
Lizbeth O. Sanchez



Lizbeth took the parent-teen mediation training in June. She applied because she wanted to learn more about human behavior, and she now looks forward to using her new skills to bring families together again. Lizbeth will start her senior year at Interlake High School this fall. She was born in Mexico, and has lived in Los Cabos, San Jose del Cabo, La Paz, Vina Loa, Mexico D.F., Ensenada, Zamora, and Michoacan, before moving to the Pacific Northwest. Lizbeth's connection to Mexican culture, and her fluency in Spanish make her a valuable asset to the Parent-Teen Mediation Program.



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*Bellevue
Neighborhood Mediation Program*

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Update

September 2006

A BNMP Mediator Experiences the Israel-Lebanon Conflict

By Barbara Miller

July 19, 2006 -- BOOM-rattle-rattle-rattle. The past few days had accustomed me to the boom—it meant another rocket had hit the ground, possibly as far away as Haifa, 20 kilometers to the west. But the rattling of the large windows in the kibbutz building was new, so I better find out what it meant before continuing to work near so much glass. I shut down the air conditioners, packed the laptop computers and left, locking the door behind me, then walked to where my fellow volunteers would be relaxing after the morning of digging and I could find out what was going on. Except that the cottage doors were all open and no one was around: instead, they were clustered around the door of the bomb shelter, where they had all run when they heard the strike and the warning sirens in a nearby village. As I joined them, I thought again about the mental safety zones we all build around ourselves in order to live our lives.

You've heard the argument: if you only do what is perfectly safe, you will never do anything at all. Risk-averse by nature, I still wanted to participate in this archaeological dig in Israel, so I looked at the likely risks (in June these were suicide bombings and auto accidents) and plan my trip so as to minimize them. Staying in a kibbutz surrounded by agricultural fields in the Galilee seemed safe enough. Five days after I arrived, an Israeli soldier was kidnapped in Gaza, but the resulting increase in violence was far to the south of us. Even after my alarmed parents had e-mailed me about the Lebanese border incident, everyday life at the kibbutz continued to be very quiet, my safety zone comfortable, since we were out of range of the unsophisticated katyusha rockets that Hezbollah had occasionally been shooting at the Israeli towns near the border and were now firing much more frequently.

Even when the rockets reached Haifa and it was clear that Hezbollah's claims to having longer-range rockets were true, it was possible to feel safe enough. After all, those longer range missiles were valuable and wouldn't be wasted on an insignificant target like us. We were also assured that a warning system detects incoming rockets and calculates their trajectories: sirens would warn us one minute in advance of impact, enough time to get to the bomb shelters that dotted the kibbutz. The window-rattling rocket had struck the reservoir a few kilometers from the kibbutz; since we weren't within the probable impact area, our sirens hadn't sounded. The supervisors of the dig decided to stay the remaining 6 days scheduled, but assured

us that there would be no hard feelings if we chose to leave early.

Some of the Israelis I talked to insisted we were safe; others admitted to being unnerved by the randomness of the strikes and the fact that, through the past several wars, nothing had happened in our immediate area, so, like us, they had no experience to use in evaluating the threat. I realized later that I was talking to the relatively brave ones: the more risk-averse Israelis from our immediate area had already evacuated to Jerusalem or Eilat, as had many more who lived in the targeted areas near the border and in Haifa.

That evening, my e-mail included a message from Andrew Kidde seeking volunteers for a mediation in August. Bellevue's property and shrubbery disputes seemed very far away, but I volunteered to co-mediate. Andrew's reply describing the neighborhood dispute as "of manageable proportion," in contrast to the larger conflict going on around me, turned my thoughts from security to what little I had heard of attempts to mediate the conflict.

I had read about an effort by Egyptian president Mubarak to secure the release of the Israeli soldier kidnapped in Gaza; for reasons that vary depending upon the source of information, this had not succeeded.

Third party efforts to find a settlement for the conflict that had injected the sound of Israeli fighter jets and distant Katyusha rocket strikes into the quiet of our July days were most conspicuous by their absence though. At the time I believed that the G8 and Iran were treating the conflict as some kind of proxy battle. But I could also see that the Israelis I spoke to were definitely in what Paul Ekman describes as an emotional "refractory state," a period of time following an emotional trigger where information can only be processed in a way that reinforces the emotion: in this case, anger at Hezbollah. Furthermore, the Israeli government and Hezbollah still felt that they had a good chance of achieving their BATNAs. The unfortunate result was the period of bloodshed and destruction that continued long after I flew out, a few days ahead of schedule, on July 20.

So, as satisfying as it would be to say that my experi-

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ence in a war zone gave me special insight that helped when I co-mediated the neighborhood dispute, the truth is that I learned little about mediation there, other than to realize just how precious neutral third parties can be at the right time, especially in situations where there is great pressure to take a stand on one side or the other. But I'm definitely more sensitive to parties' issues around personal safety, including the fact that two people will evaluate the risk in the same situation differently, and that there may well be a difference between feeling safe and being safe.

Note: If you're interested in the rest of my experience as a volunteer archaeologist in Israel, I kept a weblog at <http://barbatqana.spaces.live.com>.

Cheryl Cohen is Our New Co-Program Manager!

We are pleased to announce that Cheryl Cohen has accepted our offer to become the new Program Co-Manager! Cheryl was trained in our first basic mediation training in 1996, and she has done many mediations for the program since then. In recent years, Cheryl has become a popular mentor and coach for beginning mediators.



With her professional experience as a therapist, trainer, and administrator of an Employee Assistance Program, Cheryl brings valuable skills and experience to the Co-Manager position. Cheryl also has useful experience in case management, crisis intervention, community outreach and marketing.

We had several good candidates for the position, but Cheryl's familiarity with the program, her wealth of valuable experience, and her easy charm won us over. Please join me in giving her a warm welcome at her new position. Cheryl starts on September 18th.

Practicum Report

Congratulations to the following volunteers:

Graduated from the Practicum this year:

Barbara Miller
Jann Baird

Moved to Co-mediation:

Rhonda Younker
Mark Bornstein
Jack Mahler

Started Observations:

Tara Brase
Susan Dailey
Phyllis Sandel
Michele Stanelun



Book Group Corner:

September Planning Meeting



By Andrew Kidde

The first year of the book group was a great success. Our core group of loyal readers met every other month at Barb Miller's lovely home. The books we read were full of thought provoking ideas about mediation and negotiation and prompted lively and pleasurable conversations.

Our next meeting will be to plan the second year of the book group. We will be discussing which book to read, where and how frequently to meet, and other details. Please join us if you are considering joining the book group.

The meeting will be a brown bag lunch meeting on Thursday September 21st in Room 1E-119 at Bellevue City Hall. Call Andrew at 425-452-5288.

Parent—Teen Update

By
Cathy Goldman

I hope you all had a wonderful summer. We had some hot days, but I love how pretty our city is when the sun is shining. We had a steady flow of parent-teen intake call this summer. Most referrals were from the police department. Now that school is starting we should increase those calls by referrals from school counselors as well. Our June parent-teen training was a success and we all met again in August to practice the skills we learned in the training and to enjoy each other's company. I look forward to working with all the new mediators as the new school year draws near.

Our next in-service training will take place on September 13th from 6 to 8pm at Bellevue City Hall. We will talk about "The Nuts and Bolts of the Intake Call." Intake is an important part of our mediation process as it helps get the clients to the mediation table. Please don't miss this important topic.

I look forward to seeing you all this fall.

Training Opportunities For Mediators and Conciliators

BNMP In-Services / Training

Meet Cheryl Cohen, our new Program Co-Manager. Also share in a planning discussion on the In-service program. RSVP to Andrew. Tuesday, September 26th. Refreshments 5:30 PM, meeting 6:00 PM Room 1E-121, Bellevue City Hall.

Parent-Teen In-service:

The Nuts and Bolts of the Intake Call. RSVP to Andrew September 13th 6:00 PM to 8:00PM Room 1E-120, Bellevue City Hall.

King County Dispute Resolution:

Mediation Training, Sept. 12, 13, 15, 19, & 20 (8 am-5 pm each day; \$600)

Conflict Resolution Skills for the Work Place, Oct. 12 & 13 (9 am -4 pm each day; \$200)

Dealing with Difficult Situations with Tenants, Oct. 18 (8 am-4 pm; \$125)

Advanced Skills for Effective Communication, Dec. 12 (9 am-4 pm; \$100)

Call Training Director Sue Ann Allen for more information 206-443-9603 ext 106.

Program Staff:

Program Co-Manager:	Cheryl Cohen	-	452-5222
Program Co-Manager:	Andrew Kidde	-	452-5288
Parent-Teen Coordinator:	Cathy Goldman	-	452-4091
Peer Mediation Coordinator:	Laurie Slater	-	455-1625

City of Bellevue website: <http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us>
(Look for the Mediation Program under "Neighborhood Information")