Greetings friends,

This past year brought the opportunity both to look back in celebration of our 30th anniversary, and to look forward as we envision the future. These moments of reflection affirmed the important and unique role our dispute resolution center holds through our provision of impartial services – from mediation, facilitation and coaching, to training, supervised visitation, and restorative practices.

Looking back, we reflected on the ways in which the WDRC has responded to our community’s calls for support over the past three decades – from our longstanding programs to new and innovative responses to emerging needs. As we adapted to a hybrid service model in 2022 we saw demand for our services rise. Some program areas saw especially significant increases - we more than doubled the number of mediation cases and facilitation sessions – reflecting our dynamic community landscape and the need for accessible, trusted processes to navigate change, conflict, and communication in healthy ways.

Looking ahead, our Board and staff engaged a combination of discussion and reflection, stakeholder interviews, and a community survey to identify three key areas of focus for our new Strategic Plan - equity, quality, and sustainability. As we move forward we will prioritize efforts to:

- Adapt and respond to our community’s changing needs with high-caliber, relevant, and effective services;
- Engage an equity lens to effect positive change throughout our organization;
- Intentionally foster a culture of staff joy and well-being;
- Strengthen relationships and community connections to bolster access and increase trust as a welcoming community resource; and,
- Ensure diversified, balanced, and robust funding sources to strengthen our long-term financial security.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to the health and well-being of our community through the provision of effective and accessible dispute resolution services. Together, we look forward to continuing to strengthen our social fabric – seeking common ground, improving communication, and repairing relationships within homes, schools, workplaces, and our community at large.

Thank you for joining with us,
...Peace is powerful. Peace is a promise. Peace is in all of us. Peace is a path to things words cannot explain. Peace helps the world turn round. Peace is for everyone. Everyone can make peace. Peace needs us...

- excerpt from "What is Peace" by Aalyah Wilson, 2022 Youth Poetry Contest Winner

Investing in the Future
At the heart of our organization are the staff and volunteers who show up daily to support our community with compassion and humility. In 2022 we continued our investment in our people - from those doing the work, to those in need of assistance. We’re proud to have invested in compensation and benefits to ensure a livable wage. We additionally enacted a 401(k) benefit for staff with no match requirement, ensuring that all eligible staff may receive the benefit, not just those who can afford to contribute.

We also invested in technology to advance our hybrid service delivery. Our meeting rooms are now equipped with smart boards to support virtual mediations and workshops. These essential devices are available to clients for whom technology or reliable internet service would otherwise be a barrier to accessing our services. Our partnership with the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center led to an American Sign Language video on our website, making our Eviction Resolution Pilot Program even more widely accessible.

Looking Ahead
Our 2022 planning process engaged the perspectives of over 80 Board, staff, and community members. Our new five year Strategic Plan envisions the WDRC growing more equitable and more sustainable, while continuing to strengthen our high quality, reputable services. To view our new plan, visit www.whatcomdrc.org/our-impact or scan the QR code.
community

Stabilizing Housing

In 2022, we opened more than 2,000 housing stability cases, successfully preventing a local tsunami of evictions.

Launched in late 2021, the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP) was a response from the Washington state legislature to counter the economic hardships caused by COVID-19. ERPP creates a pause point in rent-related eviction cases and provides alternative resolution pathways prior to proceeding to court. By supporting tenants and landlords to resolve nonpayment of rent cases through mediation, rental assistance, and access to legal aid, ERPP has successfully diverted over 90% of cases from court.

Creating Spaces to be Heard

The Safe Spaces Program provides a neutral, alternative access point for community members to make a complaint about the City of Bellingham’s services, or their experience interacting with or within the City of Bellingham. After using our services, a community member said “I appreciate your time and patience working with me to capture and submit my concern. This situation has been very disturbing to me and I sincerely appreciate your kindness.”

Helping Groups Navigate Change

Through facilitation, we collaborate with clients to create opportunities for people to have conversations that matter. We hold space for discussions to occur constructively, and use participatory strategies that empower stakeholders to chart a positive path forward. This was a year of growth and impact for our facilitation services, doubling the number of facilitation sessions over last year.

Our facilitators had the honor of working with the Bellingham Public Library staff to strengthen safety and ease for library personnel. Over several months, staff and leadership shared experiences, identified key areas of challenge, generated ideas, and collaborated on selecting action steps to produce a guiding plan.

"You've worked with my landlord and family for some time now and pretty much saved my family's life and health which fell apart during COVID. Thank you so much."

-ERPP Tenant

"Thank you! We have felt so fortunate to work with you on this journey; the sessions had such an open and collaborative feel. We so appreciate you and your work in our community."

-Facilitation Participant
Thank you for helping us come to a place where we could talk and be fair with each other.

Family Mediation client

Resolving Family Conflict

A family came to the WDRC after a divorce that had left both parents feeling frustrated and discouraged. Their daughter lived with her mother and was supposed to have two weekend visits a month with her father. Recently these visits had become inconsistent, and the father was feeling cut off from his daughter.

The parents first met individually with a mediator and described a pattern of conversations that always ended up with hurt feelings and one person walking away. When they met together, the mediator helped them focus on their goals and on their daughter. The father expressed how much he missed his daughter and how important it was to him to have time with her. The mother shared that her car had broken down and that she had been unable to repair it - making it difficult for her to provide her share of the transportation. They worked together to adjust their plan to reduce that barrier and also agreed on weekly video chats.

With the support of the WDRC Mediation Program, and despite the challenges of a painful separation, this family was able to listen, collaborate, and arrive at a resolution that will benefit each parent and their daughter in the future.

Keeping Children and Parents Connected

The WDRC’s Supervised Visitation Program offers a safe space to families during challenging times, building and nurturing connections between parents and children. Before her first visit with her dad, Marie was already in elementary school. At first the visits were virtual; they were also awkward, as they tried to figure out how they fit together, asking questions and sharing tidbits about themselves. During some visits both of them struggled to know what to say. They kept showing up for their visits, which eventually became in-person. Dad found games and toys that they both enjoyed, and these became their projects—something unique they were building, like their relationship. Marie had never moved to hug her dad until one day, after a visit, she ran back into the room and threw her arms around his legs, saying that she had had the “best time.”

Building Peace, Picturing Justice

The WDRC Youth Program brings skill building workshops to community based organizations and into elementary, middle, and high schools throughout Whatcom County. In 2022, collaboration with our valuable partners led to a creative project with Squalicum High School, where our staff connected with more than 70 students about the importance of empathy and holding skilled conversations. The students enacted scenarios with their table mates and shared their perceptions of the needs and feelings underlying various situations, while focusing on how to communicate with empathy and care. The WDRC staff assisted the students in identifying issues surrounding equality, justice, and environmentalism. These were jumping off points for artistic endeavors that were later exhibited at the Whatcom Museum. Scan the QR code for more info.

Picturing Justice Exhibit

Dandelion, by Adelaide Jones

friendship is like a dandelion never perfect but beautiful then something blows it all apart sometimes the little pieces reconnect to form all over again friendship is like a dandelion
Hank You

Ann McCartney and Norm Lindquist
Iris Maute-Gibson
Mary Jo Maute
Camille Matern
Kay Marsh
Cindy Madigan
Melinda Lunsford
Don and Joan Lotze
Angie Lindquist
Janet Lightner
Michael Langey
Kristen Hubbard
Emily and Scott Highleyman
Barb’s Pies and Pastries
Balloon Depot
Balladeer Studio
The Bagelry
Backcountry Essentials
Anthony’s
American Alpine Institute
Bellingham Bells
Beeworks
Still Life Massage and Float
Joe’s Automotive Repair
Julian & Company
Just Taphouse
Kite Paddle Surf
Kalu Mountain Bikes
Kristen Ingman Art
KUL Chocolate
Living Pantry
Mighty Cause Foundation
Whatcom Community Foundation Resilience Fund
Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Whatcom County Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Whatcom County Public Defender
Whatcom County Public Defender’s Office
Whatcom County Saying Grace
Whatcom County United Way
Whatcom Council for the Aging

Foundations

Boeing Foundation
Chuckanut Health Foundation
Dave Nelson Memorial Foundation
Elaine and Vincent Bell Foundation
James Boskey Memorial Foundation
Jenny H Walton Foundation
Kaiser Employee Foundation
Lhateqemi Foundation
Loken Family Charitable Foundation
Mighty Cause Foundation
Whatcom Community Foundation Passthrough Grant Fund

Grantors

Administrative Office of the Courts
Bellingham Bay Rotary Club
Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship
BECU
City of Bellingham
Department of Social and Human Services
Downtown Bellingham Partnership
PSI
Seeking Health
Samron Rope
St James Presbyterian Church
St Pauls Episcopal Church
Superfeet
Whatcom Family and Community Network
WA State Department of Commerce

Associations & Coalitions

Association for Conflict Resolution
Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce
Birch Bay Thrives
Building Healthy Communities Task Force
Community Resource Network
Downtown Bellingham Partnership
Ferndale Chamber of Commerce
Ferndale Community Coalition
Healthy Whatcom/Community Health Improvement Planning
Mt Baker Community Coalition
National Association for Community Mediation
Project Safer
Resolution Washington
Supervised Visitation Network
Sustainable Connections
Washington Mediation Association
Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Whatcom County Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Whatcom Family and Community Network
Whatcom Prevention Coalition

Bench Artists

Kevin Coleman
David Syre
Jason LaClair
Gabriel’s Art Kids and Robert Williams School of the Arts and Sciences
Adrien Converse
Taj Williams
Rachel Simpson
Faith Ellsworth
Jim Dixon
Whatcom Council for the Aging
Total Income: $1,202,089

Total Expense: $1,171,484

Net Ordinary Income: $30,605

(excludes annual depreciation)

WHATCOM DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER

Expenses

1.2% Supplies
1.7% Fundraising & Outreach
3.7% Occupancy
7.8% Administration
8.9% Professional Services
76.7% Personnel

Income

0.2% Other
9.5% Fees for Service
10.0% Contributions
10.1% Grants
29.7% Local Gov’t Contracts
40.5% State Gov’t Contracts

68% of clients reported extremely or very low income.

Contributions help make our services more accessible for those who need it.
WDRC 2022 Impact

Supervised Visitation

- 38 children connected with a parent
- 374 visitation hours

Mediation

- 180 sessions hosted
- 442 hours
- 84% cases reached resolution

Training

- 88 workshops
- 775 adults
- 695 youth
- Developed new skills

Volunteers

- 1,750 hours served
- 51 committed individuals

Facilitation

- 27 conversations supported
- 290 participants empowered

Eviction Resolution

- 2,131 cases closed
- 90% reached resolution outside of the court system

Community Presentations

- 77 hosted
- 2,456 community members reached

5,690 people served in 2022!