

The Mediator

Empowering Whatcom County Community Members to Resolve Conflict Peacefully



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Our Board

- Leon Henley, J.D. —Chair
- Tom Anderson—VP
- Laurene Honeyman— Sec
- Bob-Davis—Treasurer
- Kara Black
- Jerry Brownfield
- Richard Dunlop
- Marian Exall
- Roben Selditz

Interested in serving? Contact the Center at 676-0122

Director's Report

A friend asked me recently how things were going at the Center. I responded quickly, sharing that things were busy, as usual. That answer, which has become rather rote over the past several years, is nevertheless apropos. When I stopped to reflect upon it, I realized that this small center, with its small staff of 1 full-time director, and 3 part-time staff gets an amazing amount accomplished.

However, it all wouldn't be possible though without the incredible dedication and support of our more than 20 volunteer mediators and trainers, interns and AmeriCorps members, leadership from our board of directors, and generosity of our donors. It is the contribution of time and resources that allows the center to serve thousands of people each year.

Unfortunately, in the last few months alone we've seen an astronomical increase in the number of new clients needing support from our sliding scale. *The economic downturn has begun to hit home.*

Our clients need more help, and we're here to assist. What that means though, is that for every client whose fees we reduce we need to seek additional funding to maintain our revenue. *Here's where you can help.* As this year comes to a close, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the WDRC. *Please help us help families in Whatcom County have peace and harmony in their homes.*

Donation Forms are included on the back page of this newsletter. Interested in becoming a monthly or quarterly contributor? Please call and we'll get you started. Your support is invaluable. *Thank you.*

WDRC to Expand Trainings For Community

In alignment with our new space, and the onsite training room we now have available, the WDRC desires to further its mission by expanding the scope of conflict management, communication, and other alternative dispute resolution related courses available to the community. To that end, the WDRC is seeking qualified practitioners who have a genuine interest in collaborating with the WDRC to build upon the trainings and services currently available. The Request for Proposals and Qualifications is available on our website at www.whatcomdrc.org under job/volunteer opportunities. Check it out and pass it on!

The WDRC is seeking board members with real-estate and financial management experience. Could this be you?



Volunteer Corner

Mark Ortman, MA, CMP



Mark was recently certified as a family mediator through the DRC, and added to Whatcom County's court-approved mediator list. Mark has been working in the field of communication over two decades as a consultant, workshop leader, author and mediator. His Masters degree is from the University of Denver in Communication and he is a Certified Mediator Practitioner. Mark's flagship communication workshop titled: *It's Not What We Say, It's How We Say It* has been conducted nationally in corporate, university and community college settings. Two years ago, he designed a new workshop titled: *Dealing With Discord, The Manager as Mediator* training managers, supervisors, leads and human resource personnel to facilitate conversations between disputing employees. Mark has been mediating cases through the Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom county dispute resolution centers and through his private practice the last six years after becoming a certified mediator in 2002. Mark is author of five books, including: *Now That Makes Sense! - Relating to People Through Wit and Wisdom*. He can be reached at <http://www.resolutionnow.com> (We're glad to have Mark on board as a mediator!)

WDRC Welcomes Joel Holland

Hello WDRC newsletter readers! My name is Joel Holland and I am the Center's newest AmeriCorps volunteer. Since starting work in September, I have performed various jobs around the office but I mostly work with the youth programs for boys and young men at schools and in the community. I became interested in working at the WDRC because of my experiences as a student at WWU, where I was a member of Western Men against Violence, a club that focuses on promoting non-violence among men and boys. I believe that nonviolence and positive communication can be taught effectively to young men and are essential in creating a more just, peaceful world. I am excited to join the staff and volunteers at the DRC and to continue to learn about the amazing things our community members are doing. I have lived here for only four and a half years, but I consider Bellingham home and have difficulty imagining living some place else. In the office, you will find me listening to music constantly and drinking unhealthy amounts of coffee. I enjoy playing music, The Office, and cooking vegan food.

New Partnership Established with Children's Administration

The WDRC has begun a collaborative effort with the Department of Children and Family Services to provide mediation for families in need; including 3rd party dependency cases, open adoption matters, and parenting plans for families whose children have been in others' care. WDRC mediators have already helped parents develop parenting plans, and teens and their guardians to plan for smooth transitions, allowing families to be reunited and reducing the caseload for the State. The WDRC looks forward to continuing to work with these families.

IN-SERVICE TRAININGS:

These trainings are offered once per month for staff, mediators, and/or people in the mediation practicum program.

The topic of our November 12th in-service training was the Role of the Guardian ad Litem. This was facilitated by one of our Family Mediators, Angela Montgomery. Angela is also a Domestic Relations Guardian ad Litem with the Whatcom County Superior Court. A Guardian ad Litem (GAL) is the person appointed by the court to look out for the best interest of the child during the course of legal proceedings. Some of our Family Mediation cases include the involvement of the GAL. Discussion included the role mediation plays in the Guardian ad Litem process, how much information a mediator should know about the Guardian ad Litem's reporting on the case, and the duties and responsibilities of the GAL. Also in attendance was Penny Henderson who is a local Family Attorney and Guardian ad Litem.

2009 Basic Mediation Training

APRIL and SEPTEMBER

Call now to register for this 40 hour course!

WDRC People Tidbits

My name is **Kara Black**, and I am very pleased to have joined the WDRC Board. I have benefited personally from dispute resolution services in the past, and I am glad to support this organization. I currently own a sustainable travel business and am working to create an eco-lodge in Whatcom County.

My most recent, and most relevant, past experience was founding and acting as Project Manager for a co-housing community in West Seattle. A large part of this work involved guiding an intensive consensus process with a group of about 45 people. I facilitated and/or led approximately 1,000 hours of consensus-based meetings, resulting in literally thousands of successful group decisions. I am a big believer in the consensus process when it is managed effectively.

Before this project, I worked in human services management with Head Start, Families First, Children's Home Society and United Way. I also worked on national family support legislation. I have two graduate degrees, and an undergraduate degree in education. I grew up in Evanston, IL, with two sisters and started Kindergarten the year the schools were integrated. I really appreciated the rich multi-cultural experience I had growing up.

I have served on a number of Boards, and really appreciate Moonwater's excellent management of this one. I currently am Chair of the Social Justice, Hospitality and Accessibility Committees at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship. I especially enjoy singing, hiking, and yoga.

Other new board members include: Marian Exall, who moved to Bellingham from Atlanta in 2006 after a legal career as both in-house and outside counsel, specializing in employment law. She is an arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association, and a certified mediator. Since 2000, she has focused on a preventive practice, including human resources policy and program development, training and alternative dispute resolution. She is a frequent speaker and writer on employment topics. She has a Sociology degree from the London School of Economics and a JD degree from Emory University School of Law. She is also certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resources. Born and raised in England, Marian lived in France and Belgium before coming to the U.S. in 1977. She is married to Graham, an executive in the construction industry, and they have two grown children, one granddaughter, and two dogs. Since moving to Bellingham, she has immersed herself in volunteer work, including with the Social Justice committee of her church, as a mentor with Teen Court, and as an English language teacher to immigrants. Her hobbies are reading, writing, gardening, cooking and travel. And...

Richard E. Dunlop, who came to Bellingham over four years ago from Washington, DC, where he served over 20 years as a federal litigation attorney with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) until his appointment as an administrative judge. Besides striving to become a certified mediator here in Bellingham, has been on archaeological and anthropological digs in Italy and Tanzania, and has been attending classes at WWU in those fields. He joined the WDRC Board last spring.

Training Calendar

*Visit our website at
www.whatcomdrc
for specific dates and times and
new trainings!*

**“Helping Children
Through Family Changes”**
Offered at least monthly
Cost: \$45.00 per person

Dealing w/Conflict (Adult)
Offered every other month
Cost: \$60.00 per person
*Discount: \$10 per person
(For separated, divorced or never-married
parents and custodians)*

Healthy Choices for Girls
(serving 12-18yr olds)
Offered every other month for girls

Offered in elementary, middle and
high schools upon request
Cost: Free

Facing Conflict w/out Violence
(serving 12-18yr olds)
Offered every other month for boys

Offered in elementary, middle and
high schools upon request
Cost: Free

Dealing w/Conflict
(serving 12-18 year olds)
Co-ed group offered every other
month to youth
Cost: Free

Professional Mediation Training
Offered in April and September
40 hour course
Cost: \$575

Workplace Training
Customized training
provided upon request

*Stay tuned for new advanced
trainings in 2009!*

**For more information and to
register call the WDRC at
(360) 676-0122
www.whatcomdrc.org**

Cribbage Tourney Creates Fun and Funds

The second annual "Compete for a Cause" Cribbage Tournament on Sunday, September 7th raised more than \$2,500 for the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center - thanks to the sold out crowd of 96 participants! Last year's tournament sold out before the day of the event, so this year we boosted the size of the event and were pleased to have it sell out as well. Participants came from as far away as Enumclaw and Kirkland to join in the festivities. Plans are already underway for the 3rd annual tournament, to be held next September. The Tournament is sponsored by Boundary Bay Brewery, as part of the "Compete for a Cause" fundraising series for the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center. The morning tournament yielded 48 players for the afternoon, single elimination event. The reigning champion, Sandy Marr of Bellingham was ousted in the 4th round, and a few hours later a new winner emerged - Michelle Smith, also of Bellingham. Congratulations!

PEACE BUILDER AWARDS

On Saturday, November 8, more than 150 community members attended the 6th Annual Peace Builder Awards, sponsored by Boundary Bay Brewery. The event honored ten community members and programs for their contributions to peaceful conflict resolution throughout Whatcom County. Joined by Representative Kelli Linville, the Board of Directors of the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center (WDRC) was pleased to honor the incredible work that people are doing in Whatcom County to build relationships, support youth, and encourage peaceful conflict resolution in work places, neighborhoods, and schools. The evening was a tremendous success, not only did it give voice to these amazing people and programs, but it also was a very successful fundraiser, bringing in \$10,000 for support of the WDRC. Congratulations to the following:

- **Program:** Leadership Whatcom, Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities. A program which develops a diverse network of skillful, informed, and collaborative leaders who facilitate renewal in our community. Dedicated alumni of the program have worked to create "Productive Public Conversation", a series of forums structured to encourage diverse civil expressions.
- **Community:** Amy Jean Kenna. Amy has offered support and has positively intervened in conflictive, desperate and sometimes violent situations to bring caring and peaceful resolution results. Her compassion is evident in many types of work with her church and in the community.
- **The Arts:** Swil Kanim. A Lummi violinist and story teller who is dedicated to "Honor" and "Self Expression, especially as it relates to children and youth. He has shared his music and verse across the nation encouraging service and compassion.
- **Healthcare:** Amy Robinson, Rebirthing Yoga. She contributes to peace building in many ways: as a yoga instructor, a prenatal instructor and Doula, and her work with Global Mala which promotes the mission of the United Nation's International Day of Peace.
- **Public Servant:** Doralee Sanchez, for efforts in the creation and management of the Lummi Cultural Learning Center. The Program helps Lummi youth build self-esteem, cultural identity, learn the ability to care for themselves. She was responsible for inspiring youth and other tribal members to handcraft thousands of gifts for the potlatch at the Canoe Journey and for the Dalai Lama's visit in Seattle.
- **Youth:** Iris Maute-Gibson, who spent her senior year tackling the concept and practical application of nonviolence. She proposed a bill to the YMCA Youth Conference on National Affairs which advocated for violence prevention and mediation in schools.
- **Education:** "Improving Change" Anti Bully Performance Education Troupe, Sehome High School, NW center for Violence Prevention Training. Their performances explore issues of bullying, harassment and related school violence with their audience.
- **Volunteer:** Rick and Jan Krouskop, Alternatives to Violence Project. This international project provides experiential, non-violent conflict resolution training for prison inmates. They recently coordinated a conference in Bellingham.
- **Honorable Mention:** NW Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. They humanely assist County residents who encounter unwanted or suffering wildlife. Their mission is to promote peaceful interaction between animals and people.


THE
UPFRONT
THEATRE

Many thanks to the Upfront Theater for the fantastic comedy show they performed at our annual Peace Builder Awards. Please support them by attending their shows, or taking classes! Learn more on their website at www.theupfront.com

BOUNDARY BAY
BREWERY & BISTRO

BELLINGHAM WASHINGTON

Many thanks as well to Boundary Bay Brewery, our event sponsor for the Peace Builder Awards. Please support them by visiting the brewery, on Railroad avenue in Bellingham. Visit their website at www.bbaybrewery.com



Honoring Kris Cassingham

ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2008 OUR DRC AND OUR COMMUNITY LOST A VERY SPECIAL PERSON, FRIEND, AND VOLUNTEER. KRIS WAS KILLED IN A MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT ON CHUCKANUT DRIVE, JUST AS THE SUN WAS RISING. FOR YEARS KRIS TIRELESSLY DONATED HIS TIME TO UPGRADE OUR COMPUTERS, WORK THROUGH ANY GLITCHES, AND LAUNCH US INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. MOST RECENTLY HE HELPED US MOVE ALL OF OUR TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS INTO OUR NEW SPACE. KRIS WAS A MODEL FOR GENEROSITY AND KINDNESS. CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH HIS BEAUTIFUL SMILE. KRIS WAS A PEACE BUILDER AT HEART AND WE MISS HIM DEARLY.



Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center
 13 Prospect Street
 Bellingham, WA 98225

Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center
Creative Conflict Resolution

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 educate and train people in peaceful conflict resolution and provide for competent and neutral third parties to mediate or otherwise empower disputants to resolve conflicts in equitable and cooperative ways.

Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center • 13 Prospect Street, Suite 201 Bellingham, WA 98225 • (360) 676-0122 • wdrc@whatcomdrc.org

Contribute to Peace Building in Whatcom County

Donations to the WDRC are warmly accepted. As a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, we seek to make alternative dispute resolution available to all Whatcom County community members. No one is ever denied service due to inability to pay. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Yes! I/We wish to support the mission of the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center _____
 with a gift of \$_____ to support Peace Building in our Community! NAME _____

Visa/Master Card #: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ ADDRESS _____
Circle one please

Expiration Date: _____ / _____ CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

Signature: _____

Please detach this form and return it with your check made payable to
Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center, 13 Prospect Street, Suite 201
 Bellingham, WA 98225

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