

# DRC NEWS

Dispute Resolution Center  
of Thurston County  
312 E 4th Avenue/P. O. Box 6184  
Olympia, WA 98507-6184  
(360) 956-1155  
www.mediatethurston.org

November 2007, Vol 7, Issue 3

## Parenting Plans are Challenging!

*This is the fourth in a series of articles by reporter and DRC volunteer, Sulie Potter.*

**M**y first real mediation was on a warm, summery day. I drove down the hill with a vague feeling that there was something important I hadn't done. Then I realized that for mediating, there is no last minute flurry of preparation, the way there always used to be when I was teaching. It was nice - I didn't have to do anything, I just had to go, and be, and pay attention.

**I** was quite early at the Lacey Community Church, and my co-mediator was early, too. I felt her kindness, as we found the easel, set up the room and chatted.

**T**he observer, a cheerful-looking woman, put her head around the door. The disputants arrived, and we all introduced ourselves and took our places. For the first time at a mediation, I could see everyone's face! Observers can only see the back of the disputants' heads, which is really frustrating. Everything was going to make much more sense now.

**T**he case was a parenting plan, and the couple had only been separated for a couple of weeks, so feelings ran high, and the tissue box was in frequent use.

*"They come in with problems, and often they leave with problems. If they leave with the problems they came in with, it isn't our fault."*

**M**y nice, steady co-mediator had been trained as a psychologist, and she explored in directions that I wouldn't have thought of. She had a great deal of experience as a mediator, and things that surprised me quite a lot didn't seem to surprise her at all. I listened intently, so intently that the outside world seemed to recede. I began to feel confident enough to chime in, to reframe, and to wonder. The couple had some common ground. Would they settle? I began to think that maybe they would. They were working well, and had covered a lot of ground. But then, all of a sudden, things fell apart. It was as if they were scared to find themselves agreeing. Out of nowhere, they traded dismaying allegations, and then they both stormed out in tears. Fortunately, my co-mediator had the presence of mind to remind them as they left that they could always try mediation again when the separation wasn't so new and raw.

**I**t took us a long time to debrief this harrowing experience, but my co-mediator had a comforting perspective. "Don't feel responsible for the outcome," she said. "They come in with problems, and often they leave with problems. If they leave with the problems they come in with, it isn't our fault." It was useful advice, and I was grateful.

## DRC Mission Statement

**W**e value empowering people to resolve their disputes by providing conflict resolution services and by training community members in conflict resolution skills.

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Office Hours: 9:00 am - 4:30 p.m.  
Monday thru Friday

## Training Schedule Update

The Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County invites you to join us for one of our popular conflict resolution trainings. For registration information or questions, please call Marijke van Roojen, DRC Training Manager at 360 956-1155, or e-mail at [mvanroojen@mediatethurston.org](mailto:mvanroojen@mediatethurston.org). All workshops are held in or near Olympia WA. We also are happy to discuss the possibility of creating a custom training designed specifically to meet your and your agency's needs.

### Training Calendar Year 2007

November 29 – 30 & December 1	Thursday Fri & Sat	5:00 – 9:00 8:30 – 5:30	Family Mediation Training*	\$265/\$105 vol
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### Training Calendar Year 2008

January 28 – February 1	Mon – Fri	8:00 – 5:00	40–Hour Mediation Training	\$565 general
March 27 – 29 & April 3 – 5	Thursday Fri & Sat	5:00 – 9:00 8:30 – 5:30	40–Hour Mediation Training	\$565 general
May 15 – 16	Thu & Fri	8:00 – 5:00	Facilitating Effective Meetings <i>(Please note: only offered 1 time per year)</i>	\$285/\$140 vol
May 29 – 31	Thursday Fri & Sat	5:00 – 9:00 8:30 – 5:30	Family Mediation Training*	\$285/\$140 vol
June 23 – 27	Mon – Fri	8:00 – 5:00	40–Hour Mediation Training	\$565 general
October 23 – 25 & Oct. 30 – Nov 1	Thursday Fri & Sat	5:00 – 9:00 8:30 – 5:30	40–Hour Mediation Training	\$565 general
November 5 – 7	Wednesday Thu & Fri	1:00 – 5:00 8:00 – 5:00	Multi-Party Mediation Training* <i>(Please note: only offered 1 time per year)</i>	\$285/\$140 vol
November 13 – 15	Thursday Fri & Sat	5:00 – 9:00 8:30 – 5:30	Family Mediation Training*	\$285/\$140 vol

\*40–Hour Mediation Training is a prerequisite. Limited Scholarships available. Teens get into the 40-hour Mediation Training for ½ price.



## Training Produces Results

*by Osborn Omoding. Osborn is visiting Olympia from August to December 2007 as a visiting practitioner in the International Trauma Treatment Program (ITTP). The ITTP is a community supported non-profit organization that trains practitioners to treat complex trauma inflicted by torture, war and natural disasters. Osborn lives in Uganda where he works with a non-profit organization called Pilgrim.*

"It was my pleasure and great privilege to attend the {October 2007 40–Hour} DRC training. I am very hopeful that I will be able to use the tools in my tool box when I get back to Uganda. Two days ago one of my friends back in Uganda had a problem within the family and asked if I could help them resolve the dispute. I called him on the phone and tried to engage him very briefly using golden questions and reality testing. He said now he knows what he really wants and what the other party wants. It sounds to me that this is going to be very useful in resolving conflicts."

## Mediator Training: Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

By Linda Strever

Mediators were recently included in a part of the Thurston County Superior Court training for guardians ad litem because of a study showing that 50% of California court-mandated family mediations involved undetected domestic violence. Presenters included Judge Chris Wickham and Peter Jaffe of the University of Western Ontario.

Dr. Jaffe said joint parenting is not appropriate when there is a pattern of physical and/or emotional abuse. Since judges are likely to sign off on successfully mediated parenting plans, Judge Wickham pointed to the need for us to be as skilled as possible in assessing domestic violence and to terminate mediation if we suspect abuse. The follow-up DRC in-service allowed us to process the training with Judge Wickham and DRC staff, and the staff will research new assessment tools and plans to make the taped workshop available to more mediators.

## Hats Off! Success!

The DRC cordially thanks all of the sponsors, performers, and volunteers who worked together to make the Hats Off! Fall Variety Show a success. On Sunday, September 30, local performance troupe Entertainment Explosion pulled out all the stops for an exciting show at the Olympia High School Performing Arts Center. Thank you, Entertainment Explosion, for this donated benefit concert! We encourage everyone to attend Entertainment Explosion's big show in February, which will again benefit homeless children in our neighborhoods.

### Special Thanks to Our Generous Sponsors!

Because of the generous donations of our sponsors for the Hats Off! Fall Variety Show to benefit the DRC, we were able to put all of the event proceeds – almost \$2,000 – toward the ongoing work of providing conflict resolution services to our community. Thank you, sponsors! Please show your support to these businesses that have so generously supported us.

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## Director's Report

By Evan Ferber, Director, DRC

It's been an exciting summer and fall for the DRC! We enjoyed a very successful fundraising benefit concert at the end of September. We'd like to thank Entertainment Explosion and all of our generous sponsors. Thanks also to KGY radio for interviewing me on the air. And once again, thank you to all of the wonderful volunteers who came out in support of the DRC.

We're thrilled that October was once again officially recognized by Governor Gregoire and the Thurston County Commissioners as **Conflict Resolution Month**. You can read the Commissioners' entire proclamation at our website, [www.mediatethurston.org](http://www.mediatethurston.org).

In September, October and November, our training department is always extremely busy. We brought our family mediation training to Seattle earlier this fall. Here in Olympia, this October, we held the highest-attended 40-hour mediation training we've ever had! Our annual multi-party training at the end of October was lots of fun, as always, resulting in more trained multi-party mediators. Sign up now for our Family Mediation training November 29 – Dec 1; for our January 40-hour professional mediation training; or for our March/April 40-hour professional mediation training. These trainings are filling up fast!

The DRC is delighted to welcome five new members to our Board of Directors. Adrienne Stuart, Becky Liebman, Judge Brett Buckley, Lynda Kaufmann and Scott Wheeler all joined our board in October, which marks the beginning of the DRC's program year. Our exciting board retreat in October provided a great forum for many of these new members to add their talents and energy to the efforts of our existing hard-working Board. We say goodbye and extend our sincere gratitude to outgoing board member, Don Ernst, for his hard work these past six years.

We're proud to know you!

- Shelton attorney and DRC board member, **Rob Wilson-Hoss**, was honored in September with the Washington State Bar Association's 2007 Community Service Award.
- Chehalis Tribal Member and DRC board member, **Rodney Youckton**, was recognized in *The Olympian* in October for his participation in the 2007 canoe journey, Paddle to the Lummi.
- Former County Commissioner and DRC board member, **Les Eldridge**, recently published his second novel, *Gray Raiders, Green Seas*.

**Congratulations!**

## Mediator Tricks of the Trade

*Mediators sharing our collective wisdom and expertise...*

*By Kathy Baros Friedt*

One of the things that helps me in mediations is to totally, mentally zone in on the parties. I can be tired, even feeling sick, wishing I hadn't been scheduled but then, I meet the parties. They are what is important at that moment. Their story. Their emotions. Their confusion and hurt. And buried within all of the words, are keys to what can give them some satisfaction. My "trick of the trade" is that total immersion — those parties and helping them sort through their issues is THE most consuming thing in mediators' lives for those 2 hours.

## Welcome New Senior Mediators

Congratulations to the following volunteers who have recently been certified as **senior mediators**:

Terra Evans

Ruth Johnson

Becky Liebman

It requires dedication, commitment and hard work to complete the DRC's practicum. We welcome each of these fine people into our senior mediator pool.

## Combined Fund Drive – Thank You, Public Employees!

For over 20 years, active and retired public employees in Washington State have participated in a workplace giving program with a profound impact in communities across the state, the nation and internationally. This year's Combined Fund Drive is underway, providing public employees the opportunity to contribute through payroll deductions and one-time donations. This remarkable resource raises over \$5.9 million per year – and the Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County is very fortunate to receive a small part of that generosity. If you would like to include us in your charitable giving, our CFD number is: 316167.

The contributions we receive through the Combined Fund Drive really help us keep our doors open. We want to thank all of you who have given to us in the past and let you know how valuable your contribution is. The program offers an easy, convenient, and secure opportunity for donors to give – and for a small organization like the DRC, it offers an easy and convenient method of receiving gifts. Thank you, public employees!

### Thank You!

- **Olympia Food Co-op** for donation of food for DRC trainings
- **Old School Pizza** for generous discounts on pizza for DRC events

Dispute



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OF THURSTON COUNTY

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