

**Notes from ACR Chapter Leaders Teleconference
May 03, 2007**

Agenda items for the call:

- I. Board Update
 - II. Conflict Resolution Day
 - III. Annual Conference Youth Plans
 - IV. How to Increase Membership
 - V. Dealing with Large Geographic Area
 - VI. Next Steps – Topics for Future Calls
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Participants:

- Lou Gieszl – ACR Chapters Director
 - Andy Levin – ACR Marketing Coordinator
 - Frances Mossman – Hawaii
 - Ruth Lusby – Arizona
 - Pat Shanahan – Northern California
 - Ashley Parker – ACR Membership and Chapters Associate
 - Elizabeth Wade – North Carolina
 - Art Benson – Minnesota
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I. Board Update

* Marilyn McKnight (ACR President-Elect) sent a letter on May 2 to the volunteer leadership in ACR requesting input on the ACR office move. Current plans are for the office to move to another (less expensive) location in DC, however Marilyn inquires whether a move to a different city should be looked into. Ruth Lusby commented that she doesn't know that it makes a difference. She suggested perhaps looking into suburbs of DC. She stressed, however, that once a location is decided on the office should remain there for extended time for continuity and stability. She does not know that DC holds any magic, since we cannot lobby, etc. She wonders how often the Board needs to meet face-to-face at office, because for most of the membership, there is no reason to go to the ACR office (Annual Conference is the only face-to-face.) Frances Mossman would like to take into consideration the location of the Chapters and suggests that ACR look at finding somewhere central to most of the Chapters or most of the members. Pat Shanahan expressed concerns around staff. She wonders, if office is relocated, what is the impact on the staff? It is a huge cost to lose people and it is also a financial cost to relocate people. She would like to see ACR get out of a high rent space, but stay in the DC area. If anyone has any opinions, concerns, etc., please contact Marilyn directly (marilynmcknight@ericksonmediation.com) or contact Lou (lou.gieszl@mdcourts.gov.)

II. Conflict Resolution Day

* Andy is the ACR Marketing Coordinator and is working with Sharon Press on Conflict Resolution Day (CR Day) this year. In 2005 the ACR Board of Directors designated the first CR Day. In 2006 they declared the third Thursday in October of every year as CRDay (October 18, 2007.) Further information on the history can be found at <http://www.acrnet.org/crday>. Andy is on the call to encourage the Chapters to participate in this year's celebration. CR Day is a grassroots celebration, so people are encouraged to

participate in whatever way they choose. This year's focus is on public education. This is a chance for everyone to share with people ADR is and what its benefits are. As Chapters plan events, they should keep ACR informed. Hope that you'll all participate and also keep ACR informed. Not only will ACR put items on the Master Calendar (www.ACRnet.org/webcalendar) but will also include them in the CR Day portion of the site (<http://www.acrnet.org/crday>). The website (www.ACRnet.org/crday) has past proclamations, a letter to request a proclamation and a listing of the 2005-2006 events.

* Community mediation programs in MD (there are 17) really embraced CR Day in 2006. Each had an open house and some kind of event. They had info on the CR Day and on the programs that they do. One center opened on CR Day (it had received a grant from MACRO.) MACRO had a forum, which 300 people attended. It also had a poster contest for kids. In 2005 they had contacted schools but in 2006 they sent out information through the MACRO network and press releases and had approximately 400 pieces. All were hung in the court of appeals and they had a press event with the winners. They gave away low-value cash prizes, so was not a big expense.

* The Chapter leaders like that ACR has things online to get the ball rolling because laying the groundwork to make it easier for Chapters to participate. One person mentioned that some requests for proclamations need to go out months in advance and so it is not too early to start working on this.

* Ruth Lusby suggests having a display (proclamations, posters, etc.) at the Annual Conference, since CR Day is one week earlier. Andy and Ashley will look into this.

III. Annual Conference Youth Plans

* Ruth Lusby gave an account of the most recent Annual Conference planning meeting. She is very pleased with the Convention Center. Friday, October 26 has been set for the Youth portion. They have 3 trainers committed and anticipate 3 more. After discussion they are still capping attendance at 120. They plan to reserve at least 20 spaces for out of state students (leaving approximately 100 for Arizona students.) If Chapters are interested in sponsoring students or in getting the word out, they should contact Ashley (Chapters@ACRnet.org.) The Youth Conference Committee would like to have strong support from the Chapters in identifying the students. The question arose as to the best way to identify students? The committee is trying to get the initial notice out before school closes. It is also still formulating the cost. They are not looking to make money on this. They want to make it inviting for the students and to let them participate without a huge financial burden. One suggestion is to let students/coordinators do some room-sharing, to keep costs down. Rate for Hyatt is \$150 per night, and though there are other hotels in the area, the committee is not sure how much to promote this. They are still looking for other volunteers to help students so that the coordinators can have breakout sessions as well. There will be a 3-hour advanced training for the students in the morning, with 20 students per trainer. A 3-hour session for the coordinators will go on at this same time. Lunch and networking will follow with a transition piece with speakers. A sponsor will record one of the trainings and give a DVD to the students that attend, so that they can take it back to share with the other students at their school. The committee is still considering whether to share this DVD with schools that were not able to send students.

* Ruth will communicate with the Committee to get firmer questions for the Chapters, so that the Chapters can respond or provide feedback. Ashley will distribute this, once it is set up.

IV. How to Increase Membership

* Minnesota held its annual meeting, with approximately 100 attendees. April, at least in Northern climates, seems to be a good time to meet (although it might have more to do with avoiding summer vacations than with the climate.) By rescheduling from March, they were able to improve attendance by about 50%.

* Northern California has a Membership Committee which consists of two people. Each month they are targeting potential attendees in a different way (going after different groups, identifying CR programs in the area, university programs, etc.) and sending materials to them.

VI. Next Steps

Topics for future calls include: the process for voting for Chapters Director; Public Education; Conflict Resolution Day events; internal communications; Diversity and Equity; ACR Annual Conference youth plans.

**Our next Chapter Leaders Conference Call will take place on
Thursday, June 07, 2007.**

Please save the date for a call on the first Thursday of each month.