

# Reconciliation Notes



Education for Conflict Resolution  
PO Box 275  
North Manchester, IN 46962



## ECR Received a Good Deeds Grant!

The Community Foundation of Wabash County has awarded **ECR** with a \$4,725 Good Deeds grant to help us provide a "Parenting the Teen Brain" Workshop.

In a letter to ECR, the Community Foundation said: "We are pleased to participate in this important work as a funder and appreciate the work you do on behalf of Wabash County citizens."

**ECR** plans to offer the "Parenting the Teen Brain" Workshop, free of charge, on **Saturday, September 27, 2025**, in Wabash, to anyone who is interested. Please see [workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/](http://workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/) for more details, and help us spread the word.

## Future ECR Events:

"Parenting the Teen Brain" Workshop, free of charge, on **Saturday, September 27, 2025**, in Wabash, to anyone who is interested.

## School Attendance Mediation Mediator Training

**October 16, 22 & 23** (evening zooms), and all day **Sat., Oct. 25**, in person, in North Manchester.

## Please see

[workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/](http://workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/) to register & find more details about all upcoming events, and **help us spread the word.**

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# Spring Greetings from ECR

## We're Still Here

Letter from the **ECR** Executive Director: Linda Troop



Hello, Reader. We are still here! Even though our political milieu has been severely rocked, even though this is not the same world in which we wrote to you last fall, we are still here. For better or for worse, **ECR** has not been supported by federal funds for many years, so, we can talk to you without watching our language. Words like **diversity**, **equity**, and **inclusion** are still in our vocabulary; and we intend to use them liberally, even though there is a whole contingent out there that views them as "dirty words." We still intend to offer our services to the **diverse** populations of Wabash County; we still believe that **everyone** in our community **should be included** as the constituents of our services; and, we still believe that **all persons deserve fair and equitable treatment**. Most importantly, we still urge everyone in our community to seek out our mediation services for help in resolving and/or transforming their conflicts.

I use the word "transforming" here because there are some conflicts that do not lend themselves to a resolving, but if they are dealt with in healthy and productive ways, they can lead to a transformation of the conflicting parties--to a better understanding of each other, to better communication with each other, to a recognition of the validity each other's positions, and perhaps, even to a compromise. Because we live in a world in which people view the violence and drama of the Jerry Springer and Dr. Phil shows as their role models for conflict resolution, we all need to be reminded that there is a nonviolent and nonchaotic way to deal with conflicts. For wherever there are people interacting, there are conflicts, and **ECR** sees our role as not only the mediators of conflict but also the educators role-modeling how to cope with conflict in a world that is presently conflict torn and worn by deep philosophical differences.

I will change directions now to tell you about the new feature that we will be running on page two of our newsletter for the next couple of years. To put this in context, please remember that **ECR** has been operating for almost 37 years now. That is almost unheard of for a small mediation center like ours. Most of Indiana's small mediation centers have disappeared, but we are still chugging along despite the economic and cultural setbacks that have beset us since our inception in 1989.

With this in mind, we decided that it would be good to review and record our history for future generations. We will be interviewing persons whom we are calling "the movers and shakers" in **ECR's** history. We want to know what they were thinking and doing that led them to their work with **ECR**, and we want to know about the impact of their work and how their original vision is still impacting us today. We have started with Jeff Hawkins, who sat on the original community-wide action committee that was entrusted with a grant from Lilly to bring something community building to Wabash County; and Steve Kinzie, who was the first director of **ECR**. We urge you to turn to page two and begin to read about our founders and our founding.

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER





## Retired Professor, Steve Kinzie, ECR's First Director

Steve Kinzie was the first director of ECR, 1988-1990. He wrote a theme song, "Let's Be Friends", for elementary school students being trained as peer mediators. What drew Steve to ECR was "The vision of helping resolve, transform conflicts by processes that create understanding leading to agreements, and, when possible, friendships." Steve continues: "My office was in the upstairs of the cafe/tavern of the amazing J. P. Freeman, who was such a friend in our efforts. It's important to acknowledge the help and training I got from Gary Zimmerman, with whom I worked and learned during several mediations. ECR was my introduction to mediation. That experience was critical for my years as an Adjunct Professor of Peace Studies at the University of La Verne where [my wife] Debbie served as Director of the Peace Studies program. We taught courses in Mediation and worked as mediators.

Steve spends his time these days making music with local friends and "our yearly gathering of musician friends dating back to the sixties who refer to ourselves as the Sack of Hammers; loving life on our acre of land on the Okanogan River with our cat, Squeaks, dogs, Poppy and Pip, and 14 layer hens;" and making frequent visits to their adult children. "We're active in the Ellisforde Church of the Brethren, where Debbie preaches from time to time and I contribute to music. We're LBGTQ+ friendly with a young progressive pastor."

Conflict resolution, according to Steve, "is important and challenging work to bring about resolution (perhaps better thought of as transformation) between parties in conflict. Sometimes it doesn't work, but it's always worth the effort to try."

## Retired Pastor, Jeff Hawkins, Member of the Original ECR Board



"My association with ECR started prior to its birth, when I was invited by the Manchester Church of the Brethren to join in a Lilly Endowment funded project organized by McCormick Theological Seminary (Chicago) described as a "Church and Community Project." The Seminary approached the local church to consider involvement as an historic peace church. The Manchester Church of the Brethren gathered a very diverse, widely-representative committee—from pacifists to VFW members—to imagine what such a project may look like." He remembers a key moment of showing Gary Zimmerman an article about "a group in Chicago that was doing conflict resolution....teaching students in schools to be conflict managers as well as using a Community Boards model for neighborhood conflict management. Gary saw the article and said, 'I am doing this kind of work at Manchester College!' Something clicked. Maybe, we thought, world peace included local peace in the form of conflict resolution. Maybe world peace *started* with local peace. So the committee began to explore the possibility, which turned into setting up student conflict manager programs in schools as well as training for community mediation."

What he's doing these days: "still trying to figure out how to keep a small-batch local food farm in business together with my partner and son, Zach; still preaching monthly at the Lutheran church, as well as hosting clergy groups on the farm for continuing education monthly through our non-profit HOPE CSA; and in my third third of life trying to be a good ancestor, especially as a grandpa."

"My belief that local conflict resolution serves world peace remains unwavering, and I am grateful to the many who have preserved the mission and found ways to sustain it, no easy task. Thank you, current ECR workers and supporters, for persisting in the mission. It is demanding, even draining work. But also holy work."

We couldn't agree more.



## What's Going On With E C R ? National Association For Community Mediation (NAFCM) Honors Jan Rhoades as Outstanding Volunteer

Congratulations to **Jan Rhoades** for being chosen by a leading national mediation organization, NAFCM, as their 2025 Outstanding Volunteer of the Winter Quarter. She was honored for serving as an example of what it means to lead with integrity and with collaboration, making a difference in our community, and amplifying the voice of mediation. Jan was chosen out of all nominations from over 300 mediation centers across the US, Canada, and Mexico. She was recognized for her commitment to **ECR**, her hard work, and her willingness to step up time and time again. Jan really pours her heart and soul into her efforts to bring professionalism to the **ECR** board, recruit new board members, mediate conflicts, and train people in the skills of school attendance mediation. Putting her social work background to use as a School Attendance Mediation mediator, she is credited as the reason some of the Wabash county students have graduated from high school, which will have a positive impact on these students for the rest of their lives. **ECR** is very proud of Jan and grateful for her many hours of outstanding volunteer work for the good of our community. **ECR** Director, Linda Troop, said about Jan: "Jan really helps the organization make wise and practical decisions on a wide range of issues. Other staff members seek her out when they are in a decision-making process because she gives such wise and considered counsel. She has exceptional follow-through with clients and in other aspects of her work. Jan does not need follow-up. She takes her responsibilities with the organization seriously and can be counted on to complete every task she is assigned or volunteers for."

## Thank You for Supporting Us! Donations 11/12/24 - 3/25/25

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## You're Invited to Our June Annual Meeting

The **ECR Annual Meeting** will be held in the Shepherd Room of the Jo Young Switzer Center (2nd floor) on the Manchester University campus on **Tues., June 17, 2025, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.** It will be a regular board meeting, but our friends, supporters, and the public are invited to attend.