



**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 website:

www.csvmediation.org

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Rapid Response teams support families in crisis

Because we believe that people are capable of making decisions for themselves *and* looking beyond themselves, CSVMC facilitates meetings for families in crisis to empower families to help themselves.

As partners in the statewide Family Engagement Initiative (FEI), a collaboration between the courts, Children and Youth Services and CSVMC, we serve families in Union, Snyder and Northumberland Counties.

CSVMC personnel work with families in crisis to plan rapid response meetings, contacting and inviting all pertinent

individuals. We facilitate the meeting and then distribute the agreed-upon plan to all parties.

Our new AmeriCorps member, Anne Coyne, helps to coordinate the program.

When asked about the value of the program, Snyder County Children and Youth Administrator Jennifer Evans said, "Crisis Rapid Response meetings have opened up many positive opportunities to children and families referred to child welfare at their most at-risk and vulnerable moments.

"Bringing families and their supports together within 24-72

hours and allowing for family voice and choice in how we remedy concerns for children, while ensuring safety, has proven to be highly effective in reducing the number of children placed in foster care, congregate care facilities and moved into the Dependency Court system.

"This practice has reduced fear and alleviated the traumatic impact of referral to the child welfare system with families reporting that they feel heard, treated with respect and that the practice has improved the relationship that they have with their CYS caseworker."

Human Library celebrates diversity, inclusion



This year we supported diversity, equity and inclusion work in the Susquehanna Valley through our partnership with the Greater Susquehanna Valley United Way.

One of many highlights was the Human Library event held at the Public Library for Union County in Lewisburg, which drew more than 60 participants.

Storytellers from around the Valley gathered to share their personal stories in one-to-one conversations about things like immigration, domestic violence, recovery, religion, fat phobia, disability, race, gender and sexual identity, parenting, art and more. The aim of the Human Library is to amplify the voices of members of our community, challenge prejudice, and reduce discrimination and conflict in our communities.

One participant noted, "The Human Library made me recognize that these issues are critical in our community. What surprised me the most, is that almost every storyteller I spoke with had the same theme – kindness, understanding, and support for our neighbors."

Mediation helps ease adjustment to life after prison

In collaboration with the Union County Probation Department, we now provide mediation services to help incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals address conflict and build social supports before and after release.

Conflict related to housing and employment are among the major challenges faced by newly released individuals.

"The number of times that poor conflict resolution skills have resulted in relapses for our addicted population is too many to count," according to Scott Kerstetter, Union County Chief of Probation.

Re-entry mediation has been shown to reduce recidivism in other states that use it, so we are excited to bring this to our community and grateful for our partners.

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 honors our founders, celebrates center's success



Left to right: Trainer and mentor Winnie Backlund, founding board members Cindy Peltier, Steve Jacobsen, Kim Kazakavage and Elayne Sobel. Not pictured: Marie Grossman

In May, mediation center supporters honored our founders at Fero's Winery in Lewisburg. It was a special evening to say "Thank you" for their vision and tenacity in bringing that vision to life.

The event followed a community listening session during which we heard from leaders from 12 different sectors how CSVMC has strengthened our community over the past 10 years.

"We were an enthusiastic and committed group who had great hopes for a local mediation center and are now proud that the center has been so remarkably successful," founder Steve Jacobsen said.

About Mediation...

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process in which a neutral third party, the mediator, assists people in conflict. Mediation helps to:

- ✓ Improve communication, understanding and empathy.
- ✓ Improve relationships.
- ✓ Clarify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- ✓ Avoid, minimize or enhance involvement of the legal system.
- ✓ Work toward mutual understanding. ✓ Define next steps.
- ✓ Resolve a specific problem, dispute or underlying conflict.
- ✓ Prevent problems from recurring.



Meg Martin

joining CSVMC, she worked as program coordinator for the Bucknell Institute for Public Policy. Meg moved to Lewisburg in 2010 and fell in love with Central PA. She spends her free time hiking, biking, running and generally just being outside with her husband, three boys and two big dogs.

Staff Profile

Meg Martin

In 2019, Meg Martin joined our staff after coming to CSVMC in 2018 as a volunteer mediator.

Meg has a degree in Public Administration and worked at SUNY Albany, managing the Center on English Learning & Achievement. Prior to



Anne Coyne

program, empowerment club and the expansion of our Rapid Response and Plans of Safe Care collaborations. Welcome, Anne!

AmeriCorps Profile

Anne Coyne

This year, we welcomed Anne Coyne to our team. Anne is a graduate of Wellesley College in Women's and Gender Studies and Economics. In Boston, she gained experience at a community mediation center. Anne is supporting our peer mediation

Director's Notes

Susan Jordan, CSVMC Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This has been another year of tremendous growth and community support. We have an extraordinary group of volunteers and supporters, committed to the work of the Mediation Center. This is the time of year that we invite you, our supporters, to consider a financial contribution to support our work. We invite you to let us know what part of our work matters to you most. Is it our work with young people? Our work with families in crisis? Our mediation services, open to all? We would love to hear from you.

And thank you for your support!

– Susan

CSVMC by the numbers

2,253 cases have been referred to CSVMC since we opened in 2011.

In 2019...

13 new mediators completed basic mediation training.

175 mediations were held at CSVMC

22 Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings were held with 200+ people participating

24 Kids First classes were taught by 3 teachers

83% of parties said mediation helped them communicate with the other person.

91% of parties said Kids First helped them learn how conflict impacts their children and what they can do to help.

45 Volunteers donated more than 2,750 hours to CSVMC

200+ individuals in community organizations participate in conflict training with CSVMC

75 teens participating in peer mediation training



Selinsgrove Middle School guidance counselor Scott Smolleck and CSVMC executive director Susan Jordan congratulate SMS students who completed Peer Mediation training. Left to right, front row: Lynley Burke, Taylor Zacharda, Sarabella Reynolds, Skye Ritter; Second row: Scott Smolleck, Cadence Kratzer, Gabby Tawney, Haley Sanutti, Abigail Parise, Susan Jordan; Row 3: Eden Miller, Alaina Liesenfield, Erika Meiser, Ella McGlauglin; Fourth row: Maddy Bucher, Murphy O'Brien, Olivia Hoffman, Eve Caron. Not pictured: Maddie Martone

Selinsgrove Middle School students mediate for peers

Our Peer Mediation work at the Selinsgrove Middle School is in its second year under the leadership of guidance counselor Scott Smolleck. Eighth grade mediators offered these insights:

Ella McGlauglin: "During the training, I learned a lot about peace-making and myself. I'm thrilled to be part of making my school a safer place."

Olivia Huffman: "Mediation training taught me how to listen better

to others. It has also given me the opportunity to learn how to let others know that they are understood. I'm so grateful for this experience."

Alaina Liesenfield: "Peer mediation training was an amazing experience. It taught us how to peacefully resolve conflict, a skill crucial to functioning in modern society. My peers and I are now confident in our ability to help those around us with their problems."

Better Angels:

Talking out the red/blue divide

On a cold day in February, an equal number of red-leaning and blue-leaning participants came together at the Mediation Center for a workshop on political polarization.

Participants were divided into two groups, based on their political leanings, and then invited to listen each other, without responding, to learn what ideas each group thought they had that were good for the country. They also took turns listening to each other talk about stereotypes they believed the other side had about them, and whether there were grains of truth in them.

Many expressed that it was a positive, worthwhile experience. Participants indicated that while more dialogue is needed in the future, it was a unique, sometimes difficult, experience to spend time listening to the 'other side,' without the intent to respond. Contact CSVMC if you're interested in participating in a future Better Angels workshop.

Planning for safe care for drug-affected babies

This year, CSVMC began collaborating with area hospitals and agencies to support families in developing Plans of Safe Care when a baby is born drug-affected.

CSVMC was asked to participate as an impartial

third party to support the voice and decision-making of the family in these challenging situations where people often feel fearful and powerless.

The meetings and plans are family-centered



while prioritizing the health, development and safety of the infant as well as the treatment and other service needs of their family and other caregivers.



Taishiana Tsosie

Club encourages empowering kids

CSVMC is collaborating with the Regional Engagement Center (REC) in Selinsgrove to facilitate the Empowerment Club, a weekly after school opportunity for kids ages 9-15 to have discussions about issues that matter to them. So far, they've chosen topics like relationships, setting boundaries, managing emotions like anger and fear, healthy ways to handle conflict, self love, bullying and more. Taishiana Tsosie, our Susquehanna University Student Leader Intern, and Anne Coyne, our AmeriCorps member, facilitate the club together. The kids say that they "look forward to Empowerment Club all day in school!"

Thirteen new volunteers join CSVMC's corps of mediators



CSVMC added thirteen new volunteer mediators to our roster in 2019. Mediator Jim O'Connell co-facilitated the training with our director, Susan Jordan.

Front row, left to right: Natalie Chesney, David Lightman, Tara McKinney, Anne Coyne; Back row, left to right: Jennifer Evans, Steve Jordan, Tom Zorn, Stacy Gasteiger, Janice Mann, trainer Susan Jordan, Heidi Dunigan, Victoria Boyd and Dane Zimmerman

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

- ◆ Our many donors
- ◆ Our wonderful teen and adult mediators and board members
- ◆ Meg Martin, our case and volunteer coordinator
- ◆ Anne Coyne, AmeriCorps Rapid Response/Plans of Safe Care Coordinator
- ◆ The Lewisburg Sunrise Rotary
- ◆ Kids First teachers: Sharon Silberman, Benita Kolmen-Solomon, and Amy Gronlund
- ◆ Our Rapid Response Team
- ◆ Jim O'Connell for co-training our new volunteer mediators
- ◆ Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Susquehanna Valley for designating us one of their "charities of the quarter"
- ◆ GSV United Way for their support of Kids First and custody mediation
- ◆ Bucknell Institute for Lifelong Learning for mediation and meeting space
- ◆ The CommUnity Zone for meeting space
- ◆ Sue Auman and the Union/Snyder CAA and Core Susquehanna AmeriCorps for their partnership and for being good neighbors
- ◆ Coralynn Davis for facilitating our community listening session
- ◆ Judges Hudock & Sholley and their staffs in the Union & Snyder County Courts
- ◆ The Union & Snyder County commissioners for their continuing financial support
- ◆ Scott Kerstetter, Chief of Union County Probation
- ◆ Jennifer Evans, Matt Ernst, and Katrina Gownley, administrators of Children and Youth Services in Snyder, Union, and Northumberland Counties, respectively
- ◆ The many community centers and places of worship that served as meeting places for Rapid Response meetings.
- ◆ Taishiana Tsosie, Sarah Farbo and Susquehanna University Service Leaders program
- ◆ Kelly Feiler and Javier Videla from the Selinsgrove REC
- ◆ Joanne Troutman, Stacey Piecuch and volunteers from the United Way's Diversity and Inclusion Council
- ◆ Transitions of PA staff
- ◆ Melissa Farrow from United in Recovery for addiction stigma training
- ◆ Sue Ellen Henry for offering our mediators training on social class bias
- ◆ Winnie Backlund of the ISCT for her continued support and mentorship
- ◆ Marie Grossman, founder and supporter, for assistance with the newsletter
- ◆ Scott Smolleck, Rebecca Schaffer-Neitz and the CASS Club from Selinsgrove Middle School
- ◆ Staff and colleagues from the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation (ISCT)

We're here to help!

If your organization or group is interested in learning more about constructive responses to conflict, call our office at 570-374-1718.



Donate online!

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

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