



The Center Letter

Bringing People Together to Talk and Resolve Their Differences

The Mediation Center
of the Pacific, Inc.

Volume 3, Issue 2

August 2009

Mediation Grows as Economy Declines



The “economic storm”, has taken its toll on everyone. The Mediation Center is no exception. We are meeting the challenges of having to do more with less. Our client numbers have grown by more than 31% and their needs have increased. Their levels of stress and emotions are high. More of the people we serve are in the vulnerable populations. They need help and they need it right away. Two examples of our changing client needs are seen with Leon and Helen.

Leon is a 72 year old homeless man who shuffled through the Mediation Center’s front door two months ago. He wanted to mediate the terms of his divorce. He also wanted to mediate with the storage service where he stored his few belongings. He received an eviction notice because he was storing food in his space.

Leon had no telephone and no address because he was living on the street after his wife kicked him out. He walked to the Mediation

Center each week for a month to meet with Client Services Manager Val Vegas, regarding the status of his mediations and to prepare for the sessions once they were scheduled.

Helen is another client who called at 6:30 one evening in a panic. The people who “convinced” her 86 year old mother to sell them the family home in exchange for allowing the family to remain living there, were now evicting them. Helen wanted to mediate right away just to “buy a little time to find a place to live and keep the family off the street.”

While the names are changed, the people and their stories are real. We hear them every day. To assist our clients in resolving their very pressing and challenging issues, mediators and staff alike have responded quickly, patiently and professionally, frequently going above and beyond the call of duty.

Like all non profits, the Mediation Center has suffered funding losses in the torrential economic climate. To “weather the storm”, we have reduced staffing and recently closed the office on Fridays.

The silver lining in

these cloudy times are the wealth of wonderful volunteers who continue to give so generously of their time, talents and energy to assist people like Leon and Helen. These committed individuals include: the office volunteers, Michaela, Joaquin and Jane who assist Client Services, answer telephones, greet clients and input data; professionals like Eugene Villaluz, who donates his time and expertise to assist with website renovations; and of course the mediators who commit hours of their time listening to clients and assisting them in negotiating creative solutions.

Together, the volunteers have made the Mediation Center wealthy in these very “lean” times. I am extremely grateful to each of them, as well as the dedicated staff and board of directors who also give generously of themselves to help the Mediation Center remain the vital organization that it is today. After 30 years, the Mediation Center continues to play a lead role in strengthening Hawaii’s communities.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Inside this issue:

Gift Campaign Champions	2
Moving from Membership	2
Mahalo	3, 4
Increasing Access to Justice	5
22nd Annual Peer Mediation Confer-	5
Training Opportunities	6
Going Green	6

This past fiscal year, the Mediation Center conducted 1,159 mediations

- 57% of the mediations resulted in written agreements
- 53% of the clients were in the low-income population
- 5,135 people were assisted through the mediation & training programs

**Every time someone in Hawai`i resolves a problem peacefully,
everyone in Hawaii benefits...**

Mahalo to the 2009 Gift Campaign Champions... **Charles H. Hurd, Michael Nauyokas, Bruce McEwan,** **Robbie & Cynthia Alm.**



Over the past two years, the Mediation Center hosted its annual wine-tasting and fundraiser event, "Under the Mediation Moon". While the event was historically a success, due to the declining economy, the Mediation Center's Board of Directors elected to not hold a fundraiser this past spring. Instead, a special Gift Campaign was initiated to raise funds to support the Mediation Center. To initiate the Campaign, President-Elect Michael Nauyokas promptly pledged \$2,500. President Charles Hurd, Secretary Warren Haight and

Director Bruce McEwan immediately "matched" his pledge. Director Cindy Alm and her husband Robbie also stepped up and generously pledged \$2,000.

Thanks to the generosity of Michael, Charles, Warren, Bruce, Robbie and Cynthia, who started the Campaign off right, the event was a success. Director Ann Botticelli pledged \$1,200, Attorney William Darrah

contributed \$1,000, the Law Firm of Morris & Ekimoto, Dee Dee Letts of Resolutions Hawai'i and Director Susan Lampe each contributed \$500. Thanks to all of our generous supporters, \$16,435 was raised.

Mahalo to everyone who supported the Campaign and special thanks to Susan Lampe for coordinating the details.

Moving from Membership to Mediation Supporters

The Mediation Center is fortunate to have a strong and committed Board of Directors. The Board creates policies and procedures to ensure quality services are provided, to ensure the organization maintains a vital role in Oahu's communities, and to ensure the organization is current with new dispute resolution trends and practices.

During its last periodic review of the Center's By Laws to ensure the organization is current with all laws and requirements governing not-for-profits, several revisions were made including the elimination of

"membership." So what does that mean?

Previously, mediators and all those who donated to the organization became "members" of the Center. Now they become "supporters."

Whether member or, now, supporter, the Center appreciates and embraces all those committed to the mission and work of the Mediation Center and values their input.

With this By Law change, the Board will be solely

responsible for recruiting and approving new directors, and the annual meeting will now become the annual gathering to celebrate the Mediation Center's successes and honor and recognize the mediators, the heart and soul of the Mediation Center, without whom there would be no organization.

Supporting High Quality Mediation

The Mediation Center's mission is to provide "high quality mediation and dispute resolution services, that are affordable and accessible." To support the mission, new Apprentice mediators are required to complete approximately 50

hours of training, 10 co-mediations with "mentor" mediators and then be evaluated. Once

these milestones are successfully met, the Apprentice becomes a "mediator". All mediators must complete 20 hours of continuing education and conduct at least 5 mediations annually, to maintain "active" mediator status.

To ensure all requirements are met and mediators are supported, the Mediation Center is fortunate to have a committed Program and Quality Assurance Committee that provides oversight of the mediators and Programs, as well as an outstanding group of "Senior Mediators who "mentor" the new mediators, assist with the training and conduct the evaluation process. It is only with the input, shared expertise and involvement of the Senior Mediators, that the Mediation Center maintains quality services.



Increasing Access to Justice

In 2007, the Access to Justice Hui published a report showing that only 17% of the civil legal needs of Hawaii's low-income and gap group populations were being met. Since that time, the Mediation Center of the Pacific has become actively involved with the Access to Justice Commission, its committees and the legal services consortium, to increase services to individuals in the low income populations.

Key activities undertaken by the Mediation Center's Board of Directors, staff and volunteers over the past fiscal year include: collaborating with EPIC and Keolahou Youth Services to provide the Waimanalo community with culturally appropriate conflict resolution skills and processes;

partnering on a Parenting Plan Program with Volunteer Legal Services of Hawai'i to assist divorcing couples create parenting plans that focus on the best interests of the children; working with the Administrative, Pro Bono and Maximizing Legal Services committees of the Access to Justice Commission to strengthen collaborations among the legal services providers and grow services; participating in the Commission's first Summit to "spread the word" about improving access to justice; and supporting the Young Lawyer's Division by providing information to the public at booths set up in various communities throughout Oahu, including Honolulu, Pearl City, Waipahu and Waianae, during "Law Day."

As a result of

these activities and increased outreach to the community, 53% of the individuals served by the Mediation Center in FY 08-09 were in the low-income population. In addition, 58% more cases were mediated by the Mediation Center than the prior fiscal year.

While these numbers are significant, the low income population continues to grow. Economic pressures leading to family conflicts, landlord/tenant disputes, foreclosures and potential homelessness, reinforce the need for even more services. Therefore, the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers remain committed to continued efforts to increase access to justice for all.

EPIC, Inc. & The Mediation Center provided 5, 3-hour sessions on Conflict Resolution, Mediation and Facilitation for 20 members of the Keolahou Youth Group and other members of the Waimanalo Community. Additional sessions throughout the remainder of 2009 will focus on O'hana Conferencing and Youth Circles.



The Access to Justice Summit was held on Wednesday, June 24th at the William S. Richardson School of Law

The Mediation Center and Volunteer Legal Services of Hawai'i, Inc. assisted 12 divorcing couples in reaching agreements on time-sharing and co-parenting arrangements. The couples first completed a 6-hour workshop conducted by VLSH and then participated in mediation at the Mediation Center to complete a Parenting Plan.

22nd Annual Statewide Peer Mediation Conference



On March 9th, the 22nd Annual Statewide Peer Mediation Conference, *Relationships, Making Them Work*, was hosted at the Ala Wai Golf Course Club House. More than 100 students from 10 middle, intermediate and high schools from the islands of Hawai'i, Kauai, Maui and Oahu, participated. 90% of the students reported that participation in the conference helped them to improve their skills as mediators.



Students from 5 of the participating schools agreed to coordinate a joint follow-up training over the summer.

The Mediation Center of the Pacific, Inc.

680 Iwilei Road, Ste. 530
Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: 808-521-6767
Fax: 808-538-1454
E-mail: mcp@mediatehawaii.org
www.mediatehawaii.org



The Mediation Center of the Pacific is a 501(c)(3) not for profit, Aloha United Way agency. Each year, the Mediation Center assists thousands of people to prevent and resolve conflicts among families, friends, neighbors and business associates.

Every time someone in Hawai'i resolves a problem peacefully, everyone in Hawai'i benefits.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITES

Divorce Mediation Training

August 27 - 29th, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

A custom model to assist divorcing couples in negotiating agreements on property division and custody and visitation issues, while focusing on the "best interests" of the children.

Basic Mediation Training

September 17, 18 & 19th, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

An introduction to a facilitative model of mediation including the core skills of effective listening, asking powerful questions, remaining impartial, interest identification, negotiation, agreement writing, ethical considerations and overcoming impasse.

Elder Mediation: The Issues, Conflicts & Problem Solving Processes

Thursday, September 24th, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

A symposium presented by the Mediation Center & the Association for Conflict Resolution Hawai'i, will focus on identifying resources and remedies the elderly and their families.

Advanced Mediation

October 9th & 16th, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

October 10th & 17th, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Advanced Mediation builds on core skills to provide additional tools of evaluation, negotiation, cultural diversity, multiple parties and managing challenges.

IN MEMORY

The Mediation Center is "Going Green"

With the rapid advancement of technology, texting, blogging and twitter are becoming the preferred method of communication. The Mediation Center is working to keep up with these trends by implementing new procedures and practices that will insure clients have ready access to services and to promote a "green workplace." To support these advances, the staff is grateful for the time and energy that mediator Eugene Villaluz and Americorp Volunteer Joaquin Villarreal have dedicated to helping the Mediation Center move into the 21st Century.

Thanks to Eugene, the Mediation Center's website has a new polished, professional look. It is easier to navigate and will soon have links and other useful tools to enable clients to schedule their mediation sessions via the internet, as well as download forms to effectively prepare to participate in mediation.

Joaquin has been busy creating "fillable" forms to improve office efficiency as well as to include on the website for client ease. Additionally, Joaquin developed an easy process for managing telephone and "skype" mediations when one party

does not reside on Oahu.

The times are changing and the Mediation Center's staff are excited to be part of the change. The goal is to eventually be "paperless" and provide quick, easy access to mediation services for every client.

A big mahalo to Eugene and Joaquin for helping the Mediation Center move ahead and keep pace with the changing times.

The Mediation Center lost two great mediators and supporters this past month.

Richard "Dick" Shipp, a retired electrical engineer, was trained as a mediator in 2000. He regularly mediated at District Court as well as in-house. Dick never missed an opportunity to sharpen and improve his mediation skills.

Evalyn Inn, a workplace audiologist, was a past Board Director, mediator, mentor and trainer. Over the years, she donated thousands of hours to the Mediation Center, including creating a mediation referral program with the Honolulu Police Department, fondly referred to as M.A.R.S.

Our hearts go out to the families of Dick and Evalyn. They will be greatly missed.