



Central Susquehanna
Valley Mediation Center
713 Bridge Street, Suite 3
Selinsgrove, PA 17870
570-374-1718

Center office hours:

Monday – Friday
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Mediation appointments
available in
Selinsgrove and Lewisburg:**

Monday through Saturday
10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
Monday through Thursday
6:30 p.m.

To request an appointment:

Call 570-374-1718
or email
casecoordinator@
csvmediation.org

General email inquiries:

info@csvmediation.org

Visit our updated website:

www.csvmediation.org

Executive Director:

Susan Jordan
570-837-9563
susanjordan@csvmediation.org

2018 Board of Directors:

Robert Shabanowitz,
President
rshabano@gmail.com

Karen Thompson,
Vice President
mornmist66@yahoo.com

Sharon Silberman, Secretary
ssilbrmn@dejazzd.com

Barbara Skrivaneck, Treasurer
bskrivaneck9@gmail.com

DeeDee Lawrence
deedebluemoon@hotmail.com

Karen Nicholson
karenann@ptd.net

Mark O'Brien
markobrien@coldwellbanker.com

Center develops peer mediation programs to foster youth conflict resolution skills



Participants in the Selinsgrove REC Peer Mediation training included (from left to right): Sam Carlson, Blake Kerstetter, Myia Brosius, Gina Twilley, McKenna Duitch, Brooke Kerstetter, Chris Calcich, Dara Tuttle and Michelle Siegel. Not pictured: Jourdan Harris, Kelly Feiler, Renae Mack and Brandy Inch.

Selinsgrove Middle School

CSVMC launched a peer mediation program at the Selinsgrove Middle School in November in collaboration with the school's guidance department and counselor, Scott Smolleck. Staff and mediators are working with 30 seventh graders and 40 eighth graders in the school's Creating A Safe School (CASS) Club.

CSVMC Director Susan Jordan, said, "One of the first steps to learning to deal with conflict is understanding that we're all susceptible to it. It doesn't make us 'bad' people. I think this message really resonates with kids. It can help them have compassion for themselves and each other."

Mediator and teacher Benita Kolmen-Solomon added, "I am excited to be part of this training with the CASS club. Watching the students begin to understand and use listening skills gives me hope

that the kids will be able to help each other diffuse situations before conflict occurs and to help their peers deal with it when it does."

The REC

CSVMC held a Teen Peer Mediation Camp this summer with youth leaders from Selinsgrove's new Regional Engagement Center (The REC). The leaders learned about managing conflict within their group and skills to help mediate conflicts between kids who come to The REC's programs. Participant Michelle Siegel said about the training, "Not only did I learn how to mediate a conflict, but I learned a lot about myself, I got to know the teens of the REC personally, and a bond grew between all of us. The training was educational and fun. The REC will benefit from this program as the teens work through problems that arise amongst themselves."

Focus on service... Child Custody and Kids First

CSVMC offers mediation to anyone in the community who needs assistance dealing with conflict. Our largest program is our Child Custody and Kids First program. In collaboration with area courts, with the generous support of our donors, and a grant from the GSV United Way, we are able to impact hundreds of families every year

through this program.

Judge Sholley, from the 17th Judicial District said, "I have been involved with the Mediation Center since the inception. To say that it assisted families and children in the 17th Judicial District would be an understatement. Not only have the mediators resolved many conflicts between parents

and avoided the costs and trauma of litigation, they have been instrumental in teaching families, parents, neighbors and others how to resolve conflict without involving the Court system. This has resulted in long term stability in many relationships and has significantly reduced the case load in our Courts."

Our Mission

The mission of CSVMC is to support constructive conversations and responses to conflict in the Susquehanna Valley through mediation services, facilitation, training and education.

CSVMC by the numbers

1,849 cases have been referred to CSVMC since we opened in 2011.

In 2017...

203 mediations were held at CSVMC.

85% of participants said mediation helped them communicate with the other person.

24 Kids First classes were taught by three teachers.

88% of participants said Kids First helped them learn how conflict impacts their children and what they can do to help.

16 mediators completed advanced mediation training.

35 mediators volunteered with CSVMC.

85 individuals in community organizations participated in conflict training with CSVMC.

80 teens participated in peer mediation training.

Volunteers donated more than **2,000** hours of mediation services.

Elayne Sobel ends board service



Elayne Sobel

At the end of 2017, Elayne Sobel completes her second term on the CSVMC board and will leave the board. During her years on the board, Elayne has served as secretary, treasurer, president and member-at-large.

Board president Bob Shabanowitz has acknowledged that she's a tough act to follow. "I don't know where Elayne gets all her energy, nor how she is able to concentrate all her powers on the good work she does for the Mediation Center."

Fellow board member Barb Skrivanek quoted Albert Schweitzer, "At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lit the flame within us." Elayne Sobel has been the light for the Central Susquehanna Valley Mediation Center from its inception.

Fellow co-founder Steve Jacobsen recalls, "Elayne's devotion to Al (Elayne's late husband) and keeping his vision alive in creating CSVMC was tremendous."

Mediator Sharon Silberman speaks for all of the center's volunteers when she says: "Elayne is tireless, dedicated, infinitely responsible, easygoing, inspiring, and a joy to work with."

Elayne says: "When I was asked what I will be doing now that I'm officially off the board after 7+ years, I had to give it some thought. I will miss the camaraderie shared at the board meetings, but I won't miss the discussions about how we can keep the center financially sound. Although that discussion can be complex, the answer is simple. We continue to rely on our wonderful mediators, donors, and the business community who step up every time we ask for financial support. So I may be leaving the board, but my mission for keeping the mediation center financially sound will go on. Thank you to all who have served on the board with me and for those that will continue serving. I'm leaving it in very good hands."

Read more about Elayne's work at CSVMC by visiting our website at csvmediation.org.

Mediator Profile:

Jim O'Connell

Jim O'Connell trained as a volunteer mediator with CSVMC in 2013 when he became interested in mediation after experiencing conflict at his church. He wanted to gain skills to be able to help people work through their conflict productively.

In his years as a CSVMC volunteer, Jim has mediated more than 50 cases for members of the community.



Jim O'Connell

"I feel that serving as a mediator is an excellent way to help others," O'Connell said. "It is a very good fit with my personality and the things I believe in. I enjoy listening to people and feel it is a meaningful way to positively impact people's lives. Also, the skills you learn as a mediator help you in all areas of your life."

Earlier this year, Jim earned his certification from the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation (ISCT) as CSVMC's newest certified transformative mediator. This achievement represents effort above and beyond what is asked of our mediators. Certification is an acknowledgment of Jim's advanced skills as a mediator and a step toward him becoming a trainer. We are proud to have his hard work and commitment recognized by the ISCT.

Jim is a registered nurse at Geisinger Medical Center in the Cardiac Intensive Care unit. He and his wife, LuAnn, live in Milton and have five children. He loves hiking and nature photography.



Wish List...

CSVMC needs:

- ★ financial contributions in any amount
- ★ a conference telephone for telephone mediations
- ★ an iPad for video mediations
- ★ training co-sponsors (\$10-\$2,000)
- ★ a sponsor for our Kids First manuals (\$500)

Can you help? Contact Susan Jordan at 570-837-9563 or susanjordan@csvmediation.org.



Donate online! Visit csvmediation.org and click the "Donate Now" button

Central Susquehanna Valley Mediation Center, Inc. is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization, and your donation is fully tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Jordan joins Institute Board



Susan Jordan

In February, Susan Jordan, our executive director, was appointed to the board of the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation. The ISCT is an international think tank that seeks to study and promote the understanding of conflict processes and intervention from the transformative framework. Susan brings a community mediation perspective to the board and is working with a committee to expand the Virtual Institute, a place for transformative practitioners from around the world to gather virtually to improve their practice and build relationships.

We're here to help!

In 2017, CSVMC worked to expand our reach in the community. We provided conflict training to area agencies, including Children and Youth Services and the Union/Snyder Community Action Agency. We worked with the Girl Scouts on their "Finding Common Ground" badge and offered a program called "Talking with Teens" at Lewisburg Area High School. If your organization or group is interested in learning more about constructive responses to conflict, call our office at 570-374-1718.



Center aids United Way's diversity and inclusion outreach initiative

CSVMC director Susan Jordan chairs the GSV United Way's Diversity & Inclusion Impact Council, which works to bring community members together to engage in conversation about difference and what it means to be a community.

In 2017, council-sponsored events around the valley included a discussion on LGBT Families and raising kids in the Susquehanna Valley, an evening of Saudi Arabian food and culture, a river walk and a gathering at Ard's Farm.

At left: Saudi Arabian students from Susquehanna University prepared and served traditional Saudi foods at a community meal at All Saints Episcopal Church in Selinsgrove in November.

Planning for progress



Staff, board members and mediators at CSVMC consulted with volunteer Mary Beth Clark to develop a long-term strategic plan.

Highlights include:

- ◆ Maintaining and improving mediator training and performance;
- ◆ Strengthening long-term viability of CSVMC,
- ◆ Exploring expansion of services into three areas:
Parent and teen conflict, elder conflict, and training and education.

"This plan lays out a vision to guide our day-to-day work with an eye to our long term goals. It also helps us stay true to our mission, which is to support constructive responses to conflict in the Susquehanna Valley," said committee member and CSVMC co-founder, Steve Jacobsen.

A note from our board president

When I sit back and think about the year, I am amazed and pleased at just how much we have accomplished. It seemed as if the year had breezed by, and we were already busy preparing our agenda for next year. Sometimes you have to sit back and reflect. And then, be thankful. Thankful for all our dedicated volunteers who devote so much time and energy, thankful for the businesses and community members who support our mission, and thankful for being able to have a positive impact on the lives of individuals, families and organizations who use our services.

Conflict can be ugly and destructive, but when we all understand and learn how to engage in constructive conversation, individuals, families and communities flourish. That is truly something to be thankful for.

Wishing everyone a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year!



Bob Shabanowitz, *President, CSVMC Board of Directors*

Mediators expand skills during advanced training



Left to right, front row: Winnie Backlund, Joanne Moyer, Cindy Peltier, Renee Sosland, Jen Clarke, Sharon Silberman, Stan Frankel; Middle row: Elayne Sobel, Carolyn Coldren, Karen Cotter, Sue Auman, Steve Jacobsen, Joannah Skucek, Stacy Hinck; Back row: Bob Shabanowitz, Barbara Gimino, Jim O'Connell

In November, 17 mediators gathered for two days of advanced training with trainers Winnie Backlund and Susan Jordan.

Trainee Barbara Gimino said, "The experience of the training was total immersion, using "lifeguard" coaches who helped me advance

my practice and solidify my trust in the transformative model. It was especially motivating to observe the excellent practice of the trainers, coaches and my fellow mediators."



Susquehanna University students
Isabella Moles and Taishianna Tsosie

Center joins SU service leadership program

CSVMC and the Community Action Agency will mentor two SU students in developing leadership skills in a new Susquehanna University Service Leaders program.

Freshmen Taishianna Tsosie, from Arizona, and Isabella Moles of Selinsgrove will work with CSVMC and CAA during their four years at SU.

"CSVMC got our start on campus at Susquehanna University. It is exciting to be back in a formal partnership with them," said Susan Jordan. "Taishianna and Isabella are intelligent, engaged and curious people. We are looking forward to working with them in our training and outreach to parents and teens."

Bingoween makes fundraising fun

On October 29th, CSVMC hosted our first Bingoween fundraiser at the Selinsgrove Moose Lodge, raising funds to support mediation center services.

Volunteers, led by Barbara Skrivaneck and Mark O'Brien, transformed the bingo hall into a spooky venue for people to have fun, win great prizes donated by local businesses, and enjoy delicious sweet

and savory concessions.

Our thanks to the Selinsgrove Moose for hosting our event, our volunteers, those who came and played bingo to support CSMVC, and our generous community sponsors and donors who provided our fantastic prizes!

We're looking forward to next year and hope you'll plan to join the fun!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! to...

- ◆ Scott Smolleck and principal John Bohle at Selinsgrove Middle School
- ◆ Our wonderful volunteer mediators and board members
- ◆ Our many donors and supporters
- ◆ Our Kids First teachers: Sharon Silberman, Amy Gronlund and Benita Kolmen-Solomon
- ◆ The GSV United Way for supporting our Kids First and custody mediation program
- ◆ The Selinsgrove Moose Lodge for hosting Bingoween
- ◆ The many donors and sponsors of Bingoween 2017
- ◆ Bucknell Institute for Lifelong Learning for mediation space and M&Ms
- ◆ The Community Zone for meeting space
- ◆ Union/Snyder CAA for their partnership and for being good neighbors
- ◆ Judges Hudock and Sholley and their staffs in the Union and Snyder County Courts
- ◆ Sarah Farbo and the Susquehanna University Service Leaders program
- ◆ Kelly Feiler, Michelle Siegel and the kids at The Selinsgrove REC
- ◆ Volunteers with the United Way's Diversity & Inclusion Council
- ◆ Paula Reber and Lewisburg Area High School
- ◆ Mary Beth Clark for her assistance on our strategic plan
- ◆ Transitions staff for providing training to our staff on recognizing signs of domestic violence and child abuse
- ◆ Our dedicated case manager, Barbara Gimino, back for a second year with Americorps
- ◆ Marie Grossman, co-founder and supporter, for her design and editorial assistance with the newsletter