

# *MCS NEWSLETTER*

Mediation & Conflict Solutions



Greetings fellow mediators. This summer edition of the MCS newsletter comes at a particularly unusual time in our lives. While it may seem not much is going on, rest assured our Executive Director and Board remain busy. Thank you to all who have felt comfortable mediating, for learning the techniques involved with ZOOM, for participating in online continuing education and for being ever-supportive of MCS and the services we offer. You and your extra efforts are truly appreciated. ~ MCS Board ~

## **School Program Update**

At this time the MCS contract with the Rochester Public School District has not been renewed. Given the early closure of schools in the spring and the uncertainty surrounding school re-opening, this is not entirely unexpected. RPS is aware we are here and available to meet their needs for mediation should they desire us to do so. We have enjoyed a good working relationship with RSD 535 and hope to have the opportunity for formal engagement again in the future.

## Money Matters

- July marked the end of the grant funding cycle and all grantors have been invoiced.
- CMM (Community Mediation Minnesota) has paid all MCS expense for needed interpreters.
- CMM was awarded the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency grant. This means that CMM will receive applications for financial assistance for rent/mortgage/utilities and connect eligible recipients to CDRP's who will help landlords and tenants negotiate the terms for one to remain housed, incorporating the rental assistance. The amount of this grant ask was \$500,000. While we aren't entirely sure if CMM received the full ask amount, we are pleased to know these funds are for financial assistance.
- We also have received a grant for two free ZOOM accounts through NAFCM, which will be helpful if MCS's caseload increases as a result of the Housing Finance grant.

## Noteworthy

- MCS continues to work with leaders from LAOC and SMRLS concerning a role for us within the eviction prevention clinic program.
- Our Executive Director completed an interview with the Post Bulletin concerning our involvement with the Human Rights Phone Line. Why was this important? MCS has a contract with OCHRC. We answer their phone line and provide resources to Olmsted County residents who feel that they have been treated unfairly. Good publicity all the way around.

- MCS mediators virtually facilitated discussions involving the Human Rights Commission. Feel free to read more about this matter at <https://www.postbulletin.com/news/government-and-politics/6541727-Human-Rights-Commission-fails-to-reach-agreement-on-rules>.
- CMM just completed its first virtual 30 hour civil mediation training. It was so successful that CMM intends to hold another training at the beginning of 2021. If you know individuals who would like to participate in a 30 hour civil mediation training from the comfort of their own home, please send their contact information to Wendy at [MCS.Director@gmail.com](mailto:MCS.Director@gmail.com).
- For the foreseeable future mediations will continue to be conducted remotely. If you would like additional Zoom training, please contact Wendy.
- Discussions are underway pertaining to the possibility of a fall Volunteer Appreciation Event. Obviously, many things must be considered. Stay tuned. Our volunteers are our greatest asset and if at all possible - we'd love to celebrate each of YOU!