

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Notes from the Board of Directors
- Being a Mom and Mediator
- New Staff
- Soon to be "Old" Staff

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A United Way Agency

MLK Celebration, and Community Service!

By: Aaron Weiss

Although most schools and businesses close on Martin Luther King Day, the Mediation Center seized an opportunity to reach out to the community. Last year's event was so successful that we decided to repeat it. Lunch was served to the homeless and needy at the Salvation Army, and I was lucky to have many volunteers help. A last minute cancellation of a large party of perspective helpers seemed to doom the success of the event. However, many of our very own teen mediators came through in the clutch, demonstrating their commitment to serve the community.

An incredible 15 volunteers came from all over: some from the community who saw advertisements on local websites, others from the mediation center, and even a group from D.C.

heard about the event and wanted to contribute. With such an abundance of helpers, we were able to serve the homeless and needy restaurant-style. Prior to their arrival, hand sanitizers had been placed at every chair. These sanitizers commemorated Martin Luther King Day and offered the words, "spread peace, not the flu!" Once people had had a chance to pick their choice of bread, they sat down, and the volunteers served them their meals.

After everyone had eaten their full, we took their trays and dirty dishes back to the kitchen where we washed and cleaned them. We took turns mopping the floor, and the tables were thoroughly wiped down. I couldn't be happier with the volunteers who showed up for

the event, and the mediation center would like to thank the following: Candi Kelley, Fedora Copley, Jackie Jenkins and Zach Fawaz, Wilson Rojas, Natalie Taylor, Dwayne Travis, Billy Bundesen, Barbara Weiss and the new cooking staff at the Salvation Army who made this all possible. Thanks to everyone who made the event a success!



QUOTATIONS from Past Mediation Participants

Ever wonder what people think, once they experience mediation? Well, here are some actual quotes, taken from some of our exit surveys, when asked "what did you like about mediation?":

- It helped me to better understand the other participant's outlook on the situation to better resolve it and come up with an agreement.
- That we can set goals in writing to resolve our conflict.



- The fact that the mediators wanted this to be a thorough process.
- We cleared the air, we understood why things ended up this bad.
- Didn't feel judged, it was a good atmosphere for the mediation.
- I liked the ability to talk without interruptions. I loved the positive feedback and things the mediators said to make us



believe we were on the right track and doing the right things.

Our services empower individuals to take responsibility for, and control of, their own conflict, through the peaceful process of mediation. Mediation can be, and often is, an uplifting experience. Relationships are rebuilt and often transformed.

Outstanding Youth

Fedora Copley is a senior at North Hagerstown High School. She is currently enrolled in A.P. Spanish Lit., A.P. Statistics, I.B. European History, I.B. English, I.B. Biology and I.B. Psychology.

In addition to her heavy class load, Fedora is a member of the Environment Club, the Art Club and used to be a member of the Drama Club at North High. She also volunteers her time to the Washington County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition, the Washington County Young Democrats, the Free-Thinkers as well as for the Public Library and Art Museum.

Despite such a busy schedule, Fedora donates her time to the Mediation Center, a process that appeals to her because of its structure, and the necessity to remove oneself from the



process. Fedora particularly enjoys the challenges that arise with the self-conscious while mediating.

We wish Fedora all the luck in the world when she heads off to college in the Fall. Thank you for all of your help Fedora!

Schedule of Events

Contact WCCMC for more information on all scheduled events

- } **March 06**—Dave Hutchin's Birthday
- } **March 10**—Legislative Day in Annapolis
- } **March 12**—Fedora Copley's Birthday
- } **April 23**—Robin Miller's Birthday
- } **April 26**—Charmayne McClarine's Birthday
- } **May 01**—Ray Fewster's Birthday
- } **May 08**—Stacie Hart's Birthday
- } **May 13**—Bettye Harrison-Burns' Birthday
- } **May 17**—Carol Schofield's Birthday
- } **May 21**—Aaron Weiss' Birthday
- } **May 30**—Mediator Social and Teen Mediator Committee Meeting-Location TBD
- } **June 01**—Thom Davis' Birthday
- } **June 06**—Maile Beers-Arthur's Birthday
- } **June 12**—Community Mediation Maryland Gala and Fundraiser
- } **June 14—19**—Basic Mediation Training at Washington County Community Mediation Center
- } **June 16**—Robin Handler's Birthday
- } **June 26—30**—Basic Mediation Training at Washington County Community Mediation Center
- } **June 29**—Lanny McClure's Birthday

Along for the Ride-Along!

By: Aaron Weiss

One of the outreach opportunities I'm excited to resume is the ride-along program with the Hagerstown Police Department as well as the Sheriff's Department. During these "ride-alongs", I will try to both dodge bullets, and inform the community as well as the officers about mediation.

The goal is for the officers to have a thorough grasp of the mediation process so that they can confidently refer to

us anyone who could benefit from our services.

We are very lucky that Chief Smith of the Hagerstown Police Department and Sheriff Douglas Mullendore of the Washington County Sheriff's Office are strong supporters of mediation.



Off the Board!

By: Dave Gysberts

After moving back to Hagerstown, having completed college, I looked for ways to get involved in meaningful service to others and to pursue a passion for education that I developed while an undergraduate student at Salisbury University. There, I took courses which included, 'History of Violence and Nonviolence in America,' 'Philosophy of Violence and Nonviolence,' and 'Sociology of Conflict and Nonviolence.'

One day while walking around campus I discovered that Salisbury University had a Center for Conflict Resolution. I walked in and inquired about the facility and was immediately hooked. I discovered that this was an opportunity to turn theory into practice to educate and help others. Dr. Phillip Bosserman, founder of the Center

for Conflict Resolution and Sociology professor emeritus at Salisbury, became my friend, mentor, and advisor for an independent study that linked group adventure-based experiences, such as ropes courses, with conflict resolution.

As a professional school counselor, I am especially interested in ensuring that young people grow up knowing how to peacefully resolve conflict and how to pursue help when they need it. As a citizen, I see that conflict too often mires our government in gridlock and inhibits progress. One of my first experiences with WCCMC was at a community forum involving a controversial land-use planning issue. I was highly impressed with the work of the mediators at this forum, so I asked how to get involved, which led to becoming a Board member. This June, I look forward to finally taking the 50-hour basic mediator training.

Let us also take this time to again thank Valerie Main for her six years

of outstanding leadership and service as Executive Director. Valerie's record of accomplishment is truly excellent and because of her solid commitment to mediation, WCCMC is one of the most respected and successful centers in the State. We are also grateful for Monica Lechuga for stepping up and taking the reins during the transition. We will miss her when she leaves us in March to join her husband who serves in the Navy.

As a member of the Board of Directors, we will continue to focus on implementing our Strategic Plan, while supporting our mediators and existing programs. We will be working hard to secure the new and necessary funding sources that will help us continue to grow and prosper, following our mission: to empower Washington County citizens to peacefully resolve their own conflicts by providing high-quality mediation and conflict resolution services and training.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, mediators, and community partners. May your 2010 be healthy and prosperous!

Mediator Spotlight: Robin Miller

By: Monica Lechuga

Robin Miller has been selected as our Volunteer of the Quarter. Robin has served with WCCMC for two years. Robin has taken all of the information from her training and soared with this newfound knowledge. From the beginning Robin was readily available for observations and moved into the mediator role with ease. I must say that her ability to really listen and reflect is phenomenal. Maybe that's due to her career choice, running a day care where she must listen to little children all-day and reflect back what they are trying to say, even when they don't know what they want.

Robin has the great ability of making participants, fellow mediators and most definitely new mediators feel comfortable when in the mediation process. Robin constantly communi-

cates with the center, whether it be her agreeing to mediate a case at the last minute, sharing her availability with us, and also giving us her feedback so that we can help the community.

Robin was a lifesaver to the staff when we were preparing for the Basket Bingo fundraiser. She went above and beyond the call of duty and received some great donations from local businesses. Robin also donated some personal items and was extremely helpful with sorting baskets and door prizes. Robin was a tower of strength at the Basket Bingo, helping with set up, selling tickets and clean up. So, for that we want thank you so much for all your positivity and calmness. You are truly a shining star and much appreciated.



"Robin has the great ability of making... [everyone] feel comfortable in the mediation process."



How does the mediation process impact a mediator's life?

Mediating At Home

By Maile Beers-Arthur

"We have to talk if we're going to resolve this problem."

This is Sophie, the redheaded half of my seven-year-old twin girls.

I was so proud. Children of a mediator, my redhead and my ash blonde have learned that when they're in conflict, the way to resolve it is to stop the bickering, to talk about the situation from their perspective, to brainstorm solutions, then to come to a consensus.

Lest you have begun to imagine a rosy pink bubble enveloping my house in its peaceful embrace where conflict is always dealt with in this nurturing, by-the-mediation book manner that Bush and Folger would envy, fear not. Enter reality. In most every case, this only happens when my cherubs think I'm listening in. Or when the mom and dad call a halt to the mayhem and introduce the mediation process.

It looks more like this:

Parent to Child One: "Tell us from your perspective what's going on and how you see this best being resolved."

This is generally followed by one of four fairly common scenarios. The first involves a barrage of reasons the other child is to blame for everything that has ever upset her in her short life! Lots of superlatives.

The second involves this elocution: "um, er, uh."

The third involves a child looking at the ceiling, trying to pick out fascinating shapes in the shadows, or down at her now wriggling toes, wondering why she hadn't found them this interesting before.

The fourth involves tears.

Once we've heard from Child One, Child Two gets the same question. Mom and Dad listen to both, then reflect back what they've said, complete with issues, feelings, values. Most of the time, during this reflection, at least one child wanders off, done with this problem-solving business already.

"Okay, okay," we often hear. "Can we *play* now?"

There are increasingly, however, more golden times when the process works, the girls find a solution and go back to being BFFs.

I will admit that once in awhile, okay, at least 50 percent of the time, the parents offer the solution. And mediator mom has been rumored to exclaim, "You're driving me crazy with this bickering!" I know, I know, nos nos in mediation. But after all, isn't that the parental prerogative?

And after all, we hear our daughters using the language of peaceful resolution, letting us know that they actually *have* internalized some of this mediation stuff. Come to think of it, they're a lot like the adults I see in mediation. (See the reference to blaming, distractions and tears.)

I know my daughters have gotten a jumpstart on peaceful problem-solving. But I won't fool myself that there's not a bit of backsliding here and there. After the redhead cheerfully and dutifully described the mediation process to her doting parents, she added, "But if a boy hurts my feelings," I'll stomp his brains out."

Oops! Well, Rome wasn't built in a day.

"We hear our daughters using the language of peaceful resolution, letting us know that they actually have internalized some of this mediation stuff."



Monica, we will miss you!!

By Dee Dee Allen

Monica Lechuga joined the Washington County Community Mediation Center quite by accident. She walked in intending to volunteer her services but after speaking with then Executive Director Valerie Main, she walked out with an invitation to interview for the position of Program Director!

Monica took that opportunity and the rest is history. She quickly learned the skills needed for her job and has stepped up to the plate time and again, always making sure that the job gets done, no matter how big or small. Monica's skills in the intake area are quite remarkable as she acquaints potential participants to the facilitative mediation process. Another of her amazing gifts is her ability in the fundraising arena. Her enthusiasm for her cause as well as her positive energy has garnered an amazing amount of support from local businesses. And judging by the number of repeat donations, they never tire of hearing from her!

When WCCMC faced the crisis of the resignation of an Executive Director and the possibility of having no one in the position for a lengthy period of time, Monica took the challenge and assumed the responsibilities of Interim Executive Director AND Program Director!

Monica, we are indebted to you for your tireless efforts, the long hours, the many phone calls, the many things you do that we don't have a clue that you do! You have been a tremendous asset to the Washington County Community Mediation Center and we are forever in your debt. Good luck to you and Elliott, and we wish you both the very best!

"Hold on to what is good even if it is a handful of earth.

Hold on to what you believe even if it is a tree which stands by itself.

Hold on to what you must do even if it is a long way from here.

Hold on to life even when it is easier letting go.

Hold on to my hand even when I have gone away from you."

WCCMC is funded by:

The Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office,

The Community Foundation of Washington County,

The Washington County Gaming Commission,

United Way of Washington County, and

Corporate and Private Donations

THANK YOU

to the many businesses who generously donated funding or prizes for Conflict Resolution Day:

The WC Board of Education,

Ellsworth Electric,

Myers Building Systems,

Gardner's Candies,

Oak Printing,

Regal Valley Movie Theater,

Chick-fil-A,

Coldstone Creamery,

Starbucks,

Martin's,

Weis,

Best Buy, and

Target

New Executive Director: Cliff Kurt

Clifford Kurt was appointed Executive Director of the Washington County Community Mediation Center in February, 2010. Prior to joining WCCMC, he worked for Better Business Bureau, serving in numerous capacities including president and CEO of chapters in Ohio and South Carolina, and in management at the organization's national offices, the Council of Better Business Bureaus. His most recent posi-

tion was as Executive Director of the Consumer Education Foundation of BBB of Austin, Texas.

Mr. Kurt was certified as a mediator through Capital University of Columbus, Ohio. He attended the University of Toledo in Toledo, Ohio. He lives in Martinsburg, West Virginia, and is married to Shelley Aikens-Kurt. He has three grown children: Amy, Cliff, Jr. and Elizabeth.



New Program Director: Jordan Appel

Jordan Appel is the new Director of Case Management for the Washington County Community Mediation Center. She started in early March 2010. Before joining WCCMC, Jordan worked in a variety of mental health facilities including hospitals, outpatient centers, and with rehabilitation programs. She also interned for the D.C. Superior Court, Morgan County, WV Court Systems, and for the Maryland



House of Delegates. Jordan has a passion for conflict resolution and upon hearing about the center felt compelled to apply.

Ms. Appel is a graduate of Hood College in Frederick, MD where she majored in Psychology. She resides in Hancock with her dog, Alf and her cat, Pepper.

Staff

Clifford Kurt, Executive Director

Jordan Appel, Director of Case Management

Aaron Weiss, Americorps Program Development Specialist

Our Wish List of Needed Items

At WCCMC, we try to keep administrative costs to an absolute minimum, so that donations can go straight into the community. Therefore, if you have access to any of the following goods or services, and could make an in-kind donation, we could put them to great use...

- In-kind printing services of brochures, letterhead, palm cards or bookmarks.

- General office supplies (paper, pens, flip chart paper, note pads, staples, paperclips, rubber bands, ink jet cartridges, etc.)
- Gift cards for office supplies
- Cases of bottled water for meetings, other contributions towards food and beverages, for use during our meetings.
- T-shirts, tote bags, hats, boxes of stationary or postcards, bumper stickers, pens, or youth rubber bracelets
- Gift cards/certificates to use for volunteer recognition
- First aid kits
- Non-perishable snack foods
- Tissues
- In-kind office space (!)

WCCMC Donation Form

____ I would like to make a tax-deductible donation for mediation

____ \$25 ____ \$50 ____ \$100 ____ \$250

____ \$500 ____ \$1000 Other: ____

____ I would like to volunteer, please send me more information.

Method of Donation

- Check
- Cash
- Money Order

Name

Address

Phone

Yes, I want to support the efforts of the Washington County Community Mediation Center to increase the recognition and use of conflict resolution techniques within our communities.

**Washington County Community
Mediation Center, Inc.**



**Washington County
Community Mediation
Center**

Board of Directors

Dee Dee Allen—
President

Dave Bort—VP

Dave Gysberts
—Secretary

Dave Jordan—
Treasurer

Bill Reno

WCCMC Yard Sale A Huge Success!

By: Dee Dee Allen

Would you like to help a great cause and at the same time get rid of some of the clutter in your house? A lot of WCCMC supporters did just that last year and I encourage all of you to join in the fun this year as well. Dale and M.J. Williams most generously donated their front yard so WCCMC could hold a yard sale in conjunction with the annual Paramount community Fourth of July Yard Sale. A team of dedicated professionals, alright, just a bunch of volunteers, gathered donations from friends, family, and co-workers and hauled the massive amount of junk, I mean other people's treasures, to the Williams yard to begin the exhausting proc-



ess of displaying and pricing their wares. Business was good, the shoppers were great, and by the end of a long hot day, we had made a profit of \$1000. (It was really \$997 and some odd cents I believe, but a donation was made to bring the total to \$1000). There were some really awesome bargains, too!

The items remaining after the yard sale were donated to (check with Monica for this detail, she'll know!)

Start checking your closets now and start a donation pile for the WCCMC Yard Sale. And please, come out and support the cause by volunteering for a few hours and/or buying a few bags of other people's junk!

Basket Bingo Fundraiser

By: Bill Reno

Ah, yes Spring. 'Tis time for all good WCCMC Board Members to start thinking about.....ah fundraisers?

Yes, fundraisers!

Last year, in early Spring, we, the Board decided that one of our fundraisers for 2009 would be a Basket Bingo party so the fun began. We had to find the baskets, fill the baskets, get a gaming license, find live auction items, find silent auction items, find sponsors, find a venue for the "party", plan food and refreshments, decide on whether or not to sell alcohol, determine advertising, find tip jars, bingo cards, raffle tickets, a bingo caller, a caterer, tables, chairs, determine supply needs, etc.

Nothing to it, right? Next was to find someone who knew what a Basket Bingo party really consisted of. No

one? That wouldn't stop us, oh, Dave knew someone, also Dave had some experience in Tip jars and 50/50 games, and Dave knew someone who had been to a Basket Bingo party before. I won't tell you which Dave each of those were however.

Once the tasks were identified, they were divided between Board and staff members and off we went. The party was scheduled for September so we had plenty of time.

OOPS, it is already August 2009. Have we ordered baskets? Have we done advertising? Have we contacted the gaming commission? Have we....have we...have we...? The answers were really surprisingly yes to most of these so by the first week in September we were set to go.

On Sunday, September 13, 2009 the Williamsport Fire Hall doors opened and thongs of people crowded the hall.

25 Baskets, filled to the brim, were on display, Items for the live auction were in full view, and a line of tables were filled with over 35 silent auction items. Board members and staff were in their places to direct, sell 50/50 tickets, tip jar tickets, and other games of chance. The Bingo caller was at his station and the free delicious lunch was laid out for all. After stomachs were filled, the calling began. After 3 or so hours, the party winded down and was deemed very successful both as a fundraiser as well as a public relations activity for the community.

Now, we need to decide if we want to have the same amount and kind of fun this year.