



The Multi-Door Current

Multi-Door Welcomes New Mediators and a New Training Format

In October 2008, the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division ("Multi-Door") designed and implemented a new mediation training format. For the first time, basic mediation skills training was offered simultaneously to prospective mediators for the Civil, Small Claims, Family, Child Protection and Landlord/Tenant Mediation Programs. In the past, Multi-Door offered program-specific training every two years, which made it difficult to meet

the number of African-American mediators, bilingual mediators and attorney mediators with litigation experience. The training applicants came from diverse professional backgrounds, and included attorneys, family therapists, social workers, child psychologists, Equal Employment Opportunity specialists, guardians *ad litem* and other helping and legal professions.

The new training format provided four days of basic mediation skills training, followed by six days of program-specific training in a specialized area. The basic mediation skills format was originally developed by the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution, where I worked previously, in conjunction with colleagues and other trainers. The Superior Court's Multi-Door Division adapted the Massachusetts model's basic format and designed the specialized training component to meet training needs here. Utilizing the new training



Jeannie M. Adams, Multi-Door Director and staff with the new mediation training class

immediate demands for new mediators in the interim two years. Multi-Door recognized that there was a small but growing need for new mediators in several of its key programs, particularly on evenings and weekends, when many family mediation sessions are held in order to accommodate working parents.

ADR Training Manager Victor Voloshin and ADR Staff Assistant Sarah Minkin -- with the generous help of the Research and Development Division -- created an online form to efficiently process and analyze a large number of applications. As a result, Multi-Door was able to select a diverse class of trainees that met the Division's desire to increase

format and the newly implemented open enrollment process, which allows mediators with previous training from an approved alternative dispute resolution program and prior experience mediating court cases to join Multi-Door's rosters, the Division proudly welcomed 10 new mediators this past year. An additional 40 new trainees are currently completing the intensive training requirement before officially joining the rosters.

Multi-Door would like to extend special thanks to the Center for Education and Training for providing training rooms and technical assistance. Also, special thanks to long-time Multi-Door mediators

Continued on page 3

A Winning Team: Judge Vincent and the Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Child Custody Cases

The Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Contested Custody Cases (PAC) is the court's newest program. It was developed by the Domestic Relations & Paternity and Support Subcommittee (DR & PS) in close association with the American Psychological Association with a goal of lessening

the negative impact of divorce, separation, and custody related matters on children. The first years of PAC have proved to showcase its efficacy, and one individual in particular has been a true champion of the program during its fledgling period. Multi-Door would like to convey our appreciation to Judge

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Winter Trainings & Events

- Whose Mediation Line is it Anyway?
Wednesday,
December 3, 2008
1:00 — 3:30 pm
- Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High
Thursday,
December 11, 2008
1:00 — 4:00 pm
- Developing Mindfulness in Mediation
Monday,
January 12, 2009
12:00 — 2:00 pm

Please see page 4 for full details on all Multi-Door Trainings

Program for Agreement and Cooperation

Continued from Page 1

Odessa F. Vincent for her pioneering work as one of the co-creators of PAC. As Chair of the DR & PS Subcommittee, Judge Vincent has been a true advocate and innovator of the PAC program. In December 2006, the PAC pilot began by requiring that parties on Judge Vincent's domestic relations calendar participate in the program. When asked what inspired her to take a lead role in this pilot, Judge Vincent said that while presiding over her domestic relations calendar, she was struck by both the youth of the parents appearing before her, and the high levels of contention between them. "Whenever I held a hearing in a case involving a contested custody issue, I was sure to try to educate the parents on the effect of parental conflict on children. I found that by making the parents aware of the negative impact they were having on their children, parents become more amenable to trying to resolve the litigation in a less adversarial manner...[and try] to keep their differences between themselves, and not expose the children...It was and is important for the children of DC to know that their parents' conflict was not their own."

In the PAC program, parents attend a half day seminar teaching them the unique needs of their children at different ages. Parents learn some of the ways children communicate their needs when they are experiencing stress or strife. In addition, they learn effective ways to communicate with each other. The PAC curriculum accepts that co-parents may not always be able to agree, however it is the parents' responsibility to protect children from adult conflict. "Soon after the parents and other caretakers complete the educational seminar, they will participate in mediation, where the parents and other caretakers will have an opportunity to immediately apply what they have learned to resolve their differences. Successful mediation means that parents and other caretakers reach an agreement that serves the best interest of their children," says Judge Vincent. In addition, there is a children's component to the PAC program in which age-appropriate material is discussed with 7 - 14 year olds. Children in the program have an opportunity to express what they are feeling in a safe environment and to meet other children who are in similar situations. Judge Vincent has had many opportunities to observe the program in action and says "the children we've had participate in the program LOVE it! I have no words to describe the feeling I experienced when I saw the children interacting during their portion of the



The PAC program puts the focus on children.

program, and when I read their comments. [They emerge from the program with] the knowledge that their parents' conflict does not mean that their parents don't love them...the conflict was not caused by them, [and with] the courage to talk to their parents about how they feel. For me, that's what PAC is all about." The PAC program is an example of the Family Court and the Family Law Bar working together to develop a tool to lessen the impact of custody conflict on children. "The PAC program is a golden opportunity for parents...to learn effective communication and other tools that will go a long way toward defusing conflict in the home," says Judge Vincent. The result of the PAC program is that more parents are resolving conflict, and building positive, nurturing environments for their children.

The PAC Program has been quite successful to date, and when asked about its prospects, Judge Vincent optimistically replied that "The court is exploring the prospect of expanding the program to all of our domestic relations calendars, and ultimately making the program available to members of the community at large." PAC humbly began as a pilot program on grant

funding and according to Judge Vincent, may eventually "become mandatory for all contested custody cases. That's GREAT! All parents in contested custody cases will have the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to protect the children." The growth of this groundbreaking program is an inspiration among Multi-Door staff, and Judge Vincent is clearly proud of its progress when she says that the PAC program is "a strong, vibrant entity that gives the parents and children of our community the keys to make life a little bit better. I certainly could not ask for more."

Judge Vincent, we couldn't agree more! The Multi-Door Division would like to convey our most heartfelt gratitude for all the effort you have made in developing the PAC program and ensuring its impressive success. Judge Vincent was appointed to the Superior Court of DC by the President of the United States in 2001. She is currently assigned to the Civil Court.

- Joan Burrell, CPM Case Manager and Sarah Minkin, ADR Staff

Introducing Victor Voloshin



Victor Voloshin joined Multi-Door staff in June, 2008. His skills as the new ADR Training Manager were called upon in the recent training classes facilitated by the division. Mr. Voloshin comes to us from New York City where he was the ADR Director for the NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board, an agency that oversees mediations between civilians and police officers. Over the course of his career, Victor has worked as an attorney, mediator, arbitrator and negotiator in the public and private sectors, both in the U.S. and overseas. His experience includes non-profit organizations, several of the "Big Four" accounting firms, and large multinational corporations. Victor has also served as an adjunct professor at New York University where he taught classes in mediation theory and apprenticeship.

Multi-Door is proud and delighted to have Victor Voloshin on board!

ADR FUNNIES



Why did the mediator cross the road?

I'm sorry, I cannot share that information with you unless the chicken authorizes me to tell you.

Thank you, Marianne Vardaman!

An Interview with an Exceptional Multi-Door Mediator

Marianne Vardaman is one of the most dedicated mediators in Multi-Door, where she has mediated in the Small Claims Mediation Program for more than twenty years. Ms. Vardaman was in the second group of mediators trained, she estimated in a recent interview. She remembers being "awed" by the training.

When asked what it is about Small Claims that has kept her there for so many years, she paused and offered: "It's not the money!" She went on to express how challenging the work is, and that the satisfaction is tremendous, in addition to the advantages of flexible scheduling. In her view, the mediator provides an alternative to the formality of the court and the possible difficulties of a "do-it-yourself" solution. When parties don't reach an agreement in mediation, she said, going on to trial becomes a more carefully considered choice than a lack of other options. "Sooner or later everyone ends up in Small

"The mediator provides an alternative to the formality of the court and the possible difficulties of a 'do-it-yourself' solution."

Claims Court," says Vardaman. Many people are not accustomed to the court setting and not accustomed to negotiating on their own behalf. A mediator is able to demonstrate that there is another way to work things out.

The biggest challenge of mediating there, she says, is the lack of advance preparation. Mediators receive cases directly from the courtroom after roll call, so the whole story comes from the parties, requiring the mediator to absorb a great deal of information in a short time: not just the facts, but the relationship between the parties and other dynamics, as well.

To be a successful mediator, Vardaman says, it helps to have "an extensive thesaurus in your head," so that you can try different ways of presenting issues and options that enable people to hear and consider them objectively.

She has helped train hundreds of small claims mediators during her time with Multi-Door. Vardaman says her most important advice for new mediators is to be truly attentive to the parties before them. That attention should be not only to what the parties are saying but the message and meaning behind the words. When you do that, she says, you'll find that the questions you need to ask come naturally and the mediation proceeds more like a conversation. Facts, she maintains, are often less important than one might think and being attentive is harder than it sounds.

Some of her most memorable moments in mediation have occurred when people are very agitated and angry and she, as a mediator, is almost despairing of being able to help and then there's a sudden shift and the whole thing turns around. "It's continually surprising," she says, "and you can't ever make assumptions that you know what's going to happen."

-Karen Leichtnam, Civil Branch Chief

It's a Small World: International Visitors Arrive at Multi-Door

In 2008, Multi-Door has had the pleasure of hosting several international delegations. Groups came from Korea, Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt, Mexico, Argentina, and Iraq. In addition, Multi-Door hosted students from the Washington Justice and Communities Seminar. The delegations from Mexico, Argentina and Iraq visited this fall through program initiatives of the U.S. Department of State via the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The focus of these visits was on giving visitors a familiarity with the U.S. Judicial System. As such, learning about the mechanisms of access to justice and dispute resolution were paramount to the overall mission of the visits. Visitors were also learning about training, management, case management, court administration, early neutral evaluation and the use of common law systems in the administration of justice. The way Multi-Door's alternative dispute resolution services inject efficacy into the overall court system was of special interest to these groups.

Multi-Door Director, Jeannie Adams, as well as

Multi-Door staff members Karen Leichtnam and Janice Buie welcomed individual delegations and were impressed with their level of professionalism and curiosity. Karen Leichtnam, Civil Branch Chief, hosted a group of 5 Mexican Judicial Officials, and was able to offer them the opportunity to observe a mediation through a one-way mirror. Many in the group had functioning mediation programs in their states, and were impressed with the services Multi-Door has been able to provide across our programs. Janice Buie, Child Protection Mediation Program Officer, found that the Mexican and Argentinian groups she hosted were impressed with Multi-Door's approach toward focusing on and protecting children. These groups remarked that the CPM system is not punitive, but rather functions as a vehicle to reunite families.

The visits succeeded in a mission of true cultural exchange, as noted by Jeannie Adams, Director. Issues around domestic violence and mediation were discussed in her meeting with the Egyptian delegation. Cultural norms vary between the US and Egypt in a manner which makes family mediation a more likely possibility in cases with domestic violence in Egypt. This was an interesting

point to note for all present at the meeting.

Multi-Door is committed to providing the best possible mediation services to citizens of DC, and that goal is only enhanced by our recent experiences with judicial officials and concerned professionals from around the globe. These visits, as well as those likely to occur in the future, are sure to continue to broaden the horizons of Multi-Door staff such that we are able to run progressively more culturally aware programs.

-Sarah Minkin, ADR Staff

"Training" Continued from Cover

Marianne Vardaman and Janine Harris for their training assistance, and to all of the guest speakers from District agencies that came to share their knowledge and expertise with the trainees. This truly was a collaborative effort to produce the best possible outcome!

Multi-Door's continuing commitment to the D.C. community is to provide high quality mediation programs, served by highly skilled mediators. The Multi-Door Division will continue to make every effort to fulfill its mission.

-Jeannie M. Adams, Division Director

Upcoming Events

LOCAL

Federal Sharing Neutrals Program Brown Bag; Learning from Mediator Peer Groups

December 10, 2008, 12:00—1:30

The SEC Building

100 F St., NW, Washington, DC

Jeannette Twomey and Elizabeth Bissell presenting

Full announcement at

<http://www.mediate.com/dcacr/pg9.cfm>

RSVP by December 6, 2008 to:

snbrownbag@sec.gov

AFCC Trainings in Baltimore, MD

December 8-11, 2008

Presented in collaboration with University of Baltimore School of Law's Center for Families, Children and the Court

Topics such as high conflict families, fathers' parenting styles, and advanced high conflict families

Full announcement at

<http://www.afccnet.org/training/>

NATIONAL—OHIO

4th National Conference for Professionals in ADR, Broadening Opportunities for Minority Professionals: In Search of New Horizons in ADR

May 18-20, 2009

Hosted by Capital University Law School
Ms. Rasheda Hansard has put out a call for proposals.

Rasheda Hansard, ADR Project Assistant
Capital University Law School

614-236-7317

rhansard@law.capital.edu

<http://www.law.capital.edu/adr>

Fond Farewells



This fall, Multi-Door said goodbye to Enona Williams, DRS, and Estrellita Hicks, Family Mediator. Ms. Williams

has been with us since 2003 as a DRS, however

she was trained at Multi-Door as a small claims mediator in 1989. Ms. Williams

later went on to be trained as a Child Protection mediator in 2006. Ms. Williams moves on to a full time position at JC Nalles Elementary School as a Resource Manager in a mentorship program. Ms. Hicks has been on staff for 3 years and will be pursuing a career opportunity at the DC Department of Mental Health as a Child and Family Services Agency Mental Health Coordinator. Multi-Door Staff and mediators will have an opportunity to see Ms. Hicks in the future as she plans to continue as a volunteer mediator in the family program. Please join us in wishing them both much success!

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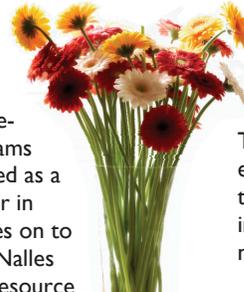
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New Staff!

During 2008, Multi-Door had the good fortune to welcome 4 new staff members to the Division.

WELCOME

April 2008

Angela Mojica-Madrid, Bi-lingual Case Manager for the Family ADR Program

June 2008

Victor Voloshin, ADR Training Manager

July 2008

Sarah Minkin, ADR Staff Assistant

August 2008

Leo Pomier, Client Services Coordinator

This is an exciting time with many fresh ideas emerging along with the recent addition of these staff members. Please look for more information about them individually in this newsletter and future issues of the Current.

If you have a quick-tip or an article suggestion you'd like to share with Multi-Door, please send it to Sarah.Minkin@dcsc.gov. We welcome submissions of all kinds to The Current. Please note, all submissions are subject to approval.

Trainings at Multi-Door

Whose mediation is it anyway? Lessons learned from actual practice.

Audience: CPM Mediators Only

December 3, 2008

1:00 to 3:30 pm

Gallery Place, 616 H Street, 6th floor, room 613

This highly interactive in-service will help mediators expand their knowledge of CPM technique and theory. Mediators will identify their personal obstacles or barriers to performing as impartial facilitators, and share their mediation experiences with lessons learned.

Instructors Multi-Door Staff. No CLE, Stipend, or Certificates given. **RSVP to Janice Buie at Buieja@dcsc.gov by 11/30/2008.**

Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High

Audience: All Multi-Door Mediators and Staff

December 11, 2008

1:00 to 4:00 pm

Superior Court Moultrie Building, 500 Indiana Ave. 3rd floor, room 3300

Learn key skills from the New York Times bestselling book to achieve better results in the mediation room, and at work. Topics include: What is crucial conversations?

How do we make it "safe" to talk about tough things? How can we create a mutual Purpose? What do you do if the other person blows up or clams up. This in-service will focus on skills that could apply to mediation and the workplace.

Instructor - Master Trainer Candace Bertotti is a certified trainer in Crucial Conversations, She specialized in conflict resolution, negotiation, and interpersonal communication to help individuals, teams and organizations.

No CLE, Stipend, or Certificates given. **RSVP to Janice Buie at Buieja@dcsc.gov by 12/08/2008**

Developing Mindfulness in Mediation

Audience: All Multi-Door Mediators and Staff

January 12, 2009

Noon to 2:00 pm

Superior Court Moultrie Building, 500 Indiana Ave. 3rd floor, room 3300

Using Meditation to Enhance Your Mediation skills is often very difficult work. Mediators are called upon to help resolve entrenched conflicts involving hostility and often violence. Remaining calm and grounded can be challenging. Participants will learn how a regular contemplative practice helps a mediator to become more present, detached, flexible and fully awake.

Instructor - Linda Lazarus, JD designs and delivers negotiation, mediation, leadership and communication skills training with an emphasis on the connection between contemplative practices and individual effectiveness. No CLE, Stipend, or Certificates given. **RSVP to Janice Buie at Buieja@dcsc.gov by 01/07/2009**