

Education for Conflict Resolution

Reconciliation Notes

Features, Facts, and Figures from ECR

Transforming Ourselves - Transcending Our Differences

As we polish the silver following one holiday feast and in preparation for the next, let us explore a well-known, lesser talked about tradition...family conflict.

We have all likely encountered strife in the midst of celebrations; a myriad of challenges, whether it stems from the vantage point of how one prepares the mashed potatoes to the passing of plates. Likely, we have all experienced the challenge of being compared to someone else, or strongly advised on what topics would be 'safe' to discuss. The beauty of connection is in the recognition of our differences. We expand who we are as individuals through opening ourselves up to new ideas.

"When Conflict Comes to Dinner" was the title of a Values, Arts, and Ideas convocation we facilitated a couple years ago. The crux of that interactive program was reminding us how normal conflict is. It is a universal experience.

When we positively address our differences, we all become better people. This *'leaning into'* difficult conversation is an intentional act. It is because we value the other person or persons and want to understand their perspective.

Think about your typical response to something you see differently. Do you say, "No, that's not how it was," or simply say that the other person is wrong? What would shift if you were to say, "Oh, that is interesting; tell me more..." or even, "That is interesting; what I saw or thought was..."

Here is the challenge for you: count how many times you begin a sentence with 'no' or 'not' in a day. Through removing these small words from our conversations, we change the dynamic of its outcome. Try it. If you feel led, share your insights with us.

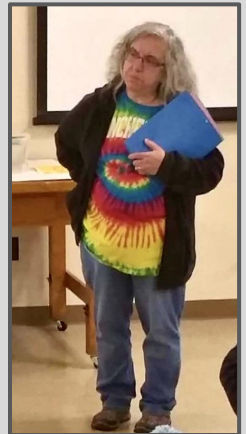
One more thought: what changes in yourself do you notice if you pause and take a breath before offering a reply? This is valid for both verbal and written responses.

T. Onderko

Honoring Nancy Yeatter Sare West

Beloved educator, mediator, and friend, we take a moment to say goodbye to Nancy Yeatter West. Nancy passed in late October.

In her wake, we reflect on her 40 year tenure as an educator and ardent advocate of peaceful conflict resolution.



Nancy teaching Peace Learning Connection for 4th graders - 2019

Nancy fostered the spirit of our mission statement through her intentional pursuit to find common ground. She encouraged others to work towards this measure of accountability. She readily used these proactive skills in her classroom and on the playground, supporting the role of conflict managers at the intermediate school level. Nancy encouraged her students to hone these essential life skills.

Her role as mediator and the leadership she provided our Board will be missed. More importantly, many will recall how she gently commanded the use of productive conflict resolution skills.

T. Onderko

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2020-2021 Activity Report

For Year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Mediations

- **Self Referred Mediations: 0**
Adults Served: 0
Mediators: 0
- **Court Ordered Mediations: 2**
Adults Served: 4
Mediators: 6
- **MU Mediations: 0**
Participants: 0
Mediators: 0
- **School Attendance Mediations: 11**
Students: 12
School Personnel: 19
Parents/Guardians: 11
Mediators: 20

Trainings and Workshops

- **MU Trainings/Workshops**
Dialogue Circles
December 16, 2020: 1 hour
Participants: Students: 4 Faculty: 0
Staff: 1 Community: 0
Trainer: Theresa Onderko
Productive Communication and Conflict
March 13, 2021: 7 hours
Participants: Students: 6 Faculty: 0
Staff: 2 Community: 0
Trainer: Theresa Onderko
ECR Mediator Refresher Workshop (via Zoom)
April 11, 2021
Participants: 8
Leadership: Theresa Onderko

ECR Board Meetings

- 07/20/20 - via zoom
- 09/01/20 - via zoom
- 02/15/21 - via zoom
- 03/29/21 - via zoom
- 04/26/21 - via zoom
- 05/20/21 - via zoom

MU Campus Presentations:

- **Three Presentations in Alicia Dailey's Human Conflict Class. November 04, 06, and 09, 2020: 15 attended each time.**
Manchester University students are introduced to the elements of conflict, the role of effective communication in directing conflict to be positive, and exploring their own conflict management styles.

Donations

(7/1/20-6/30/21)

Total Donations: \$16,002
Churches: \$2,520
Business and Organizations: \$0
Individuals: \$13,482

Thank you for supporting us!

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A Letter from the Board Chair, Linda Troop: How the Times Have Changed ECR

I know it is now a cliché to invoke the opening lines of Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, but I am a former English teacher, and I can't help myself. All too often, we only see the first two clauses quoted. Here is how the rest of it goes:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, . . ."

I cite the quote because it applies so well to ECR at the moment.

How has it been the worst of times for ECR?

These last two years of COVID had all but decimated our school attendance mediation program (SAM) since most students were doing school at home and attendance was not a problem or a high priority for most school systems. At the same time the requests from the Wabash Superior Court for court-ordered mediations has plummeted, also COVID-related. This, of course, has had a devastating effect on our financial bottom line and means ECR has been heavily dependent on individual donations to remain viable. We were unable to offer the Mediating Interpersonal Conflict (MIC) annual training this past year, again, because of COVID. To top it off, we have recently lost two valued board members: one to death and the other to prolonged family illness. "It was the season of darkness, . . . it was the winter of despair, . . . we had nothing before us."

How is it the best of times for ECR?

Schools are back in session county-wide, attendance problems are emerging, and there has been a rapid uptick in the number of requests for SAM's. Though court-ordered mediations have not yet seen a rise, we see that in our future. This year we are not only planning to bring back our MIC training but also to offer a new, shorter training, "Productive Communication and Conflict" that might appeal to a wider audience. Our board members are in the process of seeking out and applying for grant(s) to help ECR re-envision the work of the organization and to develop a sustainability plan. And, most importantly, our donor base has remained steadfast, generous, and supportive of our work for the past two years. "It was the age of wisdom, . . . it was the epoch of belief, . . . it was the season of light, . . . it was the spring of hope . . ."

ECR was founded and incorporated in 1989. It has a vibrant 32-year history of training mediators and providing crucial mediation services to the community. However, ECR, like so many non-profits today, is at a crossroads. Will we survive as an organization and continue to offer mediation services to Wabash County residents, or will we fade away? There certainly is a strong organizational will to survive, but we need the help of all individuals who believe in this work and would like to see it continue. We need people like you to train as mediators and increase our mediator pool. We need persons like you to serve on our board. We need persons like you to recommend our mediation services in your workplaces, in your churches, in your community, and in your families. Finally, we need persons like you to continue to donate. If you are motivated to support us in all these ways, we will continue to thrive as an organization and "[have] everything before us."

ECR's staff and Board of Directors would like to offer Wendy Erbaugh, ECR's outgoing Mediation Coordinator and Office Manager, a heartfelt thank you for her two+ years of excellent service.

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Website: www.WorkItOut.org
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ECR Needs You Now More Than Ever

The Vision of ECR is to promote the peaceful and productive resolution of conflict and, in all its work, seek to put the understandings and skills needed for successful conflict resolution into the hands of as many persons as possible. **In service to this vision, ECR significantly impacts the local community by providing a wide range of programs and services:** Peace-Learning training for elementary-aged children, student truancy mediations, mediations for parents or neighbors in conflict, collaboration with Manchester University's Peace Studies program, and trainings and workshops in conflict resolution and mediation for university students and community members.

In the past, sources of income for **ECR** have included local businesses, churches, clubs, organizations, and foundations. However, COVID's effect on all these sources have greatly diminished our revenue stream. **Now, more than ever, critical funding for ECR comes from individuals -- friends and supporters who recognize the contribution of the organization to our community.** Your gift **helps ensure not only the very survival of the organization,** but also the continuation and growth of ECR's innovative programs and services.

An envelope is enclosed for your convenience, or donate online at www.WorkItOut.org



Photo by Nate Corder

ECR welcomes Tina Rieman to our staff. She has recently come on board as the new Mediation Coordinator and Office Manager. ECR is lucky to have found such a competent and positive person so quickly to replace Wendy Erbaugh, who resigned in September.