



Mediation News

Maryland Commission on Human Relations Newsletter

Volunteer Spotlight

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“GUIDE TO MAKING MEDIATION SESSIONS ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES”

Thank you for your continuous commitment to MCHR's mediation program. As one of MCHR's volunteer mediators, you have either had or will have to mediate a case in which one or more of the participants requires reasonable accommodations. The following information will serve as a useful guide:

- ✦ *Maintain the confidentiality of any disability-related information known only to you and your co-mediator when conducting the mediation.*
- ✦ *Explain the role of the interpreter or non-party participant during the introduction stage.*
- ✦ *Inquire whether any of the participants needs anything that may assist them in participating more effectively or require a variation in the process in order to serve their needs.*
- ✦ *Respect the person needing the reasonable accommodation because your attitude and demeanor sets the tone of the mediation.*
- ✦ *If a participant has a speech impediment or other similar disability, do not rush or interrupt the participant and encourage others to avoid doing so.*
- ✦ *If a participant has a disability that causes involuntary movements or slurred speech, do not make assumptions about the participant's emotional or intellectual capacity.*
- ✦ *If a participant is hard of hearing and relies on reading lips, arrange the table and chairs so that the participant has a full view of the faces of the other participants.*
- ✦ *If a participant is blind or visually impaired, read all of the forms (participation agreement, Withdrawal Form and PDS) verbatim before allowing them to sign to insure that their agreement to the terms was informed and voluntary. This can be done during a break or a caucus.*
- ✦ *More importantly, do not rush the process. The needs of each participant requiring a reasonable accommodation are “unique,” so be patient.*

Throughout **GARY C. NORMAN, ESQ.'S** career, he has encouraged others around him to contemplate issues more deeply and to strive to improve the quality of life. His desire to be a continuous encouragement to others is a result of the inspiration that he received from his late mother, Mary Ann Norman, his father, as well as by his friends. Consequently, Mr. Norman serves as a registered co-mediator with the federal government. It is befitting that Mr. Norman has also shared his time and talents with MCHR for the past three to four years as one of our volunteer mediators.

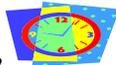
Mr. Norman utilizes a guide dog and knows, based on first-hand experience, the range of attitudes and misunderstandings that the public may have about blind people and their dog guides. Motivated by his own challenges as a person with vision impairment, he uses his skills as an ADR professional, author, and trainer to educate and resolve disputes with the public about the rights of persons with disabilities, especially, in the context of service animal access. He believes that one area that requires continuous education about the capabilities and contributions of people with disabilities is ADR. In acknowledgement of Mr. Norman's achievements and his commitment to others, he is the recipient of the 2009 alumni awards from his high school and undergraduate university.

In addition to Mr. Norman's various talents, Mr. Norman is also an attorney with licenses in Ohio and Maryland. He is currently employed in federal health care reimbursement and is the principle of Norman Access and Conflict Resolution Consultants Group, a firm that he is establishing which is located at www.gnormanlaw.com. His future goals include campaigning for elected public office.

Mr. Norman's two favorite friends are his wife and his dog guide. In his spare time, Mr. Norman finds *refuge and retreat* in “voraciously reading works on biography, history and classical literature.”

Thanks so much, Gary!

MARIA'S MINUTE



Greetings!

Here are two helpful hints when parties need reasonable accommodations: (1) have the interpreter/non-party participant sign the Participation Agreement as well and (2) If you have a participant who has a learning disability or stress related disability, ask our staff if you can relocate to a cozy conference room or empty office where the participant can “release and reflect” in the event that the mediation session becomes overwhelming for them.

Cheers!
Maria

MEDIATION News

APRIL 2009

Tues. 28th - Thurs. 30th
(8:30 am – 4:30pm)

APRIL 2009

Tues. 28th (6:00pm-8:00pm)

JUNE 2009

Thurs. 4th (9:30a-12:30pm)

JUNE 2009

Thurs. 18th – Fri. 19th
(9:00am – 5:00pm)

JUNE 2009

Sat. 20th (8:00am – 6:00pm)

“Elder Mediation Training”

(For those who like to travel or you are overdue for a vacation ☺ Walker Center - Newton, MA)
Visit www.elderdecision.com or call (617) 969-3919 for more information.

“Caution! Where Mediation Can Cross Over Into the Practice of Law”

(Maryland State Bar – 520 W. Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21201 - R.S.V.P. to actesq@earthlink.net)

MCHR Training: Making the Most out of Co-Mediation

All MCHR trainings are held at the Baltimore office unless otherwise noted. To register for any MCHR Training contact Tara at 410-767-6459 or ttaylor@mail.mchr.state.md.us

“Managing Conflict and Removing Barriers” (*Martin’s Crosswinds – 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, MD.* To register, call 301-313-0800 or visit www.natlctr4adr.org)

“The Joy of Mediation: Cooking It Up & Serving Your Community”

(*Martin’s Crosswinds – 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, MD.* Contact 410-260-3540)

Future Trainings: MCHR offers a workshop on Disability Issues in Mediation every year. More details to come in our Fall 2009 newsletter.

“Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.”

William James, *US Pragmatist philosopher & psychologist (1842 - 1910)*

“Anger makes you smaller, while forgiveness forces you to grow beyond what you were. “

Cherie Carter-Scott. *"If Love Is a Game. These Are the Rules"*

Maryland Commission on Human Relations
Mediation Unit
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