



# The Mediator

September 2005

## MONROE PARK MEDIATION

by Eric Watkins

In the winter of 2005, Community Mediation Services was contacted by the City of Eugene Department of Parks and Open Space for assistance in mediating a dispute involving neighbors living around and city agencies responsible for Monroe Park, a neighborhood park about six blocks west of downtown Eugene. While what was said in mediation remains confidential, a review of the mediation process may prove useful to other mediators.

**Background.** In the summer of 2004, a combination of events resulted in a large influx of youth, homeless, alcoholics, prostitutes, drug dealers, and sexual predators congregating in Monroe Park with a devastating impact on the neighborhood. A group of neighbors tried to combat the problem by seeking police support and meeting with a local social service agency, which provided meals to the young people, and the church which hosted the agency. The police did not have the resources to control the park, and the meetings with the church and the social service agency went very badly. There was little trust between parties.

The initial intake by CMS indicated that the mediation would be complex and should involve a team of mediators. That initial decision was crucial to the ultimate success of the process as the team members' range of skills and viewpoints and their varying schedules kept the process going. Tim Brewer, Pat Vallerand, and Eric Watkins formed the team.

The team met frequently to develop a process for moving forward. Their plan involved research to identify the scope of the dispute and parties involved, focus on the appropriate direction of the mediation, and then a transition to actual mediation sessions.

To understand the issues, facilitated meetings were held with the park neighbors, the church, and the social service agency in the church using a focused meeting process with clearly defined Purpose, Agenda, Time, and Expectations. The process solicited the good things about the park, the not-so-good things, the history of each party, and what had been done to fix the problems. The city agencies involved were interviewed. A city task force, the Community Response Team – Operations, was briefed at monthly meetings. All the parties had different objectives. The city officials wanted a solution which would address all the neighborhood parks. The neighbors were concerned with Monroe Park. The social service agency wanted to take care of the youth. The number of potential parties was huge – several social service agencies, five or six neighborhood park groups, and several city agencies could be affected. Having done the research, the mediation team made the decision to focus initially on the immediate citizen groups – the

### Upcoming Events

#### **Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party**

Thursday, Sept. 22, 2005  
Don't forget this fun-filled event where we get to express our thanks to those who make it all happen here at CMS. Find out more on page 2.

#### **Youth and Family Mediation Training**

Friday & Saturday  
September 23-24, 2005  
CMS is now expanding its services by focusing more on parent-teen mediations. Find out how to get involved on page 3.

#### **Basic Mediation Training**

January 27-28 and  
February 10-11, 2006  
We will be offering the Basic Mediation Training once again after a 1-2 year absence. See the back page for more information.

#### **New Creativity Contest!**

We need some creative ideas for a catchy phrase that says who we are and what we do. Winner gets a fabulous prize – turn to page 4 to find out what it is!

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Tim Brewer**  
*Chair*

**Melissa Crabbe**  
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**Ted Lewis**  
*Manager of both the  
Restorative Justice Program  
and Human Rights Program*

**Donna Goswick**  
*Community Dispute  
Program Co-Manager and  
Restorative Justice Specialist*

**Miriam Edell**  
*Community Dispute  
Program Co-Manager and  
UO Student Mediator  
Supervisor*

***Don't Forget***

## **The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party**

**(for all CMS Volunteers,  
Supporting Associates,  
and their Guests)**

**Thursday, September 22**

**5:30 – 8:30 pm**

**at River Kennedy's house**

***Great Food  
Great Music  
Great Mingling  
Great Door Prizes***

**Please RSVP by Sept. 15  
344-5366**

## Mentoring Program Starting Up

*by Keli Osborn*

Think of a time in your life when you received teaching, guidance and encouragement from a mentor. Perhaps this occurred in school or on a job. Maybe your mentor coached you in sports. Your mentor may have provided support and witness while you went about taking on a new role or practicing new skills. If the relationship was satisfying, you probably appreciated the genuine interest this friend, acquaintance or relative took in your growth and development.

A group of volunteers, board members, and staff are committed to bringing mentorship to CMS as a way to strengthen training for new mediators, better assure quality and consistency of CMS services, and provide an opportunity for all volunteer mediators to improve skills.

Tim Brewer, a CMS mediator and board member, recently shared a mentorship model with volunteers and staff in a two-session training. A proposal is going to the full board, with discussion planned in September. If adopted, the program could be in place early this fall. Its features would include:

- Assign all new CMS mediators a mentor who would observe at least two mediations and be available for coaching for at least six months afterwards.
- Clarify, document and distribute CMS standards for mediation and mediators.

The designated mentors would be CMS volunteers who have several years of mediation experience and training, and have undergone training in developing an effective mentoring relationship. Under the mentorship model that will be presented to the CMS board, mentoring would be similar to mediating – that is, mentors would be facilitative and explore with new mediators what works best for them. For the first year, all new mediators would be assigned individual mentors and mentoring would be optional for other mediators. We would then evaluate the effort to make improvements. The overall goals, again, are to provide support and training to mediators while improving the services provided by CMS.

Among the CMS volunteers working on this program are Tim Brewer and River Kennedy, both board members; and Eric Watkins, Carolyn Goss, Keli Osborn, David Gubernick and Allan Kluber. CMS staff members – Miriam Edell, Donna Goswick, Ted Lewis and Betsy Ford – are also critical participants.

All mentors (and those who volunteered to be mentored during role plays) were enthusiastic about the program. Contact Miriam if you are interested in being paired with a mentor or would like to learn more about the program.

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM: Engaging the Community in the Justice Process

by Ted Lewis

A recent case involving four boys who spray painted graffiti demonstrates the power of community involvement. After intake meetings with offender and victim parties, a joint meeting was held at the Willamalane Parks office. In addition to the two park representatives who were present, parents and a family counselor also took part. With mediators Charlie Larson and Ted Lewis, the room was full.

The boys had expressed their remorse and what they had learned. When one father heard that the boys had sprayed 'EP' on a wall (which stands for the gang-related Echo Park in Los Angeles), he spoke of his experience in the south-side of Chicago, warning the boys of how lesser crimes, when justified, give way to greater crimes. He kept pointing to various wound-spots on his body to illustrate the consequences of being around crime.

The park worker who cleaned-up the graffiti spoke of the impacts. He had forecasted his need to leave the meeting early, but as he experienced the power of this opportunity to help the boys 'nip things in the bud,' he chose to stay the full two hours. The other worker had previously participated in an RJ meeting, and was eager to involve these boys in direct community service to paint over other graffiti (which they did together the next weekend).

Another service opportunity involved the store from which the paint cans were stolen. The manager wanted the boys to clean the grounds around the store and to wash shelves. This, too, was fulfilled by the boys within two weeks, and Ted Lewis also worked with them on this project. He had just learned that in Clark Co., WA, volunteer mentors from the community do side-by-side work with youth offenders.

Finally, the counselor had agreed to help take parts of the apology letters that the boys were to write, combining them into a piece that could be printed in the Springfield paper without mention of the boys' names. Again, the idea is to help offenders reintegrate back into a community that is not at odds with them, but is as aware, involved and supportive as possible. Like many other cases, this one does well to illustrate how a justice process can bring about meaningful, relational reparation when various parts of the community are mobilized.

### WHO DO YOU KNOW?

If you have tips regarding good targets for our outreach efforts (anything goes from civic club to bowling league) please let us know. Specific contact information (including contact person, phone number and address if possible) or being willing to make the contact yourself, would be very helpful to our efforts. We are looking for:

- **Speaking opportunities**—we want to tell people about mediation and how to access our services.
- **Mediation sites**—we need good spaces throughout the county.
- **Brochure sites**—we want to get the word out by having our brochures everywhere.

## CMS is now offering a YOUTH AND FAMILY MEDIATION TRAINING

For both teens & adults

9:30 am – 5 pm  
Friday, Sept. 23rd and  
Saturday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>

**SPACE IS LIMITED  
SO PLEASE  
REGISTER NOW**

### LEARN

- Our co-mediation team model using 1 adult and 1 youth
- Developmental issues for youth
- Intercultural issues in family structures
- Clarifying issues that can and cannot be mediated
- When to refer to other services
- Legal and ethical issues

Those trained may have the opportunity to co-mediate parent-teen mediations at CMS.

### PRE-REQUISITES

**Adults:** Must have completed a 30-hr basic mediation training. Some experience preferred.

**Youth:** Must be age 12-18 and have had some training and experience in peer mediation or the equivalent before coming to the training.

### \$75 TUITION

Tuition may be reduced with a commitment to volunteer at CMS. Scholarships are available through CMS.

For more information  
call Miriam.

## OFFICE REMINDERS (to all volunteers)

### Time Flies! Track Those Hours!

The total number of volunteer hours contributed to CMS reflects how busy and how successful we are. We report volunteer hour totals to our funders – and they see these hours as a gauge of how well we are fulfilling our commitment to provide services.

And that's why we are asking all of our volunteers to make a conscious effort to record all hours you contribute to CMS.

- Record your hours on the clip board hanging outside of Ted's office.
- Be sure to include all activities, including travel to and from mediations, calls made to set-up and confirm meetings, potlucks and outreach activities.
- Time can be recorded whenever you are at the office. It can be recorded retroactively, but be sure to keep good notes on your cumulative time.
- Record your time on the clip board at least once a month. It's okay to call in and have someone at the office write down your hours on the clip board.

Remember that your hours are beneficial to us in showing that we are serving the community. We also want to track volunteer hours so we can recognize and thank each one of you for all of the terrific work you do for us.

### Confirming Appointments

In every Community Program mediation, CMS staff set up the appointments and send confirmation letters to both parties. Recently we have requested that mediators make a follow-up, confirmation phone call the night before the meeting to confirm that both parties are still planning to participate. This seems to be successful in getting parties to keep the appointment and avoids the "no-show" scenario. We have found that speaking directly to both parties is more effective than leaving voice mail; but if voice mail is all you can get, please have them call CMS to confirm that they're coming.

### Getting Ready to Mediate

Be aware that we share our conference room with the NEDCO folks who use it primarily as a classroom, which of course calls for a completely different chair arrangement than what we like for mediations. CMS staff try to prepare the room for your meetings, but it's not always possible for various reasons. Please remember to check the room ½ hour prior to your meeting in case the furniture needs rearranging, the water pitcher needs filling, the temperature needs adjusting, etc.

**NEW INFO!**

### Thanks for Remembering Those Evaluation Forms

In 2005-06, our major funder (Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution) is requiring us to report quarterly on our rate of return on evaluations—so we really NEED them filled out.

Until recently, we have had a very low rate of return for client evaluation forms. Encourage clients to fill out their evaluation and turn it in before leaving. If they ask to return it later, please take the time to let clients know that their feedback is VERY important to us.

On a positive note, most clients who complete the form do rate their mediation experience very positively. Even when they don't, their feedback is usually constructive and helps to improve our services.

## CREATIVE WRITING ...

*WE BELIEVE YOU CAN HELP US  
WITH A DYNAMIC MOTTO*

The staff and Board have been bantering about new mission-related phrases. Currently, CMS uses the phrase *"Empowering people to resolve disputes effectively."* We would like to come up with a more dynamic, evocative line that says what our mission is and what we are trying to accomplish. We want people to hear it and have a pretty good notion of what we do. We would also like the listener to want to hear more about CMS after hearing the tag line.

We have a rather complex story to tell—but can anyone out there think of a succinct way to express what we do and intrigue people? **CONTEST WINNER GETS A FREE NIGHT AT A BEACH HOUSE ON THE FLORENCE (OREGON) COAST.**

Here are a few examples to get your creative juices flowing:

- **We believe mediation provides a peaceful process for responding to conflict in our community.**
- **We believe mediation can turn conflict into consensus.**
- **We believe mediation is an effective, affordable alternative to resolving conflicts in our community.**
- **Resolving conflict. Restoring relationships. Building peaceful communities.**
- **Keeping conflict resolution simple, face-to-face and rooted in the community.**

Submit entries via email or snail mail to :  
[betsy@communitymediationservices.com](mailto:betsy@communitymediationservices.com)

## Monroe Park Mediation

*(Continued from page 1)*

Monroe Park neighbors, the church, and the social service agency located in the church.

The team and the parties expected that a final resolution would require a large meeting with representatives of all the parties. To set the stage for the large mediation, the team felt it was vital for the neighbors to meet with the church and for the neighbors to meet with the social service agency. If those three groups could develop a common purpose, then a mediation including the city agencies would more likely be successful. If the three citizen groups did not address their issues in a safe environment until the final mediation, valuable time would be wasted and the success of the process would be in jeopardy. All the citizen parties wanted the large mediation, including city agencies, to occur. Unfortunately, as a result of the negative experiences of their earlier meetings, not all the parties would meet with each other.

Having met with all three citizen groups individually, the mediation team had developed some level of trust with each. Determined that the initial citizen party mediation sessions were essential, the team strongly encouraged the citizen parties to meet and was prepared to end the process if the citizen parties refused. Fortunately, two groups agreed to meet and the initial success encouraged the third group to meet. Two sessions were held in a near classic mediation format. To save time and to assist the parties in recognizing areas of agreement, the mediation team developed a list of Commonly Held Understandings confirming at both sessions that the list was accurate. In a safe environment the parties were able to address their goals and fears and develop a common understanding for what was important and what could be done. Surprising even the mediation team, the citizen groups made enough progress opening channels of communication and finding ways to work together that further discussions with the city agencies were not required. In parallel processes, the city council decided to fund bicycle patrols for the neighborhood parks and the Parks Department made structural changes to the park. The police presence, the park modifications, and the citizen group agreements appear to have reduced a particularly contentious problem to a manageable level.

### Unusual Aspects:

- Team mediation.
- Large number of parties and individuals involved.
- Large group facilitation using a Purpose, Agenda, Time, and Expectations format.
- List of Commonly Held Understandings to establish common ground.
- Mediator team determination to hold initial mediations between the citizen parties.
- Parallel efforts by neighborhood representatives to resolve issue politically.

### Lessons Learned

- Complex mediations may well require a mediation team, increasing the skill sets available yet also increasing the coordination required.
- Managing a complex process requires a step-by-step process with a clear focus on the objective.
- Chart paper summaries assist the parties in retaining what was discussed and briefing their constituents.
- Trust the process will enhance communications.
- Trust the mediation teams' judgment on the process.
- Lists of Commonly Held Understandings can be useful and illuminating for the parties, yet parties still need to have their frustrations and fears heard.
- Having crafted their own solutions, parties may well not credit the mediation process its role in their finding resolution.

### Volunteers – Share your stories

*If you have a mediation-related story you would like to share via our newsletter, give us a call. Or just send it to us for inclusion in an upcoming issue. Of course, we'll honor the issues of confidentiality about all we print.*

Please join us in our commitment to create a more peaceful community.

**Yes! I would like to tangibly support conflict resolution in my community,  
and enclosed is my gift to Community Mediation Services toward that end.**

\$500       \$250       \$100       \$50       \$20       Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

All donations are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to:  
"Community Mediation Services"  
and send to: 769 Monroe Eugene, OR 97402

*Did you know that you can also contribute to CMS through United Way by designating your contribution?*

***Spread the word!***

## **OUR BASIC MEDIATION TRAINING IS BACK**

**January 27 - 28 and February 10 - 12, 2006**

**Fridays and Saturdays**

**Cost will be \$450. We hope to have 24 participants.**

**If you would like to be in the pool of potential coaches let us know.**

### **Community Mediation Services**

769 Monroe  
Eugene, OR 97402

*Check out our new website! [www.communitymediationservices.com](http://www.communitymediationservices.com)*

### **We're updating our mailing list**

Please call 344-5366  
or email [mediate@efn.org](mailto:mediate@efn.org) to let us know if...

- ◆ You want to be taken off the CMS mailing list or
- ◆ You have a preference of receiving newsletters via e-mail.