

# Mediator

NEWS & NOTES

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“Follow, don’t  
lead. It is about  
party choice.”

**NEWSLETTER JUST FOR MEDIATORS  
WELCOME BACK TO THE CDRC MEDIATOR  
NEWSLETTER. LOOK IN YOUR EMAIL EVERY MONTH  
ON OR ABOUT THE 15<sup>TH</sup> FOR NEWS OF INTEREST FOR  
YOU, OUR VOLUNTEER MEDIATORS. ENJOY THE TOUCH  
OF SPRING-IT WILL BE HERE EARLY THIS YEAR.**

# UPDATES



## CHANGES AT CDRC

Changes have been happening at CDRC. Many of you know and have worked with Melissa Hollister. After 18 years of working as the Office Manager in our Elmira office, Melissa retired. We all wish Melissa the best in her next adventure in life.

Catherine Ramos joined CDRC in January as the Administrative/Case Assistant in the Elmira Office. She has also taken on mediator scheduling. Gina will continue to work closely with all of you as she continues her role as CDRC's Volunteer Coordinator.

Rita Boratav joined CDRC in January as a part time Case Coordinator in the Ithaca office.

CDRC has begun a new pilot project called the Tompkins Family Court Mediation Project. This project began with a request from Judge Rowley to help ease the family court workload. When someone files a petition in Family Court, their initial appearance will be an appointment at CDRC where staff meets with each person in the matter, and talks to them about mediation. If both parties are willing and it is appropriate the staff will schedule them for a mediation. If both parties come to CDRC already with an agreement the CDRC staff will assist them with typing up their agreement and filing it in court for them. We are looking forward to more mediations as a result of this new program.



## MEDIATOR SPOTLIGHT

I need to make sure, that the parties are feeling comfortable enough in their interaction, so that they can communicate honestly about what they want and whether a solution emerges. As a Mediator we don't know the parties and we

aren't told anything except a very minimum about what they are coming for. The assumption in other kinds of



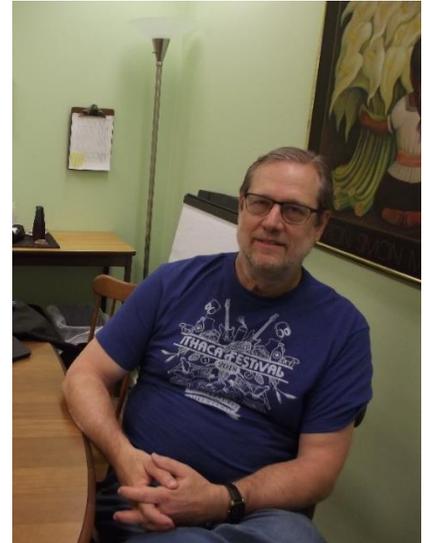
mediations is that in order to mediate well, you have to know a lot about the situation before you work it out. We are just the opposite. We know next to nothing. So when someone is talking directly to me , it might be because they think I am a lawyer or a judge who can rule in their favor. But it might also be, because they are afraid to look the other person in the eye. Or they are so mad at them, they just can't stand to say anything directly to them.

The theme of our training is to follow the parties. Follow, don't lead. It is about party choice. We try to restate instead of reframing. To reflect back the emotion and even the language. Like holding up a mirror: here's what you just said. If you said it in an angry way we're gonna reflect it back in an angry way. So that the person has the choice to say, "Yep, that's what I meant" or, "When I hear it coming from someone else it seems a little harsher than I actually wanted" or it wasn't harsh enough.

Another basic trick of the trade are summaries, which is more complicated. Not refrain what is being said, but to restate it in sort of an organized way that captures the essence of what the parties were talking about and

gives them a choice about what they want to talk about next.

Probably the most difficult mediation I've ever done was with couple that was extremely vicious with each other and very articulate. They were probably both professors, or at least one of them was. It reminded me of the movie *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf* starring Richard Burton and Elisabeth Taylor. They play an academic couple that invited another younger couple over for dinner and they just take enormous pleasure in slicing each other to pieces in front of this young couple, they are appalled. The parties



in my mediation were this couple in some ways, enjoying their battle with each other. They didn't really want to find a resolution. It was about having an audience. That's a conclusion that may be wrong, but it stands put in my mind.

This mediator spotlight was brought to you by Julia Langer. She was our Summer Intern in 2018, who came to us highly recommended by her professor, Baruch Bush. She was an international student from Germany attending Hofstra University. When asked why Julia was interested in volunteering at CDRC, she replied, "After learning about ADR in general for one semester I find it especially remarkable that CDRC offers transformative mediation as one of three mediation centers in the entire State of NY. After seeing the office and talking to the staff, I found that the atmosphere was very friendly and welcoming. It seems to be the perfect place to learn more about mediation."



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## **CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES**

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**23 years**

**Satomi Hill**

**Tompkins Mediator**

**21 years**

**Sandra Rhodes**

**Schuyler Mediator**

**11 years**

**Darlene Barela**

**Chemung Mediator**

**9 years**

**Erica Marx**

**Tompkins Mediator**

**Mary Newhart**

**Tompkins Mediator**

**8 years**

**Cindy Emmer**

**Chemung Mediator**

**3 years**

**Lydia Dempsey**

**Tompkins Mediator**

**1 year**

**Tim Blandford**

**Chemung Mediator**

**Thank you to all our volunteers for choosing to make a difference in the lives of people experiencing conflict.**



## VIRTUAL MEDIATION GROUP PRACTICES CONTINUE IN 2019

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*We will be sharing information from the ISCT (Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation, NAFCM (National Association for Community Mediation, ACR (Association for Conflict Resolution), NYSDRA (New York State Dispute Resolution Association) and others.*



**INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF  
CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**  
*Fulfilling the Promise of Mediation*

### *Virtual Institute Mediation Practice Groups Continue into 2019*

This is an affordable and enriching way to practice virtually with a small group and grow your practice through role plays, discussion, and individualized feedback.

The first practice groups were a great success. ISCT plan to offer more! There is a group starting in March, and another in May.

We will be sure and share this information with all of you.