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Summer 2011  
Volume 7, Issue 1

# The Mediator

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**The Mediator is the WDRC newsletter for staff and volunteer news, updates on past events, news of upcoming events, and tips for conflict resolution!**

We're glad you're interested. Read on to find out what's happening at the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center so far this year!

### Director's Report

*Notes from the desk of Moonwater*

With the first day of summer upon us, I had the opportunity to breathe in the warm air and give some thanks for the opportunity to live in this beautiful corner of the State. I also gave thanks for the continued opportunity to lead this amazing organization. As our community tackles some contentious issues - coal trains, jails, and healthcare just to name a few - I am reminded regularly of the importance of our work; of the necessity to focus on dialogue not debate, on interests not positions, and on creating the space for productive, civil and illuminating conversations amongst and between members of our community. The WDRC and its incredible volunteers work diligently to make this focus ever present here in Whatcom county. I am thrilled to share that the State Legislature continues to recognize the critical nature of our services and again has funded DRCs statewide. I extend many thanks to everyone who has helped to convey the importance of our work to our community leaders and stakeholders.

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### Our Board

Kacey Alleman, Board Chair  
Kara Black  
Jerry Brownfield  
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David Doll  
Randy Doucet  
Marian Exall  
David Grant  
Margo Hammond  
Mary Sass  
Linda Stewart

### Advisory Board

Leon Henley  
Betsy Gross  
Carlton Nathon  
Mark Rogers

### Staff

Moonwater -  
Executive Director

Kaitlin Davis -  
Youth Program Coordinator,  
Interim Office Coordinator

Cynthia Moore -  
Case Manager

Calhan Ring -  
Program Manager

Ellie Rogers -  
AmeriCorps (Outreach)

Nicole Theberge -  
AmeriCorps (Youth)

Rosanna Wadkins -  
Fiscal Support

As we approach our twenty year anniversary (next year!), our Board and staff have been actively engaged in a robust strategic planning process. One significant outcome was a revision to our mission statement. I am so pleased with the collaborative process we undertook and am happy to unveil our new mission: *Provide and promote constructive and collaborative approaches to conflict through mediation, training, facilitation and community education.* We have also revised our vision: *For Whatom County to be a community in which people approach conflict in creative and healthy ways.* Stay tuned for a new values statement as well.

We also have undergone some staffing changes, including the departure of our longtime administrative assistant, Kris Buettner. We wish Kris well and are deeply grateful for all of her contributions. As we work to meet emergent needs, Calhan Ring our long-time Case Manager has been promoted to Program Manager; Cynthia Moore has been promoted to Case Manager, and Ellie Rogers, our current AmeriCorps member, will return in the fall as a Program Assistant. Kaitlin Davis will be continuing as Youth Program Lead, and Rosanna Wadkins will stay on as Fiscal Support. We will soon have a new member of our team filling the role of Office Coordinator and look forward to welcoming that person to this fabulous team. Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't extend great appreciation and thanks to Tom Anderson, who is stepping off our board after serving for the past 5 years. Tom has been an incredible support to us and we will miss his leadership. Thank you, Tom!

Enjoy the sun,

Moonwater

### Farewell Kris Buettner



We said goodbye to Kris Buettner, our Administrative Assistant of 3.5 years, on June 17th. Kris has been an incredible support to the WDRC, giving extraordinary compassion to all who walk through our doors. She keeps a smile and an inner peace about her through major events, stressful times, and the many challenges of a small non-profit with a big mission.

We will miss her heart, humor, and her many talents as she navigates her upcoming summer with family. We know she will

## Upcoming Trainings

### **Understanding Conflict Training**

*August 24 and 31,  
November 8 and 10*

### **Professional Mediation Training**

*October 13-15 and  
October 20-22*

### **Family Mediation Training**

*December 1-3*

## Upcoming Events

### **Cribbage Tournament**

*September 10 at  
Boundary Bay ([Register Online now!](#))*

### **Peace Builder Awards Gala**

*November 18 at the  
Majestic*

*Pre-register and find  
more information  
online at  
[www.whatcomdrc.org](http://www.whatcomdrc.org)!*

**NOMINATE A  
PEACE BUILDER!**

continue to bring peace to the world wherever she goes. Thank you, Kris!

Feel free to send well wishes, letters or notes to Kris at the WDRC address or email her at [krisbuettner@gmail.com](mailto:krisbuettner@gmail.com). We will make sure she gets them.

## WDRC to Offer Foreclosure Mediations

In a historic moment for Washington State, the "Foreclosure Fairness Act" was signed into State Law on April 14th, giving homeowners the option of face to face mediation with the bank or company servicing their mortgage. "We anticipate this program will provide some relief to homeowners who've found themselves in need of both direct communication with their lenders, and a plan for how to move forward," says Moonwater.

The WDRC is sending 8 staff and mediators to the initial training hosted by the Department of Commerce in late June. Internally we are working to build our capacity to handle the potential increase in caseload volume, and gather appropriate resources and referral information for interested parties. Parties will only be able to participate in the mediation program if referred by an attorney or HUD Counselor, and more information will be available soon, on our website.

We intend to launch the program by August and are honored to join the local attorneys, real estate agents and other groups that have been actively working to support homeowners during this challenging period in their lives.

## Parent-Teen Mediation Training offered at WDRC last February

Through a grant with the Whatcom Community Foundation, we were able to offer a Parent-Teen Mediation Training in February, 2011. Marc Steiner, our instructor, coordinated the Parent-Teen Mediation Program for the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution which received 500 referrals each year from juvenile justice, schools, and other organizations.

A total of 22 trainees went through the 24 hours of training. Many of the participants were WDRC staff and mediators, as we hope the training will spur the strengthening of our parent-teen

Know community members or groups who deserve recognition for their efforts to build bridges towards a more peaceful community?

**We are taking nominations for Peace Builders now through September 16, 2011.**

Peace Builders will be honored at our Peace Builder Awards Gala in November.

*Find nomination forms online at [www.whatcomdrc.org](http://www.whatcomdrc.org).*

**Sponsor the Peace Builder Gala!**

**We are also looking for sponsors for our Peace Builder Gala on November 18th, 2011.**

This is a great opportunity to give to the community, help celebrate peace-building in Whatcom County, and get a little publicity for your organization or business.

*There are plenty of ways and opportunities to give. Contact us to get more information!*

mediation program here in Whatcom County. "We have done parent-teen mediations in the past, but we really haven't had the capacity to run a full program," says Kaitlin Davis, Youth Program Lead for the WDRC. "Having more mediators trained means that we can offer this service on a more regular basis." Stay tuned for more information about developments in parent-teen mediation at the Center.

## WDRC Hosts Two AmeriCorps Volunteers in 2010-2011



### **Nicole Theberge - Youth**

I have been involved with the WDRC for two years now, and I cannot believe how fast and wonderfully that time has flown by. I graduated from the human services program at Western last year, and the youth program AmeriCorps position has been a perfect next step for me. Our youth programs provide a much needed and unique experience for all involved and I am proud to have contributed to them. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with this organization and have learned so much from the experience and from the amazing staff and volunteers. I will be volunteering and trekking in Nepal this summer, and plan to start graduate school at Antioch University in Seattle upon my return.

### **Ellie Rogers - Outreach**

After graduating from Macalester College (in MN) with a degree in Ecology in 2009, I headed west. This is my second term of AmeriCorps in WA; the first was with Skagit Land Trust last year, where I realized there needed to be another way to have conversations about land use and resources. I've been able to learn about that here at the WDRC. I am so grateful to have spent the last ten months spreading the word about the Resolution Center's mission through my Outreach position. The WDRC

offers a way for people to work through some of the most challenging situations of their lives. We offer a safe space and support through difficult conversations. I find myself eager to talk to the public about what we do, because we do amazing work and we do it well. Thanks to everyone who makes it happen! I'm also happy to say I'll be back in September (after a jaunt to Alaska) as a Program Assistant for the WDRC. Hope to see you soon!

## Girls' Night Creates Art Mural for WDRC Office



Girls' Night has been an evolving extension of the Healthy Choices for Girls Program. Past participants are invited to attend these monthly events as a way to expand on what they learned in the workshops, and to connect with other girls while participating in fun activities. June Girls' Night was titled "Painting Peace", and

girls were invited to paint on canvases in response to quotes about peace. Three girls attended, and each received their own canvas and quote. These pieces will be hung in the office, along with the girls' descriptions of their wonderful paintings. Special thanks to Dakota Art and Stampadoodle for their generous donations of art supplies that made this event possible.

## FUNdraising Report



### **The Human Race - May 14, 2011**

Over 20 racers joined the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center team this year to walk and run the 5-10K course down at Zuanich Park. The team theme was CIRQUE and though we did not win best costumes, we sure had color, stripes, and spirit! And board member Jerry Brownfield DID win best individual costume! Check out our [Facebook site](#) for pics.

### **Compete for a Cause Bocce Tournament - April 16, 2011**

This year's Bocce Tournament sold out with 32 teams competing at the Sportsplex under tournament direction by Tom McNutt, longtime supporter of the Center and owner of [Boccemon](#). We grossed over \$7000 for the Center and a good time was had by all.

### **Compete for a Cause Backgammon Tournament - March 5, 2011**

A competitive crew of the usuals turned out for our Backgammon Tournament in March at the Leopold. Michael Cain of [Pacific Martial Arts](#) ran the tournament and presented Matt Shafa with first place.

### **Compete for a Cause Scrabble Tournament - January 29, 2011**

Wordsmiths from all over the County came to compete in our Scrabble Tournament. Erika Werdal oversaw the bingos, challenges, and tournament structure. We played by the Bay at Nikki's Bella Marina, but may need to find a bigger space for next year with so many contestants!

**We're gearing up for another season of Fundraisers beginning next fall with Cribbage! See the side bar for details!**

## Thanks to Our Volunteers of 2011! We couldn't do it without you!

**Ongoing support:** Arthur Abrahamson, Chris Beers, Ryan Goelzenleuchter, Amanda Pile, Bernice Rappaport, James Whisenhunt, Zhigou Zhang.

**Interns in the past year:** Marcy Alstrom, Brenna Anderst, Grace Bandolon, Emily Humphrey-Krigbaum.

**Youth Programs support:** Sam Axelrath, Greg Elgee, Lindsay Mann-King, Emily Nevels, Edmund Trangen, Janna Vergith.

**In February, we welcomed a new Practicum Program Cohort:** Sophia Davies, Jason Kanov, Cynthia Moore, Ellie Rogers, Leah Wefer, Chyerl Wolfe-Lee.

**New WDRC Mediators in 2011 include:** Doug Fenton, David Imburgia, Michael Light, Ann McCartney.

**And thanks to all of our mediators!** Including Felicia Staub who won the "Jumped In With Both Feet" award from the Washington Mediation Association in April, 2011.

**We'd like to highlight once more Arthur Abrahamson, Bernice Rappaport, and Felicia Staub, our volunteers of the year who we honored in December, 2010.**

It has been a full and wonderful year so far. We hope you'll keep in touch, and continue to support our services with your good work and words.

**Thanks!**

Moonwater

*Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center*

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