



FAMILY



YOUTH & SCHOOLS



COMMUNITY & POLICE



TRAINING



SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

2007 – 2008 Biennial Report

For the fiscal years ending
March 31, 2007, and March 31, 2008



CENTER FOR DISPUTE
SETTLEMENT
peace it together

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The Center for Dispute Settlement was the first community dispute-resolution center programs in New York State and the third in the country.

About the Center for Dispute Settlement

Founded in 1973 and incorporated in 1979, The Center for Dispute Settlement was New York State’s first community dispute-resolution center program, and one of the first three in the country.

We have been actively transforming ourselves in the years since then to meet changing community needs based on our founding principles of non-violence as espoused by Muhandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Program Categories

The Center provides arbitration, mediation and facilitation programs and services in the following categories:

- Family
- Youth and School
- Community and Police
- Training
- Specialty Programs

To learn more about our programs and services, please visit our website at www.cdsadr.org

Our Service Area

The Center for Dispute Settlement currently serves the entire 7th Judicial District including the following counties:

- Cayuga
- Livingston
- Monroe
- Ontario
- Seneca
- Steuben
- Wayne
- Yates



The Center for Dispute Settlement currently serves the eight counties comprising the 7th Judicial District.



Executive Management Introduction

The 2007 and 2008 fiscal years covered in this report were productive ones for The Center for Dispute Settlement as we continue to provide peaceful solutions to conflicts among members of families, schools, neighborhoods, business and our community at large. We have strengthened our foundation for delivering these vital services during these past two years to individuals and parties both outside and within the legal system including Family, Supreme, Surrogate, Civil and Criminal Courts. Other programs that have built on previously established expertise include civilian oversight of law enforcement, large-group facilitation, and impartial negotiators for complex community issues.

The pages in this report highlight just a few of the strides that The Center has made in the eight counties of the 7th Judicial District (as shown on page 2) that we serve.

One new development of special note is the **Family Court Mediation Diversion Pilot** program which was initiated by the Hon. Craig J. Doran, the 7th Judicial District Supervising Judge for Family Courts. It began early Spring 2007 to explore ways to expand the concept/process of our Custody and Visitation (C&V) Program.

In early August '07, a pilot C&V initiative—Family Court Mediation Diversion—began in Monroe and Ontario Counties. Under the design of this pilot program, Family Court Clerks can refer a matter to mediation when parties come to file a first appearance C&V petition. The Center for Dispute Settlement C&V Case Manager then conducts an intake interview with both parties. When appropriate, and the parties agree, a mediation session is held. If agreement is reached the appropriate paperwork is submitted to the Family Court Judge for review and the parties do not appear in Court; if the parties do not go to mediation or agreement is not reached, the Family Court Clerk is so advised and the matter is scheduled for a first appearance.

The Center for Dispute Settlement has also worked hard to increase its market presence with expanded community outreach at community and civic events. A new nine-minute promotional video, possible by a grant secured through Assemblyman David Gantt, was designed to familiarize potential clients with the mediation process. The Monroe County Family Court Chief Clerk has expressed interest in showing this video in the large family court waiting area on a continuing basis. It is anticipated that this video can also be a tool for all staff to use for presentation purposes as well.

And we continue to strengthen our financial position with deficit elimination through efficient program and operational management, a highly competent finance department, diligent county directors, and a fiscally responsible Board of Directors.

It is our pleasure to serve in leadership roles at the Center for Dispute Settlement, an organization that promotes its mission through experienced and competent volunteers and staff, and confidentiality processes.



Len Freeman
Len Freeman,
Board Chairman



Sherry Walker-Cowart
Sherry Walker-Cowart,
President/CEO



The Civilian Review Board (CRB) for the Rochester Police Department as been an important focus of The Center in the past two years.

Progress Overview by County

Monroe County

POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM

For three decades, the Center for Dispute Settlement has been working to strengthen the relationship between citizens and law enforcement through various police programs. The Civilian Review Board is one of those programs. The CRB is made up of a panel of trained mediators and third party neutral fact-finders with The Center who review allegations of misconduct by law enforcement and make recommended findings to the department. In recent years **The Civilian Review Board (CRB) for the Rochester Police Department** has lost a number of its panelists through attrition leaving a review board that no longer reflected the demographics of the metropolitan Rochester area population. As part of an effort to increase the size and diversity of the Civilian Review Board for Oversight of law enforcement in the Rochester/Monroe County area, a special Principles of Mediation training and subsequent Police Training was provided for a group of twenty five participants in Spring of 2007. This training was made possible by a grant earmarked to increase the number of minority mediators for the Center for Dispute Settlement secured through the office of State Senator Joseph Robach. The mediation training was conducted with 25 African-Americans and Hispanics by Former Executive Director Andrew Thomas.

For the year 2007 The Center reviewed a total of 36 cases with 144 allegations.

In 2008, The Center introduced a Police Conciliation process in the Irondequoit Police Department. The Center had previously only conducted facilitated meetings between the complainant and command staff; however, the police union prefers the facilitation process and the Chief of Police prefers conciliation. Efforts will continue to work with the Chief to incorporate conciliation into their complaint process.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Funding for the **Rochester After-School Academy (RASA)** at Wilson Magnet High School ended at the end of June 2007; however, a number of significant events took place prior to the end of the program:

- Approximately 25 students participated in an Atlanta (GA) college tour in April '07.
- A Violence Prevention Summit/Peer Mediation Workshop was held for 200 students in April '07.
- The year-end RASA event on May 23, '07, where participants paid tribute to one of Rochester's sister cities—Hamamatsu, Japan—including a series of demonstrations and activities reflecting Japanese culture.

(continued)



Progress Overview by County

Monroe County: Youth Programs (cont.)

TEEN COURT

According to statistics maintained by program staff, the total number of referrals for the year was 137. Under the administrative direction of the Center for Dispute Settlement, the Teen Court program saw a record year with the largest number of City Court referrals to date. As of 2008, Teen Court has become a program of The Center for Youth Services.

SCHOOL WITHOUT WALLS/SCHOOL NO. 50

The Center for Dispute Settlement is providing anger management and conflict resolution programming to approximately 75 seventh grade students at the School Without Walls. This is a collaborative effort that also involves the Center for Youth Services.

The Center for Dispute Settlement also provides anger management and conflict resolution programming at the Helen Barrett Montgomery School 50. Curricula used for these programs include, "I Can Problem Solve," "DRAMA Club," and "Working Together to Resolve Conflict Peer Mediation."

Community Programs

In 2008 The Center saw a 17% increase in cases filed in community programs. Community programs are mediations of a civil or criminal matter. Of the cases that went to mediation, 90% concluded with an agreement being reached. This was up from 84% the previous year. We attribute this increase to intensified efforts to expand our contacts throughout all the towns in the county, be it through contact with town courts or other potential referral sources. The Center continues to identify those towns for accelerated activity in the year ahead. Efforts have also been increased with and Small Claims Courts in our counties.

Cayuga/Seneca Counties

Fiscal 2007 saw a slight decrease in Custody and Visitation (C&V) filings in Seneca County from the record setting numbers of the previous years. This slight decrease can be attributed to fewer petitions being filed with the Court and a decrease in the number of days a second judge came to the County to preside over Family Court matters. It is anticipated the numbers will increase in the months ahead.

In Cayuga County Family Court is monitored weekly for referrals where we feel our services are underutilized. Center for Dispute Settlement staff continually speaks with the Judges and a cordial relationship has been established.

Outreach by staff in Seneca and Cayuga counties has included:

- Co-facilitating a half-day Housing Law Seminar with representatives from Legal Assistance of the Finger Lakes and Legal Services of Central New York.
- Participating in Employee Awareness Day programs at Five-Points Correctional Facility and the Auburn Penitentiary.
- Presentation at Wells College on conflict resolution.

(continued)



The Center for Dispute Settlement conducted numerous training sessions on a variety of topics to citizens of Ontario and Yates counties in 2007 and 2008.

Progress Overview by County

Cayuga/Seneca Counties (cont)

- Vendor at all day Information Fair at Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- Presentation to Vendor at Options for Independence annual conference and trade show.
- Attending Holiday Open Houses of other community organizations and agencies.
- Presentation to Cato Rotary.
- Vendor at all-day Youth Fair at Fingerlakes Mall.

Ontario and Yates Counties

January 2007 brought big changes to the Ontario/Yates Programs as Director Edward Pevar retired, and long-time volunteer Kim Reisch was hired to replace him. Other changes included the development of two new programs in 2007 to provide mediation services after petition, but prior to first court appearance.

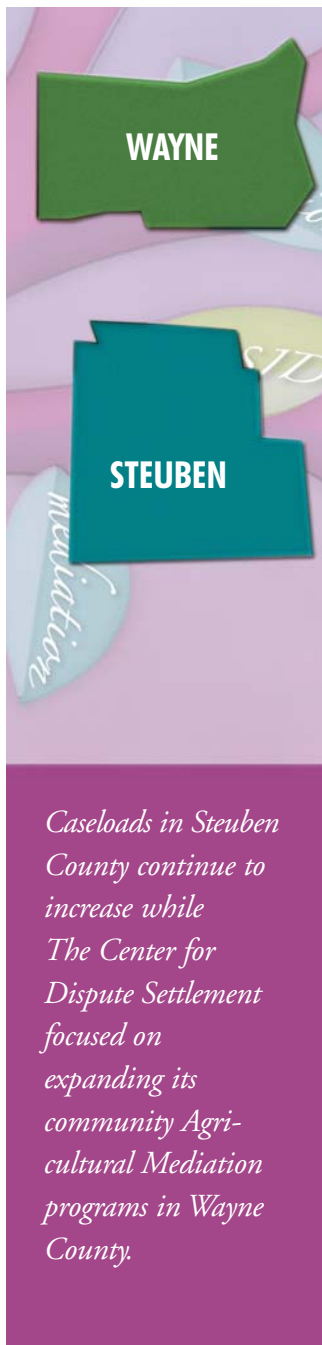
Ontario County is one of the pilot programs for the 7th Judicial District's Family Court Mediation Diversion Program, an initiative of Supervising Family Court Judge Craig Doran. Parents in cases selected for this pilot, who participate in mediation and reach agreement do not need to appear in court as their agreement is reviewed and usually approved by Judge Doran.

Ontario County staff also partner with the Canandaigua City Court to provide a Small Claims Court Mediation Program. Parties in every small claims case are contacted to encourage them to try mediation. Agreements reached in mediation are submitted to City Court Judge Stephen Aronson for approval and parties need not appear in court.

These programs have resulted in more than a 100% increase in the number of cases in the last two years and required Ontario County to increase its volunteer mediator pool. A considerable amount of staff time and effort was devoted to recruiting volunteers to attend Ontario County's October 2007 Principles of Mediation Training and supporting new apprentices. These efforts have resulted in the certification of ten new mediators in the last two years.

The Yates County Program Manager position was made full-time in 2007, a change that has allowed staff to expand community programs. The Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS) Mediation Program has been growing steadily over the last two years as a result of the collaborative relationship between the Yates County PINS Diversion Program and Yates County staff.

Increasing referrals from the Penn Yan Village Court are also a direct result of establishing a stronger relationship with the court. In fiscal 2006 there were no referrals from the Village Court; in 2007, there were six, and the Court recently expressed an interest in establishing a process for using mediation in small claims cases. The Custody and Visitation Program in this county continues to enjoy the support of Judge W. Patrick Falvey. This results in a large percentage of cases referred to mediation where nearly seventy-five percent are successfully mediated.



Progress Overview by County

Steuben County

In fiscal 2007, Steuben County continued to experience an increasing caseload through a number of referral sources including significant outreach activities and by active staff referrals to other agencies/services within the community.

The Center for Dispute Settlement in Steuben County continues to increase cases by developing solid relationships with Judges and court personnel in all jurisdictions and regularly meeting with personnel at such agencies as the Department of Probation, Department of Social Services, Institute for Human Services, the United Way, Catholic Charities, and Kinship Family Services.

Fiscal 2007 – 2008 ended with the filing of 985 cases, of which there were 294 custody and visitation, 445 community, and 246 youth program cases.

Outreach by the County Director and staff continues with events such as:

- Presentations to guidance counselors at Hornell High School and Arkport Central School personnel regarding mediation services
- Participation at Corning Community College 2008 Career Expo and Job Fair at Winds of Eagles Discovery Center
- Attending meetings that include: Magistrates, Domestic Abuse Review Team Retired Police Officers Association, Steuben County Directors Association, and annual/awards banquets of a number of other community agencies and organizations
- Presentation to the Arkport Village Board
- Presentation to Local 1000 (Corning Glass employees)
- Presentation to the Landlord Association regarding the use of mediation in landlord/tenant disputes

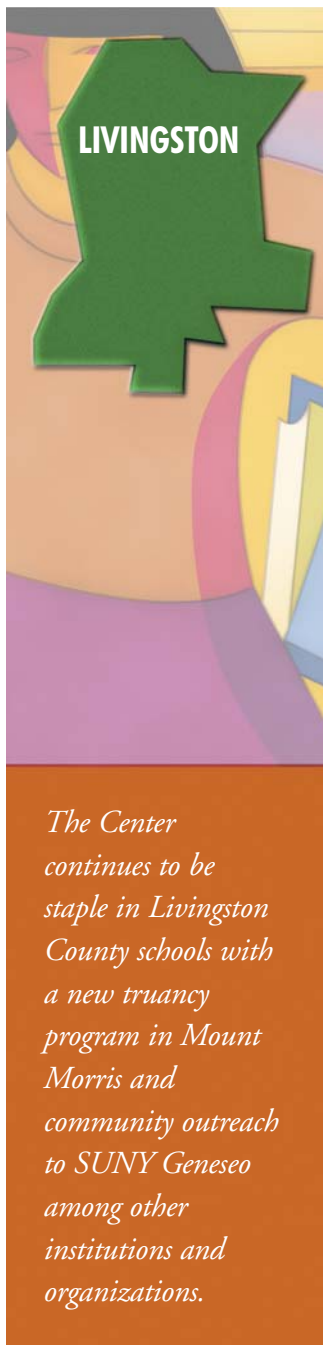
Wayne County

Wayne County Program Director Susan de Navarrete accepted the responsibility of being the 7th Judicial District's representative for the Community Agricultural Mediation Program (CAM). She will be working closely with Charlotte Carter of New York State Department of Rural Agriculture (NYSDRA) on expanding the CAM program in all counties of the district that have a large agricultural base.

The Center for Dispute Settlement in Wayne County lost 50% of its United Way funding due to campaign challenges. Staff continues to submit proposals to various funding organizations to offset this loss.

Wayne County Family Court along with The Center staff are eager to become part of the Family Court Mediation Diversion Program. Custody & Visitation (C&V) Case Manager Nancy Smith retired at the end of December, 2007, after eight years of service; Kelly Porter assumed this position in 2008.

(continued)



Progress Overview by County

Wayne County (cont.)

Outreach and collaboration efforts include the following:

- Finger Lakes Coalition of Farm Workers
- Health Fair for Family Life Center
- Meetings with Public Defender
- Wayne County Board of Supervisors
- Diversity Task Force

Livingston County

The Center for Dispute Settlement in Livingston County continues to be a staple in the community. In the Fall of 2008 The Center will work with Mt. Morris schools on a new truancy prevention program.

Referrals through March 2007 were 6% lower than the previous year; however court-referred cases returning consent agreements remained at the same level as '06. The decrease in community referrals is being discussed with Court and Probation Department personnel as well as Department of Social Services and County Youth Bureau personnel.

Two interns from SUNY Geneseo have worked in the Livingston Office:

- Amanda Spring Pelcher (August – December, 2007)
- Siuyim Auyeung (January – May 2008)

Both interns participated in a number of agency events and worked with staff in a variety of capacities.

Additional outreach activities were conducted by maintaining contact with other agencies and participating including the following committees:

- TRIAD (Program with the Sheriff's Department for Senior Citizens)
- Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS) Planning Committee
- Youth Assessment Committee
- Domestic Violence Consortium
- Violence Prevention Committee
- Livingston County Magistrates' Association, Children's Mental Health Committee
- Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC)



The Center's new Training Catalog is designed to better promote the benefits of our training programs and services to individuals, businesses, schools and other target audiences.

Training/Volunteer Coordination

In 2007, the Training Unit of the Center for Dispute Settlement has been redesigned. An updated Mediator Handbook is available for mediators. The Handbook outlines rights, responsibilities and the Code of Ethics for Mediators.

The Training Unit also has a promotional video that provides a brief history of the Center for Dispute Settlement and shows what mediation looks like. This video was made possible by a grant funded through Assemblyman David F. Gantt.

Training Program Catalog

A training catalog is also now available titled *Training Program Catalog: Working It Out Together From the Schoolyard to the Boardroom*.

In today's fast paced, competitive economic environment the need for employees, managers, students, educators and families to find common ground to peacefully settle differences has never been more critical to you, your business or organization and the community at large.

Training from The Center for Dispute Settlement—whether one of our standard or customized offerings— provides important professional and personal benefits to your organization, the participant, his or her coworkers, and your customers:

- Improve communication and self management skills;
- Reduce employee and customer complaints;
- Increase employee productivity;
- Reduce liability risk potential, and;
- Improve personnel morale and end-customer satisfaction

Peaceful conflict-resolution training from The Center for Dispute Settlement will have a tangible Return On Investment for your organization with these and other benefits.

With more than 35 years experience both peacefully resolving conflicts and training others how to do so, we are an important partner in meeting your organization's strategic goals.

Contributors to Our Success

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CAYUGA AND SENECA COUNTY

No council currently in place.

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(continued)



Our continued success is made possible by the many dedicated and talented Board and advisory council members, as well as our professional staff.



The Center for Dispute Settlement sincerely thanks all its supporters in the past two years who recognize the importance of our mission in today's society.

Contributors to Our Success (cont.)

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- Camp Good Days & Special Times
- The Community Place of Greater Rochester Inc.
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† Center for Dispute Settlement Board member

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- (continued)*

Contributors to Our Success (cont.)

The Center for Dispute Settlement Staff

Sherry Walker-Cowart, President/CEO
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Michelle Urbina, Program Manager
James Waight, Director, Steuben County
Tiamesha Walker, Director, Training and
Volunteer Coordination
Karen Ward PINS Program Manager
Dottie Wright, Receptionist

Photos from Around The Center



Above: Livingston County 16th Annual Potluck Dinner Winners

Left: NFL star, Super Bowl winner and Rochester native Roland Williams delivered a keynote address on "Champions of Peace" at The Center's Annual Awards Luncheon in February of 2008.

2007 – 2008 Statement of Revenue and Expenses

For the fiscal years ending March 31, 2008 and March 31, 2007

REVENUE	March 31, 2008	March 31, 2007
New York State Unified Court System (CDRCP)	\$ 587,108	\$ 557,888
Family Court 7th Judicial District	479,028	452,788
Other Local City and County Support	136,029	39,443
Fee for Services – Programs	124,669	162,884
In-Kind Contributions	117,229	125,987
City of Rochester Police Community	96,515	98,121
Foundations and Grants	55,621	134,628
Youth Bureau of Livingston and Steuben	33,981	32,104
New York State Surrogate Decision Making	30,400	32,585
NYS-OCFS Permanency and Other NYS Grants	29,339	63,537
United Way of Wayne and Steuben Counties	24,289	29,666
Donations/Annual Support	16,377	16,063
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,730,585	\$ 1,745,694
EXPENSES		
Program Services	\$ 1,386,119	\$ 1,361,735
Supporting Services	310,805	305,306
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,696,924	\$ 1,667,041
TOTAL REVENUE IN EXCESS OF EXPENSES	\$ 33,661	\$ 78,653



CENTER FOR DISPUTE
SETTLEMENT
peace it together