



The Dispute Resolution Center

eNews of Note

SUMMER, 2008

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The mission of the Dispute Resolution Center is to provide confidential and affordable dispute resolution services, through mediation and training, to individuals and organizations in Washtenaw and Livingston Counties.

Director's Note

Welcome to The Summer Edition of our eNews of Note! There are so many exciting things happening at the Center that we want to share them with our volunteers, friends, and the communities we serve.

We have seen many successes the past year. We've launched a new program, added to our staff, and received an increase in our funding – just to mention a few. The work of the Board of Directors, Advisory Council, DRC staff and volunteers are positively reflected in the community. You all have planted many seeds, and I'm grateful and honored – as director – to cultivate them.

Please allow me via this newsletter to highlight a few of our proudest moments.



*Peaceful resolutions,
Belinda*

DRC Supports Families and Schools

In the summer of 2007, the DRC decided to expand its services in the education community and developed its Truancy Mediation Program. We began by pounding the pavement and met with many community constituents, including members of Washtenaw County Administration, administrators of the Ypsilanti, Lincoln Consolidated, Ann Arbor Public School Districts as well as the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, and Washtenaw County Juvenile court staff. All confirmed that addressing high volumes of student absences through mediation would provide a supportive problem solving environment in which school personnel, parents and students can work together—without placing blame or judgment. So our journey continued and the DRC's newest mediation program was formally launched on March 5th, 2008. Our donors came forward and gave us lots of support.

As the school year begins, eight elementary schools will participate in The DRC's truancy mediation service. This will be the first step of problem resolution for students identified with a high volume of unexcused absences and their families—students whom studies have indicated are at risk of future failure, school drop out, even violent behavior.

We've also hired Margaret Rohr, our newest member of the mediation services team. As a social worker and former special education teacher, Margaret brings a wealth of skill and knowledge to our services. She will work directly with the schools to coordinate the mediations, troubleshoot, and assist in identifying community resources that often are needed for the families to effectively reduce the instances of unexcused absences.

Additionally, in June, the James A. and Faith Knight Foundation awarded the DRC a \$10,000 grant to further support the program. We're grateful for the support and encouraged by the belief that this collaborative problem solving process will not only help kids who are struggling, but will also help their families, schools, and communities at large.

2008 TRAINING DATES

October 3-5 & 10-12

General Civil and Basic Community Mediator Training

Trainers: Susan Butterwick and Zena Zumeta

October 10-12

Role players and coaches needed for the Mediator Training. Contact Belinda Dulin to volunteer.

November 14

Advanced Mediator Training:

"A Multimedia Comparison of Caucus and Joint Session Techniques"

Trainers: Susan Butterwick and Zena Zumeta

The Dispute Resolution Center

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The Father Bernard O'Connor Award Event



The Father Bernard J. O'Connor Award is presented in honor of Father O'Connor's contribution to the practice of just and humane resolution of social conflict. The award recipient is a person in our community who promotes our mission, supports building a peaceful community and is a friend to the Center.

For program year 2007, Robert Galardi, formerly of the Ann Arbor Public School District, was honored. On March 5th, Bob was joined by 80 guests, including his family, friends and supporters at the award reception at Everyday Cook in Kerrytown. Great music, great food, and great friends. **CONGRATULATIONS BOB! And thanks to all our sponsors and donors for this amazing event.**

Mediation Services in Quick View

YEAR TO DATE STATISTICS: January 1 to June 30...

No. of Cases Accepted: **293**

No. of Mediations: **196**

Cases Resolved/Settlement Rate: **63%**

No. of People Served: **654**

Ave. Length of Mediation: Approx. **1.5 hours**

No. of Volunteer Hours: **338.4 hours**

Value of Volunteer Contribution: **\$50,760**

We can't do it without you. Thanks!

SPECIAL THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While we're happy to report our successes, you can guess how many hours of work it took to get there. So, I'll use this space to give a special thanks to a few of our volunteers who offer their skills and talents beyond the mediation table.

Father Bernard O'Connor Event: To Rachel Bendit, JoAnna DeCamp and Robin Stephens for their help. From invitation design, food selection, and donor relations, they made certain that the event welcomed our honoree and guests.

Multi-Cultural Initiatives: To our Brown Bag facilitators, Dr. Michael Spencer, Amy Seeto, Huda Karaman Rosen, Wadad Abed, Robin Stephens, Tabitha Smith, Maymette Dolberry, and Dr. Kamuyu who enlightened us on how conflict resolution systems work in the Asian, Arab, African American, African and various religious communities. The discussions stimulated and broadened our perspective resulting in volunteer mediators seeking a continuation of this Brown Bag series.

Truancy Mediation Project Sponsors: Menakka & Essel Bailey, Rachel Bendit & Mark Bernstein, Joan Binkow, Linda & Charles Borgsdorf, Kathleen Crispell & Tom Porter, Nancy & Del Dunbar, Gretchen Gardner & Joshua Pokempner, Beverley & Gerson Geltner, Mark Haddox, Allyn Kantor, Sharon & Charles Newman, Lana & Henry Pollack, Joel D. Tauber, Bruce Wallace, Eileen & Ron Weiser, Bodman LLP, Columbia Asset Management and Brian Weisman, Dykema Gossett PLLC, The Comerica Foundation, Plante and Moran, James A. & Faith Knight Foundation, Everyday Cook and Wine, Chris Benjay and Tom Thompson Flowers