



The simple and profound acts of peacebuilding within our community are more important now than ever before.



Dear Friends & Supporters,

This past year exposed us to raw undercurrents of violence and conflict between community members—here in our county, our nation, and our world. It is showing up in the tone and tenor of interactions in meetings, homes, schools, and places we thought were safe. We each have a responsibility to navigate through these undercurrents in a way that strengthens our connection, reduces violence, and builds compassion.

In partnership with the community, the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center (WDRC) is doing just that.

2016 brought exciting evolution to the WDRC. We identified emergent needs and pulled together to address them. We began our Supervised Visitation Program, grew our Parent-Teen Mediation program, and launched new trainings.

Within the heart of every parent, every young person, and every co-worker lies the need to be heard and the ability to problem solve when given the opportunity and the support. **The WDRC creates this space, at little or no cost to those we serve, because of community support.** During our 25th year of service to Whatcom County, we at the WDRC pledge to:

- Create harmony from discord
- Counter isolation with connection
- Invite disparate voices to be shared constructively
- Promote unity in times of division

We are certain that together, we will realize our vision for Whatcom County to approach conflict in healthy and creative ways.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Moonwater".

Moonwater
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joan Cervisi".

Joan Cervisi
Board President

2016 Numbers

Thanks to community support, 100% of WDRC services are free or low cost.

4 New Mediators Certified
7 New Practicum Students

Eight thousand five hundred and thirty
Volunteer Hours

9,900 Direct services provided

Eighty-three
% of mediation cases resolved successfully

811
Mediation participants

2,199
Whatcom County youth served

20+
Types of services

47% of our budget depends on community contributions

Keeping Kids and Parents Connected Supervised Visitation Program Launch

Imagine being unable to hug your child or hear about their day at school. Imagine being a child, wanting dad to read you a story, or to tell mom about the goal you scored in soccer. Imagine recovering from domestic violence, fearing contact with the other parent, but still wanting your child to have that connection. Thousands of families in Whatcom County face this reality. One of those families is Danielle and Mason.

Mason and his mom Danielle hadn't seen each other for 2 years. **Without the ability to connect safely and heal past trauma, families risk increased violence and loss of access to children.** The WDRC has stepped up to change that.

Recently, in the confines of a safe and welcoming space, we reunited Mason and Danielle. We will now support them to lay the foundation for a healthy relationship.



"Our Supervised Visitation Program, launched last April, is the only free, safe, and legal way for parents to spend time with children when the court prohibits contact. For many parents, access to their children means stability. Being able to see their child is the reason they are staying sober, applying for work, or seeking permanent housing."

- Devin DiBernardo, Supervised Visitation Program Manager

Mason, Danielle, and 30 more families reunited in 250 visits, at no cost to them through Supervised Visitation. Unfortunately, lack of funding limits visits to 1 precious hour each week, often far below what judges recommend. Please contribute to the WDRC in 2017 to ensure that we can keep more kids and parents connected.



Team Work Makes the Dream Work Parent-Teen Mediation Program Expands

Everything was going well for mother and daughter, Katherine and Sapphire. Then Katherine's son got ill and life turned upside down. Financially and emotionally, a family that had always believed in peace was now holding on by a thread.

For Sapphire, a high school Junior, the toll of life's challenges felt insurmountable. *"It was hard. I went to school, not wanting to be there, or do anything, and just cried in the bathroom alone. There's nothing you really do but try to get through and keep your head up."*

As a parent, Katherine was coming up against walls of frustration with her daughter. They were stuck. Katherine learned about the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center Parent-Teen Mediation program. Sapphire agreed to give it a try.

They walked through the WDRC doors with palpable apprehension. Their case manager first met with them individually, giving them space to vent, set goals for the mediation, and practice skills to be successful.



"Katherine and Sapphire began their first mediation session talking about their relationship. Tensions rose as they brought up difficult things about each other. They listened carefully as they put it all on the table. With mediation, the tipping point towards resolution is often found by taking a painful slide into the past, before you can step forward into the future."

- Dr. Kate McLean, WDRC Trainer & Mediation Practicum Student

By their second mediation session, Katherine and Sapphire were ready to construct a new narrative. They began to talk about the future and what they needed to do to restore peace in their home. Together, they developed a communication plan. Katherine agreed to allow her daughter to express herself openly. Sapphire practiced active listening and committed to being present with her mom.

Sapphire shared, "I'm proud of my mom. We've been through some crap. She pushes through with me and my little brother. We eat and we have a roof over our heads. It's amazing to see my mom do that for us. Team work makes the dream work."



On Nov. 18, Katherine and Sapphire received the WDRC's Creative Conflict Resolution Peace Builder Award. Check out the video of their story, produced by the City of Bellingham at whatcomdrc.org. At the Peace Builder Awards Gala, Katherine shared a message to the donors who make the Parent-Teen Mediation program possible. *"It takes all of us to achieve peace and the support you give that makes this opportunity possible for us and has ripple effects in our community."*

Conflict Intervention

We all experience conflict. The WDRC provides *interest-based, facilitative* assistance through **Mediation, Facilitation, Restorative Practices, Conflict Coaching, and Supervised Visitation.**



Facilitation

9 local businesses & organizations participated in custom facilitation services.

Conflict Coaching

305 adults and youth received free, confidential, individual conflict support. In addition to providing these services on site, the WDRC provided coaching at East Whatcom Regional Resource Center and Project Homeless Connect.

Supervised Visitation

In our first year providing free Supervised Visitation to Whatcom County families, 31 parents spent a combined 238 hours reuniting with their kids in a safe, friendly environment.

Mediation

Empowering clients to reach mutually beneficial, lasting solutions guided by a professional mediator.

Foreclosure

71% of families avoided foreclosure and 57% retained their home.

Youth

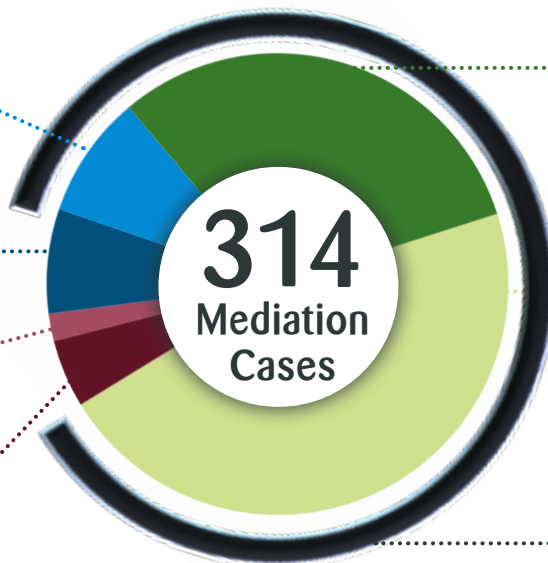
"This went better than expected. We set real & positive guidelines."

Commercial

100% of workplace clients recommend mediation.

Community

"The opportunity to open communication with my neighbor may result in us becoming friends."



Small Claims

1/3 of the Small Claims trials were diverted from court and resolved through mediation.

Family

87% reported mediation improved communication with the other parent.

83%

of mediation cases reached resolution.

"I am tremendously grateful for the family mediation services provided. They were absolutely instrumental in progress that was made. Everyone at the office was very nice and the facility was clean and comfortable."

- Family Mediation Client



Conflict Prevention

The WDRC offers **adult & youth Conflict Resolution Education** to build the capacity of community members to better manage conflict when it arises, and to learn ways to minimize its occurrence.

Adult Classes

Building critical skills to communicate effectively reduce conflict, and resolve conflict peacefully.



Fall 2016 Professional Mediation Training Cohort

Workshops for Parents

95% of parenting workshop participants reported that they gained helpful strategies for working through their conflicts in a productive way.

Community Workshops

We began offering *Exploring Equity & Cultural Humility*, in addition to our existing community workshops. This new workshop promotes cultural self-awareness, cross cultural learning, and examination of 'isms.'

Workplace & Professional Mediation Trainings

"This is the most useful training I have ever taken, with practical applications in the workplace and in my personal life."

- Professional Mediation Training Participant

79
Classes | **1,470**
Participants

Empowering young people to resolve conflict without violence and build healthy relationships.

Youth Program

Juvenile Justice Workshops

98% of participants reported that they now know how to stay calm in difficult situations.

School Workshops

"I will use what I learned to solve conflicts with my mom and friends without escalating the situation."

- Student, Nooksack High School



Restorative Practices

"Through our circle, stakeholders spoke their truths, heard each other, and demonstrated to our students and our community how to have a caring, courageous conversation."

- Steve Ruthford, Principal, Geneva Elementary School

95 | **1,541**
Classes | Participants

"WDRC mitigated potential conflict and helped students identify their social & emotional needs. I've noticed that my students are more likely to self-manage to foster a better environment for themselves."

- Elijah Davis, Teacher, Columbia Elementary School

Contribute

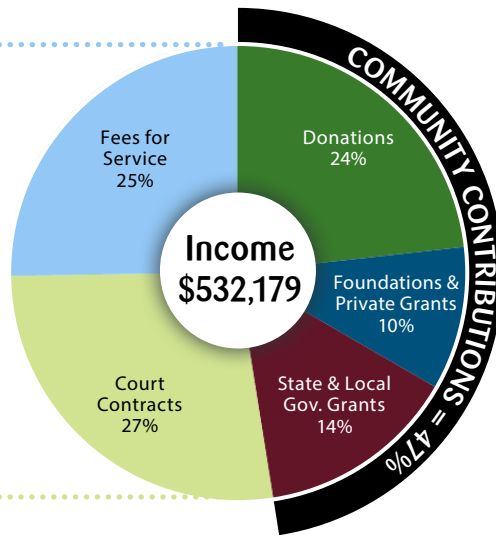
Help Whatcom County families face their most public, private, and pressing needs.

\$10,000 Average legal cost for divorce

\$115 Average paid for mediation

\$3,291,184

Projected savings to families who participated in mediation



Assets	\$253,985
Bank & Cash	\$198,857
Accounts Receivable	\$27,414
Fixed Assets	\$15,323
Other Assets	\$12,329
Liabilities	\$10,818
Equity	\$243,167
Fund Balance	\$238,297
Net Income	\$4,870

170 Court cases resolved through mediation

\$492k Savings to courts by mediation

722% Contract return on investment

Join the WDRC Giving Circle by making a tax-deductible donation



- \$1000** Develops emergent programming such as restorative justice
- \$500** Provides a free school workshop to Whatcom County youth
- \$250** Allows one family facing foreclosure participate in mediation
- \$100** A divorcing parent can create a parenting plan in mediation
- \$50** Equips a parent with skills to meet their child's needs in divorce
- \$25** Connects a child and parent in 1 hour of Supervised Visitation

2017 FUNdraising Events

- Bocce Tournament, May 6
- 25th Anniversary Lunch, June 15
- Cribbage Tournament, Sept. 10
- Wander to Wander 1k, Sept. 11
- Peace Builder Awards Gala, Nov. 17

Fred Meyer Rewards & Amazon Smile

Link your Fred Meyer Card at:
fredmeyer.com/communityrewards.
Link your Amazon account at:
smile.amazon.com

In-Kind Donations

We gratefully accept donations for our programs so we can focus our budget on providing services to those most in need. Find donation needs at: whatcomdrc.org/donate

"I support the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center because families and children who learn communication skills share with others. Thanks to the WDRC our families, kids and communities are stronger and more connected."

- Kristi Slette, Executive Director, Whatcom Family & Community Network



Thank you to all of our 2016 donors!

Giving Circle Donors



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Nancy & John Blume

Legacy Leaders

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Fairhaven Runners & Walkers
Fairhaven Village Inn
Faithlife
Film Is Truth
First Federal

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Whatcom Museum
Whatcom Sports & Recreation
Whatcom Symphony Orchestra
Windermere Property
Management
Wonderland Herbs & Teas
Yeager's Sporting Goods
Yes Massages
Yoga With Susan D'Onofrio

We sincerely regret any errors or omissions. Please inform us of any errors by contacting Iris at outreach@whatcomdr.org or 360.676.0122 x115

Our Vision

For Whatcom County to be a community in which people approach conflict in creative and healthy ways.

Our Mission

Provide and promote constructive and collaborative approaches to conflict through mediation, training, facilitation, and community education.

Our Values

Impartiality, accessibility, empowerment, collaboration, communication, and integrity.



Our Dream Team

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Program Coordinator

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- | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
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Special thanks to all of our 196 volunteers, who contributed 8,530 hours in 2016!