

A Wish List of a Conflict Resolution Center Director

by Patricia H. Lee

The Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County is an amazing place to work and a treasured responsibility. Where else can you work with a great staff, over one hundred professionally trained mediators, a working board and, at the same time, assist individuals, organizations and businesses with conflict resolution? Better yet, imagine the gratification in running a program that handles mediations, trainings, facilitations and community conferences each and every day. As I share the wonders of my job at CRCMC, let me also share with you my wish list:

Peace in the world. We know it takes each and every one of us to help toward that goal. Taking a stand in your household, your neighborhood, your business and workplace is a first step in creating a peaceful and livable environment.

Enough resources to sustain the program for several years. A healthy and diverse mix of individual, corporate, government and foundation funds is a necessity in running a fully functional program with broad impact.

A space for volunteer trainers, mediators and staff to meet. Currently, we have a wonderful location within the Mid-County Regional Service Center to host staff, take intake and dispatch information to volunteers. Yet, as we grow, we dream about larger space to accommodate trainings, an area for walk-ins who need immediate assistance and additional office space for staffing needs.

Community mediators in every part of the County. With the help of our partners, the Community Mediation Maryland and the Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office, we hope, one day, to train mediators and trainers from every demographic population in Montgomery County.

Energetic volunteers. The Conflict Resolution has wonderful volunteers that give of their time to do outreach, fundraising, and intake and to assist the CRCMC staff and board of directors. With over 4,289 volunteer hours over the past year alone, volunteers contribute greatly to CRCMC's mission and goals.

Peace, resources, space, community mediators and energetic volunteers, now that's a dream worth having!

Volunteers needed?

Volunteers are needed to send CRCMC thank you letters for in kind and monetary donations. Knowledge of Microsoft Office is helpful. Access to computer and fax is essential. Can work from home. Contact 301-942-7700 for additional information.

Committees CRCMC is also looking for volunteers to serve on our Outreach, Latino Outreach, Development, and the Training/Facilitation committees.

Donations: CRCMC also needs donations to help us continue with 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.

Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County
Executive Director: Patricia Lee.
Board of Directors: Terry Vann, Chair; Mary Edwards, Vice-Chair; Richard Alper, John Elliott, Treasurer, Anne Gordon, Casma Huie, Harold Kessler, Wolfgang Mergner, Secretary; Ed Modell, Alicia Pfund, Liz Phillips, Robert Scholz, Barbara Smith-Fennell, Tiffany Wallace.

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Newsletter

CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTER of MONTGOMERY COUNTY

"Strengthening our communities – peace by peace"

October 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.



Photo by Judi Becker

Patricia H. Lee, the new Executive Director of the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County

Liz Phillips interviews Patricia Lee

Liz Phillips: We are delighted that you have joined the Conflict Resolution Center and look forward to hearing about your ideas. What's new since July?

Patricia Lee: Thank you Liz! I appreciate you and all of the Board, staff and volunteers for the service and time everyone gives to the Conflict Resolution Center. In answer to your specific question, so much has happened since July. On the one hand I am spending time getting acquainted with the staff, board, committee

members, mediators, volunteers and our organizational partners. Also we have begun to automate many of the internal systems and functions of the office while we expand the programs that we offer residents of the County and the State of Maryland. It's been a whirlwind period and I believe, a very productive 100 days since my first day on board.

Liz Phillips: My next question relates to your background and mediation. As a lawyer, how will you approach your new role as a mediator?

Patricia Lee: Gingerly, but all, kidding aside, I've been a lawyer for twenty-five years and respect the legal profession immensely. As lawyers we confront adversarial, complex and intense situations all of the time. Our advocacy on behalf of our clients, our values and principles, has an upside, but the downside is that there are winners and losers. Mediation, in contrast, requires people resolve their matters themselves, in their own words and with their own preferences -- creating a different end game. I believe that my legal background has prepared me to be able to see both sides and to be able to help bring people together. With a mediated dialogue between and amongst parties, the possibility of win/win is more likely to occur.

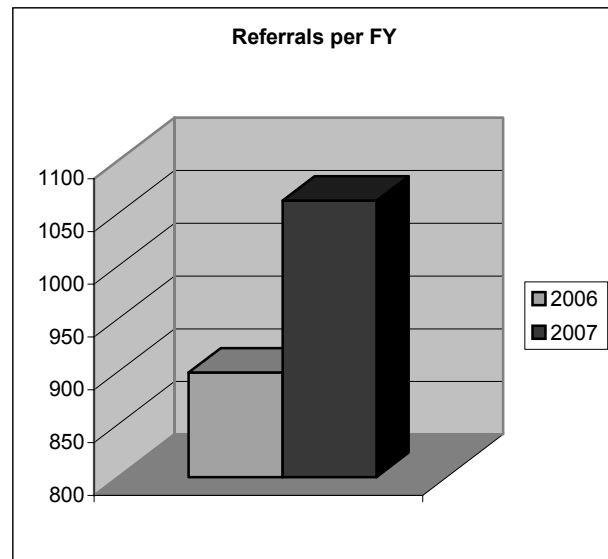
Liz Phillips: Do you think your style of leadership will be different since you are a lawyer?

Patricia Lee: I do believe that my style will be different and unique, but I don't think it will strictly be because of my legal background. My hope is to bring everything that I have learned to my position: My parenting experience, entrepreneurship, law and business skills and my Midwestern amiable personality.

Liz Phillips: When you leave the directorship of CRCMC, what is the single most impact you hope to have had?

Patricia Lee: If God is willing, I will still be alive and able to see the day after! In any event, when that day comes, I hope that every demographic population in Montgomery County is aware that mediation is an option for them and their respective communities and, even more so that mediation skills are instilled in the young and the seasoned, every individual, regardless of gender, race, color, creed, ethnicity, or personal preference.

* Liz Phillips is a member of the CRCMC Board



• Fiscal year ending March 31 2006 and March 31 2007

A Portrait of an Organization - Painted by the Numbers by Judi Becker

The past fiscal year saw CRCMC provide conflict resolution services for almost 400 disputes. Sixty percent of the mediations conducted, resulted in the parties entering into an agreement. For the first quarter of this year the number of mediations conducted has continued to rise and the agreement rate has remained steady. The last fiscal year saw cases referred to CRCMC from the State's Attorney's Office and four different Court Divisions as well as other non-profit organizations, government agencies, community members, police, schools and religious institutions. The number of referrals received from the schools, in the first quarter alone, exceeded 100% of that of the prior fiscal year. Referrals from the police and non-profits also show a substantial upward trend. Additionally, the first quarter

of this year saw referrals from Court divisions that had not referred to CRCMC in the previous year. We anticipate being able to serve even more county residents as we received very enthusiastic receptions at a number of events, including The County Agricultural Fair, The Montgomery County Housing Fair and the School-Community United in Partnership 8th Annual Conference. The police will also be receiving additional training at the Police Training Academy in conflict resolution as well as having the opportunity to view a DVD we have produced to be shown at Police Roll Calls. None of this could have been accomplished without the help of our dedicated volunteers who put in 4,289 hours last year and have put in 1199 hours in the first quarter alone.



Pete Meleney

Youth and Conflict Resolution

By Pete Meleney
Montgomery County's families are socially, economically and ethnically quite diverse. Families, from more than one hundred and fifty countries, send their children into the school system. By and large, children are engaged, but sometimes children are at risk and face conflicts, both in the school system and in their home communities.

Conflicts can be viewed as a ladder. Initially conflicts start at very basic steps. If not dealt with at this level, the conflicts tend to escalate and grow, until it reaches unmanageable proportions. One focus of the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County is to reduce the level of suspensions. The Montgomery County Public School System faces more than 8,000 suspensions per year. These suspensions have serious adverse effects on learning and on the socialization of students, particularly among minority students from low-income backgrounds who are disproportionately involved. The number of necessary suspensions has to be understood as a sign of crisis as are local violations of the law involving juveniles.

The **Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County** offers a comprehensive youth program.

The **preventive component** of this program attempts to teach youth skills in managing conflicts. The Conflict Resolution Center trains youth and teachers. It tries to create multiple teams of skilled individuals in conflict resolution.

Peer mediation is a very proven approach dealing with conflicts in the school system that otherwise would lead to punishments and suspension. Peer mediation is so effective because it seeks to address the underlying problem that led to the bad behavior. The end result is understanding, respect and restitution. Peer mediation also brings the school community into action in the form of peers.

Parent-Teen Mediation addresses another source of serious societal conflicts. A team of an older experienced mediator and a trained teen mediator offers conflict resolution to families. This can be particularly important for immigrant families where the children have been reunited with their parents after having been educated by relatives in foreign countries.

Community Conferencing Initiative (CCI) is a program of restorative justice. It is the last step in response to a crisis whereby juvenile offenders have come into conflict with the law for lesser crime offenses. These juveniles ordinarily might be subject to punishment by the criminal legal system. Community Conferencing Initiatives offers a second chance to redeem the damages done. It aims for an agreement between victim, perpetrators and the community on the restitution of damages.

CRCMC Donors April-August 2007

BY Janice McCall

The CHALLENGE GRANT was met! Thank you DONORS:

- CRCMC PEACE ANGEL** (\$5,000 or more) Anonymous
- CRCMC PEACE MAKER** (\$1,000 or more) R. B. Scholz, J. Urciolo, Anonymous.
- CRCMC CONCILATORS** (\$500 or more): B. B. Denbo, H. G. Jenkins, J. A. McCall.
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IN HONOR: CRCMC wishes to thank the following family and friends of **Barry Klein, Ed Modell, Eva & Berton Shankman, Barbara & Steve Smith-Fennell, and Terry Vann** for their kind and generous gifts in honor of special events in their lives.

New Tax-Savings Opportunity for Donors Aged 70 ½ or Older. Recent legislation benefits you, if you are 70 ½ or older. You can make a lifetime gift using funds from your IRA without undesirable tax effects. You can transfer funds directly from an IRA to a public charity such as CRCMC. This law is in effect until 12/31/07. To make a gift, contact your IRA custodian to transfer a gift amount to CRCMC or other non-profit organizations.

Fall Events 2007

CONFLICT RESOLUTION DAY EXPO,

An Annual International Celebration on Thursday October 18, 2007 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Montgomery County Education Association, 50 West Gude Drive, Rockville, MD 20850.

Thank You Tim!

Tim Stranges was CRCMC's Executive Director for only one year, but his accomplishments will continue to enrich CRCMC and the community well beyond his brief tenure. For example, CRCMC's successful Latino Outreach approach and partnership with Montgomery College is now a significant component of our program. His leadership role in CRCMC's first Conflict Resolution Day program has set the standard for this annual event. He was instrumental in obtaining a matching grant and began and strengthened partnerships with the public and private sectors. On a personal note, I too have benefited by working with Tim and have become his friend. On behalf of CRCMC and personally, I wish Tim the best and look forward to co-mediating with him in the near future.

Terry Vann, Chair of the Board