



CRC TEAM:

Jennifer Robinson:
Program Director

Naomi Janney:
AmeriCorps Member

Juli Babbitt:
Graduate Intern/Editor

Angela Hitchcock:
Graduate Intern

Rachel Jensen:
Undergraduate Intern

Jennifer Langdon:
President

Ronna Jablow:
Vice President

Bernie Penner:
Secretary

Al McComas:
Treasurer

Marion Cockey:
Board of Directors

Stephanie Lazarus:
Board of Directors

Mala Malhotra-Ortiz:
Board of Directors

Eva Rhodes:
Board of Directors

Dennis Schulze:
Board of Directors

Claire Salkowski:
Board of Directors

David Williams:
Board of Directors

CRC Celebrates Conflict Resolution Day

The Conflict Resolution Center of Baltimore County ("CRC"), a newly formed non-profit organization, serving residents of Baltimore County, is officially launching mediation services in conjunction with International Conflict Resolution Day, Thursday, October 15, 2009. Conflict Resolution Day highlights peace-making efforts around the globe, as well as a nationwide effort to avert violence and litigation through the use of volunteer mediators.

Mediation allows people in conflict to freely discuss disagreements and work together to develop creative and mutually agreeable, long-lasting solutions. CRC has begun its mediation services throughout Baltimore County for all types of disputes, including those between neighbors, families, friends, employee/employer and landlord/tenant. In a recent mediation, two roommates argued

over how much each was paying for the rent and other bills. A close relationship was strained over financial disagreements. After two mediation sessions with CRC, the roommates talked through their problems and worked out a solution to pay their expenses. In another mediation at a senior center, an emotionally charged dispute arose between several seniors and a volunteer at the center. After one two-hour mediation session, they were able to freely discuss their disagreement and work out a plan to continue communicating.

The CRC offers free mediation services held at a location within the County that is convenient to the participants. The mediators are highly trained volunteers from the community who serve as impartial third parties in disputes between individuals, organizations and groups. The mediators are

trained to listen to the concerns of the participants and to create the synergy necessary for them come up with an amicable solution. The CRC receives calls from individuals, groups and organizations experiencing conflict.

Studies of community mediation centers' work have found it to be successful at resolving conflicts and improving relationships between individuals in conflict. Research has also found that community mediation saves public resources by decreasing repeat calls for service to the police department and many other public agencies, and by decreasing the use of criminal and civil courts. The Baltimore County Police Department is closing its mediation program, and the CRC is pleased to announce that it is now providing mediation services for police referred conflicts.

Stories from the Compassionate Listening Project

The CRC is excited to announce that we are sponsoring a **Friends of the Center Speaker Series**. Our inaugural speakers will be Amy Rakusin and Phil Fratesi, who participate in Compassionate Listening Project delegations to the Middle East. Amy and Phil also teach the Compassionate Listening model as a method of conflict transformation. We have invited Amy and Phil to share stories from their most recent journey to Israel and Palestine. This event will take place on **November 18th, 2009**, at 7 PM at Bykota Senior Center in Towson.

Admission is free, however a suggested donation of \$5 will be accepted at the door. Donations will support the work of the CRC of Baltimore County.

Reservations are required, as space is limited. Please send an e-mail to speaks@crcbaltimorecounty.org or call the CRC at (410) 663-7070.



Jennifer Robinson

NOVEMBER 30

November:

18th—Speaker Series on
Compassionate Listening

Stay tuned for:

- Mediator Training in January
- Additional speakers in the
Winter and Spring

If you would like information
on any of these events, call us:
410-663-7070

“CRC’s purpose is to assist Baltimore County residents who are experiencing conflict. It is also to serve the stakeholders who work very hard to serve county residents every day, and may experience great relief to find a meaningful yet practical resource to offer residents,” said Jennifer Robinson, Program Manager of CRC, who comes to CRC with a Master’s degree in Conflict Negotiations and Management from the University of Baltimore, and experience in coordinating the Community Conferencing Program for Baltimore County, a restorative justice and conflict resolution program. “Conflict can inhibit people from moving forward with their lives, and organizations from moving forward with their work. We are working to build public awareness that services exist to assist with conflict.”

The Conflict Resolution Center of Baltimore County has committed to the following 10 points of mediation program development, consistent with other mediation programs across the state of Maryland. We are striving to:

1. Train community members who reflect the community's diversity with regard to age, race, gender, ethnicity, income and education to serve as volunteer mediators
2. Provide mediation services at no cost or on a sliding scale
3. Hold mediations in neighborhoods where disputes occur
4. Schedule mediations at a time and place convenient to the participants
5. Encourage early use of mediation to prevent violence or to reduce the need for court intervention, as well as provide mediation at any stage in a dispute
6. Mediate community-based disputes that come from referral sources including self-referrals, police, courts, community organizations, civic groups, religious institutions, government agencies and others
7. Educate community members about conflict resolution and mediation
8. Maintain high quality mediators by providing intensive, skills-based training, apprenticeships, continuing education and ongoing evaluation of volunteer mediators
9. Work with the community in governing community mediation programs in a manner that is based on collaborative problem solving among staff, volunteers and community members
10. Provide mediation, education, and potentially other conflict resolution processes to community members who reflect the community's diversity with regard to age, race, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and geographic location .

Mediation in Maryland — Community Mediation Facts

Mediation helps people reach agreements, rebuild relationships, and find permanent solutions to their disputes. Mediation is a process that lets people speak for themselves and make their own decisions. In FY2009, Community Mediation Centers across Maryland conducted 1,604 mediations. Mediation participants provided the following feedback on post mediation evaluation forms:

- 98% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that, “I was able to express myself, my thoughts, and my concerns during the mediation.”
- 79% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that, “Through this process I think I understand the other people in the conflict better.”
- 73% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that, “Through this process I think the other people involved in the conflict understand me better.”
- 92% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that, “I would recommend mediation to others involved in conflicts.”



Jennifer Langdon, President & Juli Babbitt, Graduate Intern

Welcome to the inaugural issue of CRC's newsletter! We titled it "Seasons" to evoke the leaf image in our logo (conflict is a natural aspect of our lives). We would like to thank Juli Babbitt for serving as editor for this issue.

We want to thank our volunteers, partners, and organizations that have supported us, from the bottom of our hearts for all of your support over the past year! We have accomplished so much since that seminal moment 17 months ago when a small group of interested people met to

Greetings from the President

discuss the possibility of starting a conflict resolution center in Baltimore County.

While I want to highlight many of the accomplishments of the past year, I also want to inform you about what some of our current projects are and turn your sights to the future of CRC.

As many of you know, over the past year we have grown from an interested group, to an advisory board, to a state-recognized organization with an employee, AmeriCorps members, Interns, and an office! Our Program Manager, Jennifer Robinson, was hired in May and has been instrumental in securing our office location (come and visit us!) as well as performing outreach and mediation intakes. Vernetta Hale and Naomi Janney, our AmeriCorps members worked with us over the last year to secure over 30 partners that provide sites for mediations!

I also want to make special mention of one volunteer who led the effort to get us where we are today—David Zoll. David, the public face of CRC in our "early days" was honored in a special slide presentation at the Annual Community Mediation Maryland Gala in June. David continues to mediate for CRC.

Finally I would like to personally invite you to our first special event. On November 18th we welcome you to come and learn about the powerful conflict transformation practice of Compassionate Listening, at Bykota Senior Center.

I hope you enjoy our first issue of Seasons!

Jennifer Langdon

President, Board of Directors

SPOTLIGHT: Robyn Engle, Volunteer Mediator

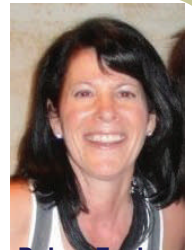
First let me start off by saying that what I have learned and observed so far in my "quest" to become a mediator diva (to coin a phrase from the number one diva Erricka Bridgeford) has been quite a humbling experience. My life experience does not give me adequate qualifications to delve into this process quickly or without a great amount of my own soul searching. My background was mostly in the retail world (my mother and I owned retail women's clothing stores) for which I did most of the buying, managing and handling of personnel for two stores for almost 10 years. I then changed gears and pursued a career in advertising and marketing of direct mail with one of the nation's largest direct marketing companies.

Almost 18 years ago I gave birth to my first child, who is now a Senior at Park

School and 19 months later gave birth to my daughter now a Junior at Oldfields School. At that point I made the decision to become a stay at home mom. I became immediately involved in all the typical activities that stay at home moms are best at. I joined organizations and became president of the first ever stay at home mom's national network called at that time FEMALE (Formerly Employed Mothers At The Leading Edge). Then I moved on to all things school-related, mostly concentrating on fundraising. In this stage of my life, a women in her 50's with children who are moving on to their own lives, I began looking for "what to do next". I began looking online for all kinds of volunteer opportunities. I came across David Zoll and community mediation when I went to a fair to get a flu shot last year. I watched the

video he gave me about mediation, and was hooked. I knew I had found the next chapter of my life.

The best part was the fact that the organization was just forming and I loved being part of the development process. After my training in January, I began observing mediations and realized the importance of this work. What I love the most is that CRC is young and they need help in so many different ways, and even though I still strive to become a "mediator diva", I know that I can contribute in so many other capacities. This is going to be an organization that will grow over the next few years, and I feel honored to be part of something that is so desperately needed in this County.



Robyn Engle



8831 Satyr Hill Road, Suite 105
Parkville, MD 21234

Phone: 410-663-7070

Fax: 410-663-7008

E-mail:

inquire@crcbaltimorecounty.org

For more information, please visit us
at www.crcbaltimorecounty.org

The purpose of the Conflict Resolution Center of Baltimore County is to help resolve interpersonal and community conflict. CRC currently offers mediation services and will offer other conflict resolution and restorative justice services and education. These programs will be accessible to all persons and organizations in Baltimore County at convenient times and locations and will be provided by professionally trained individuals selected to reflect the diversity of the community. CRC currently offers FREE mediation services at locations convenient to all county residents and organizations.

CRC would like to thank the Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) for its financial support. CRC would also like to thank our volunteer mediators and our community partners for making community mediation available throughout Baltimore County.

SAVE THE DATE!

November 18, 2009, 7pm
Bykota Senior Center, Towson MD

“Stories from the Compassionate Listening Project”
Presented by Amy Rakusin and Phil Fratesi

Join us for additional Friends of the Center Speaker Series
events after the new year.

Amy Rakusin on Compassionate Listening:

In every human interaction, whether as mentor, friend, family member, co-worker, social activist or mediator, the practice of *Compassionate Listening* builds trust, connection, respectful dialogue and sustainable solutions. The curriculum for *Compassionate Listening* grew out of many years of reconciliation work on the ground in Israel and Palestine. *Compassionate Listening* is a model that teaches us how to reach through layers of defensiveness to an essential core and from there shift into heart-to-heart interaction, even in the heat of conflict. On November 18th we will introduce this powerful model of conflict transformation and present material from our recent participation in a *Compassionate Listening* Delegation to Israel and Palestine.

Visit <http://www.compassionatelistening.org/> to learn more.

Become a Friend of the Center by making a donation!!

Please send your tax-deductible contribution to help support the programs of the Conflict Resolution Center of Baltimore County.

Make your checks payable to our fiscal sponsor, Community Mediation Maryland.
Send your contributions to:

CRC, 8831 Satyr Hill Road, Suite 105, Parkville, MD 21234

My Contribution: ___\$250___\$200___\$150___\$100___\$50___ or \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____