

Got Conflict?SM

Conflict Hurts. Mediation Helps.



AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE CONFLICT MEDIATION SERVICES SINCE 1979

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Content

May 2023

Note from Gail

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Spring is here! We have planted seeds of peace that are blooming in many places:

Did You Know?/ Fast Facts

Our Roundtables generated great interest within our Mediators and in the broader circle of Mediators. Our last two events brought together over 50 mediators each (record breaking interest!).

A CDSC Success Story

CDSC Roundtables: Offering Lifelong Learning

We launched 20 newly trained Mediators from our Spring 2023 32-hour Basic Mediation Training. Many will use the skills in their workplace, plus many may join our roster. We offered them the chance for involvement with our Board of Directors committees or as Ambassadors who assist with outreach & public education.

Helping Families in a Difficult Time

Volunteer Spotlight

Diversity Equity & Inclusion remains a strategic priority. We are assessing how to meet the needs of the communities we serve and want to serve more. We have established an Interpreter Project, provided scholarships for our mediation training and look to improve the collection of demographic information internally and externally.

Support CDSC in 2023

I continue to learn and grow from my own involvement in a 10 month Senior Leadership Learning Circle on Racial Equity sponsored by Boston's Trinity Connect.

With gratitude,



Fast facts about CDSC - Are you up to date?

Did you know ... CDSC has virtual weekly information sessions where anyone can drop in and ask any question about mediation or about CDSC. What does mediation mean? What kinds of issues does CDSC work on? How do you become a mediator? How do you volunteer for CDSC? Come talk to us any Monday between 12 and 12:30 EST on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84238635073>
No advance registration required!



Did you know ... CDSC offers facilitation services to municipalities, school districts, for-profit and nonprofit organizations? Our services are affordable, provide either assessment and/or facilitation, and tap experienced facilitators to offer assistance. We help groups hold discussions, reduce conflict, clarify decision making, and arrive at unanimous outcomes. Facilitations can take place virtually, in person, during business hours or after.

Did you know ... CDSC is seeking volunteer mediators for its court and community mediation program. Requirements: successful completion of an SJC-approved mediation training and completion of our volunteer application. Bilingual volunteers and volunteers from underrepresented communities are especially needed. Contact Grace at cdscinfo@communitydispute.org for more information and to get involved!

A CDSC Success Story

Without naming names, this mediation involved a tenant unaware of RAFT. (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition) Like many tenants, this tenant had lost a year of employment and had been a good paying tenant before that long stretch of unemployment. The landlord waited a long time before filing the lawsuit because the landlord had a long and positive relationship with the tenant.

The mediation process allowed the tenant to learn about RAFT, they applied for

RAFT, the landlord was paid, the tenant was reemployed, and the relationship is now back to where it was before the pandemic. The parties were very angry in the beginning, the tenant because the tenant thought the landlord did not care, and the landlord because they were not getting paid and were in severe financial difficulty.

Through the mediation process, the parties realized that it was not the fault of either of the parties, but simply a terrible situation both parties were in. When they realized the situation, they both worked together, resolved their situation by getting the landlord paid through RAFT, and the case was dismissed.

The mediation process helped them focus on the problem as a joint problem to solve together.

CDSC Roundtables: Offering Lifelong Learning

CDSC continues to offer innovative continuing education opportunities each month. Since the new year, we've provided sessions on managing secondary trauma; critical skills for mediators in 2023; and on April 26, mediation & neuroinclusivity.



Missed a session? We can send you the slides and/or the recording – contact cdscinfo@communitydispute.org. We'll be taking a break from our roundtables for the summer, and then be back after Labor Day with a full menu of virtual offerings. We're planning sessions on mindfulness & mediation; culture differences in mediation; improving listening skills; and more. Have an idea for a

CDSC training? Let us know! Never miss the chance to sign up for our roundtables by joining our mailing list – sign up [here](#).

Please [contact us](#) to be added to the mailing list. Follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#) to be among the first to hear about our roundtables and trainings!

Helping families in a difficult time: Parent Mediation Program

For many couples with children, divorce or separation can present significant

challenges with parenting decisions. From childcare, to medical decisions, to figuring out choices around education and more, former partners may find it difficult to navigate coming to an agreement without help.

Thanks to the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration at UMass, CDSC is one of five programs across the state which participates in the Parent Mediation Program – or PMP. Through PMP, parents can access up to 4 (and in some cases, 8) free hours of mediation services, and take advantage of all the benefits of mediation: maintaining control over the decision making process; a less expensive and less time-consuming process than litigation; and participating in a process that often reduces hostility and instead, promotes relationships. Some of our PMP participants have used this program as a prelude to divorce mediation, while others use our services solely for their parenting decisions.

Interested parents can get in touch with us at cdscinfo@communitydispute.org. And if you'd like to become one of the mediators who help these families, we need you too!

CDSC has a few open Board seats, and welcomes your interest! Our Board of Directors is an all-volunteer group from a variety of backgrounds that helps CDSC determine its direction and ensure its adherence to its mission. Meetings are virtual, and there is no prior Board experience requirement. Interested in finding out more? Contact smarsh@communitydispute.org.

Volunteer Spotlight: John Berke

It was time to renew his long-term office lease, and John Berke had second thoughts.

A long-time solo practitioner with a focus on family law and litigation, John took his hesitation as a chance to take a break from his work, travel and think about how the coming years might evolve. A three-month stay in Ghana that included working part time as a volunteer mediator confirmed his interest in mediation. When he returned to Massachusetts, his next steps included training and volunteering with CDSC. "I think my years as an attorney help me keep the whole situation in mind,



without being pulled into side issues,” says John who attended Brandeis University and Fordham Law School. “It helps me focus on the essential issue.”

Like many mediators, John finds satisfaction in helping people come to an agreement, especially when at the outset it looks impossible. “It helps people to put a problem behind them.”

Established in 1979, the Community Dispute Settlement Center (CDSC), is a private, not-for-profit mediation and training center dedicated to providing an alternative and affordable forum for resolving conflict.

CDSC promotes better ways to understand and deal with conflict through skilled teams of pro bono mediators, training programs in mediation and conflict management, and broad community outreach.

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