

# Carroll County Community Mediation Center



Newsletter  
15 October 2020

For Mediation services or for Volunteer opportunities please contact CCCMC at 410-848-1764 or email [cccmc@carrollcc.edu](mailto:cccmc@carrollcc.edu)



## From the Director

Significant Mediation Milestones:

October is Conflict Resolution Month!

October 15 is Conflict Resolution Day!

AND

October 2020 is CCCMC's 20 Year Anniversary!

We are celebrating this October for many reasons! October 2020 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> year the CCCMC has offered no cost, non-judgmental, confidential and voluntary conflict resolution services in Carroll County. While we take this time to celebrate and appreciate this milestone, there is so much more we hope to do. October is also Conflict Resolution Month and October 15, 2020 is Conflict Resolution Day! Since 2005, Conflict Resolution Day has been celebrated to increase the awareness and the use of alternative dispute resolution processes worldwide. The CCCMC, which operates under the auspices of Carroll Community College, is working hard to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of mediation and conflict resolution processes here in Carroll County. So far, 2020 has been an extraordinary year, with Covid-19 and conflict at the forefront so we hope you will join us in spreading the word about the important services provided by the Carroll County Community Mediation Center.

The Mediation Center provides free mediation and alternative dispute resolution services to anyone in Carroll County.

Mediation is a confidential and voluntary process where participants can have an honest and frank conversation facilitated by neutral and non-judgmental trained mediators. Mediation can help you create a solution to your conflict which takes the needs and wants of everyone involved into account, creating a long-lasting agreement, which works for everyone. Furthermore, mediations are held at times and locations that are convenient for all of the participants. The Center is offering all services in person with strict safety protocols and on-line to increase access for everyone.

COVID has presented an array of conflicts, especially within families, and communities are challenged and struggling to address much needed social change in addition to the anticipation of the November elections. Since March we have all strived to adapt to working remotely, learning remotely and even socializing remotely. Even in

this environment, we are in awe of the many stories of complete strangers coming together to help their neighbors and communities. This is the type of community we have in Carroll County. The Mediation Center is a volunteer driven organization which, without this commitment to the community, would not have been able to accomplish what it has over the last ten years. Since 2010, CCCMC volunteers have donated 23,000 hours of their time, skills and talents to enable the Center to facilitate over 2,100 mediations, conduct 5,000 intake conversations and 2,900 hours of outreach in the community.

As you find yourself struggling through a difficult conversation, as you see your family members, neighbors, co-workers stressed by new and on-going conflicts don't forget the Mediation Center is a resource and readily available to support people in a variety of conflict situations. Help us celebrate the Center's Birthday and Conflict Resolution month by spreading the word about Carroll County's Community Mediation Center.

-Patricia Ryan

## CCCMC – Mission and Vision

The Carroll County Community Mediation Center, operating under the auspices of Carroll Community College, **promotes peaceful resolution of conflict and collaborative problem solving by providing a range of conflict resolution services, education and professional training.**

CCCMC's vision is for every Carroll County citizen to have awareness of and access to high-quality conflict resolution services.

**This Newsletter was produced with support from the Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) and Carroll Community College**

## CCCMC Outreach (March 9, 2020\*)



Mary Johnson and Web Smith at Winters Mill High School for the Carroll County Family Support and the Special Education Citizen's Advisory Committee (SECAC) Resource Fair



\* The last CCCMC F2F Outreach since the start of the COVID Pandemic.

Question about how to refer people to mediation?  
Please contact CCCMC at 410-848-1764 or email [cccmc@carrollcc.edu](mailto:cccmc@carrollcc.edu)

## CCCMC Social Gathering/Social Distancing

CCCMC hosted a short, online, social gathering (via Zoom) on April 20, 2020. Patricia, Web, Carly, Wendy, and Mary Zoomed in, Judy and Dawn dialed in for the event.

CCCMC continues to provide Mediation and Mediation Training in person and through Zoom.



## CCCMC In-Service Training Schedule/Topics\*

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 11/16/2020 | Introduction of Volunteer Mediator Evaluation Process |
|------------|---|

\* More to Follow. Topics Subject to Change (See CCCMC email for details)

**For Maryland Program for Mediator Excellence (MPME) Events see**

[https://www.mpmeonline.org/MPME/Events/Events\\_List.aspx](https://www.mpmeonline.org/MPME/Events/Events_List.aspx)

## Volunteer Information



People volunteer for a variety of reasons, but for the most part, they want to help others, and the volunteers of the CCCMC want to help others so much that they are willing to go through a really intensive application, orientation, and training process that includes:

- Volunteering in the community,
- 50 hour mediation training,
- Apprenticeship of mediation observations and co-mediations,
- Co-mediation throughout the year at times and locations convenient to mediation participants
- Participation in on-going continuing education to develop and hone their skills.

"Thank you all for your time, energy, skills, talents, commitment, and dedication to bringing mediation services to so many people in our community."

– Patricia Ryan/CCCMC Director

If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Mediator please contact the CCCMC at 410-848-1764 or email [cccmc@carrollcc.edu](mailto:cccmc@carrollcc.edu)

If you would like to make a financial donation to the Carroll County Community Mediation Center; you may!

Checks may be made out to "Carroll Community College Foundation" with "Community Mediation Center" notated in the memo area of the check and sent to Carroll Community College Foundation, 1601 Washington Road, Room M261, Westminster, MD 21157. Donations may also be made online at <https://www.carrollcc.edu/About/Give/Make-a-donation-today/>  
 [Designation: Community Mediation Center]

CCC Foundation, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization – donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Be on the lookout for Volunteer Outreach Opportunities  
 The current schedule is under revision due to COVID-19 concerns.

### Mediation Q & A

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>What is mediation?</b>     | A confidential process that helps people resolve their conflicts with assistance from an impartial third party (the mediator).   |
| <b>Why mediate?</b>           | It won't cost you anything! It can be helpful when you need to have a difficult conversation, resolve a conflict, make decisions, plan for the future, mend relationships, improve communication, or continue a strong relationship.   |
| <b>How?</b>                   | Mediation provides everyone with an opportunity to speak and be heard, identify the topics to be addressed and develop solutions that work for everyone. The solutions can be put into a written agreement if desired.   |
| <b>Who are mediators?</b>     | Mediators for the CCCMC are volunteers from the community who come from all walks of life and all levels of education. CCCMC volunteer mediators are highly trained (50+ hrs, apprenticeships, continuing education, etc.). We have a co-mediation model which means there are 2 mediators working together. They don't take sides, judge or give advice. Mediators listen, ask questions, and guide participants through the process of coming up with sustainable solutions. |
| <b>Who can use mediation?</b> | Anyone in Carroll County! And many other counties also have centers. Many kinds of conversations and conflicts can benefit from the mediation process  |
| <b>Where?</b>                 | Carroll County Community Mediation Center (410) 848-1764 Office is in the Carroll Non Profit Center Building in Westminster; we mediate there and at sites throughout the county, including senior and community centers, libraries, and more.   |
| <b>When?</b>                  | Mediations are scheduled for 2 hours in the daytime, evenings and weekends to make mediation convenient for all participants.  |

Like us on Facebook @CarrollMediation



## CCCMC Personal Perspectives



### Life of an Intern Mediator by Grant Sturm

**Grant was an Intern with CCCMC through Salisbury University is now a volunteer mediator. He graduated Salisbury in May 2020.**

It all started when I had to get an internship for my last school credit. Being a conflict resolution major, there are not a lot of possibilities to choose from. However, the best option was mediation. When I got in touch with Patricia Ryan from Carroll County Community Mediation Center, she accepted me within an hour and told me about the training.

Everyone I met in the mediation community has been really nice and accepting, because as mediators the job is to be non-judgmental. The training was tough, but not impossible and the thought of helping people in their conflict was a good motivator.

After training, I began a role of observer where I just sat in the corner and watched mediations. Although it does not sound very intense, the first mediation I observed was just that. From the training, I guess I did not factor in how emotional the mediation process can be. I vividly remember being uncomfortable, shocked, confused, and sometimes intimidated by the intensity of the exchanges between the participants. It was almost overwhelming, but I remembered to breathe and tried to remain composed.

After my first observation, mediations become easier to observe and to frame topics between participants, because I slowly became comfortable with people and their emotions. In addition, the mediators I observed were very helpful and understanding. Although they did not have to give me feedback after mediations, they told me a few tips to try to relax during the process. Everyone in the mediation community was very nice to me and it made it easier to drive three hours for a two-hour internship and then back to school. It even made me want to do extra events outside of the mediation center. The sense of community is great, and you see a lot of volunteers wanting to make a difference in people's lives.

As my mediation internship was shortened due to the Coronavirus, there are still training, meetings, and other events that are going on online. Mediation does not stop because of hard times, it keeps moving forward to continue to be there for people, which is one of the best lessons I have learned from mediation and will continue to use throughout life.

- Grant Sturm

### Embracing the "New Normal"

by Mary Johnson - CCCMC Staff/Mediator/Conflict Coach

It was the middle of March and I found myself in the midst of a busy time. The mediation center was in full swing, we were fully booked two weeks out for mediations and the requests were still rolling in. Then...all at once it seemed, the world changed and everything shifted. It felt so abrupt. With the world introduced to the coronavirus, reality swept over us in one swift breath, literally. The thought of shutting down in-person mediation sessions had been introduced but would it really happen? Then it did. One day we were mediating in person and the next day we were packing and planning to work remotely. The bigger question was "what do we do now?" How do we continue to offer our services in the midst of a pandemic, when conflict and emotions are escalating? In the world of mediation, you learn that crisis, panic and fear tend to inflate difficult situations and raise new conflicts where there was peace before. I felt this uncertainty and concern for the participants who were in the midst of mediations and working toward a resolution. What about the participants who wanted to be able to start the process of resolving their conflicts? The center immediately shifted gears and began training for online mediations using Zoom. With little down time, we adjusted our process and began scheduling mediations online for those participants who were willing. I have the pleasure of working with mediators who truly love what they do and have a heart for conflict resolution. In the mediation world, we rose to the occasion, learned a new skill, and pressed on toward the goal of continuing to offer Carroll County mediation and conflict coaching services in a new way. In the midst of a pandemic, I can honestly say I have enjoyed being a part of the Mediation Center and will continue to do my part in helping to resolve conflict in this community.

Check out the CCCMC website: <https://www.carrollcc.edu/Mediation>

## Introduction of Jacqueline Villafañe, Psy.D., Corporate Ombudsman for the American Red Cross.

NOTE: Each issue of the CCCMC Newsletter will contain an article written and contributed by an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) professional.

Jacqueline Villafañe, Psy.D., CO-OP, is the Corporate Ombudsman for the American Red Cross, resourcing internal and external constituents. She is an Organization and Leadership Development practitioner, executive coach and has consulted with for profit, nonprofit and government agencies helping individuals, teams and organizations get unstuck.

## Empathic Listening by Jacqueline Villafañe

“Whether you are virtual on video calls or by phone, empathic listening can help your “visitor” get unstuck.”



*“I’m overwhelmed, I don’t know how to find my place during these complex times, with my family, peers or in my community. I feel lost...”*

This may sound like a typical conversation starter if you have been a practicing Ombudsman this past spring. As I write these words, I am experiencing personal emotions in addition to the void of an absent Spring Season which typically symbolizes growth and increased human interaction.

Although my professional trajectory would denote otherwise, the training and experience gained in helping individuals, teams and organizations get ‘unstuck’ have been on overdrive these days. As a practicing Organizational Ombudsman for the past four years, I have leaned into empathic listening more so now, as we all experience issues of isolation, the pandemic, race and social justice and emotional turmoil.

A “typical” day as an Ombudsman is yet to be found, and requires exceptional genuine listening skills while minding to self-care. Whether you are virtual on video calls or by phone, empathic listening can help your “visitor” get unstuck. For purposes of this discussion, empathic listening is a structured listening and questioning technique that allows you to develop and enhance relationships with a stronger

understanding of what is being conveyed, both intellectually and emotionally. I have leaned into empathy during the last five months as I help others:

- Discover the most appropriate communication strategy for framing challenging conversations
- Identify their script as it relates to diversity
- Create the space in which to address the impact of racial inequality
- Identify mental, emotional and physical ways to cope with stress

I found “my place” as the sole practicing Ombudsman in my organization when I helped leaders facilitate a dialogue around race and inequality.

Focusing on dialogue as a means to engage others in a cooperative exchange of experience sharing plus having a process-oriented facilitator create a safe space for crucial and challenging exchanges amongst the workforce were the objectives. I was able to share facilitation tips and provide a framework for what a “safe dialogue and session” might look

like. There were numerous town halls and facilitation “roadblock” discussions which were helpful to leaders that wanted to facilitate a challenging dialogue. The facilitator sessions included:

- Thought provoking self-exploration questions
- Tips on how to demonstrate curiosity
- Asking divergent / convergent questions
- Managing emotional barriers which may surface and listening empathically

Whether the issues surface individually or as a group, it is essential to practice:

- Listening without judgement,
- Providing complete attention,
- Ensuring there are no distractions,
- Listening for tone and words which may indicate emotions,
- Allowing words to sit in the “space” for the group to reflect and not needing to fill the silence, and
- Asking impact questions to gain clarity on what was shared.

Most individuals create a script to justify their experiences which may filter their perception. These complex times we are experiencing present an opportunity to explore assumptions and to gain awareness’s of self and others.

**(continued Page 6)**

## Empathic Listening by Jacqueline Villafañe (Continued from Page 5)

Self-care strategies, coping skills and tips are in abundance over the internet and seeking the best strategy for one issue or emotional, mental or physical state may not benefit *all* issues.

As an impartial Ombudsman, I have engaged various self-care techniques. Frequent breaks have become the norm - increasing the time in-between scheduled calls so that I can decompress. Additional self-care practices include: connecting with family and friends virtually, being kind to myself, getting enough sleep, clean eating and meal planning, taking meditation / mindfulness moments throughout the day and guarding the boundaries of work/life.

The script of "I'm overwhelmed, I don't know how to find my place during these complex times, with my family, peers or in my community. I feel lost..." can shift, when you find an empathic listening partner. These practices have helped me reframe my script and experience of this unusual and bizarre absent Spring Seas

### New Member of the Mediation Center's Advisory Board Explains Why He (David Dellman) Volunteered

NOTE: For this issue of the CCCMC Newsletter we are happy to provide an article by one of the most recent CCCMC Advisory Board Members



I've been the HR Director for Richcroft, Inc. for the last 26 years. I fully expected to continue in that capacity until my retirement. When I signed up to serve on the Mediation Center's Advisory Board, I expected that my service on the board would be a logical adjunct to my work at Richcroft, but April had other plans. In October of 2019, my boss of 26 years retired. The Board of Directors at Richcroft began a long and thorough search for his replacement. They found the person they wanted shortly after the first of the year, and his first day was April 6, 2020. Richcroft is a health care provider. We were on the front lines of the COVID pandemic. In that context, our new exec assumed command. He never asked for my resignation, and I don't think he wanted it, but his vision for the company was so radically different from the culture I had been accustomed to for so long that I felt it was the right thing to do. My last day was July 17. Since I departed from Richcroft, I have been earning my living in e-commerce and from writing. I share this to give you a context. While I was at Richcroft, one of my primary duties was mediation. I mediated between labor and management, I mediated employee disputes, and I mediated between individual supervisors and the staff who reported them. I love mediation. As an HR Director, it was my favorite task. I signed up to serve on the Mediation Center's Advisory Board because I believe in the necessity of mediation and mediation services in our community. Whatever I might be doing to earn my living today, I do have 26 years of experience at the helm of a human resources department to bring to the Mediation Center's Advisory Board. I hope to contribute. I hope to provide a valuable service. Above all, I hope to help you succeed. When you succeed, everybody wins, and that inspires me. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

- David Dellman

#### **In conflict right now? We can assist!**

How to get started: Call us at 410-848-1764 or email us at [cccmc@carrollcc.edu](mailto:cccmc@carrollcc.edu)

You will have a private, confidential conversation with one of our helpful staff. They will discuss your situation with you, inform you of what to expect in mediation/facilitation/ coaching and answer any questions you may have.

You decide the process that is right for you, whether it be conflict management coaching, mediation or facilitation.