

MEDIATION MATTERS 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

April 28th, 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In recognition of the value of a peaceful community Mediation Matters' mission is to provide the skills and processes that help people handle conflict in a constructive way. The year 2010 was another busy and productive year for Mediation Matters as we continue to serve the residents of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties.

Our most well-established programs — City, Town and Village Court Mediation; Community Mediation; and Family Court Mediation — continued their outstanding record of quality and consistency. During 2010, Mediation Matters provided volunteer mediators to help resolve disputes in the following courts: Albany County Family Court; Rensselaer County Family Court; Saratoga County Family Court; Washington County Family Court; Warren County Family Court; Colonie Town Court; Albany City Court; Troy City Court; Saratoga Springs City Court; Mechanicville City Court; Glens Falls City Court; Bethlehem Town Court; Saratoga Town Court; Clifton Park Town Court, Moreau Town Court, Queensbury Town Court, and Ballston Spa Town Court.

Other programs, though smaller in scale and offered through contracts with the New York State Dispute Resolution Association, provide valuable services to various sectors of our community. These programs include: Early Intervention Mediation, Lemon Law Arbitration, Special Education Mediation, Agricultural Mediation and VESID (services for the disabled) Mediation.

In 2010, Mediation Matters continued and expanded its PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) Mediation programs in Albany, Saratoga and Warren Counties. A deepening partnership with Skidmore College has resulted in joint mediator training sessions producing college aged mediators. These individuals have helped raise the quality of the service we supply by offering more mediator diversity and providing a mediator closer in age to the teenager at the table.

During 2010, we became more active in group facilitation and work with organizations. We entered into a contract with the Albany Police Department to coordinate the formation of the Albany Community Policing Advisory

Committee, a group of citizens representing each of the City's wards, and appointed by the Common Council to act as a liaison among the Police Department and the citizens of Albany. The Committee has been instrumental in making recommendations and monitoring the progress of the implementation of a community policing policy in Albany under Steven Krokoff, the new Chief of Police.

Mediation Matters also contracted with the Troy Housing Authority to help manage conflict and develop sound policies and practices for the Tenant's Association at the Kennedy Towers senior's facility.

During 2010, we also worked with the Center for Community Justice (CCJ), in Schenectady to implement a consolidation of the County Appointed Special Assistants Programs in Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties. The three programs now run as one entity under the auspices of CCJ.

As always, none of this would be possible without our panel of nearly 100 volunteers, whose talent, dedication and passion are a constant inspiration to staff, Board members, Judges, and other referral sources.

Our Board of Directors continued their dedicated service and assured guidance, with Art Fowler continuing his service as Board President during the year. One new member was added to the Board in 2010. Mathew Johnson is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies at Siena College and is Director of the College's Academic Community Engagement and VISTA Fellows Programs. Our Board is stronger thanks to his presence.

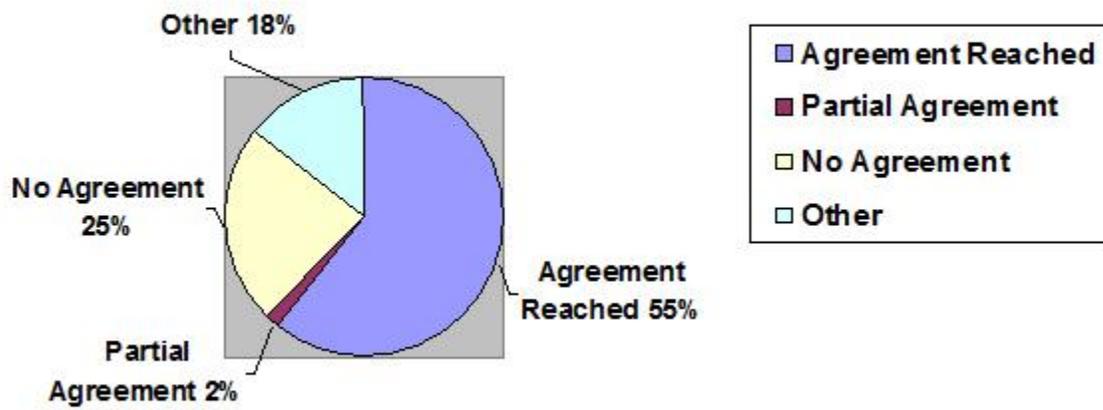
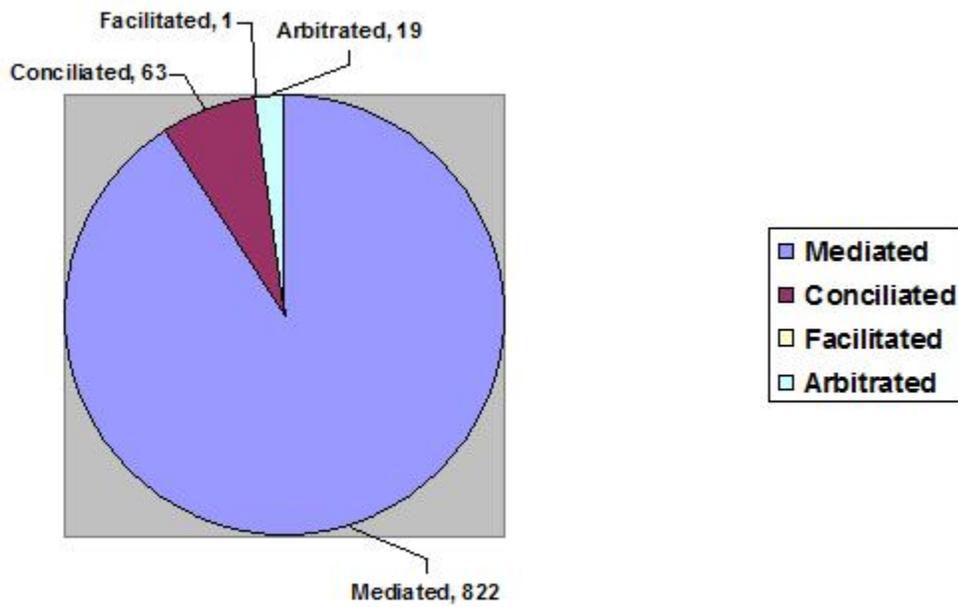
At the end of the year, due to term limits, our Board lost two well respected directors, Claudia Engelhardt and Ron Vero. Ron continues his service to Mediation Matters as a mediator and arbitrator. Claudia also continues her service as Director Emeritus and frequent advisor to our new President.

With Jonathan Fishbein taking over as President beginning in 2011, we look forward to continuing our mission in the five counties we serve.

Jonathan Fishbein – President

Peter Glassman – Executive Director

Mediation Matters 2010 Case Statistics



2009 Annual Report

May 4th, 2010

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2009 was another busy and productive year of growth at Mediation Matters.

Our most well-established programs, Town and City Court Mediation, Community Mediation, and Family Court Mediation, continued their outstanding record of quality and consistency. During 2009, Mediation Matters provided volunteer mediators to help resolve disputes in the following courts: Albany County Family Court; Rensselaer County Family Court; Saratoga County Family Court; Washington County Family Court; Warren County Family Court; Albany City Court; Troy City Court; Saratoga Springs City Court; Mechanicville City Court; Glens Falls City Court; Bethlehem Town Court; Saratoga Town Court; Clifton Park Town Court, Moreau Town Court, Queensbury Town Court & Ballston Spa Town Court.

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In 2009, Mediation Matters continued and expanded its PINS Mediation programs in Albany, Saratoga and Warren County. A deepening partnership with Skidmore College has resulted in joint mediator training sessions which have produced college aged mediators. These individuals have helped raise the quality of the service we offer by offering more mediator diversity and providing a mediator closer in age to the teenager at the table.

During 2009, we began to collaborate with Skidmore College, the Saratoga County District Attorney's Office and the Saratoga County Public Defender's Office to explore the possibility of starting a Restorative Justice Program.

Restorative justice is a process where the person responsible for the harm and the person who has been harmed both take an active role in a dialogue. Those harmed have an opportunity to express the full impact of the crime upon their lives, to receive answers to any lingering questions about the incident, and to participate in holding those responsible accountable for his or her actions. Responsible parties can tell their story of why the crime occurred and how it has affected their lives. They are given an opportunity to make things right and repair the harms done. The Restorative Justice process results in very high rates of satisfaction for those harmed, true accountability by those responsible, reduced recidivism and closure for all involved. The program will start as a pilot in 2010.

Our Court Appointed Special Assistants (CASA) program enjoyed a busy year as well. CASA provides trained volunteers to advocate in our Family Courts on behalf of children at risk for abuse and neglect. It is with both hope and sadness that we reached a collaborative arrangement with Schenectady's Center for Community Justice to merge the CASA programs in Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties into one program – CASA of the Capital Region. These programs will now be run out of the Center for Community Justice, allowing for greater economies of scale and cost savings, particularly in volunteer training and program administration. We are confident that CASA's activity under CCJ and the leadership of Connie Neal will grow and that the organization will thrive.

As always, none of this would be possible without our panel of 80+ volunteers, whose talent, dedication and passion are a constant inspiration to staff, Board members, and Judges as well as all of our referral sources. Special thanks go to the NYS Unified Court System, Albany County, the New York State Dispute Resolution Association, the Saratoga Gaming Foundation and the United Way of the Greater Capital Region. We also would like to thank Albany County Executive Michael D. Breslin and Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino for their unwavering support.

Our Board of Directors continued their assured guidance. Four new members were added this year: Portia Given – with the Civil Service Employees Association; Louis Miller – a retired postal worker and mediator; Jo Ann O'Neill – retired teacher and principal, mediator and CASA volunteer; and Al Janik – former Supervisor of the Town of Greenfield in Saratoga County, arbitrator and mediator. Our Board is stronger thanks to their presence.

As was the case with most organizations, Mediation Matters has suffered some this year due to the lagging economy. Our core programs and funding remain as strong as ever, however, and we look forward to maintaining those high quality services while exploring new opportunities during 2010.

Arthur W. Fowler – President

Peter Glassman – Executive Director

