

Find Your



Solution.

Volume 6, Issue 1

Newsletter

Fall 2007

# New Additions to the RNW Family

## Our Mission

*Resolutions Northwest is committed to strengthening personal and community responsibility by providing constructive conflict resolution services and education.*

## Our Services

### Mediation

**Family, Workplace, Neighborhood & Victim Offender**

Professionally trained mediators resolve disputes ranging from barking dogs to graffiti, improving relationships and reducing crime.

### Education

**Violence Prevention Conflict Resolution, & Mediator Training**

We teach students, professionals, and community members skills to reduce violence and solve conflicts in all environments.



This year Resolutions Northwest provided training for 18 new volunteers so they might offer empathy, support, and reflective listening for Portland neighbors, landlords, property owners, tenants, and roommates. The volunteers received more than 32 hours of intensive training and continue their training during weekly shifts when they foster community by helping Portland residents to peacefully resolve their conflicts. Skilled and ambitious, volunteers can additionally meet monthly to fine-tune mediation skills with role play mocks and professional development classes. Our volunteers come from a variety of personal and professional vocations, including: City of Portland employees, retirees, neighborhood-involved activists, an RNW board member, a farmer's market manager, and social service providers, among others. Nearly half-

way through their year-long volunteer commitment, each volunteer has logged roughly 50 hours of service! On behalf of Resolutions Northwest's board and staff and the hundreds of Portland residents served, THANK YOU!!!

### RNW 2007 New Volunteers:

Afifa Ahmed-Shafi, Adela Basayne, Marie Cassell, Joanne Delmonio, Mark Fulop, Stacey Hall, Andrea Hanson, Kim Lucey, Daurie Mangan-Dimuzio, Teri Pierson, Mark Prenovitz, Allyson Reed, Brian Russell, Jeremy Van Keuren, Melissa Tatro, Tiffany Tucker, Jamie Waltz, and Paulette Whittwer

### RNW 2007 Non-Volunteer Training Participants:

Judith Calman, Celeste Carey, Cathie Crawford, Claire Spanbock, Carol Turner

## Inside this issue:

<i>Dear Harmony</i>	2
<i>Life After Meg</i>	3
<i>Power of Doing Less</i>	3
<i>Elder Mediation</i>	4
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	4

# Dear Harmony...

## *Advice from an Undercover Third Party Neutral*

**D**ear Harmony: I participate in several different community groups that have regular meetings. Without fail there's always at least one person who creates a problem by talking too much or creating some type of conflict. How can we get these people to sit down and let us do our work?

Thank you for writing with such an excellent question! I notice that you have not signed your email and, as a true lover of form and continuity, I feel the urge to supply one for you...

Dear Scapegoat:

I can almost hear the splashing from the troubled waters that these agitators create for you. You, the peaceful activist so well schooled in the social niceties and the rigors of considerateness, just cannot understand why these troublemakers persist in stirring, shaking, and otherwise wreaking havoc on the core of calm you'd like to maintain at your meetings. Is that it? Do I have it right? Like I said, this is a great question. It gives me so many directions to go that I'm going to have to sit down and wait for the room to stop spinning.

In a state of somewhat restored equilibrium, I want to take this opportunity to just look at your question by examining the word "community". Com-mu-ni-ty: 1. A group of people living in the same locality and under the same government. 2. Society as a whole; the public. (According to the American Heritage Dictionary). Alternate definitions: 1: The place where all the people are. 2. A human grouping that contains tension, competition, ambivalence, variety, contrasts, immaturity, diversity in values, cultures, abilities, development, motivations, personalities, relationships, preferences, and other intrinsic and natural variations and divergences. (According to Harmony). In short, community means a union of people who, despite the fact that they have come together with or for a common purpose, are completely un-like one another. Some traditions solve this by coming up with strict rules (spoken or other-

*"Helping the world make wise choices..."*



***People are different and conflict means people are being truthful about their differences.***

wise), contracts (implicit or explicit), or covenants (Ten Commandments ringing any bells?), but the last time I checked, Portland was still slightly within the bounds of Democratic governance where the people are still encouraged to show up, participate, and agitate.

I realize, nice peaceful activist that you are, you still need to get something accomplished and that going to meeting after meeting without feeling like you're making progress could just leave you drained, apathetic, annoyed, and downright frazzled. For now, let's just say I believe it is the absence of good process (and not the people in it) that has you irked. And this is where Resolutions Northwest and its pool of fine community volunteers come in handy. Every year we train and mentor Portland residents to become mediators and facilitators so that one (or two or three) of them can show up and help guide your discussion. So next time you're peeved because that person "over there" is making your meeting "difficult," remember: people are different and conflict means people are being truthful about their differences. Unless you're expecting people to walk on water, you can expect community contribution to cause some ripples in your otherwise calm waters.

*Harmony*

Looking for Feedback? Send your stories to: [dearharmony@resolutionsnorthwest.org](mailto:dearharmony@resolutionsnorthwest.org) or by post to: 1827 NE 44<sup>th</sup> Suite 300, Portland, Oregon 97213.

## Life After Meg

After 9-1/2 years with Resolutions Northwest's Family Mediation Program (FMP), Meg Bowman is "retiring". Retiring from mediation (well, not completely) but looking forward to relaxing and exploring new challenges.

Meg first learned about mediation in the 1990s and was so excited by its potential to resolve conflicts she participated in a basic mediation training. After volunteering and later serving on staff with the Youth Services Consortium family mediation program, that program merged with RNW. In 1998 both Meg and Marguerite Aichele-Smith brought the creativity and energy of their parent/teen co-mediation model to RNW. Out of that successful model, Meg helped mold one of Franklin High School's teen mediators, Tommy Ziemer, who served briefly as RNW's Director of Mediation Services. Meg has put enormous energy into building the FMP into more than just a place for parents and teens to address their differences. She has recruited a number of strong and diverse referral sources, solidified partnerships in the community, and recruited and trained a strong cadre of exceptional and loyal adult and teen mediators. In addition to running the FMP, she seamlessly transitioned into being the lead trainer for peer mediation programs in middle and high schools as well as conducting customized conflict resolution workshops in the community. She has trained hundreds of students, some of whom have become mediators in the family mediation program. Oth-



ers, after graduating from high school, have pursued additional education and experience in conflict resolution.

Staff at RNW will miss Meg's unfailing good humor and willingness to take on any new challenge. Mediators will miss her strong support, encouragement and thorough case development. Community partners will miss her persistent help in keeping mediation on the service radar screen and her creativity concerning ways for sharing resources. Clients will surely miss her ability to thoroughly listen, explore their needs and empathize with their stories, often for hours on end.

And what will Meg miss? "What I'll probably miss most is the frequent interaction and relationships with volunteers and especially with teens. Cross generational mediation work has barely been tapped—there's so much more potential out there!" Meg, we will all miss you and wish you the best on your next life journey! And, we look forward to seeing you occasionally as one of our restorative justice mediators!

## The Power of Doing Less

I had heard it many times in my training, but the last couple of table mediations have made it particularly clear how powerful doing less can be. As new mediators, we are typically nervous going into a mediation, afraid that we will not say the right thing at the right time. After mediating more, I am far less worried about what I might not say. In fact, more often than not, it doesn't matter that much what I say. The most powerful statements come from the parties. My job is to give them the space to communicate; to help them feel calm. My job is to give them the table and the process. My job is to keep the conversation moving, to facilitate the process of sharing all the details and subtle messages that they might forget. My job is to identify the feelings and intent behind their

stories. I have found that I do more harm to this process by talking too much and trying to direct. In fact, most of the time when I feel that something really does need to be verbalized, I never have to think about it much, my gut kicks in and before I know it I've said something. The things I have to think about have now become the ones I generally choose not to say. It has been a powerful realization regarding my job as a mediator, but it has also taken a lot of the pressure off. I go into my mediations now feeling calm, knowing that I don't have to think too much; I know it's not up to me to make this work for them, and I know that it won't be me that "messes it up" either. I know now the power of doing less.

Eryn Deeming Kehe, RNW Class of 2005



1827 NE 44TH AVE, STE 300  
PORTLAND, OR 97213  
503-595-4890

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 11  
PORTLAND, OR

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Sara Daley, Past Chair, Windermere Commercial  
Mark Fulop MA, MPH, Chair, Multnomah County Health Department  
Greg Gonzalez, Doug Bean & Assoc.  
Maurita Johnson, Oregon Dept. of Human Services.  
Sara Kobak, Schwabe Williamson & Wyatt  
Aaron Matusick AZM, P.C., Secretary, Attorney at Law  
Michele Reeves, Windermere Commercial  
Nathan Sykes, Office of Metro Attorney  
Kim Vu, Freightliner LLC  
Carol Weigler, Mediator

**STAFF MEMBERS**  
Sandy Bacharach, Spanish Language Mediation Specialist  
Kevin Carlisle, Mediation Specialist  
Betsy Coddington, Executive Director  
Susan McDaniel, Executive Assistant  
Mark Prenovitz, Restorative Justice Mediation Specialist  
Carol Remington, Administrative Assistant  
Carrie Jo Stairs, Neighborhood Mediation Specialist  
Melissa Tatro, Americorps Volunteer  
Stuart Watson, Neighborhood Mediation Specialist



## Community Focus: Elder Mediation

Elders in our society are faced with unique challenges and needs. Resolutions Northwest is seeking to enhance its understanding of these challenges and needs so that, as an organization, we can 1) better serve the needs of elderly clients who currently use our mediation services; and 2) explore the possibility of expanding our services to specifically meet the needs of elders in our community – whether it’s through mediation of a conflict situation or helping to facilitate a difficult family conversation.

As a first step towards these two goals, RNW conducted a two hour focus group on August 9, 2007. Participating groups included Elders in Action, Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services, Portland Impact (Southeast Multicultural Service Center) and the Urban League. RNW is grateful to the representatives from these organizations and to our own volunteers, Dalene Neville and former RNW employee Sue McNelly, for donating their time and expertise to help us achieve the above goals. Ideas generated at the focus group will bring RNW to the next level of competence and capacity for delivering appropriate conflict resolutions services for elders.

**Upcoming Events:**

10/3: “What If.. Surprises in Mediation,” 6:30–9:00PM, Sunnybrook Auditorium, Clackamas

11/8: Oregon Peacemakers Conference, 8:30AM-3:30PM, Oregon Convention Center

11/9-11/10: Oregon Mediation Association Conference

*For more info, call us at 503-595-4890 or email [info@resolutionsnorthwest.org](mailto:info@resolutionsnorthwest.org)*