



COMMUNITY MEDIATION CENTER OF RHODE ISLAND

Notes from the Carriage House Fall 2009 Newsletter

THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

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As the Thanksgiving Season approaches, it seems a good time to reflect on the multitude of fortunate moments we encounter throughout the year. I'm finding that there are many moments, people and things for which to be grateful through my work at the Center, in no particular order:

- Steven Davis, our Brown intern, whose attention to detail and willingness to help with any task, however small, has made life insurmountably easier this fall
- CMCRI Board Vice President, Loraine Della Porta, who took time out of her incredibly busy schedule earlier this month to provide a dynamic two-day facilitation training for the Center
- CMCRI's recent award of funding under the federal Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program
- The fact that CMCRI will close out 2009 with a balanced budget (just barely!) - no small feat in this time of shrinking grant awards
- Ruth Kohorn Rosenberg and Bruce Kogan, who both donated their time and considerable talent over the past 6 months to run skills-based workshops for CMCRI's volunteer mediators
- CMCRI staff - Victoria Moreno-Jackson, Elmis Navarro, Meri Kaufman and Pam Humphreys - who work

hard for little pay, care deeply about our clients, pitch themselves wholeheartedly into even the smallest job, and make me laugh - and without whom the Center could not function

- Margie Caranci of the Roger Williams University School of Law, who cheerfully allowed us to hold our Basic Mediation Training in the Law School clinic building free of charge when we encountered a scheduling snafu with our training location
- CMCRI's Board members - a small but committed group of terrific supporters who month after month donate their time and ideas to our mission
- Our hardworking and patient CPA John Finnerty, who often has to chase down information from me at the last minute, but who never complains and whose pie charts are a pleasure to behold!

I wish everyone a holiday season filled with cheer and good health!

Abbie Jones-Herriott

Calendar of Upcoming CMCRI Events

⇒ **November 9, 2009 - Serving a Diverse Public: Bias Awareness for Professionals, Sponsored by CMCRI**: Casey Family Services Community Room, Providence, RI; 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM. **You do not need to be a mediator to attend this training.** This highly interactive, four-hour workshop will be conducted by Rhode Island for Community and Justice staff Nanda Shewmangal and RICJ Executive Director Toby Ayers, Ph.D. This workshop will challenge participants to identify, explore and examine their own biases, and how those biases can impact relationships with clients, colleagues, and those with whom we interact on a daily basis. The purpose is to increase the participant's capacity to identify, examine and then work beyond the biases that, often unconsciously, create and inhibit our ability to deliver services as effectively and productively as we can. By being aware of the unconscious biases we all inevitably hold we can function better in our jobs as service providers, colleagues and supervisors, as well as in our daily lives. There is a \$10.00 fee for all CMCRI Mediators and Board Members (anyone who has volunteered for CMCRI within the past year). The cost is \$25.00 for all other registrants. Snacks and beverages will be provided.

⇒ **December 5, 2009 - Role Play Workshop**: CMCRI's offices, Providence, RI; 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Has it been a while since you've mediated, or would you just like an opportunity to continue to practice your skills with other mediators? This interactive workshop allows participants to identify aspects of their practice which they would like to improve then work on those skills in a supportive group environment. A continental breakfast will be provided. Spaces in this workshop are first reserved for,

and free of charge to, participants in the Fall Basic Mediation Skills Training, but additional space may be available for mediators looking for a refresher. Please call CMCRI for more information.

⇒ Stay tuned for announcements regarding CMCRI's 2010 Spring Basic Mediation Skills Training schedule, typically held in over a three-week period in March. CMCRI maintains a year-round wait list to reserve training spaces for interested registrants; please call the Center for more information.

⇒ **CMCRI Bi-Monthly Mediators Meetings** will resume in 2010. These meetings are held on the last Tuesday of alternating months. By popular vote our mediators have asked that the meeting time be changed from a breakfast slot (8:00 - 9:30 AM) to an afternoon slot (4:30 - 6:00 PM). CMCRI provides snacks and beverages at these meetings. E-mail reminders will go out beforehand announcing agendas and topics to be discussed. As always, please let us know if there are topics you would like to see discussed or areas you would like to learn more about during these meetings. The remaining 2009 meeting date and agenda is listed on the following page.

Calendar of Upcoming CMCRI Events (Con't.)

⇒ December 15, 2009 (PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DATE FOR THIS MEETING HAS CHANGED!)- CMCRI Bi-Monthly Mediator Meeting - Updates on CMCRI's New Continuing Education Requirement for Volunteer Mediators and Holiday Gathering: CMCRI, Providence, RI; 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM. This informal gathering will present an opportunity for CMCRI Volunteer Mediators to ask questions about CMCRI's new Continuing Education Requirement which goes into effect on January 1, 2010, and to share some holiday cheer with the staff. A light meal will be provided.

⇒ January 2010 - Bi-Monthly Mediator Meetings resume. The tentative 2010 meeting schedule is as follows: February 23rd; April 27th; June 28th; August 31st; October 26th; and December 28th. Look for CMCRI emails containing further updates regarding schedule and meeting topics.

UPCOMING LOCAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

⇒ November 9-14, 2009 - 40 Hour Family Mediation Training, Boston Law Collaborative, LLC, 99 Summer Street, Suite 1600; Boston, MA 02110. The 40-Hour Family Mediation Training program--co-sponsored by the American Bar Association Section of Family Law and Boston Law Collaborative, LLC--provides an overview of the mediation process, including the various types of mediation and mediators, as well as strategies and skills to consider. For more information about each day's courses, fees, or to register: visit www.abanet.org/family/events/mediation09.shtml.

⇒ November 18, 2009 - Dealing with Power Imbalances in Mediation, sponsored by the Rhode Island Mediators Association, Providence, RI. This workshop, intended to assist mediators in identifying power imbalances and in making judgment calls as to whether, when and how to intervene in a potential power im-

balance, will be held from 5:30 - 7:30 at the Roger Williams University Providence Campus, on 150 Washington Street. There is a fee for this workshop. A light supper will be provided. For more information or to register for this workshop please go to www.rimediators.org.

⇒ January 12-14, 2010 - Elder Mediation Training, The Walker Center- Newton, MA, 171 Grove Street, Newton, MA. Elder mediation helps seniors and their adult children resolve conflicts around issues such as living arrangements, caregiving, financial planning, inheritance/estate disputes, medical decisions, family communication, driving, and guardianship. **If you are interested in this training or future trainings, please call (617) 621-7009, email training@ElderDecisions.com.**

Volunteer Spotlight: June Tow

Although a regular presence in Providence and Kent's in District Courts for many years, longtime CMCRI volunteer mediator and former CMCRI Board member June Tow has had to take a break these last few months, as she was busy fulfilling her responsibilities as one of nine members of the Judicial Nominating Committee for the state of Rhode Island.

Introduced to the Center by founding former board member and volunteer mediator Joan Gelch, June has been involved with CMCRI for more than 10 years. June credits Joan's influence as the jumping-off point for her commitment to the values of mediation and the Center's mission. June remembers with great pride when she was chosen as the CMCRI representative to receive an award honoring the Center's contribution to the community at a ceremony held at the Providence Performing Arts Center. When June commits to sit on a board or become involved in a movement it is because she is passionately committed to what that board is doing and the contribution it is making. Her contribution is never in "name only."

June's individual commitment to the Rhode Island community is far-reaching, from the Friends of Rochambeau Library Executive Committee to the Academic Decathlon and the Rhode Island Historical Society. Fairness, justice and good government are values which motivate June to support these organizations, including CMCRI and the mediation process.

June is a graduate from Tufts University where she majored in Government. She went on to teach history in Long Island, and to work for an execu-

tive head-hunting firm in New York City and for Newsweek magazine before returning to her native Rhode Island to work in the family business. Another source of tremendous pride for June is her family's four generations of contributing to the fabric of the Providence community and its rich history in the family hospitality industry

June's current seat on the Judicial Nominating Committee was a gubernatorial appointment which she was awarded several years ago. She and the eight other members comprised of lawyers and other professionals advertise the judicial vacancies, screen and interview the candidates and conduct the questioning during each candidate's public testimony. The committee runs this process for vacancies in the Family, District and Superior Courts. With a number of current vacancies, including until this past spring the position of Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, these volunteer appointees have been busy. The opportunity this committee presents to further the contribution already made to the various courts is not lost on June. She is an independent voice appointed to represent the lay community in this selection process, and as a former president of the League of Women Voters in Rhode Island she does not take lightly the role of community voice in government. CMCRI is grateful that June's interest in justice and civic matters includes a long-term dedication to the ideals of mediation and a commitment to the Center and its mission.

CMCRI News

In many workplaces, business and productivity slow down in the summer months, but not at the Mediation Center! CMCRI has increased its focus on building peaceful conflict resolution skills on a state-wide basis through training, and over the past five months has reached nearly 160 youth and adults through training efforts. A sampling of recently-conducted trainings conducted or sponsored by the Center includes:



- “Communicating Compassionately in a World of Conflict,” a seven-hour training presented by Joe Brummer, based on the Non-Violent Communication work and theory of Marshall Rosenberg;
- “Dealing with Attorneys in Mediation,” for CMCRI volunteer mediators, conducted by Bruce Kogan, Professor of Law and Director of the Roger Williams University School of Law Mediation Clinic;
- Three two-hour conflict resolution workshops presented to first graders at a local elementary school;
- Four conflict resolution workshops conducted for youth at the Channel One Youth Summit;
- “When Good Interventions Go Bad,” a two-hour workshop for volunteer mediators, focusing on furthering advanced mediation skills by exploring the impact of specific interventions on the mediation process;
- A two-day facilitation training, titled “We’ve Got to Stop Meeting like This!,” presented by Loraine Della Porta, Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution;
- A three-hour workshop on team building and resolving group conflict for a group struggling with internal consensus building;
- A three-hour Reflective Practice workshop for volunteer mediators, conducted by Ruth Kohorn Rosenberg, Director of MIT’s Mediation Program.
- Currently the Center is gearing up for its bi-annual 36 Hour Basic Mediation Training, conducted by Patricia Taubin, and a 15 Hour Peer Mediation Training for Met School students and teachers presented by CMCRI staff.

CMCRI News (Con't.)

- In other Center news, Executive Director Abigail Jones-Herriott was a panelist for an NE-ACR discussion on foreclosure mediation which took place on September 15th, 2009 at the Wellesley Library in Wellesley, Massachusetts. The panel contained representatives from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, and Rhode Island, with the panelists discussing both their own experience with foreclosure mediation as well as mediation-related legislation either pending or enacted in their home states designed to deal with the foreclosure crisis.
- On Saturday, August 29th in Somerville, MA the Keystone Center held one of 10 national facilitated meetings for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on the topic of the H1N1 Vaccine. Among those responding to Keystone's request for facilitators were CMCRI staff, volunteers, and friends Victoria Moreno-Jackson, Nan Starr, Willa Truelove, Pam Steager, and Anna Wislocki. All five led small group facilitations over the course of a seven-hour day to help the CDC determine its approach to getting the general public vaccinated against the H1N1 Virus. The mediators brought their conflict resolution and communication skills to the challenge of facilitating highly diverse groups of individuals, ranging from those who strongly supported wide-spread vaccination to passionate detractors of the vaccine.
- CMCRI founding member, past and present Board member, and current volunteer mediator Becky Minard was awarded the Sue Welin Award for Non-Violence by the Fund for Community Progress at its annual Profile in Change Award Breakfast in May. Other Award recipients were U.S. Senator Jack Reed, and Linda Katz, co-founder of the Poverty Institute. The Sue Welin Award for Non-Violence was named after CMCRI's first Executive Director, Susan Welin, who was a life-long advocate of peaceful alternatives to violence, and who passed away in 2002. Becky was honored for her long commitment to the ideals of peaceful conflict resolution, which includes founding CMCRI, volunteering her services as a CMCRI mediator, and her work in helping youth and families peacefully address and resolve conflicts. Congratulations, Becky!
- Happily, in this era of painful budget cuts, some good news on the funding front! CMCRI was awarded funding in the form of federal stimulus monies, through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, to augment the Center's housing mediation work. This money will be distributed over the next three years and will allow the Center to continue its important work of applying conflict resolution principles to homelessness prevention efforts.

Wish List



When you do an internet search, please consider using Goodsearch, a yahoo-based search engine, to help raise money for CMCRI. **Each time you do a search using Goodsearch, the website donates money to CMCRI.** The same principle applies if you do your on-line shopping through Goodshop.

Among the thousands of retailers who donate to non-profits through Goodshop are 1-800-Flowers, FTD, Garnet Hill, Zappos, the Gap, Abercrombie & Fitch, Target, Land's End, and Amazon.com. **If you plan on doing any online shopping for Mother's or Father's Day, we'd appreciate it if you would do it by going to the website: <http://www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx> and entering CMCRI as your designated agency.**

This website also has coupons for substantial discounts off certain products. You simply continue your shopping as usual, and a portion of your proceeds will go to CMCRI. During these difficult economic times, every little bit of help is especially meaningful to non-profits, so if you don't contribute to CMCRI through Goodshop, please consider donating to another agency through this method.

Thank you so much in advance for considering doing your holiday shopping through Goodshop!

CMCRI continues to accept your EastSide Market Place receipts, for which we will receive 1% back. Please note that we are no longer accepting Shaw's Supermarket Receipts, as the company has instituted an electronic receipts program that works through your Shaw's card.

CMCRI STAFF

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