

Upcoming Events

Volunteer Appreciation Event

August 13
5:30-7:30 pm at CDR
Invitations mailing soon!

Fall Basic Mediation Training

**September 27-29 and
October 11-12**
\$700 or \$650 for early bird
Register at
CenterForResolution.org
or call 253-572-3657

25th Anniversary Silver Linings Gala

October 18
6-9:30 pm
**Dinner with silent and
live auction**
**Tickets are \$65 per person
before September 15,
\$75 after**
Buy tickets at
CenterForResolution.org or
by calling 253-572-3657
**Thank you for celebrating
25 years of making silver
linings out of conflict!**

Thoughts from Maralise

For many of us, “home” is inherent to our sense of self, and it’s a concept that we idealize. Home has the power to conjure images and feelings of warmth, sanctuary, stability, shelter, connection, nourishment—the list goes on. “Home is where the heart is,” after all.

For many people, however, “home” is a fraught concept. Too many are housed in unsafe situations that might include violence, discrimination, and fear for survival, and too many people find themselves experiencing homelessness. Our fears regarding homelessness is about much more than not having a physical place to live—it can be a place of isolation, shame, disconnection, and hopelessness. The pain of homelessness is as much about identity and disconnection as it is about the economics of affordable housing, living wages, and the presence of a social safety net.

When we explore solutions to “end homelessness,” personal responsibility and social reality seem to collide. As we’ve found in our work at CDR, the solution can require more than individual choices in any given moment. Many of us are one or two paychecks away from not being able to pay the rent or mortgage. Many are subject to the realities of systemic injustices which results in people of color, women, children, and those with health issues (including those with mental, physical, and self-medicating illnesses) experiencing homelessness at disproportionate levels.

We believe that a paradigm shift is an attainable necessity to help people transition from homelessness to *homefullness*. Part of this includes choosing to reframe things as a community commitment to “Create a home-full community” as opposed to trying to “end homelessness.”

This process includes a few of the following:

- Identify the people in our community who are home-full and can support others in their community to also become home-full.
- Connect with people who have fallen on hard times and who need a listening partner to think through overcoming the obstacles to getting re-housed.
- Connect people who need extra support (physical, mental, etc.) to the resources in our home-full system.
- Invest in the people who need extra support to heal and lean into believing they belong, deserve respect, and can create the community that values them as people.
- Invite everyone concerned about increasing homelessness in our community to identify concrete steps they can take and advocate to resolve the causes of homelessness.

Everyone in our community needs a sense of empowerment, resilience, self-realization, pride, accomplishment, stability and resources enough to plan a future.

Maralise Hood Quan
Executive Director



A Paradigm Shift: Transitioning from Problem Solvers to Thought Partners

Learning to Have the Right Conversation

“Creative Conversations in Times of Crisis” is training that we offer to every housing navigator in our community. This means that every time someone encounters our housing system, they are met with:

- a human connection
- a safe space for a creative conversation
- support to make a housing plan
- minimal one-time resources

Traditionally, the housing community has used a variety of interventions and programs, yet this very human approach is different; it's not an intervention, it is a conversation. We teach service providers to use key mediator skills and practices, including:

- **Self-determination:** Only those experiencing the crisis, conflict or problem have the ability to resolve the situation.
- **Impartiality:** A listener who does not judge or take a position on the “right” solution can allow the person experiencing the crisis to consider their options.
- **Confidentiality:** This allows the safe space to explore, consider and identify creative, out-of-the-box solutions.

Our goal at Center For Dialog & Resolution (CDR) is to support skill development to increase the capacity for a paradigm shift around how we help people experiencing homelessness. We've found this to be the most humane connection and trauma-informed approach, and we deeply believe that this paradigm shift is attainable and essential to end homelessness.

For anyone living in a city or who has seen the alarmist headline from KOMO's Eric Johnson's “Seattle is Dying,” it's no surprise that we are experiencing a crisis in homelessness. Those experiencing homelessness and their service providers can feel a sense of hopelessness. Yet in Pierce County we've seen some interesting and promising results based on new strategies.

In 2014, Pierce County launched a pilot program to incorporate mediation skills into homeless outreach. The pilot was based on a similar program used at shelters in Cleveland, OH. This model involves a trained person having a rapport, building face-to-face and empathetic conversations with the person who is facing immediate homelessness. This type of conversation can go a long way.

There's a lot to be said for having a real human connection. This approach may seem too simple or too good to be true, yet we've seen some incredible results. The housing specialist becomes a “thought partner” WITH the person rather than the problem solver FOR the person in need. The data from our pilot program (as well as our ongoing efforts) has shown that in Pierce County 20-30% of people experiencing homelessness who participate in these conversations are able to find housing on their own without entering the homeless system. That's significant!

Why CDR?

At first glance, it might seem strange that our organization—a center that provides mediation services—would train housing navigators to support people experiencing homelessness. We know that what the majority of cities are doing now just isn't working. The housing system is underfunded to meet the need of people who are on the verge of becoming homeless or who are actually experiencing the crisis of homelessness, and finding new ways to approach the issue is more crucial than ever. The National Alliance to End Homelessness has explored data and policy to end homelessness, yet the problem continues to grow.

The results in Pierce County have been promising. Of the 20-30% of our homeless neighbors who are able to self-resolve their situation, after 12 months, only 6% return to homelessness. The Center is completely committed to learning how to improve these numbers, and testing and exploring new ways of engaging with people is part of this process. When our community embraces the idea of “creating a home-full community” versus “ending homelessness,” we're able to approach situations in new, productive ways that allow each of us to find our community to be much more human.

Meet Our New Staff!

Tonya “Ta” Wilson

is our Mediation Services Assistant. Ta is homegrown here in Tacoma, and loves spending time with her devoted (and large!) extended family. Ta feels that communication is “her jam,” and she loves to be useful. Galvanized by ensuring fairness exists for all, Ta enjoys how mediation services metes out justice and provides balance.



Kelly McDonald

is the first-ever Community & Donor Relations Manager and has been fundraising and marketing for nearly 15 years in the nonprofit arena along with backgrounds in teaching, financial planning and management. An avid craft beer enthusiast and self-professed nerd, Kelly enjoys doing trivia and playing Scrabble with friends and just added chess to her repertoire.



Introducing our Interns!

Elaina Smith has a passion for giving back, to family, and has a deep love for animals. She hopes to find employment in human resources and is leveraging her internship with CDR to gain valuable skills in that field. She enters her senior year at UWT this fall. It might surprise many to learn Elaina formerly worked for a cellular company that required going above and beyond climbing over 200 feet in the air daily.



Lily Bryan and **Jordan Taylor** have served as interns throughout the summer of 2019 from the University of Puget Sound’s Summer Fellowship Internship and will both stay on with CDR beyond their official internships. Both completed the summer BMT and plan to become mediators.

Lily prides herself on working hard to safeguard social and ecological justice. Juggling multiple jobs in addition to her studies and CDR internship, she is joining the

practicum to become a mediator, has been a sustainability coordinator for UPS for over a year, has founded and presided over multiple school clubs, and is currently working on a local political campaign. In her infrequent spare time, Lily is a master at puzzles and games—she can complete a 1,000 piece puzzle in one sitting!



Jordan has enjoyed taking advantage of the opportunities college and work have given him so far, and hopes to pursue mission driven work since he says “it pays the soul in ways money can’t.” He has enjoyed engaging in student government, the UPS campus at large, and learning and growing at CDR. A perfect day for Jordan would be jam-packed starting with tea time and a farmers market, followed by hiking, swimming, reading, and making a great dinner.



Member of CDR’s Board of Directors

Chelsea Hager serves as an Advisor at Insight Strategic Partners, a public affairs firm based in Seattle, WA that specializes in government relations, public policy, and strategic communications. Chelsea just completed the 40-hour basic mediation training, deepening her understanding of how we do our work.

CDR STAFF

Maralise Hood Quan
Executive Director

Jennifer Unger
Associate Director

Jennifer Moffett
Operations Manager

Kelly McDonald
Community & Donor
Relations Manager

Tonya Wilson
Mediation Services
Assistant

Logan Porter
Interim Mediation Services
Coordinator

Elaina Smith
Intern

Lily Brian
Intern

Jordan Taylor
Intern

