

# DRC NEWS

Dispute Resolution Center  
of Thurston County  
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www.mediatethurston.org

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## Closing Remarks from Toast to Chocolate

*By popular request, we are proud to present these wonderful excerpts from Marijke van Roojen's closing speech at our Toast to Chocolate, 2008*

I have been working with this beloved organization since 1993 as a volunteer and trainer. For the last three years I have been on staff as the Training Manager. I think I was asked to speak to you today because I have such a passion and love for the DRC. In a couple of months, I am leaving my job in Olympia to move to Wisconsin, so it might be my last chance to tell you why I love this place and this work. I often get to talk about the bigness of the love here, sometimes even without crying. (Definitely did not make it through this speech without crying!)

We recently had a fabulous trainer come down from Seattle to work with our volunteers and staff. She told us that whenever someone talks about the Thurston County DRC, they say that we are special, that we have something more going on. I know that it's true. I can see it in all of your faces. We do community well here. Don't you think?

I want to talk about my experience at this amazing place, this center where so much love happens. Maybe you do not know about all of the things we do and witness.

*"Maybe you do not know about all of the things we do and witness..."*

Maybe you don't know that as the Training Manager of the DRC, I am also on faculty for the International Trauma Treatment Program (ITTP) based in Olympia. Each year, ITTP brings two people to Olympia from countries torn by war, genocide, poverty and conflict so horrible we often can't even fathom it. They come to learn various skills for working with deeply traumatized people and communities. Through our trainings, they learn to help their communities heal, forgive, reconcile and rebuild. They learn to, sometimes, just listen and believe people's stories, often horrible stories, without trying to fix the problem. They learn to facilitate important conversations and to help their neighbors and themselves learn to work together for a new future.

Last fall, we had the gift of having Osborn Omoding from Uganda attend our 40 hour Mediation Training. He described it as one of the most meaningful and practical trainings he received. We have stayed in close touch, now that he is back working in Uganda.

Osborn has written to me of his personal journey, of being perpetually overwhelmed by the huge and endless need in his country and the feeling that he had to fix so many wrongs. He said

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## DRC Mission Statement

We 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

*Marijke's closing comments continued*

that since his return to Uganda, people have noticed his change. They tell him that he now listens deeply to them, has learned to be with them in their pain, and that through his efforts, they themselves are finding a way clear to the next step in their lives.

**T**his winter, two of Osborn's nephews were murdered in his small town. As a leader in his community, he was called upon to mediate, even though this loss struck so close to home. Some of the family wanted to avenge the death of the two boys, others wanted to grieve in peace. Using the powerful mediation skills of listening, acknowledging and witnessing the very deep pain in his family, he was able to help the family choose not to participate in the ongoing bloodshed of revenge. He e-mailed me just last week and told me that his brother has asked him to come back and work again with his extended family. His brother said, "Your time that you spent with us when we were grieving so much and confused, not knowing what to do, you helped us see what we wanted to have happen the most, and you taught us each to speak for ourselves and to listen." Osborn has brought his gift home in a very real way.

**M**aybe you don't know about our work with teens. We believe that training our youth in conflict resolution skills is one of the most important things that we can do. This fall, my 18 year old son, Hans, decided to take the training as part of his senior project at school. During a mock session in the training, when Hans was practicing the role of the mediator, I heard him calmly ask an angry role-playing adult to slow down and to say back what she heard the other person say. The adult took his lead, and that moment became a turning point in the mediation. I could tell that Hans, in his understated way, my ordinary teen of few words, was really proud of himself.

**O**ne day after the training, I had a pretty difficult phone conversation with my spouse who is currently living in Wisconsin. After we hung up, I was sitting in front of my computer, feeling pretty down. Hans came up, sat on the edge of my chair, put his arm around my shoulder and said, "That sounded like a really hard conversation, Mom. Do you want to talk about it?" Of course I cried. So sweet. It gives me hope for the future.

**O**r maybe you don't know that we also are working with Military Officers and Chaplains from Fort Lewis, teaching them how to listen to people who are very different from themselves. I find myself watching these very young men and women, they could be my kids, grapple with listening to their intuition and learning to hear another side, another truth. It nearly breaks my heart, knowing the challenges they face.

**I**recently had the great fortune of seeing author Kenneth Cloke speak about mediating evil, terrorism and war. He

said: "All conflicts take place at boundaries, at the borders between us, the places that separate us." He said, "Every border and every boundary is also a place of connection, where we can meet and touch. Every effort at resolution is a consensual border crossing. Resolution is where we invite 'the other' in a little closer and exchange something meaningful." As mediators, we already know this. We have a responsibility as global citizens to teach people how to talk to one another. Kenneth Cloke asks, "If not us, then who?"

**We have a responsibility as global citizens to teach people how to talk to each other. Kenneth Cloke asks, "If not us, then who?"**

**I**n spite of what we teach in our trainings (where we help people learn to be impartial facilitators), the world does not need more neutral people. We need people to care deeply. We need **you** to care deeply. For the kids whose parents we serve, for our teens, and our too young soldiers, for the Osborn Omoding's of the world, who are learning and teaching their communities a new way, we need **you** to care deeply. For ourselves in our ordinary lives, I really believe that doing something different only 10 % of the time, learning and trying out new skills, even just some of the time, will change our lives, our families' lives and our communities. If we are going to have hope in this big world, every day and each action matters. I need **you** to care deeply.

**P**lease help us to do this important work, day in and day out. Right now, today, please help create a world full of hope and promise. The world we want for our kids and their kids. We need your pledge of financial support to keep this vision alive. (*If you want to mail a donation, send your check to the DRC, PO Box 6184, Olympia 98507.*) Thank you. P.S. - If you are ever in Green Bay, WI, come on by. Our door is open, love, Marijke

## Join the DRC in the Community!

**L**ook for the DRC table at these fun upcoming events: **Capitol City Pride on Sunday, June 22** in Sylvester Park and **Super Saturday at Evergreen, June 14**. If you are interested in talking-up the DRC at a future community event, please call us any time at 956-1155. We'd love to sign you up!

## Training Calendar: Fall 2008 – Winter 2009

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 the DRC at 360-956-1155, or e-mail us at [mvanroojen@mediatethurston.org](mailto:mvanroojen@mediatethurston.org). All workshops are held in or near Olympia, WA. We also are happy to discuss with you the possibility of creating a custom training designed specifically to meet you and your agency's needs.

October 2 – 4 & Oct. 9 – 11	Thursday Fri & Sat	5:00 – 9:00 8:30 – 5:30	40–Hour Mediation Training 37.5 CLE/2 ethics credits included	\$565 general
October 15 – 17	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
October 23 – 25	Thursday Fri & Sat	5:00 – 9:00 8:30 – 5:30	Family Mediation Training* 17.75 CLE/3 ethics credits included	\$285/\$140 vol
January 19 – 23	Mon – Fri	8:00 – 5:00	40–Hour Mediation Training 37.5 CLE/2 ethics credits included	\$585 general (note fee change)

\*40–Hour Mediation Training is a prerequisite.

**Note: Teens get into the 40-hour Mediation Training for \$285 in '08 and \$295 in '09. Limited Scholarships are available.**

### “A Toast to Chocolate: Saluting Community Mediation”

*Thank you for your support on April 13!*

The fifth annual Toast to Chocolate event was a great success. Our community gathered to enjoy a lovely afternoon of chocolate and wine-tasting, reflect on the importance of the mediation and training services provided by the DRC, and reach deeply into their pockets to help sustain our work. Our supporters gave over \$30,000 this year – thank you!

Please help us show our gratitude to our generous sponsors:

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Thurston County Bar Association

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### Summertime Blues

- Kids are getting on your nerves?
- Ex-spouse is getting on your nerves?
- Parents are getting on your nerves?
- Neighbor's fruit tree is dropping squishy fruit all over your patio?
- Your dog is doing hew own dropping on the neighbor's lawn?
- Team at work is understaffed &overworked?
- Heat making you cranky &irritable at work?
- The lack of heat is making you cranky and irritable at work?
- Fire crackers are keeping you up all night?
- Fire crackers have ignited your garage?

Get Help! – Call the DRC at 956-1155,  
Tell us Your Story

## Mediator Tricks of the Trade

*Mediators sharing our collective wisdom and expertise ... please send your gems to [ashelton@mediatethurston.org](mailto:ashelton@mediatethurston.org)*

*By Marijke van Roojen, Training Manager*

**N**otice when you hear people say, “There is only one way to solve the problem.” If people are so stuck that they can’t envision another way out, you are probably addressing solutions too early in the process. Help the parties back up a little, and explore further what they need from the situation, what is being threatened, what are they afraid of losing, what they most want to have understood, etc. When you believe their interests are really out on the table, then ask parties to begin again making offers to each other that include meeting both parties’ needs. This sets them up nicely for problem-solving together. If they get stuck again, go back to surfacing those needs that are still not being addressed.

**T**he take-home message is: if you see folks stuck on polar opposite solutions, you have arrived at problem-solving too soon, go back to surfacing interests. Good luck!

*“A Toast to Chocolate” Appreciation list continues:*

### **Vendors:**

Aunt Kate’s Chocolates  
Blissful Wunders Confectionery Chocolates  
Celebrations  
Fine Art Chocolates  
Hint Café and Dessert Bar  
Olympic Crest Coffee Roasters  
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## New Senior Mediator

**C**ongratulations to the following volunteer who has recently been certified as **Senior Mediator**:

**Tani Biale**

**D**edication, commitment and hard work are required to complete the DRC’s practicum. We welcome Tani into our Senior Mediator pool. Thanks Tani!

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Dispute



Center

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