



Mediating With Interpreters

By Andrew Kidde

Over the years we have had a small but steady number of mediations where an interpreter was required. Given recent demographic trends, we can only expect that number to go up. According to recent census data, 25 – 30 % of Bellevue’s population speaks a language other than English at home, and according to Bellevue School District, there are 70 different languages spoken by students enrolled in their schools.

Our mediation service needs to be accessible and relevant to the whole community we serve. We need to be able to provide comparable service to people who have no English, or who have some difficulty communicating because English is their second language. When in doubt about whether a person’s English is good enough, it is best to err on the side of providing an interpreter. Non-English speakers in the US are practiced at surviving linguistically and creating good initial impressions. So they may display more competence in initial conversations than they could sustain in longer and more complex dialogues. Functioning in a mediation however is a complex task, and we must also be aware of a possible power imbalance for the non-native speaker.

Another tempting alternative is to think that a

party’s friend or relative who speaks English well could be used as an interpreter. It is usually hard to know however, how accurately they interpret, and how much of their own bias they inject into the discussion. It is not usually good practice to use anyone as an interpreter who has any relationship with either of the parties, or an indirect involvement in the dispute. Some mediators have language skills and may be able to undertake work in languages other than in English, but they may lack the skills of experienced interpreters.

When we need interpreters we usually use the King County Superior Court’s Office of Interpreter Services (OSI) to get referrals for local interpreters. As their web site states their panel of interpreters work in more than 100 languages: “from Afghani to Zulu.” OSI screens its interpreters to make sure they have the proper qualifications. OSI also conducts a certification process for interpreters of the languages of Cambodian, Cantonese, Korean, Lao, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. Our experience has been that the interpreters we hire through OSI usually have the experience to translate without undermining the mediation process.

Interpreting is not a casual matter. It is a formal profession with a code of ethics and fairly well

Sawubona
#ujambo
Ni Hao
Shalom
Bonjour
Nei Ho
Ahalan
Merhaba
Vitayu



Ola #alo
Namaste!
Zdravstvuyte
Sa-wat-dee
Gin' sou #ola
Kon-nichiwa
An-nyong #a-se-yo
Salaam

defined best practices. Interpreters must learn to use both the simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and when to use which type. Simultaneous is on-going interpreting conducted at a low whisper while speaking occurs. Consecutive is interpreting that occurs at the end of the statement. Interpreting is a hard job -- if you have any doubt of that, just remember how challenging our simple restating exercise can be, and then add on top of that the problem of translating and the fatigue that may set in after a few hours of this. It can be made much harder if the people using the interpreter service don't know the proper protocols for working with interpreters.

For mediators, working with interpreters in mediation adds complexity to an already difficult job. It requires adjusting to a slower pace of work; many mediators will have little opportunity to gain this experience and will need some training in working with interpreters, just as interpreters will need some training in working with mediators and a basic understanding of the mediation process.

The mediators also need to understand how to work most effectively in this different context. Several questions may come up. Who should the mediator look at: the party or the interpreter? Should there be extra breaks? What signs might tell them whether the interpreter is doing a good job? If the mediator believes there is a cultural misunderstanding in addition to the language barrier, can the mediator rely on the interpreter to be a cultural interpreter as well as a language interpreter?

These are important questions that any mediator needs to know before he or she mediates a case with an interpreter for the first time. To get the answers, please come to our next in-service on March 12 (see the schedule on page 3 for details) when Martha Cohen, director of the King County Superior Court Office of Interpreter Services will present to us on using interpreters in mediation.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Facilitating Multi-Party Disputes Training with Ann McBroom!

Thanks to our volunteers who participated in this training: Ilana Vayman, Gayle Khaled, Barb Miller, Jack Mahler, Dave Tallent, Silvia Wilson, Michele Stanelun, Galit Kedar, Linda Wataoka, and Adrienne Keith. This highly experiential training provided participants with theory, process, tools and skills to facilitate complex, multi-party disputes. It was a resounding success!

10th Annual ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Spring Conference

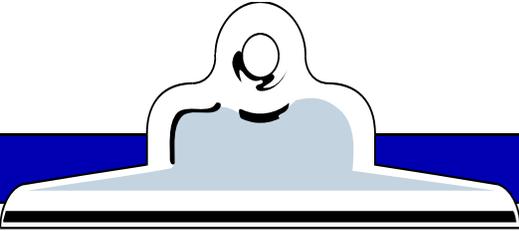
The 10th Annual ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Spring Conference, "Pacific Currents: Sound Perspectives on ADR," will take place April 3-5, 2008 at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel & Towers. This national conference takes the place of the annual Northwest Dispute Resolution Conference, which will resume in April 2009 in Seattle. Since the cost of the ABA conference is quite a bit higher than the NW conference, we want to alert you to opportunities to defray the cost of attending.

The "early bird" registration rate deadline is before February 22, 2008. All registrations will be handled by the Dispute Resolution Section of the ABA in Washington, DC. A limited number of partial scholarships will be available to defer \$200 of the registration fee for people who reside in the Pacific Northwest. The amount of the partial scholarships will be \$200 towards your early bird registration. **The deadline for scholarship applications is February 4, 2008.** Up to 24 Volunteers will receive free admission to the conference (excluding ticketing events), and in exchange, will be expected to serve a minimum of two days at the conference—April 3-5, 2008. Organizers will take preferences into account when assigning volunteers to monitor specific conference sessions, so that volunteers can attend sessions they are most interested in. A mandatory one-hour volunteer orientation will be held on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 2, 2008 at the Sheraton Hotel. **For more information go to the ABA website: <http://www.abanet.org/dch/committee.cfm?com=DR013250> or contact Kathy Kline at (206) 685-3929.**

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PARTY
YOU ARE INVITED!**

THE 2008 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION NIGHT IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. COME AND ENJOY FINE FOOD—A LIGHT, BUFFET-STYLE DINNER. OR JUST DROP-IN AND MINGLE WITH FINE PEOPLE—OTHER VOLUNTEERS YOU MAY HAVE NOT MET YET. IT'S YOUR CHANCE TO TAKE PLEASURE IN AN ENTERTAINING PROGRAM WHICH WILL APPRECIATE BNMP'S DISTINGUISHED VOLUNTEERS. THERE WILL BE COFFEE & CAKE FOR DESSERT. THE PARTY WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH, 5:30PM - 8:30PM, AT THE WINTER'S HOUSE. PLEASE RSVP IF YOU ARE COMING FOR DINNER. CALL (425) 452-4091, OR SEND AN EMAIL TO MICHELE AT MSTANELUN@BELLEVUEWA.GOV. SEE YOU THERE!





Parent—Teen Update

By
Cathy Goldman

It was so great to see the fabulous turn out at our January in-service training. The presentation by Detective Sarah Finkel was informative and well presented. The information will help us as mediators when working with families.



On February 12th we will gather for our Volunteer Recognition Night. It is fun and festive and it is an opportunity for the staff to “thank you” for your commitment to our program. I hope you all can attend

I know many of you are anxious to observe some cases! I have been working hard at outreach in an attempt to get the word out about our service. A special “thank you” to Joann Bromberg and Rhonda Younker for working with me on my outreach effort. I will be doing many presentations in February as a result of our brainstorming.

I hope you are staying warm during our cold weather. I look forward to seeing you all at our Volunteer Recognition Night.

BNMP Training Opportunities For Mediators and Conciliators

**Joint Neighborhood and Parent/Teen In-service:
Working with Interpreters** — Martha Cohen
Wed., Mar. 12, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Room 3W-119

Trainings:

Basic Mediation Training — Room 3W-119
Thurs., Apr. 24, 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM
Sat., Apr. 26 & Sun., Apr. 27, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM,
Thurs., May 1, 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM
Sat., May 3 & Sun., May 4, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Book Group:

Next book: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's, *A Human Being Died that Night*. Wednesday, Mar. 19th at 5:30 p.m. Meet at mediation office.

Con/Med Consultation Group:

Join us to discuss your current conciliations/mediations or questions. Great networking and learning opportunity. Open to all volunteers. Wednesday, February 20th, 5:30 p.m. Room 1E-121.

Volunteer Recognition Party

Feb 12th, 5:00pm to 8:00pm, Winter's House

10th Annual ABA Section of Dispute

Resolution Spring Conference

Join over 1200 mediators, arbitrators, advocates and other ADR professionals for the world's largest dispute resolution conference Apr. 3-5, 2008, Sheraton Seattle Hotel & Towers, Seattle

Snohomish County Dispute Resolution

Questions? Contact Matt at Snohomish County DRC: 425-339-1335 ext.2325, mphillips@voaww.org, or www.voaww.org/drc

Family Mediation Training

April 11-13 (Everett)

King County Dispute Resolution

Questions? Contact Jessica at KCDRC: 206-443-9603, ext. 107, jessicad@kcdrc.org, or www.kcdrc.org/

Mediation Training:

Each day is 8:30am-5:30pm. Fee \$675, lunches provided. February 11, 13, 15, 21, & 22 (Mon, Wed, Fri, Th, Fri)

Program Staff:

Program Co-Manager:	Cheryl Cohen	-	452-5222
Program Co-Manager:	Andrew Kidde	-	452-5288
Program Assistant	Gwen Jones	-	452-2897
Parent-Teen Coordinator:	Cathy Goldman	-	452-4091

City of Bellevue website: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov>
(Look for the Mediation Program under “Neighborhood Information”)

Volunteer Profile:

Travis DesAutels



I joined the mediation program as a conciliator in November of 2007. I think mediation is a very forward-thinking and refreshing way to solve conflict. The communication process infused with the 'good will mentality' can be very satisfying! I am looking forward to learning more about the program, and meeting more of the folks involved. I graduated from college in 2002 with a degree in studio art, and I am still painting when the wave of inspiration comes. I spent a year and a half living in Chile teaching English. There I did some pretty serious exploring, including spending three weeks in Patagonia. I also made and sold jewelry on the sidewalks! Currently I work for the City of Bellevue as a Service First Coordinator, but I live in Seattle up on Capitol Hill. I am on a basketball team, an ultimate Frisbee team, and even a bowling league. I like music of all sorts, and I have one cat.



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