

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center. Don't forget to add outreach@whatcomdrc.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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Summer 2013
Volume 9, Issue 3

The Mediator

Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center Newsletter

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Contribute to the WDRC

Would you consider including the WDRC in your annual giving?

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



Bronwyn and Tayen, our two youngest mediator in-service attendees



Make a tax-deductible donation today through JustGive.

Ways to Stay in Touch

Check out our website:



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Upcoming Events

WDRC Open House

Thursday, October 3, 2013

More info coming soon!

Peace Builder Awards Gala

Friday, November 15, 2013

More info coming soon!

For more event info, email: outreach@whatcomdrc.org.

Upcoming Trainings

Understanding Conflict Workshop

Wednesdays, August 20 & 27, 2013

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Pre-registration

A few nights ago as I was putting my 3 year old daughter to bed, she began to recount her day after a visit to her friend Miles' house. They had apparently experienced a wee bit o' conflict as they both wanted to use the connectors and straws set to build different objects. Miles wanted to build a replica of the Titanic (or, "Titamic" in 3 year old speak) and Tayen wanted to build a sand castle. I practiced my reflective statements with Tayen, acknowledging this had likely been a frustrating experience, while at the same time encouraging her to think about these moments as opportunities to share and take turns. Tayen flopped on her bed with gusto and stated that, apparently, (granted this is one-sided) Miles hadn't particularly wanted to share. Then silence. All was quiet and I thought she'd fallen asleep. Suddenly she popped up from bed, "Mom, can I tell you more one thing?" "Sure, hon," I said. "I have an idea, maybe next time me and Miles can build a Titanic Castle!" I couldn't resist sharing this, as it's a great reminder that collaboration and win-win integrative negotiation starts early, folks.

In other news, this has been a full spring and start to summer. In mid-July our fantastic AmeriCorps Member, Emily Wilson, completed two years of service with us. After training more than 1000 youth in conflict resolution skills, Emily has planted seeds in the minds of many...Beginning in September we will welcome a new AmeriCorps Member to our team. At the end of July our wonderful Program Assistant Ellie Rogers shifts to graduate school. Ellie will be leaving a legacy of organization, branding, databases and more. We are so grateful for her contributions. I'm pleased to share that Iris Maute-Gibson will be joining our staff. Please give her a warm welcome the next time you stop by. Lastly, Erin Corday has been promoted to Education Coordinator, so stay tuned for stellar improvements to our adult training and volunteer programs!

For those of you that work for the state, I'm happy to report that we are now part of the Combined Fund Drive. Look for our ad in the CFD newsletter, and please consider making a contribution to us this fall!

Please also make sure to spread the word about our Peace Builder nominations, and the brand new youth poetry and video contest we are hosting as part of the Awards Gala this year.

A special thanks to everyone who participated in and contributed to our Human Race team this year. We exceeded our fundraising goal and had a great time.

required!

Professional Mediation Training

October 16-18 & 23-25, 2013

Pre-registration required!

EARLY BIRD

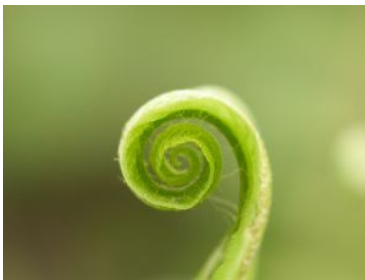
DEADLINE: September 17, 2013

Understanding Conflict Workshop

Tues/Thurs, Nov. 5 & 7, 2013

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Pre-registration required!



Check out [our website](#) for more info. Call 360-676-0122 to register.

Our Board

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 Dave Grant
 Margo Hammond
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Our Advisory

Until next time,
Moonwater

Calling all creative youth!

WDRC is holding a NEW Youth Poetry and Video Contest



This year, the WDRC is holding a video and poetry contest for our annual Peace Builder Awards Gala in November. Youth grades K-12 are invited to explore any theme related to peaceful conflict resolution through film or poetry. Some topic ideas might be:

- Resolving conflict
- Talking things out
- Apologizing
- Listening
- Tolerance
- Alternatives to violence
- Respect
- Anti-bullying
- Or more!

Submissions are now open, due Friday, October 11, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. Winners will be guest stars at our Peace Builder Awards Gala on November 15th. Help us spread the word to the creative youth in your life!

For all the details (the fine print!), check out our [Peace Builder Awards Gala page on the website](#). There, you'll find submission forms and instructions, guidelines, and other info. If you still have questions, feel free to contact Britt Sullateskee, Youth Program Coordinator, at youth@whatcomdrc.org or 360-676-0122 x120.

Reaching Resolution

A peek into a mediation at the WDRC

Last year we mediated 244 cases. Of those mediations, 80-85% reached resolution. While those numbers are impressive, the stories

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Calhan Ring
Program Manager

Vanessa Roebuck
Case Manager

Ellie Rogers
Program Assistant

Brittany Sullateskee
Youth Program Coordinator

Rosanna Wadkins
Fiscal Support

Emily Wilson
Youth Program AmeriCorps

Volunteer with the WDRC

Check out our website for details on our volunteer program and how to apply: whatcomdrc.org/volunteer-and-job-opportunities/

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

are even more telling. Here's one example of our work in Whatcom County. Names and details have been shifted so as to protect and honor the confidentiality of the participants.

A small claim for an unpaid contract turned into a story of human graciousness and understanding. Over the course of eight months, Cynthia (our Small Claims Case Manager at the time) was able to facilitate a conversation between defendant and plaintiff through their small claims process. Information that would have been irrelevant in court brought great sympathy from the plaintiff. It turned out that the reason there had been no pay for his completed contract was that the defendant was hospitalized with a challenging condition. Her finances were slipping, as were her faculties. As news of her situation was uncovered month by month through Cynthia's communication, circumstances became more and more grim. At the final announcement of the condition being inoperable, the plaintiff decided to drop the case altogether. His final message to the defendant was that he was sending prayers for her healing, and hoped that she and her family would conquer this hurdle.

Though the two never mediated, they never ended up in court either. And through us, they were able to have the conversation they needed to have to come to understanding.

Ch-ch-changes!

WDRC bids farewell to Emily and Ellie



Emily Wilson has been WDRC's tireless AmeriCorps Volunteer for two terms, serving nearly two years with the youth program. Staff and volunteers have come to know Emily as a confident, flexible, creative, and incredibly fun facilitator and co-worker. It's with extreme gratitude and affection that we say goodbye to Emily.

Check out the Notes from the Youth Program for Emily's reflection on her time with the WDRC.

Ellie Rogers also started as an AmeriCorps Volunteer at the WDRC almost three years ago. She transitioned into a new staff position, Program Assistant, and has been having a hard time leaving ever since, due to the irresistible work of the WDRC and its community. She'll be stepping away at the end of July to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing at WWU.

Emily and Ellie won't be gone for good; they both plan to continue on in the Mediator Practicum. Their transitions also mean we're hiring some new great folks! Stay tuned for those introductions in the next newsletter.

Stay in touch:

Emily: akemilyawilson@gmail.com

Ellie: ellie.a.rogers@gmail.com

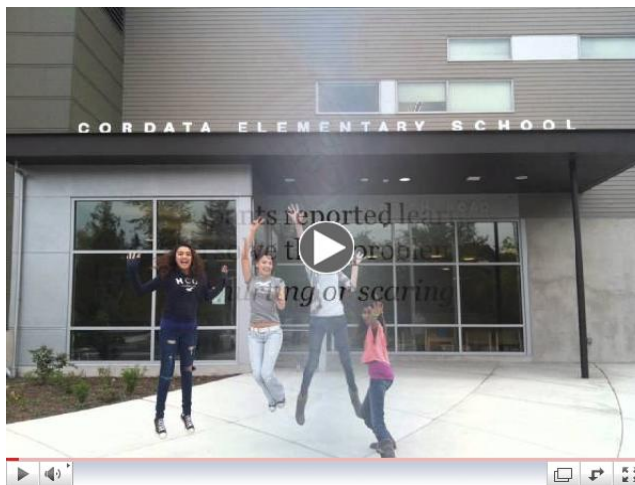
WDRC on the Web

New website and new video!

Here's a snapshot of [our new website](#), unveiled in June. Click the photo below to scout around the pages, and be sure to give us any feedback (outreach@whatcomdrc.org).



While you're on the web, check out this short video highlighting our youth programs. Thanks WWU students for this wonderful project!



Notes from the Youth Program

AmeriCorps Volunteer Emily Wilson reflects on two years of service



My AmeriCorps term is winding to its end and July 15th feels sooner than ever. My mind seems to hum with the ever present cycle of "But what will you do next? What happens in the fall? Have you thought about it? What will you do?!" For me, this position has been so much more than a respite between my bachelor's degree and the "real world." I sought out AmeriCorps because I was looking for a meaningful way to connect with my community and to attain the skills I would need for a career in the nonprofit sector. I have immense respect for the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center where I have been serving for the past two years; I care about the values and the mission and feel invested in its future as an organization. This is where I come to develop my skills--and to have them put to the test. I feel a sense of pride when I describe what I do and why it's important.

It has been fascinating to learn about the diverse applications of conflict resolution. It is exciting to be part of a growing field and to have attended trainings and conferences where I've interacted with lawyers, mediators, and teachers who work to increase communication and understanding between parties in conflict. I feel very fortunate to be surrounded by professional colleagues who are actively building community members' capacity to resolve their own disputes. They are masters at creating rapport, pinpointing interests,

and empathizing with clients as they deal with the strong emotions that difficult situations can stir up. The people I work with care deeply about their work, and are a vital part of the organization's evolution as it continues to serve the community.

Through high school and during college, I had a sense that I wanted to help people, to make some kind of positive impact, yet it was difficult to imagine what that would mean in practice. My service has provided me the opportunity to network with other professionals in the local nonprofit sector, showing me that there are many ways to work towards making progress on the issues that are important.

During my service, I felt most successful when I saw youth make connections between the discussion topics and their own lives and when they felt safe enough to share their experiences. It has also been personally gratifying to see them reflect on what they learned and to hear that the training was helpful and valuable--especially from teenagers who were court-mandated to attend.

While I worry that I might lose some sense of identity when this is over, that fear is outshone by the gratitude I feel for what I have learned. I've grown personally and professionally in all kinds of unexpected dimensions. As I am pulling together my resume and starting to look for positions that will make use of my interests and skills, it has been especially clear how much this opportunity has given me. I've grown in my leadership and organizational abilities, and in my facilitation skills. When I started this position, I never would have imagined that I would work with over 1,000 youth, or be able to speak meaningfully about services to teachers, or that I would seek out the opportunity to present at a conference in front of other professionals and enjoy all of it so much.

As I look forward to what comes next, I know that this experience has been a major turning point in my life and in the way that I will handle new challenges and experiences. I am more qualified to be able to serve in other professional roles and the skills and lessons I've learned will stay with me as I continue to find ways to connect with and support my community.

-Emily Wilson, Youth Program AmeriCorps

FUNdraising and Outreach Report

Upcoming WDRC events



WDRC Open House

Thursday, October 3, 2013

Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center

More details forthcoming! Plan on stopping by for a free mini-training, meet a mediator, and of course good food!



Peace Builder Awards Gala

Friday, November 15, 2013

6:30 p.m.

NEW LOCATION: Bellingham Cruise Terminal in Fairhaven

Tickets and sponsorship information will be [on our website soon.](#)

Don't forget to nominate a Peace Builder by September 13.

And youth! Submit your videos and poems to our contest by October 11.

Past events (thanks for joining us!):

June 1, 2013: Human Race



The WDRG retains the title of best costumes for yet another year as conflict resolution superheroes. Not only did we look great, we also

met our fundraising goal of \$2000. Thanks to all who walked, dressed, and donated!

April 20, 2013: Bellingham Bay Bocce Tournament



Sold out, raised \$12,000, and had a grand old time. Thanks very much to [Tom McNutt of Boccemon](#), and to our Gold level sponsors [Silver Reef Hotel Casino Spa](#) and [Unity Group](#). Congrats to team [SPIE](#) for taking first place!

Email outreach@whatcomdrc.org to get on the list for 2014!

Have you noticed that we're not holding our annual Scrabble and Cribbage tournaments this year? Don't worry! The tournaments are still in the hopper as we transition them to volunteer-run events. If you'd like to be on the mailing list for either tournament, let us know.

For events and outreach information, contact outreach@whatcomdrc.org or 360-676-0122 x115 for more details.

Thanks to Our Volunteers!

Ongoing office and event support:

Chris Beers, Kris Buettner, David Donohue, Jaina Gemin, Ryan Goelzenleuchter, Kristin Jager, Leon James, Sarah Jenkins, Tom McNutt, Judy Osmundson, Dave Thorngren, Wes Withrow

Youth Program support: Interested in volunteering? [Check out our website for details!](#)

Mediators:

Joel Bergsbaken, Jeanne Chadwick, Sophia Davies, 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

Practicum Students:

Kris Bundy, Nancy Joseph, Jason Kanov, Alice O'Donnell, Rebecca Pisciotta, Ellie Rogers, Ann Russell, Leah Wefer, Emily Wilson, Chyerl Wolfe-Lee, Cat Zavis

Welcome to our new office volunteers:

Elana Cohen

As a student studying Power, Identity and Marginalization through Fairhaven College at WWU, Elana Cohen is passionate about Social Justice. This has fueled her longtime interest in conflict resolution, leading her to volunteer with the WDRC to better understand the reality of conflict resolution and to be more involved within the Bellingham community. Elana is from the Bay area of California and is excited to experience her first Bellingham summer.

Iris Banks

Iris Banks, an Eastern Washington native, is currently studying Environmental Studies and French at Western Washington University. Iris's experience witnessing the positive outcomes of mediation sparked her interest to learn more about the subject and to continue helping others. This summer, she is filling her time with various volunteer opportunities and, in addition to working with the WDRC, she is excited to volunteer with Animals as Natural Therapy.

Goodbye to interns Patti and Wyatt

Both Patti Drews and Wyatt Shedd-Stewart have interned with the WDRC since 2012. They're heading off to other adventures now, and we wish them all the best.

Patti Drews - Office Intern

I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to work beside and learn from such a wonderfully committed and skilled group of individuals. As a culminating experience of my undergraduate education, the Conflict Resolution and Mediation training I have

received has been invaluable. These newly acquired tools for increased personal awareness and problem solving will inevitably continue to illuminate and transform both my professional and personal interactions. Thank you all for your gifts of peace-building insights. It has been such an honor to participate in an organization that promotes so much growth and healing as you facilitate productive dialogue in this community.

Wyatt Shedd-Stewart - Youth Program Intern

These past months at the WDRC have been some of the richest and blessed of my life. I felt privileged in my time here to step out of the mindset of a student who was "just passing through" and to switch into the perspective of a community member working to cultivate a better Whatcom County. I have been so happy to work at the WDRC and I look forward to one day returning. In the meantime I will be spending my next year working for the local campus ministry Campus Christian Fellowship as a pastoral intern on WWU's campus. I will be stopping in to see how everyone is doing here and I encourage you to do the same!

Thanks for your support in helping Whatcom County become a community that values communication and creative conflict resolution.

Sincerely,

WDRC Staff

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