



**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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susanjordan@csvmediation.org

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New coalition empowers families in crisis

CSVMC is proud to be part of the new statewide Family Engagement Initiative (FEI), a collaboration between the courts, Children and Youth Services and CSVMC, which seeks to increase family involvement in dependency cases, limit court intervention, and reduce trauma and the time children are separated from their loved ones.

Led by Judge Michael Sholley and Children and Youth Services administrators Matt Ernst (Union County) and Jennifer Evans (Snyder County), Union and Snyder counties have been among the early adopters of the FEI statewide.

Mediators from CSVMC facilitate Rapid Response family meetings, as a proactive early step, designed to give families and their support people space to discuss safety concerns and challenges. They are able to evaluate their needs and develop their own solutions.

"This is an example of collaboration at its best," said CSVMC Board President Bob Shabanowitz. "Every member of the team brings their strengths. CSVMC brings our expertise in supporting difficult conversations. We can help families, who are the experts in their own lives, access their strength and voice



and deepen their connections with one another at a time when they are under incredible stress. That is what our mediators are trained to do."

Better Angels: Save the Date! February 23

Join the conversation to bridge political divides



2018 brought us requests from people across the political spectrum wanting help addressing the level and nature of political conflict in our community. People want to know, "How can we deal with the divisiveness?"

In response, we are partnering with the Better Angels organization to sponsor a series of free Red/Blue Workshops. The first session will be held Saturday, February 23 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at 713 Bridge Street in Selinsgrove.

The workshop, which seeks to have equal numbers of red- and blue-leaning participants,

offers the possibility to better understand the experiences and beliefs of those on the other side of the political divide, to identify commonality and differences and learn something that might be helpful to the community. The focus is on listening and reflecting, rather than debating and persuading.

CSVMC Mediator Karen Cotter, a member of Better Angels, said about the program, "At this juncture in our history I feel certain that it's up to us as citizens of the United States to help heal the divide in our nation. I believe that Better Angels is a good resource to help us do just that."

If you are interested in participating, contact our office at 570-374-1718.

Lewisburg to use mediation for discrimination complaints

Borough officials have asked CSVMC to play a role in Lewisburg's proposed Human Relations Ordinance, which will include mediation as an early step in the process if there is a discrimination complaint in the Borough.

"Confidential, voluntary mediation has the potential to be transformative in alleged discrimination cases. Mediators are able to create space for these conversations to occur and to support all parties in achieving greater communication, clarity

and perspective-taking," said CSVMC mediator Amy Ershler. Amy is a former volunteer mediator for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with experience mediating cases for Pennsylvania's Human Relations Commission.

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

2,054 cases have been referred to CSVMC since we opened in 2011.

In 2018...

8 new mediators completed basic mediation training.

165 mediations were held at CSVMC.

24 Kids First classes were taught by **3** teachers

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

90% of parties said Kids First helped them learn how conflict impacts their children and what they can do to help.

42 Volunteers donated more than **2,500** hours to CSVMC

75 individuals in community organizations participate in conflict training with CSVMC

40 people participated in Crisis/Rapid Response Meetings

80 teens participating in peer mediation training



Stacy Hinck

special place in her heart for children who struggle in the midst of separation and divorce.

We miss her terribly and wish peace to her husband Glenn, her boys, Sam and Kyle, and the many people who loved her.

In Remembrance: Stacy Hinck

This year, we experienced the unexpected loss of one of our dedicated mediators, Stacy Hinck. Stacy first trained to be a mediator in 2011 and was an active volunteer until the time of her passing. She worked hard to improve her practice and had a special

Director's Notes

from Susan Jordan, CSVMC Executive Director

Dear Friends,

During this season of thanksgiving, I feel tremendous gratitude for our volunteers and supporters. I once read a thought from author and theologian, Frederick Buechner, that said true service is "the place where one's deep gladness meets the world's deep need." When we find the intersection of those two things, we have found something really special and deeply meaningful. As you read this newsletter, you will see the many different ways our volunteer mediators have found meaning in community service through CSVMC. We simply could not meet the need without them. Many of you find meaning in assisting us with our financial needs. You are positively impacting many lives through your support, and we thank you. 2018 was a year of growth for CSVMC as we continue to strive to fulfill our mission. Together our volunteers and supporters made that possible. I hope you'll consider making a donation this season to support our important work in the Susquehanna Valley.

– Susan

Volunteer Profile:

Amy Gronlund

Amy Gronlund first trained as a volunteer mediator with CSVMC in 2014 and started teaching in the Kids First Program in 2015. This year, Amy joined the teams training peer mediators at Selinsgrove Middle School and facilitating Rapid Response Family Meetings.

"I truly enjoy all aspects of volunteering at CSVMC. Teaching parents how to help their children through the challenges of separation and divorce is very rewarding. So often we get caught up in the adult story, and this (KidsFirst) class reminds us how to see and feel things from a child's perspective. This year, it was especially rewarding to be part of the team that trained teens to mediate for their peers. I loved devoting time to help the next generation learn transformative mediation skills," Amy said.

In addition to program support, Amy has dedicated many extra hours to advance her skills and practice, and is a tremendous asset to the mediation center.

Amy is a part-time substitute teacher with the CSIU and also volunteers as a board member with Transitions of PA and the Listening Post. She lives in Lewisburg with her husband, Brooks, and their son, William. Another son, Harrison, is a second-year student at Carnegie Mellon University. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family, reading and traveling.



Amy Gronlund

Kids First helps separated parents focus on children

Our Kids First program helps parents understand what helps and hurts children, whether parents are newly separated/divorced or are navigating an ongoing co-parenting relationship. Parents learn how they can support their children at all ages and stages of development, and how to reduce conflict and provide a healthy co-parenting environment. This program is designed to provide both important knowledge and hope to parents and caregivers at a stressful time. About 200 adults attended Kids First classes this year.

Participants tell us...

"I feel more knowledgeable and more comfortable with having to go through this now. Thank you!!"

"I wanted to thank you for taking your time to teach this class. I've learned a few new tools that I intend to use."

"This was voluntary for me but it helped me realize my child can come out okay through all of this with effective co-parenting. Thanks!"

"The instructor was very informative and helpful, glad there are people like you in the world!"



Selinsgrove Middle School guidance counselor Scott Smolleck and CSVMC executive director Susan Jordan congratulate the first group of SMS students to complete Peer Mediation training. Left to right, front row: Nicole Gelnett, Beverly Barrera, Tori Ross, Moses Hostetler, Kayla Gage, Robert ("Bert") Snyder, Clarianis Vazquez Flores, Alexander Ourique, Susan Jordan; Back row: Scott Smolleck, Chastity White, Madison Dominick, Leah Klooststra, Sydney Schmouder, Haylee Nava, Tate Fordyce, Sophi Walter-Ramer. Not pictured: Trinity Melius, Anna Kratzer, Haley Berge.

Selinsgrove Middle School students mediate for peers

CSVMC completed our first peer-mediation training at the Selinsgrove Middle School this year.

Eighteen students from the anti-bullying club learned skills to support their peers in conflict that they can use in their daily lives to help make school and home more peaceful places. At school, student mediators work in pairs to mediate conflict under the supervision of

their guidance counselor, Scott Smolleck.

The training was made possible with the support of the Selinsgrove Middle School CASS club and the Selinsgrove Area Community Foundation. The training was co-facilitated by Susan Jordan and Benita Kolmen-Solomon, and the coaching team included Amy Gronlund, Cindy Peltier, Barbara Gimino and Taishiana Tsosie.

SU Service Leaders learn conflict management



Left to right: Isabella Moles, Jenn Cesack, Erin Holland, CSVMC director Susan Jordan, Katharine Rodriguez, Taishiana Tsosie and Jose Martinez.

This summer, Taishiana Tsosie, our new Susquehanna University Student Leader intern, co-facilitated "Managing Conflict" training for her class of service leaders, led by Sarah Farbo.

Leaders were introduced to the transformative approach to working with conflict and guided through activities to help them explore conflict and identify how they might balance their own strength and voice with their connection to others when in conflict.



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.

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. ✓ Define next steps. ✓ Avoid, minimize or enhance involvement of the legal system. ✓ Work toward mutual understanding. ✓ Resolve a specific problem, dispute or underlying conflict. ✓ Prevent problems from recurring.

Jordan trains Czech mediators



Susan Jordan

This year, our director and trainer, Susan Jordan joined Winnie Backlund from the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation to facilitate an advanced transformative mediator training for staff attorneys, psychologists and mediators from UMPOD Office for International Legal Protection of Children in Brno, Czech Republic.

The Office specializes in cross-border custody disputes and other forms of family mediation. "This was an excellent opportunity to gain training experience and to see how well the transformative framework translates to different contexts and cultures," Jordan said.



Left to right, front Row: Taishiana Tsosie, Amy Ershler, Mary Sholley, Meg Martin, Julia Snyder and Katie Scheib; Back row: Jane Brockman, Mark Morgenfruh, trainer Susan Jordan, trainer Jim O'Connell.

Eight new volunteers join CSVMC's corps of mediators

CSVMC added eight new volunteer mediators to our roster in 2018. Mediator Jim O'Connell co-facilitated the training with our director, Susan Jordan.

"It's quite amazing to see a diverse group of people come together and embrace the work that we do at the mediation center. Training more mediators always seems to me to be true grass roots peacemak-

ing. Peace is only possible if it's between individuals. There are now eight more people in our part of the Susquehanna Valley who can help make this an even better place to live. I am very grateful to be part of an organization that takes its volunteers so seriously," said CSVMC co-founder, Steve Jacobsen.

We're here to help!

In 2018, CSVMC worked to expand our reach in the community. We had a record number of self-referred mediation cases from people in our community dealing with family, divorce, neighbor, workplace and other relational conflict. We provided conflict training to area organizations, including Susquehanna University, Transitions and the Selinsgrove REC board and volunteers. We worked with the a Girl Scout troop on their "Finding Common Ground" badge and offered a program for younger kids at the Selinsgrove REC on dealing with conflict called "What can I do when I feel mad?" If your organization or group is interested in learning more about constructive responses to conflict, call our office at 570-374-1718.

AmeriCorps partnership thrives

2018 marks CSVMC's fifth year working with AmeriCorps volunteers. We are thankful for the program and for our dedicated AmeriCorps members. This year, Barbara Gimino completed her second and final year with CSMVC as our case and volunteer coordinator. Her combined commitment, talents and good humor will be missed.

Alexa Wolfberg joined us in September as our new case coordinator. Alexa is a Selinsgrove native and looks forward to developing her talents in her new position.

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

- ◆ Our wonderful volunteer mediators and board members
- ◆ Barbara Gimino and Alexa Wolfberg, AmeriCorps members
- ◆ Our many donors
- ◆ Our Kids First teachers: Sharon Silberman, Amy Gronlund and Benita Kolmen-Solomon
- ◆ The GSV United Way for their support of our Kids First & custody mediation programs
- ◆ The Selinsgrove Area Community Foundation for their support of our Peer Mediation Program at the Selinsgrove Middle School
- ◆ Bucknell Institute for Lifelong Learning for mediation and meeting space
- ◆ The Community Zone for meeting space
- ◆ Union/Snyder CAA and Core Susquehanna AmeriCorps for their partnership and for being good neighbors
- ◆ Judges Hudock and Sholley and their staffs in the Union and Snyder County Courts
- ◆ The Union and Snyder County commissioners for their continuing support
- ◆ Jennifer Evans, Snyder County and Matt Ernst, Union County administrators of Children and Youth Services
- ◆ Sarah Farbo, Taishiana Tsosie and the Susquehanna University Service Leaders program
- ◆ Kelly Feiler from the Selinsgrove REC
- ◆ Volunteers with the United Way's Diversity & Inclusion Council
- ◆ Transitions staff for providing training to our staff on recognizing signs of domestic violence and child abuse
- ◆ Winnie Backlund of the ISCT for her continued support and mentorship
- ◆ Marie Grossman, founder and supporter, for her artistic and editorial assistance with the newsletter
- ◆ Scott Smolleck and the CASS Club from Selinsgrove Middle School
- ◆ Staff and colleagues from the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation (ISCT)