

Update

May 2010

Dispute Resolution Center Youth Programs From around Washington

By Jenny Winkler

Earlier this year, the Bellevue Neighborhood Mediation Program began a needs assessment to explore what new programming, in addition to parent-teen mediation, might support Bellevue's youth in learning to handle conflict effectively. The needs assessment has two parts: assessing existing youth programs being implemented by other dispute resolution centers in Washington and exploring the needs of other Bellevue programs that serve youth to identify where our program might make a contribution.

We've completed the first part of that assessment and want to share what we learned and gather ideas and suggestions from you about what might come next for Bellevue's program. We interviewed eight dispute resolution centers (DRCs) in Washington who work with young people to learn about the successes and challenges of their youth programs and to ask what they would recommend to Bellevue.

Parent/teen mediation

A number of respondents noted how much they value and respect the adult/teen co-mediation model Bellevue uses, but none are implementing a model that incorporates teen mediators. One program does parent/teen mediations for kids who are in prison or custody prior to child's release. Another DRC has a strong relationship with a social worker who is on staff at the juvenile court who makes suggestions to the commissioner about how mediation might play in to specific cases. Yet another program focuses on homelessness and provides mediations between kids who have run away from home and their parents. A pilot project implemented between one DRC and a high school aims to reduce school drop-out rates by offering multi-party mediations to kids who have truancy or other school problems.

Victim/offender meetings or mediations (VOM)

Five of the eight programs we spoke with are

currently implementing or initiating a victim/offender meeting or mediation program. These programs are built on the concept of restorative justice. The idea of restorative justice is described by Howard Zehr as being based in three questions that are different than the questions framed by the criminal justice system. Zehr explains that while the criminal justice system asks: What laws have been broken? Who did it? And what do they deserve?; restorative justice asks: Who has been hurt? What are their needs? And whose obligations are these?

The victim/offender programs we heard about were designed differently across the state, but cases are often referred from the legal system through the diversion process (though some programs include probation referrals, kids who are charged with a crime, and pre-charge cases). The meetings (preceded by a screening and intake process) provide an opportunity for victims and offenders to meet face to face to talk about the impact of the crime, the harm done, and how that harm can be addressed. Program managers described VOM programs as being powerful, transformative, and worth the effort.

Peer-to-peer

Four of the programs we spoke with were implementing or have provided training for school-based peer-to-peer mediation programs. Most of the respondents noted how difficult it has been to sustain these programs from year to year because of staff changes among the program champions at the schools. Respondents also noted that for these programs to succeed, it is important to recruit kids from a broad spectrum of class to become mediators. They have found that kids in the middle—good kids starting to get in trouble or kids at-risk or on the edge of trouble have influence in all sectors of the school while kids who are perceived as “know-it-all” or “goody-two-shoes” are often not as good at bridging the whole school population.

One program has partnered with their local juvenile department to do “dual victim” cases for kids in middle and high school. They offer mediation for kids who were in a fight, but have an ongoing relationship that could use work.

Training/classes

Four of the programs we spoke with offer training or a class on conflict resolution for young people. The classes they teach are diverse. One DRC offers a class for all kids in the juvenile system. Another DRC has a set of training programs geared towards at-risk kids. Yet another DRC is working on developing a partnership with a local Aikido studio to offer a program using Aikido as an analogy to an effective approach to conflict management and resolution—the idea of accepting the volatile energy without letting it harm you or the other person. One DRC offers mandatory parenting classes for parents who are getting divorced.

Violence prevention

One program is working in a partnership with law enforcement, courts, schools, fire, and safety. They are exploring how to identify the conflict cycle early enough to refer to mediation and prevent violence.

Galvanizing support for youth programming

One DRC, confronted with low referrals to their youth programming has developed two internal working groups to deepen and expand support for their program. One of these groups is geared toward building the relationships with school administrators, the other a youth ally group focused on making the organization more accessible to younger folks.

Next steps

The next step in the needs assessment is to understand the needs around conflict resolution services for young people in Bellevue. We are in the process of holding a number of conversations with representatives from Bellevue programs that serve youth including: Parks and Recreation, Bellevue City Police, Bellevue School District, and Bellevue’s Community Accountability Board to understand the perceived needs for youth programming around conflict in Bellevue.

We are also interested in hearing any ideas you have about youth programs that we might consider. Please contact Jenny (winkler.jennifer@gmail.com) or Andrew (Akidde@bellevuewa.gov).



An Example of a Victim/Offender Meeting

One example of a victim/offender meeting that was powerful for both the victim and the offender was a situation where an elderly woman’s car was broken into and things were stolen out of her car. She lived in an area with some gang activity and imagined that gang members had broken into her car, and she was terrified and scared of leaving her house. She ultimately learned that the car was broken into by an 11-year old neighbor she had known his whole life. This was the boy’s first big mistake and he was incredibly mortified and sorry. Had these two not come together to talk, she would have continued to believe that gang members had been in her yard. She was able to forgive the boy and he was able to move past the mistake.

In May BNMP staff is collaborating with Lake Hills Library to put on a workshop series called:

Can’t We All Just Get Along?



Tuesday, May 11, 6:30-8 p.m.

Understanding Across Cultures: Muslim Culture

Wednesday, May 12, 4:30-6 p.m.

Understanding Within Families: Parent-Teen Mediation Session 2

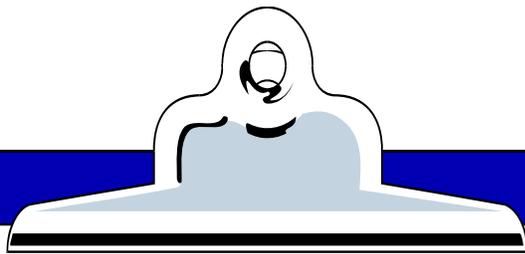
Tuesday, May 18, 5:30-7 p.m.

Understanding Across Fences: Neighbors, Session 1

Tuesday, May 25, 5:30-7 p.m.

Understanding Across Fences: Neighbors, Session 2

This 6-part series will provide conflict management tools for neighborhood, parent/teen, and cross-cultural disputes. Free and open to the public. Please register for one or all at www.kcls.org or call the Lake Hills Library at 425-747-3350 for more information.



Parent—Teen Update

By
Cathy Goldman

I have selected 20 participants for the June Parent-Teen Mediation program. I am excited with the quality of ability and enthusiasm of the new participants. It will be a great experience for me to lead them through the training process and I look forward to it. I do need help from my experienced mediators both teens and adults so I will be contacting you shortly. Assisting with training is a great learning opportunity for all so please try to carve out some time to help!



Our May in-service training will take place at Bellevue City Hall on Tuesday May 25th from 6 to 8 pm in room 112. Our topic is "Training the Trainers." Please plan to attend even if you will not be available to help at the training. The skills presented can be used in your daily life when coaching and tutoring, doing projects or communicating concepts to others. This will be our last in-service training until September. And, we want to wish our seniors "farewell."

Let's all get together before we go off in many directions during the summer!

BNMP Training Opportunities For Mediators and Conciliators

Neighborhood In-Service Training:

Mediation Video featuring Andrew Kidde

Watch and discuss with Cheryl Cohen

Wed. May 19th, from 6:30-8 PM in room 1E-118

Parent-Teen In-Service Training:

Train the Trainer with Cathy Goldman

Tues. May 25th, from 6-8 PM in room 1E-112

Mediation Training:

Parent-Teen Mediation Training 2010

Mon. *June 21st* through Fri. *June 25th*

8:30 am — 5 pm each day

VOLUNTEER NEWS

*Congratulations to the
Parent-Teen Mediation Program's
graduating seniors!*

We wish you the best as you go off to college!

Brandon Lau	University of Washington Honors
Evan Loshin	USC
Tom Fouche	University of Washington
Erin MacLean	Claremont McKenna College
Andy Chung	Bellevue College
Kelly Trsek	University of Washington
Sreetha Sidharthan	University of Washington Honors

Program Staff:

Program Co-Manager:	Cheryl Cohen	-	452-5222
Program Co-Manager:	Andrew Kidde	-	452-5288
Program Assistant	Gwen Jones	-	452-2897
Parent-Teen Coordinator:	Cathy Goldman	-	452-4091

City of Bellevue website: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov>
(Look for the Mediation Program under "Neighborhood Information")

Basic Mediation Training 2010

**Congratulations to the
graduates of the 2010
Basic Mediation Training!**



Back row from left to right: Peter Tran, Stephen Creighton, James Healy, Tom Harvey, M.L. Kellogg, Nick-hath Sheriff, Colleen James, Jim Larsen, Andrew Kidde. Middle row from left to right: Irina Aficiuc, Farida Hakim, Cynthia Li, Asha Nelson, Maureen Wright. Kneeling from left to right: Thomas Wolter, Mike Brown, Sergey Novikov, Cheryl Cohen.

**BELLEVUE
NEIGHBORHOOD MEDIATION PROGRAM**

City of Bellevue Department of Planning and Community Development
P.O. Box 90012 Bellevue, WA 98009-9012