

MCS NEWSLETTER

Mediation & Conflict Solutions



Updates from our Executive Director, Wendy Moore

CMM: Community Mediation Minnesota, the umbrella organization to which all Community Dispute Resolution Programs (CDRP) belong, received a grant to purchase case management software. Since last year, representatives from each CDRP have been meeting to create a common database for all CDRP's in order to more easily and uniformly collect case data and generate grant reporting. Mediation & Conflict Solutions has the system up and running and the efficiencies are already proving useful.





After our successful family mediation training held in November of last year we have 14 newly trained family mediators, nine of whom are new volunteers to MCS. Almost all of our new family mediators have completed their two observations and are eligible to co-mediate with more experienced volunteers. Since it has been a particularly busy spring, it has been very helpful to have these newly trained mediators helping with cases.



CRM: Every year Conflict Resolution Minnesota holds a one day mediation conference where volunteers have the ability to choose interesting courses related to mediation and the ability to earn six continuing education units. This year the conference will be held as a Webinar series on Saturday, May 9th. The CRM website provides additional information and registration details. **This is not a live link.

<https://conflictresolutionmn.org/crm-annual-conference/>



The MCS conference room has been relocated closer to the building basement. When volunteers arrive to mediate, please check in with the Executive Director before proceeding to the conference room. The walls are very thin in the new space, so if participants need to caucus, please use other basement rooms. If you need to contact the Executive Director, there is a telephone you can use to request copies or a consult with Wendy. Dial 1-507-285-8400. (This # is also located in the room for your reference.) Also, please be aware of the possibility that participants may need to be separately escorted to their vehicles at the conclusion of a mediation.



Legal Aid of Olmsted County provides a variety of beneficial services to the people of our county. You may support them by attending their fundraiser: [A NIGHT IN MONTE CARLO, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2020](#) at the Mayo Civic Center. Silent and live auctions, charitable gaming tables, a band, dancing and sit-down dinner are sure to provide you with a night of fun while supporting this wonderful organization. The ticket site will open in July. For additional details go to the LAOC web site.



Zoom Zoom

Thank you to everyone who has logged on for a ZOOM class. Continuing education hours will be provided for the completion of these classes. We have completed 5 mediations utilizing ZOOM and have learned much along the way. It is believed our new-found proficiency in utilizing this technology may ultimately provide us with an increase in mediations since we'd not be limited by geographic proximity. If you have questions concerning this technology, please don't hesitate to contact Wendy Moore.





Thoughts from our Chairman, Allan Witz

Mediating During a Pandemic – 5 things to Think about while mediating (they can even be useful when there is no pandemic).

1. The **children** who are the Subjects of the mediation **may be listening**. In a parenting time remote mediation, whether on the phone, using Zoom or a similar platform, it is more likely while schools are closed that the children are at home and hearing all or part of the mediation.

2. **Heightened Emotions**. With layoffs, children indoors, increased financial challenges and families in closer proximity for longer periods, it is understandable that tempers may flare more easily, and the mediation process will be more challenging. In these challenging circumstances, negative emotions are more likely to surface. They are also likely to surface sooner than they may otherwise occur.

3. **Confidentiality and Ethics**. We cannot always control who else is in the room in a remote mediation. Irrespective of the challenges, our ethical obligations remain the same. While we know who is in the room in a non-remote mediation, let's remember that other adults may be in earshot. Our ethical obligations don't change when the mediation format changes.

4. **Consider speaking indirectly** when you cannot speak directly. In times of high stress, it may be helpful to speak indirectly by making sensitive observations through appropriate comments made generally rather than directing a comment at any one individual.

5. **Technological challenges**. Everyone has their own level of comfort with technology. While Zoom and other remote platforms are becoming the norm in business and even in some family interaction, these platforms are not the norm for everyone. It's OK to make a friendly comment at the start of the mediation about learning new technology. Let the participants know that it's OK to ask questions about the technology and that you are learning the technology yourself.





A Note From the Board

We are each keenly aware these are unprecedented times. We are incredibly proud of the volunteers of MCS for your willingness to find a way to continue helping those in need of mediation services. ZOOM has proven to be an invaluable tool to MCS. Not only have we completed ZOOM mediations, but we're also holding our board meetings via ZOOM. We have made the availability of our remote services known to various community entities that may encounter conflict situations, should our services be helpful. Whether out of boredom, a need to see another face, or true interest, your participation in the ZOOM offerings has been tremendous.

THANK YOU! Stay safe. Be well: physically and mentally. And, if you need to chat with someone - now you can set up a ZOOM coffee with your friends.



Is there a topic you'd like to see addressed in an upcoming newsletter? If so, please contact Wendy Moore with your thoughts.

