

Reconciliation Notes



Education for Conflict Resolution
PO Box 275
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SAM Mediator Training:

ECR will hold another School Attendance Mediation Mediator Training April 7, 9, and 16 (evening zooms), and all day Sat., April 18, in person, in North Manchester. See www.workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/ to find more details. If interested, please register by 3/27 and help us spread the word.

ECR plans to offer another training in the fall.



School Attendance Mediator training participants in a role play, September 2023



Special Announcement:

Plans are in the works this spring for ECR to offer a **Zoom Book Club** experience to anyone who might be interested in reading nonfiction books that relate to the topic of conflict—its causes, its manifestation in our daily lives, and its resolution. We will post more details about this later, via email & facebook, but for now, be aware that our first book will be *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict* by Donna Hicks, Ph.D. About this book Desmond Tutu says, “[It] is a must-read for those who want to experience peace in their everyday lives and peace in the world around them.”

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Reader, sit back & relax with a hot cup of tea and read **Troop's Fireside Chat.**



Letter from ECR's Executive Director:
Linda Troop

Well, this is new. Isn't it? A Winter Newsletter. How did this happen? First, we realized that we had more material than we had room for in the Fall Newsletter. Some important events and items had to be left out. After brainstorming, however, we came up with the idea of creating a 2026 Winter Newsletter to catch you up on those events and items. We are not sure yet, but this may become a regular thing. This winter has been bitter cold and extra snowy, so let's call this Troop's "Fireside Chat," not even comparable to Churchill and Roosevelt's famous 1940's radio fireside chats that rallied two nations to stand against Hitler's barbarity. (Or, come to think of it, maybe there are some political-historical parallels at least.) But we won't go there.

The first item of news we want to share with you is about a training that **ECR** Trainers received about a year ago on the topic of the teen brain and how it differs in form and function from the adult brain. Now if that may seem like an odd thing for a mediation group to get trained in, here's what motivated us to do that: Quite often, when we did school attendance mediations, we would hear this comment from parents and especially grandparents of teenagers. "We don't know how to get better behavior from our teens because we don't really understand them," or "I never thought I would be raising a teenager at my age, and I am just not in touch with how they think or what motivates their irresponsible behaviors."

Parents and grandparents seemed to be stymied by teen behavior and looking to us for advice and answers. We decided that offering Wabash County residents a parenting workshop would be useful to local parents, grandparents, and youth workers. Today's educators have been trained in techniques for "educating the teen brain" which has had an important impact on adolescent learning. After receiving our training, we believed that "parenting the teen brain" based on the latest research of psychologists and neurologists could also improve parenting techniques and teen behavior.

We planned a 3-hour "Parenting the Teen Brain Workshop," widely advertised it in flyers, the newspaper and on local radio, and attracted 25 registrants for the workshop. Though not all the registrants showed up for the workshop on September 27, we were pleased with the interest and engagement of the participants who did, and they seemed pleased with what we offered them as illustrated by these three post-workshop evaluation comments: "Hold more workshops! This was fantastic!", "Facilitators did great with presenting info in an easy-to-access and understandable way. Thank you!", and "They [the trainers] provided practical solutions and techniques for communicating effectively with teens."

Our second item of news is that ECR is launching a new fundraising and marketing campaign to secure stronger support from local businesses, organizations, and individual donors. As I've mentioned before, sustaining a nonprofit mediation center in today's climate is challenging. Without increased revenue, we risk being unable to continue offering valuable workshops and mediator trainings—or even keeping our doors open. For 37 years, **ECR** has served this community, and we hope to continue that work well into our 50th anniversary and beyond. But this future depends on the financial support we receive today. Please review the support-level benefits chart on page 3 and consider increasing your contribution this year. Your generosity is essential to keeping **ECR's** programs and mediation services sustainable. *Thank you!*



Jim Smith, former ECR director and mediator

In 1988, when Jim Smith was working as an administrator with Manchester Community Schools, Manchester College Psychology professor, Gary Zimmerman, introduced him to community board service, peer mediation, and the newly-formed organization, **Education for Conflict Resolution**. Jim found that the philosophy behind **ECR's** work appealed to him. He was particularly impressed because it offered "the logic behind the idea of conflict being a normal condition" while creating a structure for resolving conflict peacefully. Nearing retirement in 2007, Jim completed mediator training with Angie Briner and became a volunteer mediator. Within a year, he was asked to join the Board of Directors, where he served for five years, including two years as president.

Reflecting on his time as president, Jim spoke about the financial challenges **ECR** faced during that period, which forced a reduction in staff and the loss of office space. Despite those difficulties, the organization endured, and it was out of that hardship that Jim worked with Angie Briner, Katy Gray Brown, and Dave McFadden to establish a collaboration between Manchester University and **ECR**. **MU** would provide office space and access to telephone and WIFI services while **ECR** would offer mediation trainings and no-cost mediations for student conflicts. This collaboration remains instrumental to the organization today.

Another effort Jim remembers fondly is the **Peace Learning Connection Program** for fourth graders in the North Manchester community. Working with Bev Eikenberry, Jim recalls it as "a great experience," noting that there is "a lot of evidence that speaks to the lasting impact of that program for students." Jim served as one of the facilitators of the program, guiding students, during a one-day camp at Koinonia Environmental and Retreat Center, through conflict resolution exercises such as the River of Conflict, the Peace Walk, and the study of stories about the lives of famous world peace role models, all designed to help students explore conflict resolution and peaceful problem-solving.

Looking toward the future of the organization, Jim emphasizes the importance of adaptability. He believes that **ECR** has remained viable because it is supported by the community and is willing to change as new needs arise. He thinks that over the 37 years of its existence, **ECR** has continued to evolve to meet the community where it is in addressing conflict. As Jim puts it, "**ECR sees what's needed, and addresses it.**"

These days, Jim remains deeply involved in the North Manchester community, serving his 19th year on the town council and his 12th year on the Community Foundation of Wabash County board. He remains active at the North Manchester United Methodist Church and is currently Executive Director of the Manchester Symphony Orchestra. After many years of service, Jim says he and his family are "living our best lives."

- by Joshua Adler

ECR Board Welcomes New Member, Nathan Sautter



Nathan is the Global Product Management Director at Zimmer Biomet. In his own words: "I bring a unique perspective to the ECR board with my corporate business background. Strategic planning, problem solving, customer segmentation/targeting, fiscal responsibility, and tactical execution are areas I provide value. Volunteering has always been important to me – working with Habitat for Humanity, Brethren Disaster Ministries, and various church leadership positions. I am excited to join the ECR board because the services ECR provides are important for the community, mediating peaceful resolutions to hard situations."



Levels of Support

Level Name	Annual Donation	Meaning & Role	Recognition & Benefits
Supporter	\$1 - \$99	You believe in the mission and value of ECR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you letter and tax receipt • Name listed in next newsletter • Option to join ECR email newsletter • Invitation to ECR's annual meeting • Recognition on ECR's website donor page
Bridge Builder	\$100 - \$499	You help ECR connect people and open the door to understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All previous benefits • ECR sticker
Mediation Advocate	\$500 - \$999	You strengthen mediation services that help families, students, and neighbors resolve disputes peacefully.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All previous benefits • Individual appreciation post on ECR's social media • Listed in annual thank you ad in local newspapers • ECR magnet
Peace Advocate	\$1,000 - \$2,499	You sustain ECR's community mediation, youth, and training programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All previous benefits • Recognition at ECR events • Complimentary attendance for one ECR workshop
Peace Champion	\$2,500 - \$4,999	You help expand ECR's impact through partnerships with courts, schools, and local organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All previous benefits • Logo featured on website donors page (for businesses) • Verbal recognition at ECR's annual meeting
Pathfinder	\$5,000 - \$9,999	You help ECR capitalize on opportunities to expand its services to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All previous benefits • Featured profile in ECR newsletter and social media • Flyer display at ECR events
Ambassador of Peace	\$10,000+	You are a cornerstone of ECR's peacebuilding mission — leading by example and helping entire communities thrive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All previous benefits • Personalized impact story showing how your gift made a difference • Opportunity for private briefing or training with ECR leadership

Education for Conflict Resolution is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible, minus the value of any goods or services provided by ECR to the donor.

Thank You for Supporting Us! Donations 11/21/25 - 2/14/26

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