

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Everett, Washington, featuring a large body of water, a marina filled with sailboats, and a dense urban area with various buildings. A vibrant rainbow is visible in the sky above the town, set against a backdrop of dark, dramatic clouds. The foreground shows a green field and more residential or commercial structures.

**30** Years  
*of Building*  
**Community**



**Dispute Resolution Center**  
OF THURSTON COUNTY

# THANK YOU

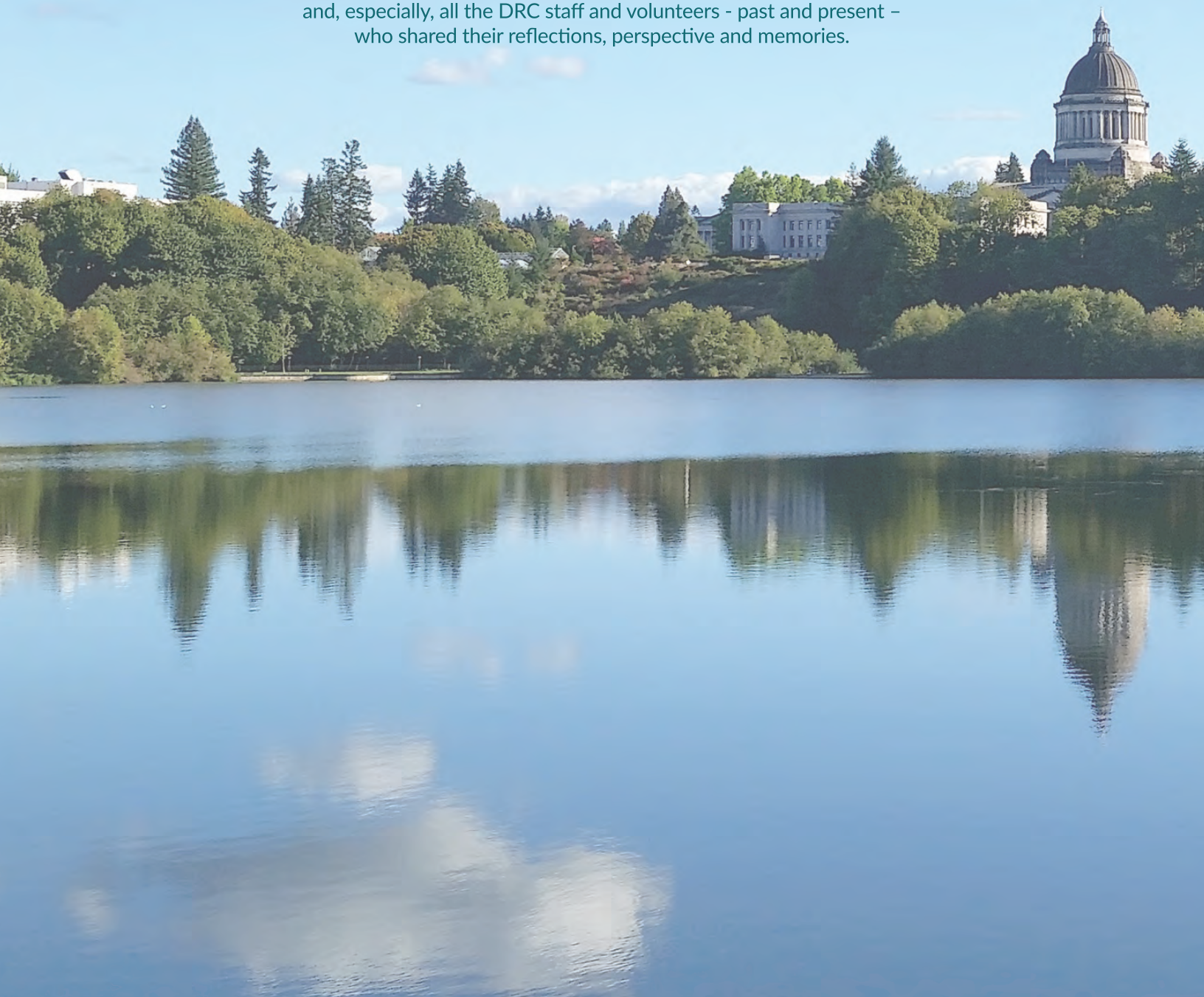
to all those who made this 30th Anniversary  
commemorative book possible:

Robyn Togesen – Writer & project manager;

Jesse Laird – DRC oral history interviews;

Corrie McPheeters – Graphic design;

and, especially, all the DRC staff and volunteers - past and present –  
who shared their reflections, perspective and memories.





## MISSION, VISION & IMPACT

### Our Mission

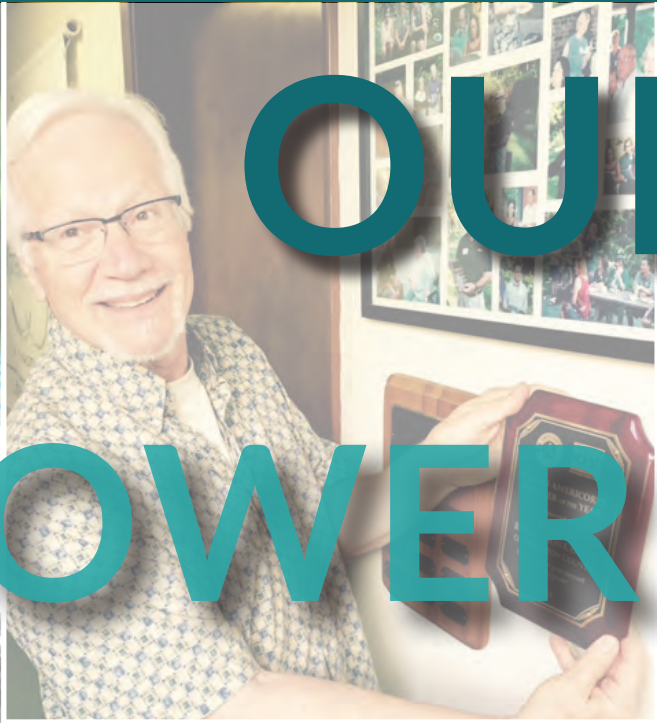
The Dispute Resolution Center empowers people to resolve their disputes by providing conflict resolution services and training community members in those skills.

### Our Vision

We envision a South Sound community that has and uses healthy and respectful conflict resolution skills.

### In 30 years we have:

- Completed over 1,000 trainings totaling nearly 23,000 participants.
- Maintained an average active volunteer pool of 150 people, providing nearly 160,000 hours of volunteer service.
- Performed 8,000 mediations, 77% of which ended in a partial or full written settlement.
- Served nearly 125,000 community members through conciliation, mediation, facilitation, and trainings.



OUR V

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INTEGRITY

# VALUES

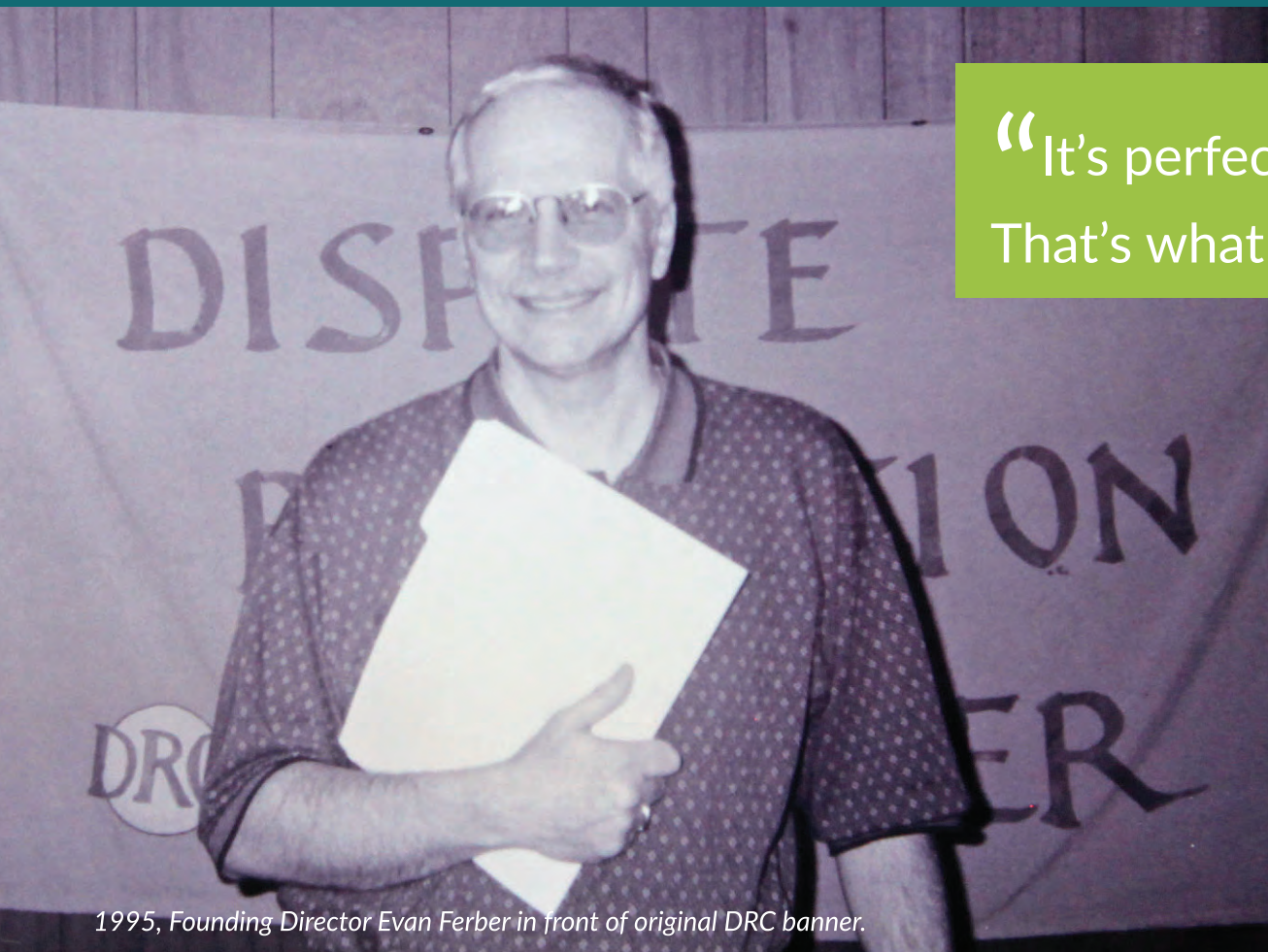
# NT

# TRUST

# RESPECT

# LABORATION





1995, Founding Director Evan Ferber in front of original DRC banner.

“It’s perfect.  
That’s what I’ll do.”

## HOW AND WHY I STARTED THE DRC

There are a handful of important choices I’ve made in almost eighty years of living. Deciding to start the DRC is right there pushing for the top. I remember like it was yesterday: a calm assurance and clarity of purpose settled over me when the idea popped into my head. “Of course,” I said to myself. “It’s perfect. That’s what I’ll do.”

It was that simple and uncomplicated. From the initial inspiration, all the details in the building and running of the DRC took on a life of their own. I jumped into that boat and went with the flow and what a wonderful ride it was for the next twenty-five years of my life. I was so very fortunate. Talented, dedicated people were drawn to this idea of a community-based conflict resolution center where trained mediators helped community members settle their conflicts. The most important person in helping me through those first eight years was my dear friend and mentor Bruce Bergquist, no longer with us, who was

my senior by ten years and who had run small non-profit enterprises on the East Coast.

So what was, and still is, so compelling for me about community mediation? My enthusiasm for it encompasses all of the values I hold dear. First of all, peacemaking is such an attractive concept! It’s socially constructive, it’s very much needed, (and it has such a noble, elevated and sacrosanct ring to it). Returning from my parenthetical silliness, the work of the trained mediator is very highly rewarding. The skills involved are very teachable to anyone over the age of seven or eight. Volunteer work and voluntary financial support on its behalf is non-transactional. It calls upon each of our most idealistic hopes and dreams: on the one hand, utopian and messianic perhaps, but on the other, so very practical and achievable right here and right now, in this imperfect world. That’s what I love about this work.

*Evan Ferber, February 2022*

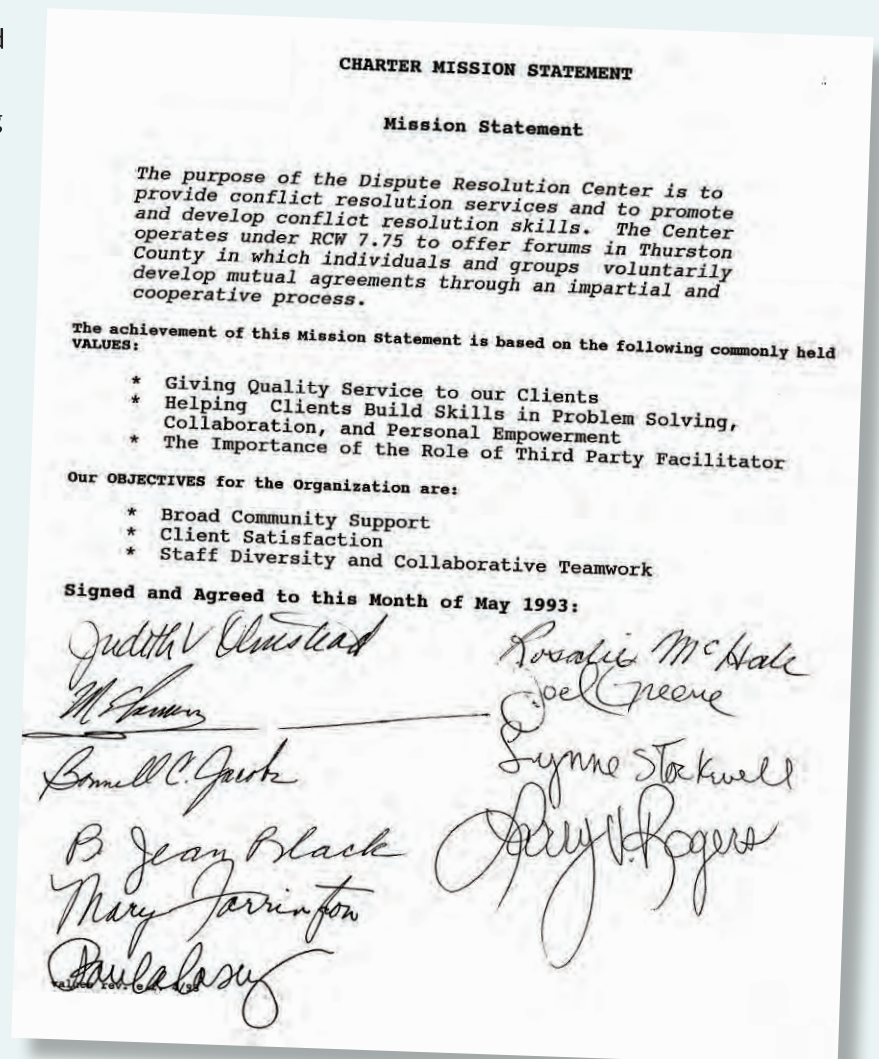
# A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMMUNITY MEDIATION

Community mediation evolved in this country along two streams of innovation, each flowing from a deep well of inspiration. One stream developed from the social and political activism of the 1960s and can be traced back to the Community Relations Service, a federal program established through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prevent violence and encourage constructive dialogue in communities. The other stream developed from efforts to reform the justice system. The federal impetus was an over-crowded court system with increasing numbers of litigants suing each other. Where the two streams converged were principles of democratic participation, drawing on citizens' rights and responsibilities, and the involvement of networks of community organizations.

Proponents of the early community mediation movement thought the mediation process would have positive impacts on the quality of life of community members by affecting the underlying levels of interpersonal conflict. Not only was mediation seen as an empowerment tool for individuals to take back control of their lives from governmental institutions like the courts, but it could also humanize people to each other's concerns and needs even while in the middle of a disagreement.

Between 1971-1975, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) of the US Department of Justice funded the five seminal Neighborhood Justice Centers (NJC) in Columbus, OH; Rochester, NY; New York City, NY; Boston MA; and Miami, Florida. At the end of 1975, there were approximately 10 community mediation programs in the United States. By 1985, there were over 150 programs and nearly 300 by 1995. The National Association of Community Mediation (NAFCM) currently estimates there are over 600 centers operating nationwide today.

In Washington State, the Court Reorganization Act of 1984 made it possible for communities to form community dispute resolution centers (DRCs). As part of that legislation, RCW 7.75 gave counties and cities the authorization to establish DRCs in their jurisdictions. At that time, Thurston County Superior Court Judge Paula Casey introduced an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program where attorneys could have their cases mediated by a community dispute resolution center. It seemed apparent that many of the disputes that came into the court room could be resolved outside of court. ADR offered a way for court cases to have more favorable outcomes for people to resolve disputes and not end up as lifetime enemies.



## 1990-1999

Our story in Thurston County began in 1990 with the simple notion that residents can settle their own disputes and learn effective communication with a little bit of help from other residents who've learned some practical, teachable and highly effective skills as neutral facilitators. The charge to establish a local dispute resolution center was led by founding director Evan Ferber. Evan had learned mediation in regard to organizational development in Spokane, WA where he originally took the 40-hour Basic Mediation Training. In 1989, Evan moved to Olympia and found there was no DRC established. He got involved with the King Country DRC and became a certified mediator at the flagship DRC in Snohomish County. He decided to establish a local DRC and assembled an organizing committee of community leaders, social change agents in fields of law, real estate, social services, and education. Critical help was also given by Associated Ministries of Thurston County, now called Interfaith Works. March 1, 1991, the Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County opened up for service as a not-for-profit DRC authorized by the County Commissioners under the state statute. At that time, Evan resigned from the Board of Directors and became the first Executive Director.

Another founding parent of the DRC was Bruce Bergquist, who followed Evan as the first hired employee. Bruce had a professional background in education and non-profit leadership and made a rich addition to the DRC culture. The breadth of experience and expertise he brought to the DRC was fundamental in the agency's growth and success. He served as a volunteer coordinator and assistant director for more than seven years until his retirement in 1998. Bruce was a born teacher and naturally fell into training the mediation process to new volunteers. In 1992, he and Evan offered the first 40-Hour Professional Mediation training to 10 participants.

The DRC organizing effort fell on very fertile soil. More and more people volunteered to get trained and provide conflict resolution services to their fellow community members. Within a few short years many community entities were involved, such as schools, courts, law enforce-

“The DRC was absolutely blessed to have Evan as the Executive Director. He was just



so caring and warm and thoughtful and we were so lucky that he was the person who was coaching us and helping us evolve. He set the culture at the DRC.”

*Joel Greene*

ment, social services, churches, and civic organizations. Volunteers came from a wide cross-section of the community. Those who took our training, whether they continued to volunteer with us or not, took their skills back to their everyday lives at home, at work, and beyond.

The Associated Ministries, Community Sustaining Fund, Interests on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Fund of the Washington State Bar, and Thurston County Commissioners and administration provided seed money grants that helped the fledging organization form an electronic database of interested parties, publish a regular newsletter, and furnish a new office space that was shared with Associated Ministries. The Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, the First Christian Church, and later the Westminster Presbyterian Church and the First Baptist Church made numerous in-kind donations of office, training, and mediation space that sustained the DRC immeasurably. The saying “it takes a village to raise a child” certainly applies to the DRC. With the involvement of many individuals and groups and scores of others who followed over the years, the DRC was able to grow and flourish.





## 1991 ▶

The DRC opened its doors for service.

## 1992 ▶

Performed our first 40-Hour Professional Mediation Training.

## 1993 ▶

Began partnering with other DRCs in WA through the establishment of Resolution Washington.

## 1994 ▶

Began long-term partnership with the Thurston County Family Court.

Secured first contract with WA Department of Social & Health Services to provide subsidized parenting plan mediations.

## 1995 ▶

Began first peer mediation training in public schools.

Partnered with Juvenile Court to establish a Victim-Offender Mediation Program.

Performed first Family Mediation Training.

## 1996 ▶

Began long-term partnership with Small Claims Court.

Performed first Multi-Party Mediation Training.

Honored first Volunteer of the Year at annual volunteer picnic.

## 1999 ▶

Established Elder Mediation Program.

Created the Bruce Bergquist Youth Scholarship Fund to provide training fee support for youth age 14-19.



1: Original DRC office on the grounds of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

2: Joan Swanson, Evan Ferber and Sydne Cogburn at the original DRC office.

3: 1995, Board of Directors meeting.

# MEDIATION

Community mediation sits at the heart of the DRC and every program works as a valve, keeping vital fluid, or in this case the essence of mediation, moving through the heart in the right direction. To put simply, mediation helps people talk and listen to each other when they are not getting along. Regardless of the purpose, every DRC program pumps personal empowerment, integrity, respect, collaboration, civility, and trust into the community.

Mediation at the DRC is a structured, voluntary, and confidential process where mediators, in pairs, act as impartial facilitators to formal, scheduled negotiation sessions. The goal of our mediators is to assist the parties in reaching agreements that are based on shared information and understanding the underlying interests that impact the decision-making process.

The interest-based method of dispute resolution allows for anger and hurt held by clients to dissipate and discharge at the lowest level of stress and damage to the parties. The role of a mediator in this method of mediation is to hold a safe and productive space where parties can find common ground, keep the conversation moving forward, and arrive at mutually beneficial solutions.

The mediation process is a healing opportunity.

By meeting parties where they are in their pain and confusion; by having the trust that ordinary people have the ability to settle their own conflicts with a little help; by creating a safe and quiet space where parties can slow down, begin to assess their situation and hear the other side; and most importantly, by giving the parties hope that taking the risk of mediating is worth the effort, the mediator creates an opportunity for healing feelings and relationships.

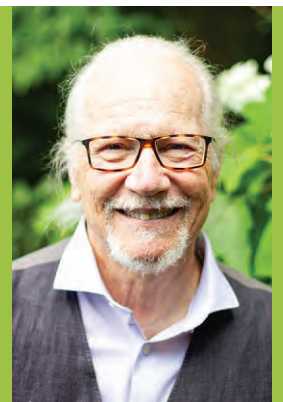


1: 2016, Mediation client with volunteer mediators.

2: 2012, Volunteer mediators perform a mock mediation.

“The model of interest-based facilitative mediation is a very unique process that isn’t practiced intentionally in many places. I don’t know any other movement that preserves the integrity of this particular flavor of mediation. It’s the core of who we are and what we do, what we’re practicing, and what we’re offering the community. Everything goes from there.”

*Evan Ferber*





2016, 40-Hour Training Participants watch a mock mediation.



2013, Maketa Wilborn refreshing mediator skills at Reconnect, Refine, and Rejuvenate training.



2016, Training manager Oriana Noël Lewis facilitates a training for the Port of Olympia.



2017, 40-Hour Professional Mediation Training Graduates show off their certificate.

## TRAINING

Training is at the core of the DRC's work - with a volunteer culture of high ownership, training is both a service we can offer to the community, and a doorway by which the community helps us. The 40-Hour Professional Mediation Training is at the center of the services we offer and the beginning of the journey for each of our volunteers who make mediation possible. The structure of the training is a quilted collaboration grown over many years by a series of trainers who all brought their own unique wisdom and inspiration, as well as input and legacy from other Washington State community mediation centers who shared their resources with us along the way. The 40-Hour invites people into our work, equips them with the skills for mediation, and connects them to other people in our community.

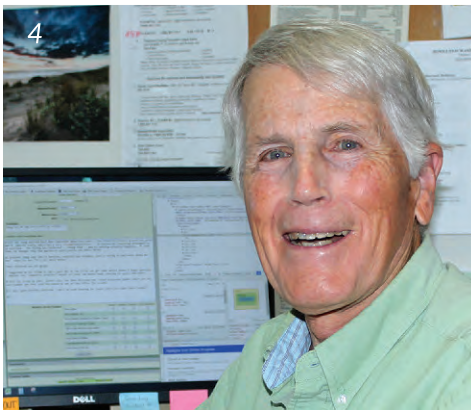
Out of the foundational skills offered by the 40-Hour grew our other slate of public and custom trainings. Custom trainings for agencies became a critically important part of how to grow the DRC, how to get in front of different audiences, and how to attract more volunteers. We consider our training to be part of preventing conflict and empowering individuals to resolve their own disputes. Each year, hundreds of people receive training in communication skills, workplace conflict resolution, facilitating effective meetings, collaborative negotiations, and much, much more.

In 2020 we entered a new era of training, transitioning all our services, including training, online. This has made our trainings available to people all over the country, and our center was recognized by NAFCM as one of seven excellent training providers nationwide, setting the standard for Online Basic Mediation Training that other centers can look to. In the future, we will continue to offer a mix of in-person and online trainings to better meet the needs of a changing, growing world.

“One of the things that is most inspiring about the DRC is its training. I love how the DRC is a learning organization.”

David Kegley





## 2000-2009

The growth of the DRC has been held up by a strong set of values. These values shape how the board, staff, and volunteers work with each other and how the DRC provides mediation and training services to our clients, the residents of Thurston and south Mason counties. We have always promoted respect, empowerment, civility, and kindness in all human interactions, starting with ourselves and extending outwards from there.

As the organization grew and more staff positions were added, space became an ever-present issue. In 2002, the DRC moved its offices from the house on the grounds of Gloria Dei Lutheran church into a space on 4th Avenue in downtown Olympia. This allowed the DRC to be more available and visible to the community as a "4th Ave entity." At that time there was a small staff of six including Executive Director Evan Ferber, Volunteer Manager Joan Swanson, Case Manager Sydne Cogburn, Training Manager Linda Strever, Development Manager Marge Price, and Assistant Training Manager Margie Schubert.

In 2007, the DRC received financial support from the state Legislature for the first time ever. A total of \$1 million dollars was dispersed over a two year period among the 19 dispute resolution centers across the state. Our DRC received about \$20,000 locally which sustained operational expenses and increased mediation service provision in the community. This represented a critical turning point for how community-based mediation is viewed in the state and set the stage for years to come.

1: Staff and Volunteers upstairs in the 4th Ave office. 2: 2002, Volunteer Manager Joan Swanson enjoying the additional workspace at the 4th Avenue office. 3: Front of 4th Avenue DRC office. 4: Bruce Bergquist providing conciliator services after retirement. 5: 2009, DRC Mediator Volunteers Liv Monroe & Joel Greene at the Toast.



“I adored the staff I worked with. I learned how to be on a collaborative and supportive work team. Always when we put our heads together and shared our perspective, we came out with something better than any one of us could have come up with.”  
**Margie Schubert**

## 2002 ▶

Moved to new office space on 4th Ave in downtown Olympia.

Created the Dorothy Hiroko Sato Brooks Memorial Scholarship Fund to provide training fee support for adults from diverse backgrounds.

## 2003 ▶

Received the organizational Lifetime Achievement Award from the Thurston Council on Cultural Diversity and Human Rights.

## 2004 ▶

Hosted first signature fundraising event, *A Toast to Chocolate*.

Performed first Facilitating Effective Meetings Training.

## 2006 ▶

Established partnership with Legislature to receive annual state funding.

## 2007 ▶

Received National Fatherhood Initiative Grant Award to improve services to fathers.

## 2009 ▶

Performed first Collaborative Negotiations Training.

Launched Parent/Teen Mediation Pilot Program in Mason County.

Performed the 1st annual Reconnect, Refine, and Rejuvenate (RRR) Training.



- 1: 2011, Sydne Cogburn working with conciliators.
- 2: 2004, Over 250 guests attended the first Toast.
- 3: 2008, Training Manager Oriana Noël Lewis training skills for Collaborative Negotiations.



1: 2009, The “Fabulous Pointless Sisters” Cheryl Huggins, Sharon Fasnacht, and Janet McLane provide musical entertainment. 2: 2017, Terry Teale, Betty Utter, Glen Anderson, Kathy Baros-Friedt & Evan Ferber. 3: 2016, Evan Ferber Peacemaker Leadership Award recipients Kerensa Mabwa, Matt Grant, & Chief Ronnie Roberts. 4: 2017, Bittersweet Chocolates and their assorted truffles.

## EVAN FERBER PEACEMAKER LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

- 2011 Evan Ferber
- 2012 Kathy Baros-Friedt
- 2013 Betty Utter
- 2014 Rev. Arthur Vaeni
- 2015 Jill Severn
- 2016 Kerensa Mabwa, Matt Grant, & Chief Ronnie Roberts
- 2017 Glen Anderson
- 2018 Teal Russel & Katherine Trahan
- 2019 Rev. Carol McKinley
- 2020 Rabbi Seth Goldstein
- 2021 Hon. Mary Fairhurst & Shelly Willis



Our annual signature fundraising event, originally named A Toast to Chocolate, allowed the DRC to invite community members, county commissioners, and other elected officials to learn more about what we do. Every year 40 or 50 staff, volunteers, and board members would generously donate time and energy to arrange table decorations, serve chocolate and wine, and help with setup and cleanup to ensure a smooth and successful event. A mediation client would be invited to share their story about what it was like to be involved with the process and exemplify why the DRC’s community-based mediation services is a vital and helpful resource for all residents of Thurston and Mason Counties.

The first Toast, organized by Marketing and Development Manager Marge Price, was held in 2004 at the Worthington Center at Saint Martin’s University. A jazz ensemble played soft music and set the stage for everyone to have an entertaining afternoon of sampling delectable chocolates and the best of Washington wines. This salute to community mediation attracted 250 guests and raised over \$25,000. Jeff Miller and Trudy Yarborough shared their stories about crossing paths through a difficult encounter and what it was like to walk together through a victim-offender mediation.

In 2011, the DRC introduced the Evan Ferber Peacemaker Leadership Award to recognize and honor individuals who have provided extraordinary leadership in promoting civil discourse, civic harmony, and peaceful service to our community. The first recipient of this award was none other than Evan himself in honor of his twenty years of service promoting communal peace through community mediation.

# PICNIC

Every summer, DRC volunteers have marked their calendar for the annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. It is an opportunity for the staff and board members to celebrate the DRC Family as well as recognize the annual Volunteer of the Year. Long-time and new volunteers alike gather to enjoy a delicious meal, delight in each other's company, and appreciate the work we do for the DRC in our community.

This tradition began early in the life of the DRC. A key value that was so integral to the DRC was not only the desire to do meaningful work in the community, but also to make time just to be human beings together. Both Evan and Bruce brought effervescence to the organization with song, laughter, and a desire to connect interpersonally with the people around them. The annual picnic is an occasion of celebrating life, love, and spirit.

# VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

- |      |                    |      |   |
|------|--------------------|------|---|
| 1996 | Harry Bowron       | 2010 | Andra Weddington & Steve Dirk   |
| 1997 | Frances Andrews    | 2011 | Becky Liebman   |
| 1998 | Corey Meador       | 2012 | Clair Taylor  |
| 1999 | Joel Greene        | 2013 | Bonnie Rose   |
| 2000 | Betty Utter        | 2014 | Mike Rowswell   |
| 2001 | Judy Olmstead      | 2015 | Shelley Kirk-Rudeen   |
| 2002 | Les Eldridge       | 2016 | Mary Jones  |
| 2003 | Sharon Fasnacht    | 2017 | Vicki Martin  |
| 2004 | Karen Guyot        | 2018 | Terry Teale   |
| 2005 | Kathy Baros-Friedt | 2019 | Steve Tilley  |
| 2006 | Mike Fraidenburg   | 2020 | Casey Wegner  |
| 2007 | Liv Monroe         | 2021 | Tam Clark, Susan Havens, Cathi Greenwood, Jo-Ann Costantino, & Kitty Parker |
| 2008 | Terrance Wagner    |      |   |
| 2009 | Mike Walsh         |      |   |



“When you're in a giving role in your work, the more that you take care of yourself, the better you are for others. When we take these breaks to laugh or sing or talk about something that is deeply touching, it feeds our humanity.”  
*Joan Swanson*



1: 2001, DRC Volunteer of the Year Judy Olmstead presented by Founding Director Evan Ferber. 2: 2015, Leslie Carey & Bruce Bergquist. 3: 2009, Sydne Cogburn, Shelley Kirk-Rudeen, Eric Trimble, Marilee Fosbre, & David Kauffman enjoy lunch at the DRC Picnic.



1



“There’s kind of a marrying, kind of a blending of the continuity between the eras of this organization that ground me in knowing that this organization is healthy and resilient. And that is a tribute to everybody.”

*Terry Teale*



2

## 2010-2021

Over the course of 20 years, the DRC matured into a respected, successful nonprofit that offered a unique and valuable service to the community. Staff, board members, and volunteers were consistently busy building partnerships in the community as they laid the foundations of peaceful conflict resolution, one training or mediation at a time. They actively nurtured the DRC mission, vision, and values by working with state agencies, homeowners, financial institutions, Family Court, families, and youth. The DRC evolved as a needed and valued fixture in the community.

1: 2012, DRC board members and staff. 2: 2015, Current Executive Director Jody Suhrbier and Founding Director Evan Ferber toast to transition in DRC leadership. 3: 2016, Hugh McGavick, Terry Teale, Sharon Fasnacht, Oriana Noël Lewis, Joan Swanson, Jennifer Miller, Sydne Cogburn, Elaine Vradenburgh, Margie Schubert, Linda Strever, & Carly Thornburg gather to say goodbye to Founding Director Evan Ferber at his retirement party. 4: 2016, DRC staff Carrie Stringer, Jennifer Miller, Sydne Cogburn, Joe Sanders, Carly Thornburg, & Evan Ferber.

Joan Swanson’s retirement in December 2014 marked the beginnings of gradual change in staff leadership at the DRC. Margie Schubert announced her retirement for May 2015, and Evan was set to transition out of his status as Founding Director in 2016. The DRC staff and Board carefully considered the future – thinking about what our service area looked like and what it could look like in the near future; thinking about what new opportunities there were for services in the community; and identifying new competencies that were needed to be prepared to serve a diverse community.

After 25 years of service, Evan retired as Executive Director and leadership transitioned to current Executive Director Jody Suhrbier. The next year the office relocated to the current West Olympia location. While the organization looks much different today with additional staff positions and expanded office space, the core values remain unchanged. At the Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County, we continue to focus on listening and learning to understand how we can offer space for individuals and groups to have a voice, seek healing, and address needs.



3



4



## 2011 ▶

Established Foreclosure Mediation Program.

DRC Board of Directors honored Evan Ferber as the first recipient of the Evan Ferber Peacemaker Leadership Award.

Established the Honorable Judge Paula Casey Scholarship to provide financial support for advanced training for practicum participants.

## 2013 ▶

Partnered with the WA Department of Corrections to provide services in the Family Offenders Sentencing Alternative Program.

Became administrators of a state-wide contract through the WA Department of Enterprise Services to bring conflict resolution services to public employees.

## 2014 ▶

Created Youth Services Coordinator position to support youth-designed and -driven training in schools.

## 2016 ▶

Transitioned DRC leadership from Founding Director Evan Ferber to current Executive Director Jody Suhrbier.

## 2018 ▶

Relocated to current West Olympia location.

## 2019 ▶

Launched new Small Claims Court Mediation Program in Mason County.

Received, along with Resolution Washington partners, the Access to Justice Community Leadership Award.

## 2020 ▶

Developed Online Dispute Resolution protocols to meet virtual mediation needs.

Taught LEGL 220 at SPSCC so students can receive college credit for taking the Professional Mediation Training.

## 2021 ▶

Piloted Restorative Justice Facilitated Dialogue program within the Thurston County DUI/Drug Court.

Launched the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program in Thurston and Mason Counties.

Expanded West Olympia offices, doubling the size of the DRC's facilities.



1: 2021, Current DRC office located in West Olympia.  
2: 2017, Kitty Parker provides conciliation services.

# YOUTH

Engagement with the next generation has long been part of the DRC's work. In 2009, a cohort of young people formed the Youth Ally Group, "YAG", affiliated with the DRC. In addition to supporting parent-teen mediations, YAG organized trainings for local schools, school superintendents, and organizations like Community Youth Services, and also supported a multi-year project for peer mediation programs at Olympia High School. This volunteer cohort grew into a staff Youth Services position in 2014 and the development of the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) team, which provided programs in local elementary, middle and high schools, based in principles of restorative justice.

The YES team also continued the work of providing training for school faculty and administration, recognizing that children and youth need adults to practice and model changes in communication and conflict styles. Though the model of youth engagement has shifted over the years, the DRC remains deeply invested in the young people of Thurston and Mason Counties who are essential to achieving our mission over the long term. We continue to partner with schools and other youth-serving organizations to support young people and the adults in their lives.



“Both Bruce Bergquist and Evan Ferber were deeply invested in schools, and there has been a school-based DRC program in some form or another since the DRC's inception.”

*Oriana Noël Lewis*



1: 2017, YES Team Justin Navetski, Jessica Babcock, Nick Rawson, Mattie Leighton, & Cynthia Spencer. 2: 2013, YAG trainers Lucy Swenson, Joy Crouse, & Serafina Riegel. 3: 2014, YAG members perform mediation "street theater" during Fall Arts Walk. 4: 2018, Youth Services Manager Lucia Wyss with YES team Lev Pouliot, Andrea Fercho, & Luca Day.



2019, Volunteers, staff, and board members at the DRC Volunteer Picnic.

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

The DRC is often described as an organization that exists to support its volunteers rather than the volunteers supporting the organization. Many of the people who gravitate towards mediation come from helping professions. Some are teachers, counselors, nurses, and doctors. Helping others is a part of their DNA and who they are. They want to help people and be involved with making things better.

Today we have a pool of over 160 talented and dedicated volunteers. Their generosity with their time, effort, and knowledge enables the DRC to train hundreds of people with conflict resolution skills that they take

back to their homes and workplaces. Volunteer support touches hundreds of people in our community as DRC mediators work with people so that they can find peaceful resolution to conflict. Everything we do is the result of their generosity. Their passion, respect, and benevolence sustains and grows the DRC legacy.



“The people who seem to be involved with the DRC have always been really good people. That has been consistent from day one.”

*Paula Casey*

# VOLUNTEER VOICES – WHAT DREW YOU TO THE DRC?



Wanting to help my community by helping people find ways to work together, to see from the other's point of view and compromise.

**Cathi Greenwood**

My desire to help people create positive communication with another that is mutually beneficial. My belief that everyone wins when we work together.

**Monica Crawford**



A desire to work as a team member collaborating to foster reconciliation and compassion, to further deepen our shared capacity for listening and recognition of our fundamental unity.

**Neil Weinberg**

Conflict is pretty universal, yet many people don't have healthy, effective ways to deal with it. I think we have the capacity to work through conflict. The more people that learn how to do this, the more it can grow, exponentially.

**Renee Cruickshank**



I believe in mediation as an important tool in building and/or rebuilding trust. I find that this work is satisfying, and although not every case ends in resolution, at least the parties are provided a platform that is safe and conducive to attempting resolution.

**Joanne McCaughan**

I gave a testimonial for the fundraiser in which I told my story of being a client with my daughter. I could see the process worked, so I took the training and became a mediator.

**Barbara Young**



Desire for more peace and harmony. Wanting to make a difference.

**Jim Becker**

I wanted to meet a need for being involved in something I believe in and I do believe in mediation. It is an art where I know the results because I can see them.

**Casey Wegner**



# VOLUNTEER VOICES – WHAT'S MOST REWARDING?



Working and learning alongside committed volunteers and staff who share my core values to provide services to people in our community such as conflict transformation/ resolution, restorative justice, and improved communications.

**Terry Teale**



When the clients are able to use the tools, you can really see them move from being closed, being fixed, to being a little better able to listen to each other, to making some movement forward.

**Andra Weddington**



To approach a collaborative process and have people try to work together to come up with a solution that is sometimes one they haven't thought of before.

**Mike Rowswell**



It fulfills my need for meaningful public service and curiosity and interest in social interactions. What keeps me going is the satisfaction in helping individuals overcome conflict in difficult separation situations with kids involved.

**Peter Heide**



I find it most rewarding to be part of a process that allows people who have not been able to have a face-to-face conversation to actually see and hear each other. Whether or not agreements happen, the process itself is potentially transformative!

**Mary Galvez**



The possibility of making a real difference - even if it's just by planting a seed of curiosity or by modeling responsible communication skills.

**Brian Morgan**



Helping people resolve conflict when it may initially feel too big or impossible. Empowering people to show up in their lives and risk connection. Watching people walk away with some sort of structure that is going to give them (and often their children) a better outcome than before they arrived.

**Stacy Hirsch**



Mediation allows people to understand why they are in conflict with people. It allows people to find some answers that they didn't have a safe way to do prior to mediation. Mediation is healing.

**Sharon Fasnacht**

# WE APPRECIATE OUR DRC F



# FAMILY - PAST AND PRESENT



# NAVIGATING CHANGE

As an organization, we have and will continue to navigate our way through significant change. Our collaborative community is the foundation on which we build for the future. While the landscape has shifted and the horizon is a little harder to see, we have made significant strides and have developed new resources to serve our community during these challenging times.

Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and staff, and the support of many individual donors, businesses, and partner organizations, the DRC has been able to successfully navigate the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020. To adapt to new realities and evolving community needs during this time of challenges and transformation the DRC has:

- Launched the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program with our partners across Washington State;
- Piloted a Restorative Justice Facilitated Dialogue program within our Thurston County DUI/Drug Court;
- Expanded our services to Spanish-speaking members of our community with bilingual and bicultural staff and mediators;
- Trained dozens of volunteers to provide effective and meaningful online mediation, group facilitation, and training; and
- Transitioned all of our training offerings to be given online, resulting in selection by the National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM) as one of just seven best practice models for online mediation training in the U.S.!



1: 2021, Youth Services Manager Lucia Wyss & volunteer mediator Elizabeth Drake at the volunteer picnic. 2: 2020, Staff and Volunteers at a virtual training. 3: 2021, Volunteer mediator Marion Spence with husband John and conciliator Jo-Ann Costantino.





# THE DRC TODAY

During the 30 years since our founding, more than 200,000 residents of Thurston and south Mason counties have benefited from the skills shared and applied by the DRC's ever-growing family of volunteers, partners, and advocates. We serve our community through a variety of resources for individuals, families, businesses and organizations, and the broader community, to help manage and resolve conflict, to prevent conflict when possible, and to create a more civil and peaceful community.

## These services include:

- **Mediation** - Our trained and certified mediators serve as impartial facilitators to help people in conflict work toward mutually beneficial agreements.

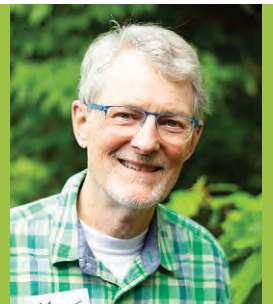
- **Conflict Resolution Resource Line** - We provide conflict coaching, information and referrals, phone-based conciliation, and arrange face-to-face mediations.
- **Eviction Resolution** - We help to resolve landlord and tenant disputes before they lead to court filings and evictions, at no cost to participants.
- **Group Facilitation** - We help work teams and other groups run orderly and productive meetings, and achieve key goals.
- **Training** - We provide customized training to businesses and organizations to prevent and manage workplace conflict, promote teamwork, and improve customer service
- **Youth Empowerment & School Support** - We partner with local schools to offer training and support to help the next generation communicate through conflict
- **Restorative Justice Facilitated Dialogue** - We partner with Thurston County Drug Court to help individuals affected by crime engage in difficult conversations to heal the harms caused.



“We're on a journey that's moving us from being primarily seen as a resource for crisis and remedial work that is mediation to an organization that is working more and more on the preventative side.

We're seen in the community not just as a resource when things are falling apart and are dysfunctional, but as an enhancement to help people work better and prevent conflict.”

**Mike Walsh**



# New Beginnings



For 30 years, our community has looked to the DRC to hold a frame in which individuals and groups come together, deepen understanding, bridge gaps and heal harms. As we step into our next 30 years, we continue to make explicit our awareness and intention that we are an organization that continues to transform, being responsive to the evolving needs of our community, in alignment with our vision and values.

Embracing growth and evolution as individuals and as an organization models for our community the ways of being that lead to supportive adaptation. Looking back at what was most hoped for in our founding and seeing what our community needs of us today, we remain committed to learning from the past, being open to growth and co-creating for improvement. Imagine a community where each of us makes such a commitment!

Tracy Chapman has a song *New Beginning* that came out just a few years after our founding - the sentiment is that looking around, seeing pain and suffering, things are just so wrong that it has become necessary to start all over.

*"... too many stand alone. There's too much separation. We can resolve to come together in the new beginning."*

It is disheartening to see struggle, hardship and suffering around us. We know that there are systems that needs reconstructing and cycles that need disrupting. We also know that it is together that we will do this work.

*"In the new beginning, we can learn, we can teach  
The notion that we can do better, change our lives and paths."*

Our vision remains the same. We welcome you to walk with us towards new beginnings, for each of us, our families, our workplaces and our community.

*Jody M. Suhrbier*



*Jody Suhrbier, Executive Director*





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