



The Mediator

Winter 2004/2005

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF OUR MISSION

Betsy Ford, Director



As the new Director of CMS, the learning curve has been steep for the past couple of months. Time has been spent catching up on history, budgets, funding sources, strategy plans and office procedures. The best part has been meeting so many dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers and staff—and I'm looking forward to meeting everyone involved in the agency within the next few months.

As I tell my friends and family about my new position, everyone exclaims that it sounds wonderful, and mediation is meaningful and important. But they haven't heard of CMS. And they don't quite get what mediation involves.

Which brings me to my vision of CMS in Eugene. I am working with the Board to develop a strategy to increase community awareness of mediation in general and CMS in particular. The first steps of designing two new brochures [one aimed at clients, one at funders], posters and a web site have been completed. We are developing presentations, public service announcements and short articles that will be utilized in the following programs:

- Speakers bureau / community awareness campaign
- Business awareness program
- Government collaboration
- Legal community outreach
- Non-profit collaboration
- Media coverage

Additionally, the staff and I are continuing to work to make our new office space more welcoming and comfortable. Please give us feedback on your concerns and needs when using the office for mediations. We are also updating our databases and forms to gather data, including case information, volunteer hours, and client feedback. We will keep everyone informed about new systems. And please bear with the changes as they are being made to improve our record-keeping and grant reporting capabilities, as well as simplifying life for everyone.

I look forward to the challenge of making CMS a household word in Lane County. What better community to welcome the concepts of dispute resolution? And I encourage any and all assistance that you can provide as long-standing and solid supporters of CMS, who understand the history of the organization and challenges of promoting mediation as a win-win method of conflict resolution.

UPCOMING EVENTS

'Money 101' workshop

Coming in early January.
(see article on page 4)

Third Annual RJ Deepening Retreat

This retreat for volunteers in the Restorative Justice Program is now set for Saturday, January 22, 2005, Wellsprings School. As before, the 6-hour time together will combine good food from local donors and good fun, along with some sharing, discussion, short training, and time for feedback about the program. Mark it on your calendars today.

Upcoming RJP Training

The next 16-hour training for Restorative Justice will be held on April 23-24 of 2005. At \$50, this training is open to anyone wanting to learn more about victim/offender dialogue work. It is a necessary gateway for volunteer mediators who want to assist with RJP cases. Please pass the word to inform others of this opportunity.

Human Rights Program

The Human Rights Advisory Council for Lane County and the City of Springfield are renewing their contract for CMS to cover human rights complaint calls for a second year. Since last January, over 20 cases have been handled with some significant mediation outcomes. If you'd like to be more involved as a volunteer, talk to Ted.

CMS Board Meetings

The Board meets the second Wednesday of each month at noon in the CMS conference room.

Check out our new website coming soon! www.communitymediationservices.com

TEACHERS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT MEDIATION LESSONS

By Doug Hennessy

On August 27th, volunteer mediators Doug Hennessy and David Gubernick ran a three-hour workshop on mediation for Eugene's Network Charter School. Teachers and staff of the Charter School requested CMS to help them learn a few skills to use in resolving disputes between students. As a new service CMS is developing, volunteers were glad to be part of this offering to the community. CMS is developing a presentation package and a group of volunteer presenters as an outreach service.

Originally scheduled for an hour and a half, workshop attendees got so enthusiastic dividing into groups and performing the mediation role-play, there was no way to stop at the arranged time. Besides discussing mediation and how it works, participants practice techniques that get students to provide information school staff needs, and also channels the students into reaching resolution on their own. The teachers admitted that taking over and making the decisions for the students was how they had been doing things (they're trained that way), so this was a whole new approach. Afterwards they had so many questions and were so interested that they asked for a follow-up workshop.

CMS can provide schools and organizations throughout the community with training, education, and workshops that will not only stimulate awareness of mediation and appropriate dispute resolution and what it offers in general, but will increase public recognition of CMS in particular. And we all want that to happen.

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NEW TO CMS: PUBLIC POLICY ASSESSMENT

Elaine Hallmark of The Oregon Consensus Program (at PSU) is expanding the scope of collaborative conflict resolution in Oregon's public policy arena and has invited the CDRCs statewide to work with her on local cases. OCP is willing to provide training and mentorship to volunteers and program directors in the critical assessment and convening stage of public policy cases. Techniques to be shared include, interviewing, analysis, identification of barriers, stakeholders, multiple options, generating funding and other aspects of case development.

Elaine is currently working on a case with the City of Eugene to determine if a collaborative process could be effective in resolving a dispute between neighborhood groups over a federal historical designation of their neighborhood. She is training three CMS staff in the process of interviewing parties, recommending an appropriate resolution process, and identifying resources needed for the process.

Miriam Edell, Betsy Ford and Eric Watkins also attended a workshop in public policy assessment at PSU in mid-October. It is an interesting field that offers opportunities to use collaborative approaches by government agencies and the public involving issues such as land use, environment, service siting and more.

The workshop is tentatively scheduled to be held again this spring if there is enough interest. If you would like to receive more information about the workshop, please call Donna or Miriam at CMS and we will give your e-mail information to Elaine. Enrollment is limited to three people from each community mediation center.

***Give us ideas and feedback
on our soon-to-be website:***

www.communitymediationservices.com

RESTORING VICTIMS AND YOUTH OFFENDERS: A DECADE IN REVIEW

By Ted Lewis

It was once said, "Not all that can be counted matters, and not all that matters can be counted." This is certainly true for restorative justice programs. Outcomes involving relational healing, empathetic learning or reintegration into the community are hard to quantify. That is why I often write out case narratives for the Justice Heals newsletter.

Numbers are important, though, in that they reflect the successes or challenges of a program. This article pulls together data from the past ten years, although some of the information will be based on my four years at CMS. While the seeds of the Restorative Justice Program (RJP) were sown in the late 80's, the first cases from the Lane County Department of Youth Services came in 1994. Within the first four months of operation, 32 offender referrals were handled at the diversion level.

From July 1, 1994 to July 1, 2004, RJP has closed 1,189 referrals (or on average, 119 per year). Of these, 877 offenders (or 74%) went through final mediation meetings, and 312 (26%) closed without an agreement. These latter offenders either declined, were not available, did not respond, moved, missed their appointments, or their case was asked to be returned.

Of the offenders who did participate in a mediation, 676 (or 77%) fully completed their terms of agreement, and 117 (or 13%) were closed with partial completion. This leaves 10% of all participating offenders closing with an unsuccessful completion status, most of whom never started.

In looking at a 3-year period (2001-2003), the total amount of monetary restitution assigned to offenders was \$17,993. The amount actually paid back to victims was \$14,315 (or 80%). Approximately two-thirds of this money was earned through the DYS Work Crew. Regarding community service hours done in this same period, of 3677 hours assigned, 2918 were completed (or 79%).

Victim statistics have not been preserved very well, but recent data indicates that while fewer victim parties agree to participate in mediation meetings than offender parties, the numbers of individual victims served annually is comparable to the number of participating offenders.

Of the 120 victims referred and connected to cases handled between July 1, 2003 and July 1, 2004, 94 (or 77%) chose to participate at some level, being served through phone conversations and meetings. A rough estimate of victims served over the ten years, then, would be around 1000, including family members who participated.

Since 2003, RJP started to do phone evaluations with victims in mediation processes. Of 30 victims surveyed last winter and spring, 22 (73%) expressed satisfaction with the process and the outcome; of the 8 who expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome, 75% expressed satisfaction with the mediation process. Post-program evaluations with offenders will start this winter.

Last but not least, RJP proudly relies on a pool of trained volunteers who help with case development, intakes, and mediation meetings. In recent years, some 30 volunteers per year give their time just for RJP. Given the normal turnover of volunteers (and fortunately many stay with us over the years), the number of total volunteers with RJP over the past ten years still reaches over 100, with total hours averaging 1000 per year.

So, these are the numbers we track. Recidivism rates are also important, especially for governmental funding sources; we can be thankful that the data consistently looks good. According to a Lane County DYS study, "RJP reduces juvenile crime by 80.8% a year after juveniles complete their agreement." A similar group of offenders who did not meet with victims of their crimes showed only a slight reduction in crime at 32.2%.

Overall, I am thankful for what the numbers suggest. I haven't covered cost-effectiveness, but that is also a key area for promoting the growth of RJP in Lane County. My hope is that what is now a healthy sapling will grow into a large tree in due time.

WHAT'S NEW?

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 volunteers to make a conscious effort to record all hours you contribute to CMS on the clipboard hanging outside of Ted's office.

- Be sure to include all CMS activities, including travel to and from meetings, calls made in case development, potlucks and outreach activities.
- Time can be recorded retroactively, but at least once a month. Be sure to keep good notes on your cumulative time.
- It's okay to call in and have someone at the office record your hours for you.

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.

Hey! It's Cold Outside

The days are colder and so is the conference room! In order to create a warm and comfortable place to have a meeting, please arrive at least 30 minutes early to turn on the heater, arrange the room, and make sure there are pens and paper, water, and tissues available for your parties. Thanks again for your efforts to help others solve their conflicts.

Money 101: Lobbying the Oregon Legislature for Funding

The state of Oregon has provided funding to community mediation centers for several years. CMS receives about one-third of its operating budget from these funds. However the funding is slated to end as of January 2006.

A coalition of Oregon community mediation centers has made a concerted effort to reverse this legislative decision. Appearing before a judicial committee last month, they were successful in getting the committee to introduce a bill to the 2005 Legislature to reinstate the funds throughout Oregon.

CMS can help with the lobbying process. If you have an interest in helping and/or good contracts with people in our state legislature, please consider helping out. We are planning a workshop in early January (time to be decided) at CMS to develop a cohesive strategy to lobby our representatives in the Oregon legislature. If you are interested or know people who have contacts and might want to assist us in our lobbying efforts, please call Betsy at 344-5366 to stay tuned to this project.

Small Claims Court Mediator Training

CMS is currently under contract with the University of Oregon Law School to train Small Claims Court mediators. Miriam Edell is working with four students from the law school and one community member for a semester of hands-on training. Monday mornings from 8:30 until noon students attend small claims court. The program consists of a two-hour training from the courts, follow-up training for another two hours done by Miriam, reading the Oregon statutes regarding small claims court and a live appearance with the small claims court judges to discuss details of specific cases or any other concerns.

This year's interns are bright and eager to improve their mediation skills and apply them to the small claims process. This is an excellent way for volunteer mediators to get experience in an intensive time frame, as small claims takes place each Monday morning. For any interested persons, the next Small Claims court training will begin January 14th, 2005. For more information and to apply contact Marcie Selfridge at 682-4227 before December 30, 2004.



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?

Community Mediation Services

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