

# Reconciliation Notes



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

## NEW Training Series: From Conflict to Connection

ECR will hold a new, two-part conflict resolution training, in person, in North Manchester. **Part I: Building the Bridge: “Communicating Through Conflict” October 23-24, 2026.** Learn and practice conflict resolution skills and de-escalation techniques! The first part of the series is designed to guide learners in understanding the dynamics of conflict and in learning and practicing powerful communication skills to reduce and resolve it.

**Part II: Crossing the Bridge: “Becoming a Community Mediator” November 13-14, 2026.** Become a community mediator and help community members resolve conflict! The second part of the series is for seekers who want to build on the foundation of productive communication and conflict to become trained community mediators with the tools and knowledge to support others as they work through and resolve conflict. Participants may take only the Part I Training but are required to take both parts to become a community mediator. **Please Note: CEUs are available.**

See [www.workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/](http://www.workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/) to find more details. If interested, please register by Oct. 2, and help us spread the word.



April 2026 SAM Training Participants and Trainers

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## This is What ECR's Work Looks Like



Letter from ECR's  
Executive Director:  
Linda Troop

Here, at **ECR**, we sometimes forget that the very people who so loyally support us and still believe in **ECR's** mission may not be sure at all about what they are supporting, so in this issue, we decided to make what your loyalty and funding is supporting more transparent. We want you to know that this organization has always cast a wide net of care for the community, especially in the area of conflict. **ECR** is trusted by businesses, courts, schools, faith communities, and community partners throughout the region. Peace depends on community relationships. And healthy relationships depend on the ability to manage conflict well. Managing, deescalating, and resolving conflict is our business at **ECR**.

### Why is ECR so important to the Wabash community? The Answer: Conflict Is Costly

**Unresolved conflict carries a measurable price tag.** In the workplace, nearly half of emerging managers report struggling to handle conflict effectively, driving down morale, productivity, and retention. In schools, chronic absenteeism, often rooted in unaddressed family stress and interpersonal conflict, has reached crisis levels. Nationally, absenteeism rates climbed from roughly 15% before the COVID-19 pandemic to over 26% in its aftermath. In northern Indiana, that translates to real students whose futures are at risk.

**Students who do not graduate face disproportionate rates of unemployment, poor health outcomes, and involvement with the legal system.** Schools that cannot re-engage absent students feed what researchers call the school-to-prison pipeline. And businesses whose employees lack conflict management skills lose talent, spend more on turnover, and operate in communities that feel the compounding effects of these failures.

**Conflict is not the exception in community life.** It is the norm. What separates thriving communities from struggling ones is not the absence of conflict, but the capacity to work through it. For over 35 years, **Education for Conflict Resolution (ECR)** has served the people of Wabash, Huntington, and Kosciusko Counties by providing exactly that capacity: skilled mediation, practical training, and a relentless commitment to peace built one relationship at a time.

**ECR was founded in 1988 by a diverse group of community members who asked a deceptively simple question: What would it take to build world peace?** Their answer was both humble and profound. World peace begins with community peace. Community peace depends on community relationships. And healthy relationships depend on the ability to manage conflict well. **ECR's** founding conviction, rooted in cooperation, nonviolent communication, and a deep belief in the transformational power of mediation, still guides everything we do today. **ECR** is now one of northern Indiana's primary providers of community-based and school-based conflict resolution training and mediation services.

**Your partnership with ECR is an investment in the community** where your family, friends, and fellow co-workers live, and it is also a stand for the kind of community you want to help build.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ECR IN 2026?



### Andrew Duffy, Trainer, Mediator, Consultant, and former ECR Director

Andrew Duffy, who literally grew up with **ECR**, having participated in one of **ECR's** first elementary peer mediation trainings when he was only in 5th grade, is now working as a marketing and programing consultant for the organization. In his article, Andrew takes a look at all the new and forward looking initiatives that **ECR** is launching or advancing in 2026.

**ECR has entered 2026 with momentum.** Building on more than three decades of community trust, **ECR** is launching new programs, deepening its training offerings, and expanding its reach in ways that reflect both the evolving needs of the community and a sharpened vision for what peaceful conflict resolution can look like at scale.

**Parenting the Teen Brain Workshop:** Adolescence is one of the most conflict-rich seasons in family life, and one of the least understood. **ECR's** new *Parenting the Teen Brain* workshop equips parents and caregivers with practical, brain-science-informed tools for navigating the tension, defiance, and communication breakdowns that are a normal part of raising teenagers. This workshop reflects **ECR's** commitment to addressing conflict at its roots, before it escalates into something harder to repair.

**New Communication Skills and Mediation Training Series:** **ECR** is launching a new structured training series focused on the practical skills that healthy relationships and productive workplaces depend on: active listening, de-escalation, and nonviolent communication. Designed for community members, organizational teams, and anyone who works with people under pressure, this series makes **ECR's** expertise accessible in a flexible two-part format. The second part of the series will train participants to become community mediators.

**Conflict Resolution Book Club:** **ECR** has launched a community book club dedicated to exploring the ideas behind conflict resolution, dignity, and human connection. The inaugural selection was *Dignity* by Donna Hicks, a powerful examination of how honoring the dignity of others transforms the way we approach conflict. This initiative reflects **ECR's** belief that building a peaceful community is an intellectual and relational project, not just a procedural one.

**Expanding SAM Statewide:** **ECR's** School Attendance Mediation (SAM) program has already demonstrated what's possible. Now **ECR** is working to bring SAM to schools across Indiana, partnering with districts, educators, and families to replicate that success statewide. This expansion represents an ambitious undertaking, and one of its most urgent, given that chronic absenteeism continues to affect more than one in four students nationwide.

**ECR has spent 35+ years building something rare: a community that knows how to work through conflict.** That work is far from finished. What **ECR** needs now is the stability to keep working and a stronger foundation to grow. Your investment in **ECR's** long-term sustainability ensures that the next generation of families in crisis, has somewhere to turn.



## Partnership Opportunities

### Ways Your Business Can Partner with ECR

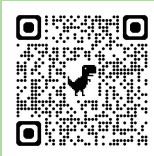
- **Support Financially**
  - One-time or recurring donations
  - Sponsor key programs (workshops, mediations, presentations, etc.)
- **Engage Your Team**
  - Encourage mediation services
  - Encourage volunteer mediators or board service
  - Offer **ECR** workshops to your employees
- **Get Recognized**
  - Annual donor recognition ad in local newspapers
  - Annual appreciation blurb in **ECR** newsletter
  - Appreciation post on **ECR** social media
  - Listed on **ECR** website
  - Recognition at **ECR's** annual meeting



We're launching a new campaign to engage local businesses in supporting **ECR's** mission of building stronger, more peaceful communities. As part of this effort, we've developed a short, dynamic pitch deck to share with business and community leaders. The presentation highlights **ECR's** 35+ years of impact, its mediation and peacebuilding programs, and the value of corporate partnerships in creating a healthier, more connected region. Through personal outreach, community events, and presentations to area companies, **ECR** board members and staff will use the deck to inspire businesses to invest in peace. If you, or someone you know, are part of a business that would be interested in learning more, please let us know.

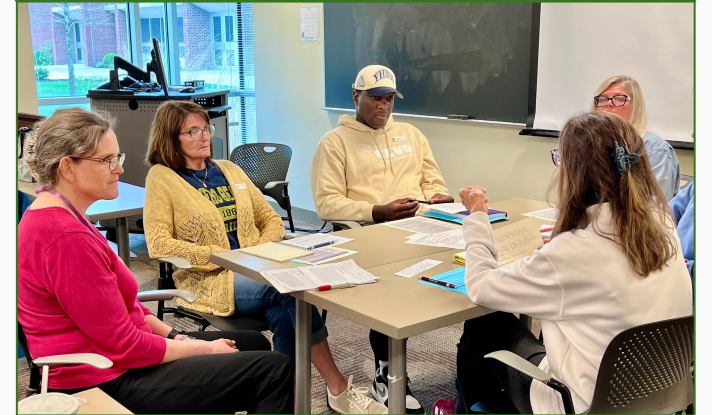
## Thank You for Supporting Us!

Donations 2/15/26 - 6/12/26

Dean & Reba Beery	Beacon Credit Union
Jeannie Dinwiddie	Common River Consulting
Roger & Mim Eberly	Manchester Church of the Brethren
James & Deb Emans	
Zach & Wendy Erbaugh	<i>There is more room for your name!</i>
John & Ann Hartsough	
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Robert Jones	You may donate here:
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Mel & Anita Sautter	
Coreen Spencer & Gary Heisler	
Edith Stone	
Linda Troop & Nancy Cripe	
Bud Tully	

## SAVE THE DATE: Fall SAM Mediator Training

**ECR** will hold another School Attendance Mediation Mediator Training on **September 2, 10, and 15**, (evening zooms), and all day Sat., **September 19**, in person, in North Manchester. See [www.workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/](http://www.workitout.org/focus-upcoming-events/) to find more details. If interested, please register by August 21, and help us spread the word.



### SAM Training Role Play Day, April 2026

"I really believe no matter how much I studied the packet, I would not have been prepared without practicing and seeing others practice. The feedback was invaluable! Great session overall!"  
"Actually participating as the different roles was crucial to learning the importance of each part!"  
"The role play was very positive. It took the stiffness of mediation and made it feel more human."

~ Reflections on the Role Play Day by SAM Training Participants

## Exciting Tax Deduction News for ECR Donors:

A new federal tax change for 2026 may allow taxpayers who do not itemize deductions to claim an above-the-line charitable deduction—up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly. This expands tax benefits for charitable giving and enables more households to support causes they value. To qualify, donations must be made directly to eligible charitable organizations such as **Education for Conflict Resolution**. Please consult with a qualified tax professional to learn how this may apply to you.

And remember: If you are over 70 ½ and have an Individual Retirement Account, you can ask the custodian of your IRA to give a Qualified Charitable Distribution directly to **ECR**, free from income tax.