



Dispute Resolution Center Newsletter

September & October 2017

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Beginning this month, the DRC Newsletter will be published bi-monthly. This will allow us to offer more informative articles on topics that matter to our mediators.

“The Role of the Arts and Gifting in the Restorative Process” (Aldington, Claire, European Forum for Restorative Justice Newsletter, vol. 18 No. 2, June 2017, p.5-8. http://www.euforumrj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Vol_18_2.pdf)

The arts have the power to transform lives. They challenge to us to reflect and think about issues from a different perspective. Artistic expression serves as a creative outlet, allowing us to process difficult, emotionally charged experiences. The transformative power of the arts is especially relevant in addressing how conflict impacts victims and offenders.

In this article, Claire Aldington describes her path as restorative artist. In 2001, she worked for a season with the Oxfordshire Youth Offending Service and had received training in restorative justice practices. Her first case involved a young person who had stolen merchandise from a store. She was caught by the staff and security, and was arrested for shoplifting. The girl was banned from all of the national stores.

The girl was assigned to Aldington who learned more about her interests and the reasons for her actions. The girl was remorseful and embarrassed, and had difficulty working through what had happened. Aldington suggested they create masks that would reflect how the girl was feeling. After several masks had been created, the best masks were framed and given to the people who had been harmed by her actions as a “reparative” gift. With the consent of the girl and her mother, Aldington contacted the store manager to talk about the incident. During the conversation, the store manager expressed how distressed he was about what happened and wanted to meet with the girl. The girl did not feel comfortable meeting him, but agreed that Aldington present the artwork on her behalf. The staff were delighted that they received this gift and hung it in the staff room, and the nationwide ban preventing the girl from visiting the stores was lifted.

After the success of this first case, other gifts

were created and, when appropriate, victim-offender meetings were arranged to share their thoughts and feelings about the incident. The artwork served as a focal point that made it easier for both parties to communicate with each other. In follow up meetings with people who created and received artwork, people responded that it helped them work through the traumatic event and allowed them to move forward with their lives.

Aldington identifies three stages that are essential to the restorative process. The first stage requires that the offender talk about the incident and explain what happened. During the second stage, the offender answers questions about the consequences of their actions- “How have you been affected? Who else has been affected? Who do you think has been the most affected?” The final stage explores the future and the work that needs to be done to change the situation.

In 2007, Aldington and another artist, Alyson Halcrow, co-founded the “space2face” arts— a restorative justice project using the model of reparative gift giving. Space2face works with adolescents in creative restorative group activities, combining the arts and dialogue circles to explore difficult issues.

Aldington states that it is important not to re-victimize the person receiving the gift. The artwork can serve as a conduit for communication when it is inappropriate for the parties to meet or if they choose not to meet. Professional artists trained in restorative practices can help the person develop their ideas artistically. The significance of giving away the artwork also has to be understood by the person receiving it. Finally, Aldington states that the artwork produced must be of a very high quality and must be presented in a thoughtful and beautiful manner. This is essential because, if the person harmed receives a poorly made piece of art, it could be interpreted as insincere and disrespectful.

For more information about space2face, go to: <http://www.clairaldington.com/project/space2face/>



From the Program Director

Greetings Mediators!

I am currently preparing the applications for the funding to provide two Advanced Regional Trainings for volunteer mediators. This year our topic will be around Restorative Justice. We are designing the trainings so that they will be able to be taken back to back as continuations or if a person would like to take one but not the other, they will be able to do that as well. We are looking at dates in November and February. Once the applications receive the approval of the Unified Courts System staff, we will send out the information for people to sign up for each. Stay tuned.

There has been one staff change that I would like to announce to everyone. Natasha Daniels who was the full-time DRC staff person in Herkimer County is no longer with the program. Tom Pullyblank, who was the part-time Case Manager in Herkimer County has taken the full-time Case Manager position in Herkimer County. We will be hiring a 21-hour per week Case Manager to be in the family court in Herkimer County. Open positions will be advertised, if you know someone who is interested in applying they can call me at (607) 432-0061 for more information.

Christy Houck

Remembering Richard Makepeace by John Graham

Hi everyone. I wanted to say to all that we have just lost one of our former mediators to death recently. I think I can say for those here in Otsego county that it was an experience to mediate with Richard Makepeace. While we had different styles in mediation, Richard had this connection with every party he worked with. He was not pretentious, he didn't think he was smarter or had the answers for the parties during mediations. He was a meat and potatoes kind of guy. He connected with them on a human level, something you can't learn. He had great empathy for the parties in mediation. I remember talking with him on the streets of Oneonta, and the number of people who stopped by to say hello was amazing. It seemed there was no one he did not know. Facebook messages also show what a difference he made in countless lives. Thanks Richard Makepeace for your involvement with the community, and for those you have helped. To share your memories or to send condolences, click the link below:

<http://www.hillcrestmemorialcenter.com/obituaries/Richard-Makepeace/>

Reminder to Mediators! As a reminder, parties are now responsible for turning in their own agreements to court. Previously, mediators would give completed agreements to Case Managers to hand in to court. However, Case Managers are no longer responsible for this. It is up to the parties to turn in their own agreements. As always, if parties have any questions about their agreement, they are welcome to reach out to Case Managers for assistance.

Thank you!

Diana Halstead, DRC Case Manager

Hello, Volunteer Mediators! Please be sure to submit your "Self-Evaluation" form to your Coordinator no later than December 31, 2017. If you have questions about the number of mediations that you have done or what requirements you still need to meet, please contact Lois. If you have general questions about the Self-Evaluation form, feel free to contact any DRC staff member.

Lois Hubbard, DRC Coordinator for Chenango, Delaware, & Otsego Counties,
lhubbard@charitiesccdo.org



Save the Date!

- **Saturday, September 9, 2017, 8:30 AM-4:00 PM: *New York State Council on Divorce Mediation 2017 Symposium*, Locust Hill Country Club, Pittsford, NY, \$115 NYSCDM Members, \$135 Non-members. Featuring sessions on: **Pensions & QDROs: Always More to Learn**, **Panel: Getting to the Bottom of Clients' Incomes**, **All Things Insurance: What's New in Life, Disability and Long-term Health Insurance**, **How's Your Agreement? Elements of a Durable Agreement** For more information or to register for this event, go to: <http://www.nysmediate.org/upstate-symposium>**
- **Saturday, September 30, 2017, 12:00 PM-2:00 PM: *"Reframing– A Useful Tool in Mediation"* In-Service, Catholic Charities, 176 Main St., Oneonta, NY** Reframing is a great and useful tool for mediation. It allows a dispute to be seen from a different perspective especially when the parties are positioning. It can detoxify language and can account for feelings and needs. While reframing on the surface seems to be easy it is also challenging for mediators who are in the midst of conflict to reframe vs. giving advice or directing. This in-service will allow us to practice (role play) various situations to help us become more confident with the use of reframing. **R.S.V.P. JGraham@charitiesccdo.org by September 22, 2017.**
- **Coming in October! Catholic Charities DRC Divorce Mediation Training** Information will be sent out soon!
- **Sunday-Tuesday, October 22-24, 2017: NYSDRA 2017 Annual Conference, Holiday Inn Saratoga, Saratoga Springs, NY** For more information, go to: <http://www.nysdra.org/page/2017NYSDRAConf>



Everyone is invited to write articles that would be of interest to mediators. If you have something you would like to share for the newsletter, please email your article by Friday, October 20th to April Rando at arando@charitiesccdo.org. Thank you!

Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program by Allison Pierce



Fruit and Vegetable Prescription programs enable innovative partnerships between healthcare, retail and community-based organizations to increase access to healthy and affordable food. Patients are empowered to prevent/manage diet-related health conditions, retailers and local farms receive direct economic benefits, and patient-provider relationships are deepened. On August 31st, Catholic Charities Food Pantry and NOEP participated in the Fruit & Vegetable Program outreach event at the Foothills Performing Arts Center in Oneonta. This event was hosted by the Food & Health Network of South Central NY and co-hosted by the Rural Health Education Network of Schoharie, Otsego and Montgomery Counties.



Each month we feature articles about our staff and volunteer mediators.



Elliott Adams, Volunteer Mediator

I, like many, have felt helpless as I watched conflicts grow into damaging, if not violent, situations. Our efforts to help often seem to be counterproductive. In 1992 we heard about a dispute resolution program

funded by the NY Office of Court Administration. Several of us from Peacemakers of Schoharie County decided this might be important. If it does actually work between individuals it might even be extended to work between nations.

The weeks of classes with Josephine Ashworth were inspiring. It felt life changing. There were radical ideas - like win-wins. When we did the “Ugly Orange Negotiation Exercise” (how many of you remember that one?) I was completely blindsided, I was amazed that I was so wrapped in a mind set of competition I could not see a win-win sitting right before my eyes. It was empowering to learn that we didn't have to be a King Solomon and be smart enough to know the just solution for everyone. We could learn a process that helped disputants find their own solutions and with that we could be part of resolving conflicts.

As a mediator it has been exciting to have disputants walk into a mediation unable to even talk to each other, they could only scream vileness at each other and later walk out not best friends, but with a resolution they were committed to making work. There are also those disappointing mediations that don't work out, too. We always hope disputants can not only resolve the issue they came in with but also learn a new way to handle other conflicts.

Mediation is a process that is typically used to

resolve conflicts when people have an ongoing relationship. My mediation work expanded to working with Meta Peace Team (MPT). Peace Team work is about reducing the violence in other people's conflicts when the people do not have any ongoing relationship, typically in conflict zones and war zones (a demonstration like Charlottesville, NC on 12 Aug was an example of a conflict zone). MPT deploys teams in the US, like at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland and internationally in Palestine. We understand that conflict is normal and natural. If I am going to be an individual there will be conflict around me. If we embrace diversity, which we should, there will be conflict. But what is not normal and not natural is violence in that conflict. When violence increases it is likely to further increase. However, if we can help decrease the violence in a conflict it makes room for it to further decrease. Which is part of the hope in peace team work. After participating in peace teams both in this country and internationally, I know how much difference it can make. This has lead me into also training people across the country to do peace team work.



Visit the Catholic Charities of Delaware, Otsego & Schoharie Counties' website and “like us” on Facebook!

<http://www.charitiesccdos.org/index.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/CatholicCharitiesDOS/>

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS!

Do you know someone who might be interested in becoming a volunteer mediator or a volunteer translator? Please contact Christy Houck, DRC Program Director at chouck@charitiesccdo.org