



# Northern Community Mediation

Where The Solution Is Up To You

November 20, 2024

NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, STATE ZIP

Dear NAME:

The mission of Northern Community Mediation (NCM) is to help people meaningfully resolve conflicts in Charlevoix and Emmet counties. Although NCM receives funding from the State Court Administrative Office (25%) and from the local courts and counties (30%), NCM still needs to raise approximately 45% of its budget in order to provide quality services for the citizens of Charlevoix and Emmet counties.

Therefore, each year in November, NCM sends out a Donor Campaign letter encouraging financial support. You may ask, "Why should I financially support NCM. Of what value would my contribution be?" The best way to answer that question is to share an example of a mediation through a "true story."

Molly had been a very active, vibrant 72-year-old woman. Following her stroke, however, she was no longer able to live on her own. Even with physical therapy, it was obvious that she would not be able to return to a life of independent living. She agreed with her sons Jeff and Tom that she needed to be in a long term care facility. Her sons located the ideal place for her, and for two years, she was not only content but also happy with her new "home."

Unfortunately, she started showing signs of dementia, and eventually was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Following two competency hearings, Jeff and Tom agreed that one of them needed to be her guardian. Molly was adamant that she was fully capable of making her own decisions and insisted upon a third competency hearing, independent of the staff at her nursing home.

The third evaluation yielded the same diagnosis. At the court hearing, the judge referred the case to mediation because "family knows what is best for the family." In the meantime, Tom died. Although Jeff still believed that Molly needed a guardian, he wanted the court to decide. He did not want his mother to think that he was "taking away her rights and was betraying her." Even though he knew that his deceased brother Tom agreed that she needed a guardian, Jeff did not want the burden of guilt solely on his shoulders.

2202 Mitchell Park Drive, Unit 4, Petoskey, MI 49770 Phone 231.487.1771 Fax 231.487.1770 Website [www.northernmediation.org](http://www.northernmediation.org)

President: Mitch Brown  
Vice-President: Cyndy Tonkavich  
Treasurer: Bill Meengs  
Secretary: Suzanne Kanine  
Member-at-Large: Judy Zorn

Bill Cattin  
Phil Harmon  
Lisa Hoyt  
Jody McLeod

Denise Drake  
Kristin Hasse  
Hob Ingleson

Jason Guthrie  
Kirstyn Horam  
Nikki LaDeur

The mediation process gave Jeff the opportunity to express his thoughts to his mother, and even though she was confused and reticent about having a guardian, somehow she seemed to grasp that Jeff was doing what was best for her. It was as if a light bulb of love turned on in her heart.

The message of this "true story" is that if the judge had simply declared that Molly needed a guardian and that Jeff should be that guardian, in all probability that "light bulb" of understanding never would have turned on in Molly's heart, and she would have resented Jeff as her guardian..

I realize that many of you have been very generous in your support of NCM's Capital Campaign, which is for the purpose of paying down the mortgage on our new facility. Those funds, however, cannot be diverted to operational funds. This request for funding relates to NCM's everyday expenses and bills, such as salaries, utilities, printing costs, postage.

I want to thank you for the time you have taken to read this letter. Enclosed is a donation envelope. I hope that you will give serious consideration to making a contribution to NCM so that we can continue to provide affordable mediation services for the citizens of Charlevoix and Emmet Counties.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely



Jane Millar, Ed.D.  
Executive Director