

ALBERTA FAMILY MEDIATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Edition 8: August 2005

Special points of interest:

- Newsletters will be distributed six times yearly
- We welcome your input about the newsletters and encourage you to submit articles and features

This newsletter features interviews with new board members, and more!!

An Interview with Kate Wood

It was a pleasure to interview Kate Wood, a new AFMS board member, for the newsletter. Kate was inspired to join the AFMS Board of Directors after being approached when a position became available. She stated that she was honoured to have been approached because of her strong belief in the organization and the field of ADR. She thought that it was natural to support this opportunity.

Kate is actively involved in the field of conflict resolution and ADR, she instructs in the Parenting After Separation program, is a Collaborative Family Law lawyer, does some mediation and serves as a Dispute Resolution Officer in the courthouse. The majority of her professional involvement is in the area of ADR.

From speaking with Kate, it was evident that she sees ADR as a positive opportunity for families and individuals in conflict in that they may learn valuable and effective communication and conflict management tools to take with them in life, as conflicts are a part

of life. She also believes strongly in the importance of people dealing with conflict in a way that maintains everyone's dignity and self-respect. While sometimes there are cases that require litigation, Kate feels that ADR processes can be successful for most. There are some cases however, whereby an individual or both individuals may be so entrenched with emotional difficulties that it prevents resolution and there is a need for a third party decision maker.

Kate sees ADR as a part of a larger philosophy and that it is not restricted just to her profession. Kate volunteers in a number of arenas, and reports that the core principles of ADR fit well with her personal core values.

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AFMS Board of Directors

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Ms. Geeta Bharadia (Vice President)

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Ms. Barbara Acton (Treasurer)

Ms. Barbara Bishop

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Dr. Trevor Neil

Ms. Lorri Yasenik (past president)

Mr. Michael Porter

Ms. Kim Rieger

Ms. Shelley Taggart

Kate Wood

Lynn Parish

Lunch and Learn Sessions

The location is always the Edmonton City Hall in the Heritage Room. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. and the presentations run from noon until 1:00 p.m. There is a question period and mixer beginning at 1:00 to 1:30. This is a great venue to learn, share information and network with colleagues (all over a lunch break).

Lunch and Learn sessions are a great way to network, learn and connect with colleagues all at once.

See Page 7 for the June Lunch and Learn Session Summary “Mediation in Child Interventions”.

Thank you Barbara Bishop for submitting the summary for the newsletter.

There is no cost and you just need to bring your own lunch.

These sessions have been held now for several years.

Keep watching the newsletter for the upcoming fall and winter sessions.



Lunch and Learn

Looking to build up your resource library?

The CRNetwork has a number of resources and books that are available at reduced rates as part of their clear out event. For a listing of available resources and books please contact the CRNetwork at www.crnetwork.ca

From the newsletter Editor– Charmaine Hammond

Opportunities to promote the field of conflict management and dispute resolution exist through pre-scheduled designated days. Family Mediation Canada has designated February 5 as Family Mediation Day, and the Association for Conflict Resolution

(ACR) has designated October 20/05 as Conflict Resolution Day. The intent is to raise public awareness about the benefits of mediation and other ADR processes. Some examples of activities compliments of ACR are: hold a conflict resolution information session at work, organize a panel discus-

sion for the public, speak with media, put up a display, promote the day to referral agencies, make a presentation to clubs and service clubs. Stay tuned for more info.



Ethics in Family Mediation

The Encarta Dictionary (New York, 1999) describes ethics as a system of moral principles that shape and govern the appropriate conduct for an individual or a group. The dictionary definition adds that when one is being ethical, he/she is being consistent with agreed upon principles of correct moral conduct.

Dispute Resolution/ADR is not a regulated profession however, numerous membership organizations such as AFMS and many others have Codes of Conduct, Standards of Practice and other

guideline documents that clearly spell out the expectations and standards for practitioners. Most of these codes promote similar principles such as integrity, confidentiality, impartiality, etc. These codes serve not only as a guideline and resource for practitioners but also as educational information for individuals/groups/families utilizing ADR services.

Working in this profession can bring about many rewarding experiences for practitioners and those who use the services however; the profession can also bring with it challenges and dilem-

mas. It is important for us to connect with the Codes that shape our profession, as in difficult situations they are often a reminder of how we should proceed. Other ways that professionals maintain ethical practice include— confidential peer consultation/debriefing, staying current in training and reading materials, practicing within your scope of knowledge, maintaining an ethics journal, peer discussions on general ethical issues, training on the topic. Stayed tuned for next month's

Resources on Ethics and Practice Standards

There are a number of valuable resources pertaining to Ethics and Practice Standards in the field of family mediation. Some of those include:

- Alberta Family Mediation Society Code of Conduct (available on AFMS website)
- Family Mediation Canada Code of Professional Conduct (available at www.fmc.ca)
- Family Mediation Canada Practice, Certification and Training Standards (available at www.fmc.ca)
- CR Info has a number of articles pertaining to family mediation and ethical practice (available at <http://v4.crinform.org/browse.jsa?nid=2207>)

Please let us know your favorite sites and resources on this and other topics.

Membership Categories with AFMS

Registered Family Mediator (RFM) specializing in separation/divorce mediation.

Registered Family Mediator (RFM) specializing in General Family Mediation.

Registered Family Mediator (RFM) specializing in Family Business Mediation.

Practicing Mediator (designation for those who are continuing to gain mediation experience or for whom mediation is a small part of their practice.

General Member
Student Member

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Alberta *family* Mediation Society

*Advancing the practice of
family mediation.*

*We're on the web—
look us up!*

About AFMS

Established in 1984,
the non-profit
society provides
services to family
mediators.

The organization has a
part time administrative
assistant and is managed
by a volunteer board of
directors, with
representatives across the
province.

The society is dedicated to
both professional and public
education regarding family
mediation.

Kind words can be short and
easy to speak, but their echoes
are truly endless.

Mother Theresa

The greatest accomplishment is
not in never failing but in rising
again after you fall.

Vince Lombardi (1913-1970)

We learn the ropes of
life by untying its knots.

Jean Toomer

Great minds must be
ready not only to take
opportunities but to
make them.

Charles Colton (1780-
1832)

Book Reviews

Books for Parents;

We're Still a Family– what grown children have to say about their parent's divorce. By Constance R. Ahrons (2004).

This book provides information to parents to help them learn from other families who have faced separation and divorce.

Health Canada (2000). Helping Children and youth live with separation and divorce: a guide for parents (3rd Edition)

This publication was intended to assist Canadian families help children cope with the process of separation and divorce. The booklet has also been described as a helpful resource for professionals working with families experiencing separation and divorce.

Books for Teenagers:

For Better, for worse: a guide to surviving divorce for preteens and their families. By Janet Bode (2001).

This book is divided into two parts with the first being for girls and boys and the second part is for the parents. This book offers a number of quotes from children who have experienced divorce and there are also practical tips provided. The focus is on children, and much of the book is in the children's own words.

Goodbye to Griffith Street. By Marilyn Reynolds (2004).

This book describes a teen's way of coping with his parents divorce and moving from the neighborhood he'd grown up in. This book helps teens through change, loss, moving and relationships.

Books for Children:

18 situation stories for use with children of divorce by Lisa Lawmaster Hess (2004)

This book has 8 stories for elementary school aged children and 10 stories for older children. Each story places focus on a different situation and gives suggested questions for post story discussions.

Two Homes by Claire Masurel (2001).

This book relates a young boys experience of his parent's separation. The book is intended to help parents tell their children they are still loved despite their living arrangements.

Credit to the library for providing a listing of books with short summaries

Lunch and Learn Session
Summary of
Mediation in Child Intervention
June 15, 2005

Nora Deisman, Mediation Program Supervisor from Child and Family Services provided a clear outline of the Family Enhancement Mediation Program.

Nora has an extensive background, primarily working with families in the areas of “Early Intervention and Family Intervention” as well as a diverse background with Headstart, McMan Services, and acting as the intake worker under the Alberta Response Model which formed the basis for the current Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act.

Nora took us through the entire process of the program with clarity on the legislation that dictates the mandate and time lines for children in temporary or permanent care.

The program’s focus is to provide a neutral, collaborative component for all stakeholders including the child’s voice in a process allowing for different perspectives and options focusing on the best interest of the child. (case workers, lawyers, family members, etc.)

The program was developed by Alberta Justice and Children’s Services initiating training of staff in knowledge of the mediation process as well as providing appropriate mediators through Alberta Justice Family Court Mediation Services and contracting with Catholic Social Services.

Nora has the role of key contact person, case developer, screener, as well as attends all mediation sessions. The structure of this type of mediation has parameters due to its mandate, thus Nora as a Supervisor has the authority of the department and acts as a decision maker and/or reality check for any options or agreements that might be contrary to any mandates or legislation.

Nora gave insightful stories of her involvement in mediation and the balancing act with the perception of her role as a neutral and yet representative of “the system”.

Nora was very passionate regarding her experiences with the mediation process and its’ benefits for the families in conflict, consistent with values of respect, dignity and reality that is the true “magic” in mediation.

Look for the next season of speakers in upcoming newsletters.

Contact Barbara Bishop with suggestion of topics or presenters at Barbara.Bishop@gov.ab.ca

News, Upcoming Events and Other Information

Diverse Voices is presenting a conference on December 4, 5, and 6, 2005 (in Edmonton) that considers the impact of Family Violence across generations, from various multicultural perspectives as well as in the workplace and the health care systems. There are several keynote speakers that will discuss:

- the impacts of family violence on children
- working with abusers
- impact of family violence on the workplace
- and much more

Registrations can be found at www.diverse-voices.com