Got Conflict?

Conflict hurts. Mediation helps.

Community Dispute Settlement Center

AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE CONFLICT MEDIATION SERVICES SINCE 1979

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September 2025

Hi friends,

I hope you had a nice summer and we are excited for the start of fall!

It seems like everywhere we look, we are reminded of the need for conflict resolution in this country and in the world. At CDSC we are excited to continue our important work this fall, welcoming new people to our team.

We are proud to announce that this past fiscal year we mediated over 30% more cases and trained over 55% more people compared to the previous fiscal year, for a total of over 2,000 people served last fiscal year between our training and other conflict resolution services. This means we more than doubled our services in less than two years. This has only been possible thanks to our incredibly dedicated staff and volunteers. We are so grateful for you!

In this newsletter, you will see a volunteer spotlight as well as some exciting staffing announcements! Although we were sad to say goodbye to our AmeriCorps Member Emma Knight, who is off to law school, we are thrilled to welcome new team members, including our new Case Coordinator Clara Dutton. In addition, we are very excited to announce Chandra Banks as our new Practicum Coordinator at CDSC.

We hope you will join us for our upcoming roundtables, as well as our CDSC BASH on October 23, in which we will honor Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell and the EASTIE Coalition as our CDSC Peacemakers this year!

We are so grateful for your support for our work and for being part of our community!

Onward,

Pedro
Executive Director

Join us Oct. 23 to celebrate CDSC peacemakers!

Andrea Joy Campbell

CDSC will hold its annual BASH to celebrate our Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell and the work of the EASTIE Coalition on October 23, 2025, from 5:30pm to 6:30pm EST.

The Massachusetts Attorney General does crucial work that aligns with our organizational mission, supporting conflict resolution work across the state for example through Face-to-Face Mediation Programs and Local Consumer Programs. Staff at the office of the Attorney General regularly refer cases to us, and as an organization that prioritizes accessibility and affordability, we appreciate Attorney General Campbell's commitment to standing up for the most vulnerable throughout her career.

The EASTIE Coalition does crucial work to prevent and reduce substance misuse in East Boston, with an important focus on youth. We love their supportive, community-based approach and have worked with them as a workshop partner in the past and in organizing a listening session on community mediation in East Boston. For this year's BASH, we will be raising funds for our youth work, and we are thrilled to honor this fantastic organization.

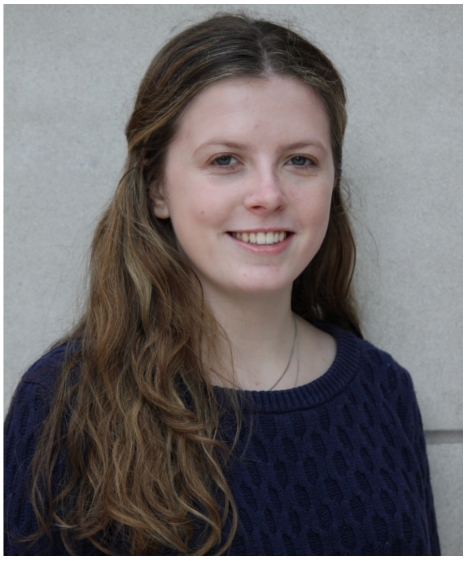
To purchase tickets ($45, plus sponsorship opportunities available), please visit our website. Look for our invitation to the event in your mailbox. We can't wait to celebrate CDSC and other wonderful local CDSC Peacemakers. See you soon!

CDSC Staffing Updates

Thank you, Emma!

Thank you to our AmeriCorps Member, Emma Knight, who worked with us for almost a full year. In that time, she planned and led youth programs, helped to coordinate cases and played a crucial role when our Director of Youth Programs went on extended leave. She recently started law school in New York. We wish you all the best, Emma!

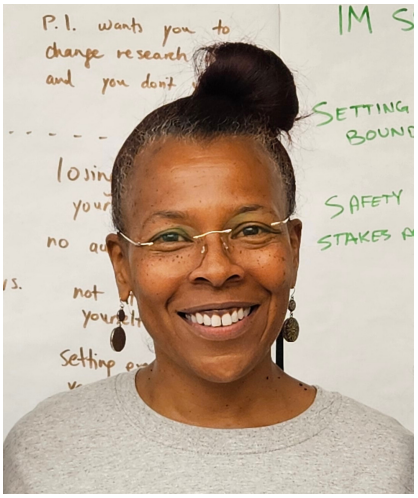
Welcome to our Case Coordinator, Clara!



Welcome to Clara Dutton, who will be serving as CDSC's Case Coordinator! Her role will focus on intakes and supporting parties and our mediators for community (family, neighbor and workplace) cases and we are excited to work with her!

Clara recently graduated in May 2025 from Washington University in St. Louis with a BA in Biology and Global Health. She is interested in community development and wellbeing, and her past work has included environmental advocacy and international development research.

New Practicum Coordinator starts this fall



A longtime trainer, volunteer and facilitator with CDSC, Chandra Banks is stepping into a new role this fall: Practicum Coordinator. Chandra worked in a variety of roles, including as the District Wide Conflict Mediator for the Cambridge Public Schools in addition to roles in recreation, social services, higher education, prevention (substance abuse & violence) and institutional wellness. She also has a background in Restorative Practices, which informs

much of what she does. Chandra often leads modules for our Basic Mediation Training, and as Practicum Coordinator she will be able to continue to mentor new mediators.

In Memoriam

We learned after our May newsletter was sent out that Albie Davis, a pioneering figure in community mediation, conflict resolution and a former CDSC Peacemaker, had died peacefully on April 26 at age 88. Her work transformed how conflict is approached—centering on dignity, dialogue and community empowerment. You can view a full obituary here.

Should you wish to honor and pay respects to Albie, a celebration of her life will be held tomorrow, September 13, at 11:00 am at First Church in Jamaica Plain, Unitarian Universalist. Or, consider making a donation to the Community Dispute Settlement Center in her honor, as mentioned in the obituary.

Our roundtables are restarting!

Ready for a new series of roundtable discussions, sponsored by the Community Dispute Settlement Center? Our 2025/26 series kicks off on September 18th with a talk by Ben Stich on stress and mediation. On October 9 we will hear from Tracee Ford from Community Mediation Maryland about the essential nature of feedback in mediation. In November Professor Karina Schumann will join us on the 6th to discuss apologies in mediation. December 11 we will host Professor Robert Bush from Hofstra University to discuss mediation and self-determination.

All sessions take place on Thursdays at or shortly after noon via Zoom. Email grace@communitydispute.org to register for any of these sessions.

Volunteer Spotlight: Ellen Waldorf

As one of the members serving on the CDSC Board of Directors, Ellen Waldorf combines sound legal and mediation skills with enthusiasm, optimism and good humor. The combination has made her one of CDSC's most valued volunteers! She's helped CDSC make tough decisions, and navigate tough times, as well as the nitty gritty work of outreach to potential partners and helping with fundraising.

A trained mediator since 2001, Ellen first encountered mediation in law school, when in class with adjunct professor — and ADR pioneer — Margaret Shaw. Mediation piqued Ellen's interest, and aligned with her problem solving skills and her commitment to helping others. With almost 25 years of experience, Ellen has become a true evangelist for the practice of mediation. "The upsides of these [conflict resolution] skills are incredible," she notes. "These are valuable skills that everyone should have."

Ellen has led conversations with and provided training to a wide variety of interested audiences – from educators, legal service providers, law students, human service professionals and more. She heads a thriving family mediation practice in Newton MA, and has successfully mediated hundreds of cases. "It is a privilege to serve my clients and enable them to have difficult conversations and seek resolution to their concerns."

"Volunteering with CDSC has been so special. It provides the opportunity to connect with the mediation community and to make a meaningful impact for individuals and families."

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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