

AN UPCOMING VISIT



Pictured: Representative John Damoose

On Wednesday, June 16, Gabi Reihanian, Director of the Michigan Community Mediation Association, and executive Director Jane Millar met with Representative John Damoose via Zoom. Rep Damoose represents District 107 in the state House of Representatives. He succeeded Lee Chatfield. Not only was John very interested in mediation, he was also very impressed with the process and the various services that Northern Community Mediation can provide for the citizens of Charlevoix and Emmet counties. On Wednesday, July 7, John will be visiting with the NCM staff and “taking a tour” of our facility.

John and his wife Margo, who is the current Director of the Harbor Springs DDA and member of the Harbor Springs School Board, reside in Harbor Springs. Their top priority in life is to “pour themselves into raising their four children. They are committed to following the principles upon which our country was founded.

FORTY-HOUR TRAINING

On May 12, 13, 14, 20 and 21, Northern Community Mediation offered the 40-hour, general civil mediation training via Zoom. There were 16 participants: ten from NCM, four from the CDRP center in Muskegon, one from the Grand Rapids center and one from the Flint center. Four of the participants were attorneys. Case Manager Karen Cole and mediators Bill Cattin and Amy Stikovich assisted with the training. Bill shared the use of some spreadsheets that he created, Amy covered legal issues, and Karen explained the intake process and helped with accumulating information and agreement writing. Mediators Lee Kramer, Bruce Herbert, Steve Hall and Case Manager Karen Cole served as coaches for the role plays. Although everyone agreed that in-person is desirable, the evaluations indicated that everyone felt that the training was outstanding.

2021 APPRECIATION GALA

In 11 months, Northern Community Mediation will hold its annual Appreciation Gala. Granted, that is a long way away, but not really, especially since (God willing and the creek don't rise) we will actually be getting together in person. Yes, face-to-face. Not only will we still have our Veteran Mediator of the Year, Rookie Mediator of the Year, Advocate of the Year awards, we will be introducing three new awards. And, one never knows whether or not there will be a Leah Award.

Not that your curiosity might be getting the best of you, be certain to watch for the date. The time will be from 5:00pm to 6:30pm at a location other than the NCM facility and will include appetizers, wine and beer. The date will be set at the annual staff retreat on Friday, November 12. So, be on the lookout so that you can mark the date for the Appreciation Gala on your calendars.

COVID-19 UPDATE

We realize that everyone is anxious to return to normal, and that includes conducting in-person mediations. We do have to continue, however, to have patience for a little while longer. In all probability, by September, face-to-face mediations will be the norm. In the meantime, staff is evaluating on a regular basis. One of the challenges we face is that we can ask people if they have been vaccinated, but they do not have to answer the question. Since we cannot ask for proof of vaccination, we have to assume that if they say “yes,” they are being honest. Another challenge is that those individuals who have not been vaccinated would have to wear face masks. Having some people with face masks and others without face masks at the mediation table lends itself to imbalance and even political friction. Our desire is to return to in-person mediations as soon as possible, and if herd immunity were to set in tomorrow, we would begin scheduling face-to-face mediations.

OUR SYMPATHY

Our condolences go out to Sue Metzger on the death of her husband Bob. Bob completed his 40-hour mediation training in 2019, as did Sue. Bob was well on his way to becoming an outstanding mediator.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

This pandemic has made us realize the amount of things we take for granted in life, not to mention, life itself. Anonymous

USELESS FACT

One of the most unusual symptoms of coronavirus is the loss of a sense of taste and/or smell.