

Reconciliation Notes



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



The October 2025 School Attendance Mediator Training Group represented Wabash, Huntington, and Vigo Counties. Below, SAM trainees participate in a simulated school mediation role play as a key part of their training.



ECR Completes its Fourth SAM Mediator Training:

Word has gotten out to various counties in Indiana that ECR's School Attendance Mediation (SAM) Program is an effective intervention for students with a chronic pattern of absenteeism. As a result there have been more frequent requests for ECR to train volunteers from other counties in both how to conduct SAM mediations and how to set up their own county-wide SAM Program. In October, we trained six participants representing three counties and also one Manchester University student. ECR hopes to offer another training in the spring of 2026.

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“What the world needs now is love sweet love. It’s the only thing that there’s just too little of.”

Lyrics from the song, “What The World Needs Now” (1965)
by Burt Bacharach & Hal David

Compassion: What the World Needs Now

Letter from the E C R Executive Director: Linda Troop



It is a strange and fearsome time for the compassionate of heart in America. Every day presents new obstacles to our collective journey towards justice, peace, and unity. Core rules, principles, and norms are being questioned, and institutions are undergoing significant changes. There is a growing distrust in government and a deep concern for the public safety in an era in which Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are invading public spaces in armored tanks, sporting combat gear, and waving military-style weapons. Greed and corruption are lauded while human empathy and compassion are renounced.

In my college days, I studied the renowned Jewish philosopher and theologian, Martin Buber, who believed that it is in human nature to fear things that pose no real threat to us but to desire things that offer no real benefit, all because we are reluctant to recognize our true selves and our genuine needs.

“We can be redeemed only to the extent to which we see ourselves,” claims Buber.

Known for his profound insights into human relationships, Buber, in his writings emphasizes the important role that self-awareness and self-understanding play in promoting personal growth and redemption.

You may be asking yourself “How does this discussion relate to **ECR**?” Fair question. The most important part of the mediation process is the mediator’s skill at holding a light up to a participant’s underlying needs as opposed to their expressed temporary interests. Beneath the façade that we all create with language, what mediation participants really want is to be listened to and to have the person they are in conflict with really *hear* what they need. The magic and the joy of a skilled mediator is the ability to make both sides of a conflict *heard*, and this brings resolution.

At **ECR**, we believe that compassion and empathy are humanity’s genuine needs—and never more than at this very moment. Here at **ECR**, we hold on to the hope that the mediations we offer to community members unveil the compassion and empathy that will assist them to open a window onto a clearer view of true self-understanding. If we can provide this helping hand, as Buber says, “to lift a man from the mud and filth, with strong hands, we can pull him and ourselves out into the light.”



ECR's 2025-2026 Board of Directors at **ECR's Annual Fall Board Retreat** on November 18.

Pictured from the top left and moving clockwise are **Anuj Gurung, Joshua Adler, Andy Rich, John Horn, Nathan Sautter, Jan Rhoades (Board Vice Chair), Linda Troop (Board Chair and ECR Director), Pam Long (Board Treasurer), and Tina Rieman, (ECR Office Manager).**



Carol Horn, ECR's Second Director and Ongoing Mediator

"After 18 ½ years of elementary teaching, I had felt that I wanted to learn more... and I did for sure!" Carol Horn has been involved with ECR since near the very beginning. She was the Executive Director 1990-1998 and the Director of School Services 1998-2008. Since then she continues to serve the community as a volunteer mediator for ECR.

A memorable experience for Carol was a neighborhood mediation where so much violence, or threat of violence, was happening to young and old, and then after intensive sessions with so many people from the neighborhood participating and so many true feelings and stories shared, it totally turned around! "One main person had the courage to share what was making him so violent. It still gives me chills to think about it."

She keeps busy each day with the Wabash Church of the Brethren Growing Grounds (GG) outreach to the homeless, those coming out of incarceration, and just generally those on-the-edge. "Growing Grounds actually started over 20 years ago because of going into the jail to do a few classes using ECR materials, and then two of the inmates were released to come to an ECR training. That opened my eyes to folks being released, especially women, and having absolutely no place to go when exiting the lobby of the jail."

What Carol values about conflict resolution: "Can you picture a society learning these skills and using these skills in all aspects of life? Wow! Defensiveness, revenge, and violence could be so reduced.... I have often wished that the mediation process steps and skills that I learned through ECR and conflict resolution books and resources would have been on my radar when our kids were growing up and in the home. The communication skills and the step-by-step processes are so applicable in any setting." So true.

Thank you, Carol. We know you're doing all you can do bring peace to this world.

Bob Gross, ECR Former Director, Trainer, and Ongoing Mediator



Bob Gross was one of the volunteer mediators in the first group trained by ECR. "I had already been invited to do some informal mediation in situations with friends, and wanted to learn more about it and develop skills for continuing to do that. And I wanted to be helpful where I could be." He became a volunteer mediator, then moved on to the new part-time position of Director of Training and eventually to Executive Director (also part-time).

A memorable story that Bob experienced as a mediator: "We mediated a conflict between a white MU student and her parents. The parents objected to her relationship with a black MU student, and had refused to pay for her to come back to the university the following year. There's not space here to explain the dynamics of the mediation, but the outcome was that the student was able to continue the relationship and return to school the next year, and the parents were able to save face through a small concession that the student agreed to. As mediators, we had to refrain from addressing the father's racism directly, so that we could maintain some trust from him while empowering the student to speak for herself."

A larger story of our work in the early years: "Through ECR and Carol Horn's work specifically, many schools in Indiana began peer mediation programs. ECR led the way in Indiana in those early days of school mediation programs. Through ECR and my work specifically, we trained initial groups of mediators and helped to start mediation programs in a number of communities: Fort Wayne, Huntington, Warsaw, Indianapolis, Bloomington, Richmond, and also Elgin, Illinois, and Lima, Ohio."

"ECR serves the community, seeking to be useful with the expertise the organization can bring to conflict situations. The commitment to a mediation approach that empowers the people in the conflict is important to me."

Bob continues to support ECR by consulting with church congregations in conflict. It is through Bob's unique gift for working with churches in conflict that ECR is able to continue offering this service to the community.



2024-2025 Activity Report

Mediations

Self Referred Mediations:

Mediations: 2
Adults Served: 52
Mediators: 3

Court Ordered Mediations:

Mediations: 0
Adults Served: 0
Mediators: 0

Manchester University Mediations:

Mediations: 2
Participants: 11
Mediators: 4

School Attendance Mediations:

Mediations: 1
Students: 1
Parents/Guardians: 1
School Personnel: 1
Mediators: 3
Referrals withdrawn: 1

Board Meetings

10/15/24 in person
11/19/24 in person
1/21/25 zoom
2/18/25 zoom
4/15/25 in person
5/20/25 in person
6/17/25 in person

Trainings / Workshops

None

Presentations

Conflict at Work - to Manchester University senior social work majors, 5 attendees

Healthy Conflict - to Manchester University students and North Manchester community - about 30 attendees

ECR workshop and trainings - to Rotary Club of North Manchester: 10 attendees

Presenters: Tina Rieman and Linda Troop



Tina Rieman representing ECR at the Community Fair on the Manchester University Campus, September 4, 2025.

Donations 7/1/24-6/30/25

Total: **\$23,103.85**
Churches: **\$2,765**

Business and Organizations: **\$0**
Individuals: **\$20,338.85**

62 Total Donors: 59 individuals, 3 churches, 0 organizations

Thank You for Supporting Us! Donations 3/26/25 - 11/20/25

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