were very nice."

"The program is well worth while. Excellent staffing."

"Your services were excellent. I would recommend to anyone. Thank you and god bless."

"I highly recommend mediation services and gladly donate \$20.00 to help further this organization."

Northern Community Mediation
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(231) 547-1771



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Calendar of Events

Upcoming Events

Agriculture Mediation Training
Sept. 14
Fairfield/Comfort Inn, Mt. Pleasant

For more information please contact:

Susan D. Hartman
PeaceTalks
840 Starwick Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
(734) 623-8255
Email: shartman_pt@hotmail.com

Penelope Hommel
The Center for Social Gerontology
2307 Shelby Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(734) 665-1126
Email: tcsg@tcsg.org

40 Hour Mediation Trainings

Oakland County
July 18, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28
(248) 338-4280

Genesee County
July 13, 14, 15, and 20, 21
(810) 249-2619