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Spring 2012  
Volume 8, Issue 2

# 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 here at the Center. We'll give you updated 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*

Spring is upon us, and what a busy few months it's been! I am pleased to share several significant successes. After a grueling legislative session, and thanks to all of your support, the legislature retained full funding for Dispute Resolution Centers. Those capacity funds provide a critical stream for our overall programming. The Governor also signed into law a bill pertaining to the newly created Foreclosure Fairness Act. The new bill will ensure some much needed technical fixes to the original legislation, resulting in a smoother intake and mediation

## Our Amazing Volunteers

### Quick Links

#### Visit our Website:



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Check out our 2011  
Annual Report, now  
online

### Upcoming Events

**Compete for a Cause Bocce  
Tournament**  
*April 21 at the Sportsplex*

process for all. It will also create a small source of revenue to help support this very large program.

As you'll see in the newsletter we're also about to launch a new program in partnership with District Court, which will create a new sentencing option for low risk misdemeanor offenders. We are so fortunate to live in a County which values principles of restorative justice and can creatively work with partner agencies like us to pilot innovative programs! Many thanks to Judge David Grant and all of the key stakeholders in this project for their vision and support!

We just wrapped up another mediation training course, in which 15 wonderful members of our community, with backgrounds in law, HR, higher and elementary education, social work, and non-profits, tried on the mediator's hat. It's always inspiring to see people embrace the mediation process and find value in its wide applications.

I'd be remiss if I didn't invite you to join us on Saturday morning, May 12th to participate in the Human Race and help raise funds for the WDRC, or remind you to mark your calendars for the June 20th fundraising luncheon.

I hope to see you all there!

## Pilot Project to Begin in Partnership with District Court

### *Conflict classes to begin in June*

In an effort to expand our services and meet emerging needs, the WDRC has begun working with Whatcom County District Court to offer new sentencing options which increase the type and scope of interventions available to suitable adult offenders. Currently there is an absence of options available for sentencing lower risk misdemeanor offenders.

This program will provide a more appropriate sentencing option. By creating an alternative to jail and other long term interventions intended for higher level offenders, the Court can now provide sentences better suited to the offense and offenders. Through this program, which weaves in elements of restorative justice, adult offenders will be required to pay a fee, participate in community service, take the WDRC class, and participate in either active or bench probation.



**Volunteer Info Day**  
 May 2, 2-3 p.m. and  
 June 6, 1-2 p.m.  
 at WDRC

[More info here](#)

**The Human Race**  
 May 12 at Zuanich Park  
[More info here](#)

**20th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon**  
 June 20 at Northwood Hall

### Upcoming Trainings

**Understanding Conflict Workshop**  
 May 1 and 8

**Professional Mediation Training**  
 October 4-6 and 11-13

*You can learn more about all of our trainings at our website.*

**To register, please call (360) 676-0122!**

### Our Board

Kacey Alleman, *Board Chair*  
 Joan Cervisi  
 David Doll  
 Randy Doucet  
 Marian Exall

The new District Court Sentencing Alternative Conflict Class offers both appropriate consequences and an opportunity to educate the offender in hopes of building or enhancing positive interpersonal and conflict resolution skills. Designed to reduce jail usage and create a productive outcome for offenders, it is a one year experimental program set to begin this Spring.

### WDRC Welcomes Two New Board Members

#### *Ray Pelletti*

Ray brings a colorful background of business experiences to the WDRC. Being immediate past president of the Whatcom County Association of Realtors gives Ray a great background in working with volunteer associations and developing a strong board with focus, defined goals and objectives. With 20 years in real estate appraisal, brokerage and management, he hopes to be able to contribute to the continued development and success of the WDRC. His concern that there has to be common sense alternatives to resolve conflicts other than court and sentencing is a driving factor in his decision to devote his time to the community and the WDRC.

#### *Debra Young*

Debra is excited and thrilled to be joining the board of the WDRC. As a Mental Health Professional in Bellingham she's been a long-time admirer and hands on supporter of the work that the Center does for this beautiful community. In addition to Mental Health, she has both a background in Human Resources and mediation, and is the mother of two lovely teenagers. She's looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that working with such a dynamic group of people will bring.

### Notes from the Youth Program

#### *Emily Wilson on the power of addressing exclusion*

"Cross the line if you have ever been called a mean name." Thirteen third grade girls walk across the blue line of masking tape I've laid on the ground. "Cross the line if you have ever called someone a mean name." Again, all the girls step back across the line. "Cross the line if you have ever felt left out or excluded." With some head nodding and murmuring the girls unanimously cross the line. "Cross the line if you have ever left someone out or excluded them." Some girls cross right away,

David Grant  
Margo Hammond  
Ray Pelletti  
Mary Sass  
Debra Young

### Our Advisory Board

Tom Anderson  
Nancy Blume  
Betsy Gross  
Leon Henley  
Carlton Nathon  
Mark Rogers

### Our Staff

Moonwater  
*Executive Director*

Erin Corday  
*Office Coordinator*

Kaitlin Davis  
*Youth Program Coordinator*

Cynthia Moore  
*Case Manager*

Calhan Ring  
*Program Manager*

Ellie Rogers  
*Program Assistant*

Rosanna Wadkins  
*Fiscal Support*

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others wait and embarrassedly cross to the other side.

It is our sixth week of Healthy Choices, a small girls group that the Youth Program offers at partner schools throughout the county, for youth all the way from elementary school up to high school. The goal of the program is to develop communication skills, problem solving skills, and to promote emotional awareness and management, and non-violent conflict strategies. Exclusion and feeling left out was a major source of conflict at the school, according to the classroom teacher and to the girls themselves. Today, my goal is to facilitate a discussion on how feeling left out can impact people, to brainstorm strategies that promote inclusion at their school, and to engage in a role play about asking to join an activity in a respectful way.

During the group discussion, almost every girl shared an experience of a time when she was left out and how she felt about it. It was powerful to see the commonality of the experience, both for myself and for the students, and allowed us to question why it was happening so frequently. After some role-plays and further discussion, we huddled in and each named one way we could be a good friend. Dealing with exclusion is hardly something that can be solved in a day (let alone forty-five minutes!), but I am hopeful that the discussion and activities have provided a starting place for the girls to address it in a curious and peaceful way.

### WDRC Partners with Current Media

*Local video production company steps up to make short film*



This spring, Current Media, our neighbors down Prospect Street, will be putting together a short film about our Center, its history, its programs, and its extraordinary value to the community. The clip will help us reflect, celebrate, and communicate about our Center in light of our 20th anniversary. Jordan Donovan, new

owner of Current Media, is donating his filming, production, and editing expertise. We are so grateful for his time and commitment.

We will be unveiling the finished product at the 20th Anniversary Fundraising Luncheon on June 20. One more reason for you to join us for the celebration!

Until then, don't be surprised if you see the film crew at our various trainings and events! And make sure to think of Current Media if you're ever in need of video work.

## Spotlight on Small Claims Mediation

*Getting to know a little more about our mediation services*

One of our strongest programs at the WDRC is our Small Claims mediation program. Our Center has a great relationship with District Court, and has been offering mediation at no cost to claimants since being identified as the County's DRC in 1993. In 2005 we also began offering mediation onsite at the courthouse. This program is funded in part by small surcharges that parties pay to the court to file a case.

Cynthia Moore, our Small Claims Case Manager, helps orient people to this opportunity by first contacting every plaintiff in the County, and describing and offering our services as an alternative before their scheduled court date, which can sometimes be months away. If the plaintiff chooses to mediate, she'll then contact the defendant and work to convene the case. Recently, cooperation with the Courts has allowed information about mediation to be sent to both parties in the initial service of papers, ensuring that either party has the opportunity to initiate mediation. Parties can always retain their court date if they don't reach agreement in mediation, however the majority of clients don't need to. In 2011 alone, Cynthia convened 98 small claims mediation cases, 80% of which ended in resolution.

Cynthia also schedules WDRC mediators to be available every Thursday morning at Small Claims Court in case the parties opt in to mediation the day-of. Each Thursday, Cynthia and the Judge will again describe and offer mediation as a possibility. Cynthia goes over the potential benefits of mediating: outcomes can involve more than just financial exchanges, important details and conversations can happen, their dispute can remain confidential rather than on public record. The list goes on.

We're so glad to be able to offer this service to Whatcom County,

and so grateful for Cynthia's diligence and dedication to the program!

## FUNdraising Report



### Compete for a Cause Scrabble Tournament - February 4, 2012

The third annual Compete for a Cause Scrabble Tournament was held on Saturday, February 4, 2012. Almost 50 players turned up to compete in a fast-paced day that included four 50-minute games. Competitors came from as far away as Alaska, were as young as eight years old, and all in all were a competitive, skilled bunch. This year's winner was Hannah Fenske, a return player from Kirkland, who upended the reigning champion from both years past, Elizabeth Hart. Other top players in this year's tournament were Sherry Jubilo, Ronna Biggs, Matt Hoogestraat,

Andrew Compain, and John Rozeboom.

The Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center benefited from all profits made at the tournament, bringing in more than \$1000 for its programs and services. Third time tournament director, Erika Werdal, donated her time, and the [Leopold](#) donated the venue. Other donors and sponsors included [Boundary Bay Brewery](#), [Village Books](#), [Eagle Games](#), [Fairhaven Toy Garden](#), [Cascadia Weekly](#), [KVOS OnScene](#), and many wonderful volunteers.

### **Upcoming Events: Mark your calendars!**

#### **Bellingham Bay Bocce Tournament**

**April 21, 2012**

**9:00 a.m. at the Sportsplex in Bellingham**

We still have a few more open teams: Register at our website! If teams fill up, we invite you to come cheer on your favorites, check out the beer garden, and add to the fun!

#### **Human Race**

**May 12, 2012**

**8:45 a.m. at Zuanich Point Park**

A wonderful Saturday event! Join our staff and board in this Whatcom Volunteer Center and WDRC fundraiser!

[Sign up at the Whatcom Volunteer Center page](#)

#### **20th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon**

**June 20, 2012**

**12:00 p.m. at Northwood Hall**

We're still looking for business sponsors for each of the tables. Please contact us if you're interested in supporting our anniversary celebration!

All are welcome at this free event. Donations will be requested in honor of the WDRC. RSVP required by June 8.

## Our Amazing Volunteers

*We're continually grateful for your service!*

**Welcome to our new volunteers!** Sarah Jenkins, Molly McKay, and Brittany Sullateskee

**Ongoing support:** Arthur Abrahamson, Kevin Alex, Chris Beers, David Donohue, Patti Drews, Abigail George, Ryan Goelzenleuchter, Leon James, Tom McNutt, Judy Osmundson, Bernice Rappaport, Erika Werdal, James Whisenhunt

**Youth Programs support:** Brenna Anderst, Greg Elgee, Jaina Gemin, Micah Shanser

**Our 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, Mark Ortman, Bill Palek, Mark Polin, Calhan Ring, Barbara Rofkar, Mark Rogers, Sheri Russell, Felicia Staub, Nancy Waters, Irene Wysocki

We hope your spring blossoms with creativity and collaboration!

Sincerely,

**The Staff**  
Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center

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