



Restorative Reflections

A Newsletter of Mediation Services: A Community Resource for Conflict Resolution

Spring 2005

My Favorite Four Letter Word

kelly jones

Some days work can be soooo exhausting – conflict after conflict, client after client, call after call – I just want to roll up into a teeny tiny, itsy bitsy little ball and burrow away. Or perhaps close my office door and shout at the top of my lungs. At these times there are more than a few four-letter words that I am tempted to use.

But instead, I bring my thoughts to Nancy. Nancy is a single mom with two children– age 6 and 15. She is also a recovering alcoholic. I met Nancy when the Crown Attorney referred her case to Mediation Services. She was up for theft and fraud charges and it wasn't the first time.

When Nancy came in to see me, she shared her story... things had been going really well for her – she had not had a drink for nearly a year and was growing in her Christian faith. She had a strong, supportive network of friends from her church, and though it wasn't easy, she was staying sober. Then one night she was at her neighbour Joanne's house where they were having a drinking party. Life had been stressful, money was low, and so was Nancy. Everything felt like too much to handle and Nancy, as she put it, "fell off the wagon".

Sometime during the evening Joanne gave her credit card to a friend. Later on when Nancy was getting ready to leave, she saw the credit card sitting

on the kitchen table. Without thinking she took the credit card and proceeded to withdraw \$500. Then she went to her friend Donald's house where she gave him the credit card and passed out. That is the last thing she remembers. When she woke in the morning the night was a blur. What she was sure of though, was that she had done something terribly wrong.

By the time Nancy and I met, she was deep into remorse. She desperately wanted to make things right but had no idea where to begin. She found out later that the damages came to over \$1600.00 – an amount that seemed impossible for her to ever pay back. But her desire to make things right was even greater and she was willing to do whatever it would take. She *really* wanted Joanne to know that she was not a bad person and that she was sorry. She really wanted forgiveness.

When I met with Joanne, she was all business. She was still very angry and felt betrayed. She was willing to come to mediation but made it clear that restitution was what she was interested in and there was no hope for a restored relationship. Period.

Joanne's interest in restitution was seen as something to work with, so the mediation date was set. I met with Nancy a second time to talk about some realistic possibilities for taking responsibility given what Joanne was hoping for.

The mediation took place and the parties were unable to reach an agreement. There was still a lack of clarity for both parties on the correct dollar amount, as well as Nancy's ability to pay. It seemed unlikely that the relationship would be repaired but at

Inside this issue

My Favorite Four Letter Word	1
Restorative Action for Youth	2
Volunteer News	2
Teen Touch	2
Community Conversation on Gang Issues	3
RJ around the World	3
Membership	3
Special Announcements	4
Training Calendar	4
Pancake Breakfast	4

the end of it all, the parties did agree to meet again.

Nancy was committed to the process. We met again and talked about the idea of having to temporarily put aside her need to be forgiven and focusing on Joanne's interests first. (Still hoping that in the process this too may become possible!) We also talked about

Our Mission:

To promote peace and restorative justice within the community by empowering people, through education and mediation, to resolve conflict using non-violent conflict resolution processes.

what might be a realistic monthly payment for her.

At the second mediation session an agreement was reached. Nancy would pay back the total taken from Joanne's account (\$1800.00!) with monthly payments of \$50.00. Though a friendship was not immediately renewed, I knew Joanne was feeling differently as she now indicated that she was satisfied with this agreement, did not want to see Nancy get a criminal record *and* did not want any hard



feelings on either side.

Each party went their own way and the court was informed of the outcome. Nancy began making payments immediately and has continued to make them faithfully and on time each month.

Shortly after we reached this agreement, I received a call from Nancy. Nancy and her son were walking down the street and they passed Joanne's house. Much to Nancy's surprise, Joanne not only wished her a good morning but invited her for coffee later that day. Nancy could barely believe her ears!

Since that time, Nancy and Joanne have continued to communicate and the trust between them continues to grow.

The only four-letter word I am tempted to use now is – HOPE.

Restorative Justice at Home

Restorative Action for Youth (R.A.Y.)

LeAnn Pich

My name is LeAnn Pich and I am a Master's student in Conflict Analysis at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I am currently working on a practicum placement with the Restorative Action for Youth (RAY) program at Mediation Services. RAY is a new program that enables youth involved in crime the opportunity to meet with community members in instances where victims are unable or unwilling to meet with the youth.

The purpose of the Restorative Action for Youth Program is:

1. to link knowledgeable community members with youth in conflict with the law and,
2. to support the youth in repairing the harm caused by their actions.

Restorative Action for Youth is a voluntary program in which youth are provided with the option of declining RAY and having their charges proceed through the court system. Those who choose to attend a RAY session will meet with their parent/guardian or support people and two volunteer facilitators to discuss the situation. The youth are encouraged to take responsibility for his or her actions and brainstorm meaningful ways to repair the harm caused by their actions. Once an agreement is reached between the youth, parent/guardian or support person and the community members, an agreement is drafted. Both volunteers and Mediation Services caseworkers support the youth in following through with the agreement reached.

Each agreement is very unique and

takes into account- the youth's age , cultural appropriateness, services and supports the youth is able to access, the type of incident, the youth's role in the incident, any feedback from victims who are unable to meet, and the youth's interests or hopes for the future. Agreements may include letters of apology, monetary restitution, community service, creative projects, and/ or attending educational youth programs.

If you are interested in learning more about the RAY program or would like to volunteer with the program please call Janine Hogue at 925-3425.

Interested in working directly with youth?

Teen Touch is accepting volunteer applications for their internet and phone line workers- a volunteer opportunity where you can work from the comfort of your own home (you dial into the system and calls are forwarded to you) . **Teen Touch** has a comprehensive training program for its volunteers. Many of the skills used in mediation are critical skills for **Teen Touch** phone line volunteers. **Mediation Services** and **Teen Touch** are looking at ways to collaborate on future projects. For more information about Teen Touch please call 945-5467 www.teentouch.org

Volunteer News

If you are interested in volunteering with Mediation Services as a Mediator, Restorative Action for Youth Facilitator, Board Member, Administrative Volunteer, or Special Events Volunteer, please call Janine at 925-3425

A Fetal Alcohol Syndrome information workshop will be held on the morning of June 6th from 9:30 -12:20. If you are interested in attending please call Janine at 925-3425.

Community Conversation on Gang Issues

Richard Kennett

A Community Conversation on Gang Issues was held on Wednesday March 18, 2005 at Knox United Church, 400 Edmonton Street.

The event was coordinated by the Public Safety Branch of Manitoba Justice to provide an opportunity for people in the neighbourhood to learn more about and to raise their concerns about gangs and gang related issues.

A presentation was made by representatives from the Winnipeg Police Service, followed by brief presentations about two programs run by Manitoba Justice:

- "Lighthouses" a youth crime-prevention program that provides neighbourhoods with funds to supervise youth outside school hours in safe and productive settings and
- "Turnabout" a program for youth under 12 who become involved in breaking the law.

Some resources were made available to those who attended the workshop: a comprehensive booklet entitled "Project Gang-Proof; A Handbook For Families and Community Members", published by Manitoba Justice, as well as other bro-

chures and contact numbers on gang-related issues.

A lively and valuable discussion followed the presentations, which included such questions and comments as:

- How to create a support group for parents whose children were involved in gangs.
- How to support workers and volunteers who are supervising gang-involved youth.
- How to help parents whose youth want to leave a gang.
- Raising our youth is not just the responsibility of their parents - the responsibility lies with everyone!
- Parents! Welcome the friends of your children into your home where they can meet safely!

Knox United Church was chosen as an appropriate site for the presentation because it runs a Lighthouse program and has many youth in its neighbourhood who need a safe and productive setting outside school hours. There are plans to conduct more gang awareness community discussions in the spring and summer at other Lighthouse sites in Winnipeg. This is part of an overall Manitoba Justice initiative to provide community members with an opportunity to discuss and to become more informed about gang issues.

For further information, please contact Beth Ulrich at 945-6884 or bulrich@gov.mb.ca

Restorative Justice Around the World

Association for Conflict Resolution's Fifth Annual International Conference: Conflict Resolution in a Changing World: Building the Practice and Fostering Hope

September 28-October 1, 2005
Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.acrnet.org/conferences/>

2005 International Victim Offender Mediation Association (VOMA) Conference

October 24-28, 2005
Philadelphia, PA

<http://www.voma.org/conf05.shtml>

You are invited to become a member of our organization!

\$ _____ Individual Member donation (minimum of \$20.00)

\$ _____ Non-member Donation

Members will receive our quarterly newsletter and an invitation to attend our annual general meeting.

Please make cheques payable to:

Mediation Services
302-1200 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0T5

Charitable tax receipts will be issued for donations.

Spring Training Schedule

Special Announcements

Certificate Program

Already it's been a busy 2005! We have congratulated three people who have obtained their certificate over the last few months. Best wishes to Victor Kliewer, Tricia Barnabe and Rachel Charette who all persevered to achieve their goals with us! By the end of June, we expect another 15 people will have completed their certificate.

It is very exciting for us at Mediation Services to see people keen to learn, practice their conflict resolution skills and to eventually obtain recognition for their hard work. Next time you are in the office, take a look at our Graduate Board at the back of the training room. The board captures the achievements of people working at building their skills to help resolve conflicts in their community, family and workplace.

May 20 (F)	Delivering Negative Feedback
May 26-27 (Th, F)	Conciliation Skills
May 30-31 (M,T)	Assessing Your Organization
June 2-3 (Th, F)	Interpersonal Conflict Resolution
June 6 (M)	Power Plays
June 7-8 (T,W)	Communication Skills for Mediators
June 13-14 (M,T)	Dealing with Anger
June 17 (F)	Emotional Intelligence
June 23-24 (Th, F)	Mediation Skills III

Please call 925-3410 for more training information, or check our website for trainings after June 2005.
www.mediationserviceswpg.ca

3rd Annual Pancake Breakfast and Membership Drive

Thanks to everyone who came out to visit and enjoy our pancake breakfast! We raised over \$1400 in membership registrations and renewals! If you are interested in becoming a Mediation Services Member please see our membership form on page 3, or call 925-3410 for more information.



Mediation Services Members enjoying pancakes and company.

Our Support

Mediation Services is supported by the Manitoba Department of Justice, the United Way of Winnipeg, Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, other foundations, private donations, memberships and a strong group of over 60 volunteers whose expertise in mediating, training and other activities continues to be vital to the program.