



# Newsletter

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTER OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

"Strengthening our communities – peace by peace"

Winter 2007

**CRCMC Mission Statement:** to help individuals, groups and communities in Montgomery County constructively manage conflict by offering collaborative problem solving services such as mediation, facilitation, community conferencing and training.



### Conflict Resolution Expo 2006

See article by Tiffany Wallace, page 2

**A Mediation Success Story:** Jill is looking Jack straight in the eye. He's the neighbor who has caused her so much grief: his loud voice, his boisterous behavior, his way of shutting her out flooded her with anger. The "little Chinese", he called her behind her back. And Jack was staring right back at Jill. He had had paid tons of money to repair the damage her trees did to his house. THIS was the issue, as far as he was concerned--the roots of her pine trees were damaging his house and his sewer system and the slippery pine needles on his porch were a safety hazard to him and his guests. On top of that, what kind of woman is she? --Trying to poison his dogs! Jill and Jack had argued over the pine trees that bordered their properties for more than a year. Lately, Jack had accused her of poisoning his dogs. "That's ridiculous!" said Jill in anger, "Jack is intimidated by my law degree. He just wants to upset me." "Jill, it sounds like you feel misrepresented and that respect is important to you," said the mediator. "Yes," says Jill, "respect is important to me."

"You want respect? Then stop poisoning my dogs!" shouts Jack. Jill, puzzled, says, "I really didn't know your dogs were sick. I like your dogs. They help keep the neighborhood safe. I am putting rat poison down in the back yard but I didn't know it was affecting them." Jack asked, "Would you be willing to use another method if I help you identify another one -- that wouldn't hurt my dogs?" Jill: "Absolutely! And I could work with you to get your homeowners insurance to cover the house damage." Jack: "Thank you that would help a lot." The two agreed to keep the beautiful pine trees but to sever the roots of those damaging Jack's property. **Lesson Learned** - It's never just about the "trees". Mediation opens up lines of communication and provides a safe environment for individuals to talk about their concerns and consider other perspectives. As a result, even relationships that carry long-standing wounds can be healed



### Visits with "The Women of the Don" By Jeannie Austin

On December 15, 2006, CRCMC staff met with a five-member delegation from a Russian non-governmental organization, "The Women of the Don".

The "Women of the Don" is regional women's leadership and civil society organization. Its name comes from the Don River, one of the major rivers running through the North Caucasus part of Russia, and passing through the Chechen region. The women of the delegation are teachers and educational administrators.

CRCMC was invited to speak with these leaders as part of a weeklong professional development program focused on conflict resolution and peace building in the U.S. The program was sponsored by the "**Open World Leadership Center**", a congressionally funded program. During their visit to the U.S., the "Women of the Don" also met with the "National Peace Foundation", The American Friends Service Committee's "Help Increase the Peace Project", the "U.S. Institute for Peace's Education Program" and the "Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution" at George Mason University. CRCMC staff explained the conflict resolution programs in Montgomery County with particular emphasis on community conferencing and other restorative justice practices – their areas of interest. With the aid of an interpreter, our staff described the goals of restorative justice and community conferencing and how they fit into schools and the juvenile justice system. The staff's presentation was received with great enthusiasm. Many good questions were asked. It lasted all morning. The staff concluded the meeting by exchanging gifts, business cards and website addresses and promising to keep in touch.

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## **CRCMC Celebrates Conflict Resolution Day** by Tiffany Wallace

Promoters of conflict resolution around the world proclaimed October 19<sup>th</sup> as **Conflict Resolution Day**. CRCMC and several other community mediation centers under the auspices of Community Mediation Maryland presented educational programs and ceremonies to promote the peaceful resolution of disputes. CRCMC held a Conflict Resolution Day Expo in concert with the Commission on Common Ownership Communities, District Court of Maryland, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville Community Mediation Program, and the Bar Association of Montgomery County. The Expo was CRCMC's first annual event. Booths staffed with representatives from the sponsoring organizations featured information. A video on conflict resolution, two live mock mediations, promotional conflict resolution materials and door prizes were also presented. The Expo drew 75 local residents, members of the conflict resolution community, county government and the media.

"It was spectacular. The people who staffed the tables were helpful and willing to discuss the benefits of conflict resolution and share examples of cases they had mediated," said Steve Greenfield, Acting Director of the Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development, Montgomery College. Steve also found the two simulated mediations insightful. Steve, who had been in discussion with the CRCMC staff about a conflict resolution course in Spanish, learned about the event while researching information about CRCMC. He said the Expo provided him an opportunity to learn "both theory and reality" of conflict resolution. The Expo culminated with a ceremonial presentation of proclamations from the County Council, County Executive, City of Rockville, State Senate and State Judiciary. In addition, each of the sponsoring organizations recognized volunteers and individuals who have supported their programs. Tim Stranges, CRCMC's Executive Director, recognized Mary Edwards, Barry Klein, Wolfgang Mergner, Alicia Pfund and Tiffany Wallace, all of whom were nominated by their peers for the 2006 CRCMC Volunteer of the Year Award. Mary Edwards was later selected and recognized as the CRCMC 2006 Volunteer of the Year at Community Mediation Maryland's Annual Gala Dinner held on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

Event Planning Committee: Carla Mamana, District Court of Maryland; Janet Kelley, Rockville Community Center; Peter Drymaski, Commission on Common Ownership Communities; and Terry Vann, Bob Scholz, Barbara Smith Fennell, Ellen Warren, Liz Phillips, Tiffany Wallace, Pete Meloney, Kathryn Liss, and Brenda Hansen of CRCMC.

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## **2007 Executive Director's Goals**

by Tiffany Wallace

**Tiffany:** *Tim, you have been here six months now, what are your impressions of CRCMC?*

**Tim:** The last six months have been a whirlwind of activity: continuing our past successes and trying new things. I have enjoyed working with the dedicated CRCMC Board, Committees, and our great volunteers - the backbone of CRCMC. Without their work we would not have been able to present the first-ever Conflict Resolution Day Expo or have such a successful Year End Fundraising Campaign that raised over \$15,000. I have had the good fortune of being able to expand the staff with the additions of Margie Henry and Jeannie Austin (both temporary, part-time employees) and Eduardo Obregon (our temporary, full-time AmeriCorps Volunteer).

**Tiffany.** *What are CRCMC's goals for 2007?*

**Tim:** Some of the goals that I have discussed with Board and Committee members include expanding our income base so that we are not as dependent on government grants for our funding. To the extent we can attract new money, I would like to see CRCMC do more outreach to underserved communities in Montgomery County. I think we are starting to make inroads in the Latino community, thanks to the efforts of Eduardo, Margie, Marcia, and the Latino Outreach Committee. I would like to see more outreach efforts to the Asian and African-American communities.

**Tiffany.** *Other than fundraising and outreach, are there other goals for 2007?*

**Tim:** Efforts are underway for CRCMC to have an expanded presence at the District Court in Rockville. The proposed pilot program would allow CRCMC to contact parties to small claims cases much earlier in the process and invite them to try mediation well before their "day of trial." CRCMC is also exploring ways to offer Elder Mediation training to enable our volunteers to mediate the often-contentious issues surrounding care decisions for senior citizens. We need to have more teenage mediators to offer a viable Parent-Teen mediation program. I anticipate a need to step up our capability to offer more training and facilitation sessions for community groups. Later in the year the Board of Directors will set ends for CRCMC, so these goals may be modified and others added.

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## Events by Ed Modell

**Film Event- Announcement:** This year's film event will take place Sunday March 11 from 3:00 to 7:00 PM at the Montgomery College in Silver Spring. The featured film is "***In My Country***" about the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The film is 1 hour 45 minutes. There will be a reception before the film and a discussion after the film lead by former Ambassador John McDonald, an expert in international peace negotiation.

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## What do donations pay for?

by Wolfgang Mergner

CRCMC is a nonprofit organization whose mediation services are free. Highly trained volunteer mediators offer **4,576** hrs of mediation service a year. Based on current

hourly rates for paid mediators, this translates into volunteer mediators giving **\$457,600** a year. And these numbers do not include the hours donated by CRCMC's facilitators and trainers.

Some of the funds donated by our sponsors pay for a case manager. When the CRCMC office receives a request for mediation the case manager communicates with the parties involved in a conflict to explain the process and determine their willingness to participate in mediation. The case manager also solicits and selects volunteer mediators and develops a case file. Finally the case manager performs the necessary follow-up, records statistical entries, and closes cases out. The case manager performs similar functions in response to requests for facilitations and training sessions.

CRCMC is a highly effective organization. Of the 70 inquiries a month for mediation, 80% result in mediations and of those who come to mediation almost 70% are positively resolved.

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**How you can help:** CRCMC is always looking for volunteers to serve on our Outreach, Latino Outreach, Development, and Training/Facilitation committees.

CRCMC also needs donations to help us continue ongoing programs and start new ones. You can donate directly or help us to find foundations, corporations and other organizations that might be willing to help out.

Finally, the CRCMC office is in need of two 17" or 19" flat-screen computer monitors. If you would like to donate a new one or one that is gently used, please contact us (301-942-7700).

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**Updated Website** CRCMC recently revised and expanded our website. Visit it at [www.crcmc.org](http://www.crcmc.org). Please take a look at it and send us your comments.

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**Conflict Resolution License Plates** If your car is registered in Maryland and you would like a plate that encourages folks to try mediation, Community Mediation Maryland (formerly MACMC) has applied to the state for a brand new license plate. You can pick up an application in the CRCMC office or have one sent from Community Mediation Maryland by calling 410-349-0080.

## CRCMC Volunteers of the Year 2006



From left: Barry Klein, Tiffany Wallace, Alicia Pfund, Wolfgang Mergner, and Mary Edwards receiving the CRCMC Volunteer of the Year 2006 awards. Mary Edwards also received the Community Mediation Maryland award for her accomplishments and for introducing the Carver Model of Board Management.

## CRCMC DONORS - July-December 2006

**CRCMC** thanks the many donors who have contributed cash and in kind contributions: Mary Akers, Gertrude Axilrod, Ramona Buck, Maile Beers-Arthur, Arthur Bill, Susan Concannon, Holly Cooper, COPE Inc., Mimi & Russ Eschbacher, Linda Esrov, Carmel Ebb, Benson D. Forman, James R. Geletka, Marsha and Robert Goldfarb, Erwin H. Mack, Rita & Paul Marth, Margaret McCoy, Kathy McGuire, Mary Miltenberger, Jane Rasmussen, Hank Prensky, Alternative Resolutions, Inc., Linda & Tom Rhoads, Elizabeth & Henry Schaedler, Gerald Schneider, Gerald Share, Gary Stein, M/Ms Anthony Stranges, Wendy Swire, Adam Vann, Francis Vincent, Mary & Robert Walker.

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**CRCMC CONCILIATOR** (\$500 or more): Mary Bailey, Kaye A. Craft, Gertrud & Wolfgang Mergner, Timothy Stranges, Terry Vann, Tiffany Wallace.

**CRCMC PEACE MAKER** (\$1000 or more): Beverly B. Denbo, Barbara & Steve Smith-Fennel, Robert R. Scholz, Peter Vaslow, John Urciolo.

**CRCMC PEACE ANGEL** (\$5000 or more): Rosanna Coffey, Smith-Alper Family Foundation, Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office, Montgomery County Council.

Please contact us at [crcmc@crcmc.org](mailto:crcmc@crcmc.org) if you have given since the last newsletter, but your name doesn't appear on this list. We apologize for our oversight. Thank you

**CRCMC Executive Director:** Tim Stranges

**CRCMC Board of Directors:** Terry Vann, Chair; Mary Edwards, Vice-Chair; John Elliott, Treasurer; Wolfgang Mergner, Secretary; Richard Alper, Anne Gordon, Casma Huie, Harold Kessler, Kathryn Liss, Alicia Pfund, Liz Phillips, Robert Scholz, Barbara Smith-Fennel, John Urciolo, Tiffany Wallace.

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