

The Mediator

Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center Newsletter

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The Mediator is the WDRC quarterly newsletter conveying and communicating to you all that's going on at the Center. We'll give you updates on our successes, the skinny on trainings and events coming up, and introductions to our mediators, staff, and volunteers.

Director's Report

Notes from the desk of Moonwater

Thank goodness summer has finally arrived in Bellingham. With its arrival comes the opportunity to slow down just a wee bit to celebrate the successes of the past couple of months.

Our 20th Anniversary Luncheon was a tremendous success. With more than 30 sponsors and more than 150 people turning out for this first-time event, we raised more than \$10,000 in support of the WDRC's services. Thank you to everyone who contributed and took time from the busy workday to learn more about us! A special thanks to Jordan Donovan of [Current Media](#) for donating the production of a fabulous informative video about the WDRC. If you haven't seen it yet, check it out at <http://vimeo.com/45862628>.

We also just learned that we will be the beneficiaries of a three-year \$90,000 grant intended to help us boost our capacity in several programming areas. We've also been challenged to raise \$10,000 of new funding each year for the next three years. I'm excited to create this opportunity for donors to be a part of significant growth here at the WDRC. Be sure to let me know if I've piqued your interest and we can talk about how to get involved in this venture.

In some somber news Arthur Abrahamson, who had been a volunteer with us for the past decade, passed away peacefully in July. Arthur diligently and carefully reconciled our books, prepared financial reports and offered gentle smiles regularly. After living a full life, (he was 84 years young!) and staying

Cribbage Tournament

Saturday, September 8, 2012

10:30 a.m. at Boundary Bay

REGISTER

ONLINE: www.whatcomdrc.org

WDRRC Open House

Dispute Resolution Day

Thursday, October 18, 2012

Details coming soon!

Community Shopping Day

Saturday, October 20, 2012

1% of all proceeds from the [Community Food Co-op](#) goes to WDRRC!

10th Annual Peace Builder Awards Gala

Friday, November 16, 2012

Tickets on sale in early October!

Upcoming Trainings

Understanding Conflict Workshop

Wednesdays, August 15 and 22, 2012

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Pre-registration required!

Professional Mediation Training

October 4-6 and 11-13, 2012

Pre-registration required!

Check out [our website](#) for more info.

Our Board

Kacey Alleman, President

sharp until the moment he passed, Arthur gave much to our community. He received our Volunteer of the Year Award two years ago and really enjoyed supporting the WDRRC. We miss Arthur and are so grateful for all that he contributed.

Arthur's passing has given me further pause to appreciate the myriad mediators, volunteers, trainers, staff, board members, contributors, and community members that support the WDRRC every day to advance our mission of providing and promoting constructive and collaborative approaches to conflict.

I must also share that I've seen several news reports lately about violent acts amongst neighbors that seemed to have started with simple arguments and I've been reminded of the urgency of our mission. A quote by Elise Boulding, a Quaker sociologist, peace scholar, and researcher accurately captures the timeliness of our work, "There is no time left for anything but to make peace work a dimension of our every waking activity." And so we will.

WDRRC Understanding Conflict Workshop Filling Fast

Our quarterly training is attracting community attention

Maybe it's because conflict happens in myriad situations. Maybe it's because our trainers Mary Dumas and Barbara Rofkar are so fabulous. Maybe it's because we have developed a curriculum full of great tools and information on conflict and communication. Whatever it is, word is spreading that our basic Understanding Conflict class is a gem for professionals in their workplace, and for anyone in their home and community.

Here's what trainees this year have to say:

- *"It was excellent and very illuminating. The presenter was very effective!!"*
- *"A well designed class with great info."*
- *"I am going to process for quite some time."*
- *"This course should be a requirement!"*

Our next Understanding Conflict workshop will take place

Wednesdays, August 15 and 22

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Fee: \$75

Pre-registration required! Call today!

Joan Cervisi
Jacie DeLaruelle
David Doll
Randy Doucet
Marian Exall
Dave Grant
Margo Hammond
Raymond Pelletti
Mary Sass
Debra Young

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Youth Program Coordinator

Cynthia Moore
Case Manager

Calhan Ring
Program Manager

Ellie Rogers
Program Assistant

Rosanna Wadkins
Fiscal Support

Emily Wilson
Youth Program AmeriCorps

Join Our Mailing List!

Peace Builder Award Nominations Open!

Who will you nominate?

The 2012 Peace Builder Awards Gala is an opportunity to honor Whatcom County citizens, programs, organizations, or businesses that have demonstrated a commitment to resolving conflicts through creative and peaceful means. By doing so, they help promote the mission of the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center in their everyday lives. We look to you in the community to help us identify those exceptional efforts that deserve to be recognized.

An awards ceremony, live entertainment, tasty food, and silent auction will be held on Friday, November 16th, 2012 at 7:00 pm. Tickets will be available in early October.

The deadline for nominations is September 14th, 2012. We encourage you to submit nominations early. Questions? Call 360-676-0122. Submission forms can be found online at <http://www.whatcomdrc.org/> or in person at the WDRC.

Spotlight on Family Mediation

Getting to know a little more about our mediation services

Almost half of the cases the WDRC has mediated so far this year have involved family conflicts. Of the 123 mediations, 59 of them have involved divorcing couples, parents working on parenting plans, teens and their parents sorting out issues together, or adult families struggling with aging parents, estates, and responsibilities. 90% of these families reached resolution here.

Calhan Ring, family mediation case manager and Program Manager for the WDRC, says, "Family mediation is an opportunity to get help working directly with other family members during challenging times like divorce, separation, and other big family transitions. In mediation, you get right to the heart of conflict and what's most important. You work out the main details so you can move forward with your lives and evolving relationships."

Since families often have years of experience together, and may have years more of shared parenting responsibilities or continued connection, the relational aspect of these mediations is important. The mediation process excels at offering space for all perspectives involved, allowing hard conversations to happen safely, validating the emotions that accompany the

conflict, and finding and naming common ground and shared interests. Conflict resolution aims to truly solve problems, and working through underlying emotions and needs in family conflicts is especially critical.

In our [new video](#), facilitator and mediator Mary Dumas says, "Everybody's going to have a conflict somewhere along the way because they care hard about something or they care hard about other people." By nature, families do care hard about each other--about their children, their partners, their parents. We hope to be the resource for families when they hit hard challenges together.

"It's satisfying to see the impact of mediation for families and it's also great to be able to connect families that are experiencing challenges to mediators who have great skills," Calhan says about his work here. To get more information about the family mediation program, give the WDRC a call (360-676-0122) to talk more with Calhan or Cynthia. Family mediation fees, like all WDRC mediation fees, are charged on a sliding scale basis. We aim to keep our services affordable as a low-cost alternative to the courts.

Notes from the Youth Program

AmeriCorps Emily Wilson will be back in the fall!

I am thrilled to announce that I will be returning again in the fall as the AmeriCorps Youth Program Assistant and I am looking forward to another exciting term! When I accepted this position in late August of 2011, I knew that I was going to experience significant growth, both personally and professionally and that has certainly come to fruition. I feel like I have come a long way since my first solo group in November to now, having led multiple class presentations and small groups to the tune of seeing well over 400 youth participants in the last six months. I have the pleasure and the challenge of working with youth whose ages and experience are quite varied, from as young as third grade all the way up to eighteen-year-olds who are already living and working on their own.

As anyone who has children or works with youth knows, it can be some of the most deeply challenging as well as the most incredibly rewarding experiences you can have. The successful moments occurred most when I was able to forget myself and really focus on what the participants had to contribute. One of the aspects that really set this program apart from other models I have seen is its underlying idea that the youth we deal with already have conflict resolution skills, even if they don't come

across in what might seem to us as the most ideal ways. The opportunity for groups of peers to explore different ways of reacting and interacting with conflict that differ from their normal response can be quite amazing. I recall one instance when a student realized that one of the major problems he had communicating with his mom was because her conflict style was more direct and needed to address the problem as soon as possible, while he needed more time to cool off and reflect before talking.

As I look forward to next year, I am excited to jump in as soon as my term starts with the benefit of the lessons I am taking from this year. One of those lessons is that the best gift you can give your students is to be authentic in who you are and what your interest in being there is. Another is not to get too caught up on what seem like major diversions or things that feel like they went terribly from my perspective as a facilitator; I have been amazed reading evaluations after a workshop that the youth still took away tools that they either have already used or are planning to use. I am so thankful to have had the ever-present support of the WDRC staff and the absolute dedication and creativity of all of the volunteers; Without them, this year would not have been so rich or so productive. With that, enjoy the summer and I'll see you in the fall!

Other Youth Program Notes:

This spring, Youth Program Coordinator Kaitlin Davis completed her Master's Degree in Counseling from WWU. Throughout her schooling, she has continued to work in the WDRC Youth Program, writing grants, training volunteers, and facilitating classes for youth and adults. We're so proud of Kaitlin both for completing this step in her education and for rounding out her fifth year with the WDRC!

New Faces: 2012 Volunteers



Jaina Gemin (pictured above left)

Originally coming to Bellingham for college, I just can't bring myself to leave. One of the things I love about this town are

places like the WDRC, whose mission is vital to the growth of our community. Having been involved in the Youth Programs here, I've had the amazing opportunity of sharing ways in which we can resolve conflict peacefully with our county's young people.

Sarah Jenkins (not pictured)

Since I graduated from Western last June with a degree in Liberal Studies I have been searching for something worthwhile to do that would also give me badly needed job experience. The WDRC has been on my periphery for a while, and finally my friend Patti's high praise of the staff and organization led me to apply as an office intern. I feel so lucky to be able to know and work with such excellent people for such a wonderful cause.

Gayle Livingston (pictured above center)

After completing the Professional Mediation Training this past spring, I am thrilled to be interning with the WDRC for my last two quarters at Western as I wrap up my studies in Communication and Embodied Living. The art of language is one that unendingly fascinates and inspires me. The continuous inquiry into how to create a space for individuals to show up honestly, vulnerably, and compassionately in collaboration to resolve conflict and build healthy, supportive relationships is at the heart of the work I want to do. The WDRC offers an invaluable service to the community and I can't imagine a more suited place for me to be at this time. I am hoping to continue my education through the mediation practicum program and volunteer my services in multiple ways to the WDRC and larger Whatcom community.

Molly McKay (pictured above right)

Hello! I'm Molly McKay, the Youth Program Intern here at the WDRC. Currently, I am a student at Western Washington University studying Human Services and Theater Arts. I have collected about a dozen visitor passes this year from schools in Whatcom County! Teaching creative conflict strategies appeals to me because you never know what kind of results and outcomes you are going to get from each classroom. Each group of students has different ideas which constantly inspire me. I love to incorporate creativity to the curriculum when challenges arise.

Thanks to Our Volunteers!

Welcome to our new volunteers: Gayle Livingston

Ongoing office support: Chris Beers, David Donohue, Patti

Drews, Jaina Gemin, Abbie George, Ryan Goelzenleuchter, Leon James, Sarah Jenkins, Gayle Livingston, Molly McKay, Judy Osmundson, Bernice Rappaport, James Whisenhunt

Youth Program support: Jaina Gemin, Molly McKay, Micah Shanser, Brittany Sullateskee

Mediators: Joel Bergsbaken, Rachel Brown, Jeanne Chadwick, Kaitlin Davis, Randy Doucet, Mary Dumas, Rose Anne Featherston, Doug Fenton, Deborah Forgays, Kathy Hilmoe, David Imburgia, Robert Kelly, Michael Kleps, Jessica Lee, Michael Light, Don Lotze, Howard Lowe, Jean MacGregor, K. Ann McCartney, Moonwater, Cynthia Moore, Mark Ortman, Bill Paleck, Mark Polin, Calhan Ring, Barbara Rofkar, Mark Rogers, Sheri Russell, Felicia Staub, Nancy Waters, Irene Wysocki

Farewell Abbie George!

We said goodbye to Abbie George, our Office Intern, on July 18th. Abbie has been an incredible support to the WDRC, and since September has graciously helped us pilot many new procedures and tools for both the office and our Helping Children through Family Changes class. Her many contributions include developing training materials for new volunteers and making the timeline for our 20th Anniversary Luncheon.

We will miss Abbie's warmth, delightful sense humor, and her many talents as she starts her new position working with intergenerational literacy programs in Boston. We know she will continue to bring her unique balance of engaged intelligence and compassion wherever she goes. Thank you, Abbie!

FUNdraising Report

So much fun already this year!



20th Anniversary Luncheon - June 20, 2012

Over 150 community members attended our 20th Anniversary Luncheon, including WDRC founders and their families, and many other volunteers and supporters. The celebration featured the unveiling of our new [promotional video](#), produced and donated by [Current Media Productions](#), as well as speeches by Mayor Kelli Linville, WDRC founder Barbara Rofkar, WDRC Board President Kacey Alleman, and WDRC Board Member Dave Doll. Chyerl Wolfe-Lee, HR Director at WWU reflected on her experience as a WDRC professional mediation training and practicum program participant and its value in the community. WDRC staff member Ellie Rogers read a reflection by an anonymous client who had an impactful mediation. Executive Director Moonwater closed out the event, expressing gratitude for all in attendance.

The event raised over \$10,000 for the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center's programs and services. We would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for sponsoring and donating to the event: [Let Them Eat Cake](#), [Cascadia Weekly](#), [Current Media](#), Joan Cervisi, [Trader Joe's](#), [Abby's Gallery of Homes](#), [Back in Motion](#), [Barkley Boulevard Dental Care](#), Bellingham Police Association, [Bellingham Tennis Club](#), [Boundary Bay Brewery](#), [BP America](#), [Buri Funston Mumford](#), [CAZ Energy Services](#), [Employment Law Compliance](#), [Ferndale Quiznos](#), Judge David Grant, Judge Matt Elich, [Keith Cox Autobahn](#), Law Office of Randy A. Doucet, [Northside Dental Care](#), [PetStop](#), [Raven's Way Counseling](#), [Repanich Dental](#), [Schmidt Orthodontics](#), [The Chimney Sweep](#), [Tollhouse Energy Company](#), [Tree Frog Night Inn](#), [Village Books](#), and the [Whatcom County Bar Association](#). Please support our supporters!

Human Race - May 12, 2012



We value creativity both in conflict resolution and in fundraising efforts. This year at the Human Race, our team of volunteers, staff, and board members chose a birthday theme in honor of the WDRC's 20th Anniversary. For the second year in a row, we won an award for our enthusiasm as the best dressed team. Check out our [Facebook page](#) for more fabulous photos. Thanks to everyone who came out and to everyone who donated!

Compete for a Cause Bocce Tournament - April 21, 2012

The tenth annual Bellingham Bay Bocce Tournament, run by Tom McNutt of local business [Boccemon](#), sold out once again! A total of 32 teams competed in the tournament from all around the Pacific Northwest, as well as a few local favorites. The team sponsored by [Unity Group](#) here in Bellingham took the championship. Runner up was a team sponsored by [Fin Records](#) in Seattle. Third and fourth places went to [Bellevue Vision Clinic](#) and [Boccemon's](#) own team. A full day of bocce was preceded by a book signing and happy hour event Friday with Mario Pagnoni, author of [The Joy of Bocce](#), at Poppe's. Teams socialized with Mr. Bocce himself and took to the courts the following morning.

The tournament grossed \$8000. All profit from the tournament directly benefited the WDRC. The tournament was made possible by generous team sponsors, local donors, the [City of Bellingham](#), and many volunteers. Many thanks to all team sponsors, Mario and Carmella Pagnoni, [Boundary Bay](#)

[Brewery](#), [Auburn Bocce Club](#), [Current Media](#), [Avenue Bread](#), [Roundtable Pizza](#), [Community Food Co-op](#), [Playaboule](#), [Johnny's Donuts](#), [Lafeens Donuts](#), [Seafood Producer's Co-op](#), [Vis Seafoods](#), [Boccemon](#), and countless others for making the tournament a success.

Upcoming events: Mark your calendars!

Compete for a Cause Cribbage Tournament

Saturday, September 8, 2012 at 10:30 a.m.

Register online: www.whatcomdrc.org

We plan to sell out this tournament once again!

Register now!

Community Shopping Day

Saturday, October 20, 2012

WDRC receives 2% of all sales at the [Community Food Co-ops of Bellingham](#)

10th Annual Peace Builder Awards Gala

Friday, November 16, 2012

More info coming soon!

We're looking forward to our next decade of service to the community. Thanks for your support!

Sincerely,

WDRC Staff