



## Salute To Our Volunteers An open letter to our mediation community

By Cheryl Cohen

One of the greatest highs we get from being Co-Managers of the Bellevue Neighborhood Mediation Program is from having the opportunity to meet and work with an outstanding group of volunteers. Each one of you is an asset to the program and contributes in no small way to its success.

My first year as Co-Manager with the BNMP has been exciting, challenging, and motivating. Having started volunteering with the program 10 years ago, I can attest to the fact that it has had a huge impact on my life. I have been impressed with the City of Bellevue's support of the program, and I have learned so much from my fellow mediators and conciliators. Mediation skills are life-long skills that I use in all aspects of my life.

In the same vein, many of you have mentioned how meaningful the program has been personally and professionally. Often you speak about our community of mediators and conciliators – mentioning someone who has made a difference by demonstrating special skill and knowledge, or by simply offering appreciation, friendship, or a thoughtful insight.

At times, our mediation community feels like an extended family, where everyone looks out

for each other. We are united by mutual respect and admiration, by a desire to learn and to better the world and ourselves. We are fortunate to have such a supportive and skilled volunteer group.

At times, you have shared your frustrations with the program, with the co-managers, with the

quantity of cases, with the boundaries set by a bureaucratic system. The staff here appreciate the feedback, and, with your help, we will continue to make BNMP a model community mediation program.

In looking back at the year 2007, we are awed by the talent and energy that you have brought to the program. In tallying up our year end statistics we were impressed by the large number of cases you successfully conciliated -- many of these cases required substantial effort and skill to bring to

agreement. This year we also had our first ever in-home mediation which was successfully concluded. In addition you handled an ever-increasing number of multi-party mediations and cases with cross-cultural issues. The parent teen program also experienced a particularly challenging range of family disputes this year. You showed great emotional strength in working on these difficult cases.

We truly appreciate all of you who volun-

Recent feedback from our clients reinforces the quality of your work. Comments include:

- *Thank you for your perseverance and availability.*
- *Thank you for taking the time to talk to me.*
- *I am thankful that there are people like you who give their time.*
- *Thank you for all you have done.*
- *Thank you for your intervention and I will send more work your way.*

teer to coach at trainings and attend community fairs and presentations. These efforts are invaluable – indeed we would not be able to offer high quality trainings without our volunteer coaches, and the support of our outreach program is a boon.

We are also impressed by how many of you are working on your own initiative to improve yourselves as mediators. Several of you took advantage this year of educational opportunities outside the program – such as the annual ADR conference; the Ken Cloke workshop “Crossroads of Conflict”; the William Ury lecture on “Getting to No”; the Conflict Resolution Day celebrations; the Seattle Federal Executive Board conference at NOAA; Making a Case for Justice: Elder Care and Vulnerable Adults; and Collaborative Law trainings. Several of you have also been attending our new quarterly mock mediation sessions which provide an opportunity to role play mediations and then get feedback from colleagues and staff. Also **Jack Mahler**, **Rhonda Younker**, and **Joann Bromberg** have applied this year for certification with the Washington Mediation Association (WMA). We are confident that they will succeed.

A few volunteers have stepped forward with special leadership roles. **Jack Mahler** continues to coordinate the conciliator/mediator consultation group which meets every other month and provides a very useful forum for volunteers to share stories and learn from one another. **Barb Miller** has revitalized the book club which also meets every other month and gives volunteers an opportunity to discuss a broad range of non-fiction books relevant to mediation.

Outside of your volunteer duties, you lead rich and eventful lives. Many of you traveled -- **Michele Stanelun** to Iran and Paris, **Galit Kedar** to Israel, **Ilana Vayman** to Montreal, **Jack Mahler** to Hawaii, **Rhonda Younker** to Paris, **Henry Smilowicz** to Alaska for salmon fishing. **Tara Brase** and her husband, Joe, have a new baby boy, Rafael. Our first baby in the program!!! All are doing well. **Adrienne Keith**, mediator in our program, is engaged to be married and has started her own law practice in Seattle. **Dave Tallent**, a conciliator and City of Bellevue employee, has been active in the enter-

tainment world of singing and dancing.

With all of you leading such active lives, we especially appreciate that you make time in your busy lives for our program. We look forward to an active 2008, beginning with a free 3-day training on Facilitating Multi-Party Disputes. Hope to see you there! Happy New Year!

Upcoming 3 day training:  
**Facilitating Multi-Party Disputes!**

This highly experiential training will provide participants with theory, process, tools and skills to facilitate complex, multi-party disputes. Multi-party dispute resolution processes are convened differently than mediations, and require the facilitator to assess the situation and design and recommend processes that will help the group reach its goal. You will learn a variety of approaches and techniques that will help you design processes that work!

See calendar on page 3 for details!

*Please join us in welcoming **Gwen Jones**, our new half time Mediation Program Assistant. Her phone number is 452-2897 and she will be here 4 hours a day every day except Thursday. Drop by and say hello!*

*Also please welcome **Michele Stanelun**, our part-time special assistant, who will be helping us redo our promotional literature, and will help organize the volunteer recognition party.*



**HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE BELLEVUE NEIGHBORHOOD MEDIATION PROGRAM!**

## Parent—Teen Update

By  
Cathy Goldman



I hope you all had an enjoyable holiday season. It is always nice to take a break from work, school, your routine and spend time with family or friends. Now that January has arrived we are back in full force scheduling mediations and setting up presentations. Some of you may want to join me as I present to parent groups and school age children. I will e mail you dates and times of activities coming up. Please take the opportunity to assist me.

On January 16<sup>th</sup> at 6pm we will come together to learn more about domestic violence issues and how they are handled by the police department. Detective Ellen Inman from the Family Crime Unit of the Bellevue Police Department will speak to us. Please plan to attend!

My New Year's goal is to work with those who are waiting to observe cases. I'm hoping all of you who have been patiently waiting will have an opportunity to observe in the next few months.

## **BNMP Training Opportunities For Mediators and Conciliators**

### ***Parent-Teen In-service:***

**Domestic Violence** — Detective Ellen Inman  
Jan. 16, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Room 1E-121

### ***Trainings:***

**Multi-Party Disputes**—Ann McBroom  
Jan. 25, 26 & 27, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, 3W-119  
No charge to BNMP volunteers, \$160 to non-volunteers

### ***Book Group:***

Next book: Lang and Taylor's, *Making of a Mediator.*  
Wednesday, January 9th at 5:30 p.m. Meet at mediation office.

### ***Con/Med Consultation Group:***

Join us to discuss your current conciliations/mediations or questions. Great networking and learning opportunity. Open to all volunteers. Wednesday, February 20th, 5:30 p.m. Room 1E-121.

Volunteer Recognition Party  
Feb 12th, 5:00pm to 8:00pm, Winter's House

## **Snohomish County Dispute Resolution**

Questions? Contact Matt at Snohomish County DRC: 425-339-1335 ext.2325, [mphillips@voaww.org](mailto:mphillips@voaww.org), or [www.voaww.org/drc](http://www.voaww.org/drc)

### **Basic Mediation Training**

January 11-13 & 19-20, (Everett) \$750

### **Family Mediation Training**

April 11-13 (Everett)

## **King County Dispute Resolution**

Questions? Contact Jessica at KCDRC: 206-443-9603, ext. 107, [jessicad@kcdrc.org](mailto:jessicad@kcdrc.org), or [www.kcdrc.org/](http://www.kcdrc.org/)

### **Mediation Training:**

Each day is 8:30am-5:30pm. Fee \$675, lunches provided.  
February 11, 13, 15, 21, & 22 (Mon, Wed, Fri, Th, Fri)

## **Antioch University, Seattle**

### **Workplace Conflict Management w/ Kathy Rice (.6 CEUs)**

January 29, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Tuition: \$240

### **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")

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*Volunteer Profile:*

Allen Oh



I joined the mediation program my 8th grade summer and I have enjoyed it ever since. I attend Bellevue Senior High School as a senior, and am looking to utilize my skills and enter either an American Northwest or Canadian school of either commerce or law. Mediation has eased many burdens in my life which came through simple misunderstandings or lack of communication, and I will miss it much when I leave next year.



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