

2007 Annual Report

Empowering Whatcom County Community Members to Resolve Conflict Peacefully



Donors

Many thanks to the following individuals and organizations:

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Executive Director's Report

Two words can best describe what 2007 held for the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center: *positive change*. This historic year marked the beginning of a new era for the WDRC; amid the numerous accomplishments on a statewide and local level, the Center also celebrated its 15th year of being. This birthday year was especially significant in that it was filled with a handful of incredible happenings:

- An enormous collaborative effort with DRC's statewide resulting in the receipt of \$1 million from the Washington State legislature's general fund.
- A spotlight interview featured on KVOS television and YouTube.
- A highly successful and first of its kind "Compete for a Cause" cribbage tournament fundraiser in partnership with Boundary Bay Brewery.
- Front page coverage and multiple news articles in the *Bellingham Herald*, the *Weekly*, *The Whatcom Independent*, and the *Community Food Co-op* papers.
- The hiring of a permanent administrative assistant staff person.
- The hiring of an AmeriCorps member to re-launch our youth program within schools throughout Whatcom County.
- The identification of a new, expanded location for the WDRC.
- The development of a partnership with Northwest Training Institute.
- The honoring of 10 Whatcom County Peace Builders.

With enthusiasm I can say that 2008 will bring even more positive change. With more new board members, creative ideas, and amazing energy and commitment, the next year is already shaping up to be one of success. We'll be focusing 2008 on moving into our new office space, expanding our community trainings and developing more partnerships. In doing so, we will continue to work to achieve our mission and empower community members to resolve conflict peacefully.

Moonwater

Moonwater, Executive Director

Our Mission

The mission of the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center is to promote understanding, tolerance, and healing in the community by helping people transform conflict into creative and harmonious outcomes. To this end, the center will work to increase community understanding of the processes and alternatives to peaceful conflict resolution, educate and train people to the purposes of such conflict resolution, and provide for competent and neutral third parties to mediate or otherwise assist or empower disputants to resolve conflict in just, equitable, and cooperative ways.

Our Impact

"The Whatcom Dispute Resolution has proven to be an invaluable resource for courts and claimants. Since beginning on-site mediation, we have observed a significant surge in cases being diverted out of the courtroom, resulting in mutually satisfying, creative, and durable agreements. "

~ Judge David Grant,
Whatcom County District Court

Now that I am aware as to how individual staff respond in crisis, I will try to utilize appropriate methods to work together

~ Workplace training participant

"Mediation has been more progressive and helpful than relationship counseling ever was...It gave us each a valid platform to speak our mind and stay focused on what we want to resolve."

~ Family Mediation Client

The Year in Numbers

Total People Served:	3,526
Total Mediation Cases:	165
Small Claims Mediations:	103
Family Law Mediations:	53
Other Mediations:	9
Total Training Participants:	1,792

Balance Sheet

December 31, 2007

Assets

Total Current Assets	\$78,242
Total Accounts Receivable	\$20,866
Total Fixed Assets	\$8,000
Total Assets	\$86,243

Liabilities

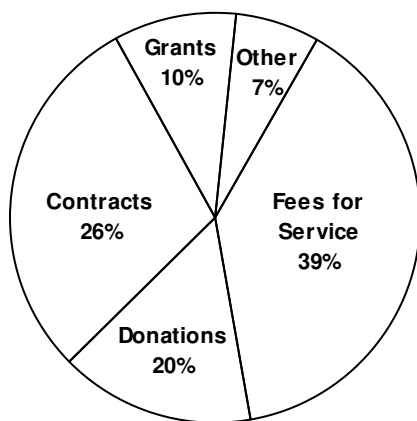
Total Accounts Payable	\$1,001
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$1,902
Total Liabilities	\$2,903

Equity

Fund Balance	\$54,129
Net Income	\$29,175
Total Equity	\$83,339

Total Liabilities and Equity \$86,243

Funding by Source



Peace Builder Award Recipients



- ◆ **Youth:** Lynden high school S.O.C.K. Club
- ◆ **Community:** Roosevelt Neighborhood Association
- ◆ **Public Servant:** Terry Bornemann
- ◆ **Education:** Dr. Vernon Damani Johnson
- ◆ **Environment:** Steve Seymour, Nooksack Watershed Steward
- ◆ **Program:** Paddle to Lummi Project: James and Lutie Hillaire, Maria Roberts, Freddie Lane
- ◆ **Volunteer:** Beth Brownfield, Paddle to Lummi Community Connections Committee

Overview of Services

Conflict Prevention Services

The WDRC is committed to building the capacity of community members to better manage conflict as it arises and to teach them skills to prevent it from escalating. To that end, in 2007, the WDRC made the following trainings available to the community:

“**Helping Children Through Family Changes**” seminar for parents experiencing marriage dissolution. This seminar helps parents focus on the needs of their children through this process.

“**Neighborhood Conflict Management**” training for neighbors interested in learning a dispute resolution process for interpersonal conflict and strategies to serve as ongoing resources within their neighborhoods and communities.

“**Dealing With Conflict**” workshop for youth and adults to teach the fundamentals of conflict resolution, from personal awareness to communication strategies.

“**Healthy Choices for Girls**” and “**Facing Conflict Without Violence**” for Boys workshops, gender specific training designed to empower young people to effectively manage conflict, with an emphasis on relational vs physical aggression .

“**Family Conflict**” workshop for separated, divorced, or never married parents and custodians which focused on foundations for effective conflict resolution and communication with a specific intent to improve co-parenting relationships.

“**Basic Mediation**” training is an engaging and intensive course for people interested in learning the interest-based mediation model; it is an effective training for everyone interested in improving family, workplace, or community interactions, as well as the foundation for becoming a certified mediator.

Conflict Intervention Services

Recognizing that conflict is a normal and natural part of life, the WDRC is committed to providing intervention services when individuals need assistance with conflicts they are experiencing. To that end, in 2007, the Center provided mediation services for a variety of cases including dissolutions, parenting plans, small claims, neighbor-to-neighbor, victim-offender, workplace, union/management, landlord-tenant, and more. In doing so, the WDRC served our local courts, schools, businesses, families, neighborhoods, and governmental agencies.

The WDRC uses an interest-based approach to mediation and most mediators use a facilitative style. The majority of the WDRC’s mediations occur with clients in one room together, although the WDRC will use “shuttle diplomacy” (where clients are in separate rooms and the mediator moves back and forth) upon a clients request or a mediator’s recommendation. The interest-based approach prioritizes the procedural, psychological and substantive satisfaction of parties. In 2007, the WDRC had an 79% success rate in helping parties reach resolution. Many of the remaining 21% found the session (s) to be helpful and valuable despite not reaching a formal resolution.