

THE PATH FORWARD

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MIDLANDS MEDIATION CENTER
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Annual Report 2017

PROGRESS REPORT

2017-2018

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To our friends and supporters, old and new:

Almost daily, we're reminded of the powerful influence of conflict in our lives — and of the power we have to resolve issues peaceably using tools such as conversation, collaboration and the mediation process.

We're proud of the stories and statistics you'll find in this Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2017. The stories reflect the impact of our work for our clients and our volunteers; the statistics tell how we make the stories possible, through the support of generous individuals and organizations and careful fiscal management.

The Midlands Mediation Center continues to provide an informal alternative to a protracted court battle. Families have the opportunity to work out co-parenting arrangements before divorcing, and parties in small-claims disputes are able to meet and discuss issues before a jury trial date is set. Our volunteer mediators help participants draft agreements that normalize tense relationships and lower stress levels, while saving our court system time and money.

Our newest initiative in community conflict resolution, **Conflict = Opportunity**, is returning us to our roots, engaging a cross-section of people in practicing skills to communicate, understand and resolve issues for themselves.

As we look forward to the 20th anniversary of this community mediation center's founding in 2018, we take hope in the mainstreaming of mediation as an "alternative" dispute resolution practice that preserves self-determination and builds bridges for stronger communities.

Thank you for walking the path forward with us.



Sandra N. Francis
FY 2017 Board Chair



Shawn L. Reeves
FY 2018 Board Chair

VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

We rely on our volunteer mediators: their knowledge, experience and commitment to service. They collectively donated nearly 800 hours during Fiscal Year 2017.

We especially appreciate the following volunteers who mediated 12 or more sessions during the year:

Brian Dumas

Pat Forbis

Pat Hudson

Wendy Levine

Dwight Mosby

Ed Mullins

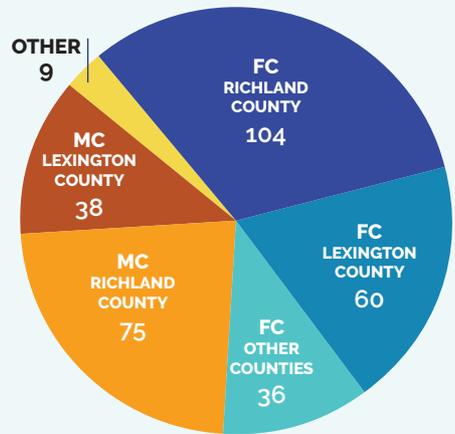
John Pressly

Deb Stirling

Jim Swick

Volunteer mediators helped us facilitate two rounds of our Introduction to Mediation course, a highly interactive program that has participants play different roles in conflict scenarios to practice the skills used in the mediation process. Eighteen people with diverse work backgrounds successfully completed the 20-hour classroom portion, which is the first step in qualifying to serve as a volunteer mediator in our Magistrate Court program.

322 CASES MEDIATED FY 2017



FC-FAMILY COURT MC-MAGISTRATE COURT

MEDIATIONS BY TYPE

FAMILY COURT	200 cases	62%
MAGISTRATE COURT	113 cases	35%
OTHER	9 cases	3%



At our first Friend-Raising Luncheon in October, volunteers like Mathias Chaplin shared their passion for the work we do mediating Family Court matters.

MOVING FORWARD WITH MEDIATION

While the circumstances that bring people to the Midlands Mediation Center are always unique, our volunteer mediators do a great job of listening and facilitating understanding among the parties.

Connie, who used our family court mediation services this year, related this about her experience:

Connie wasn't sure what to expect, because of how she's seen things portrayed on TV. During the opening, when the mediator was explaining the process to her and her attorney, Connie was relieved to hear that the setting allowed her not to be in the same room with her soon-to-be ex-husband. "The mediator moved back and forth between the two rooms, providing some space for thinking and talking with my attorney" as the contested issues were being worked out.

"The mediator made the experience relatively painless — especially compared to what I was anticipating." And even though they couldn't agree on a couple of things, Connie was very satisfied with what was accomplished during their 3½-hour mediation session. They were able to agree on how best to conclude their marriage and move

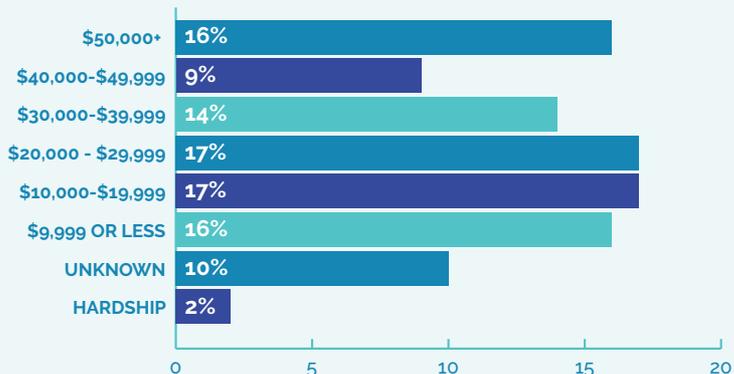


on with being their children's parents.

Midlands Mediation Center's sliding-fee scale is a big help to many of our clients. And thanks to a gift from St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Foundation's Cloak and Sword Fund and some generous individual donors, we were able to provide financial assistance to some clients who were experiencing extreme financial difficulties.

FAMILY COURT CLIENTS BY GROSS ANNUAL INCOME

Our sliding-fee scale ensures that those who cannot afford the full cost are able to access the benefits of mediation. More than 35% of the clients had a gross annual income of less than \$20,000.



Conflict is inevitable, but it doesn't have to be unresolvable.

"He's totally conflict avoidant, so it's like we never fight about this stuff," a young woman commented about how she and her husband seem unable to address their differences.

"Why am I holding on to this past knowledge and hurt?" an energy company employee asked after an exercise to explore conflict styles.

In the first year of our **Conflict = Opportunity** initiative, more than 100 participants throughout the Midlands engaged in learning about and practicing peaceful conflict-resolution skills, gaining a greater understanding of how conflict can lead to growth and positive change for individuals, families, organizations and communities.

Our training content is organized into short sessions that begin by exploring one's own tendencies in uncomfortable conflict situations, when people's needs and interests are at odds. From there, participants work on

listening and questioning skills to foster understanding and, ultimately, to

collaboratively resolve differences. The design emphasizes MMC's transformative approach to conflict resolution and builds appreciation for respect and accountability.

The Midlands Mediation Center is looking for additional partners interested in providing funding for this program when our two-year Richland County grant ends in mid-2018. In addition to cultivating a Community of Practice, we are exploring ways to widen our reach to include youth. Learning to constructively engage conflict can strengthen a young person's communications skills, leading to greater opportunities for expression and growth.



BUILDING BRIDGES CELEBRATION

Attorney Ed Mullins accepts MMC's McKay Brabham Award from Board Chair Sandra Francis and Treasurer Pat Forbis. Ed was honored as an outstanding and determined champion of justice at the Building Bridges Celebration in April.



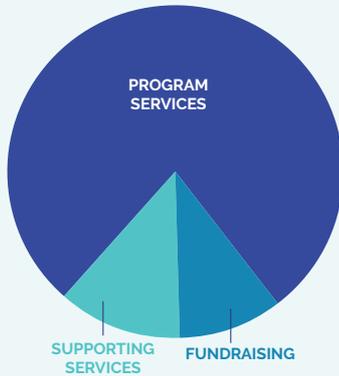
SELECTED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

FY 2017 EXPENSES = \$255,342

PROGRAM SERVICES
78%

SUPPORTING SERVICES
12%

FUNDRAISING
10%



FY 2017 INCOME SOURCES = \$267,364

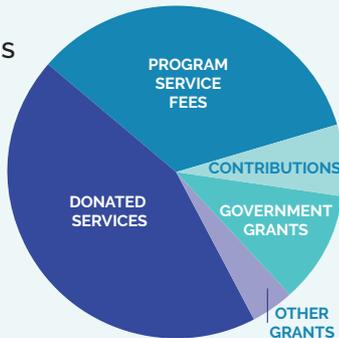
PROGRAM SERVICE FEES
34%

CONTRIBUTIONS
7%

GOVERNMENT GRANTS
11%

OTHER GRANTS
4%

DONATED SERVICES
44%



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Assets	
Cash	\$ 74,631
Accounts receivable	6,632
Prepaid expenses	1,001
Furniture and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation of \$10,764	<u>4,337</u>
Total Assets	\$ <u>86,601</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities	
Accounts payable	\$ 2,583
Accrued compensated absences	1,833
Total liabilities	<u>4,416</u>
Net assets	
Unrestricted	<u>82,185</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ <u>86,601</u>

More detailed financial statements are available upon request.

The mission of the Midlands Mediation Center is to help individuals and organizations resolve conflict, improve relationships, and strengthen communities.

THANKS TO OUR DONORS

We are grateful for the financial support that enables our mission work. With the introduction of our Multi-Year Giving Society during the October 2016 Friend-Raising Luncheon and with more participation in Central Carolina Community Foundation's MIDLANDS-GIVES online event in May, we have increased the number of donors and the number of donations.

GRANTS *(and programs they support):*

Richland County Grant

Program and operating funds



Richland County Discretionary Grant

Conflict = Opportunity Project

SC Bar Foundation

Family Court mediation



Smith Family Foundation

Volunteer training and development

St Martin's-in-the-Fields Foundation

Mediation services for women with lower incomes and school-age children

INAUGURAL MULTI-YEAR GIVING

SOCIETY MEMBERS — *those who pledged in FY 2017 to sponsor 1, 2, or 4 family mediations per year for 3 or 5 years.*

Mary L. Bryan
Attorney Dennis N. Cannon, Jr.
Gladys Coles
Pat Forbis
Francis Family Fund of CCCF
Diane Frea
Kathleen Pavelcak
Eve Moredock Stacey
James Swick
Loretta Winburn

Anonymous
Terry Baggott
Patricia Brandon
Ethel Brewer
Mary L. Bryan
Maurice Campbell
Tammy M. Campbell
Attorney Dennis N. Cannon, Jr.
George Cauthen
Central Carolina Community Foundation
Law Office of Mathias Chaplin
Lee Coggiola
Gladys Coles
Natalie Coles Cooper
William S. Davies
Beth DeHart
O. Alicia de Myhrer
Bill and Jane Drake
Gale DuBose
David Dukes
Brian Dumas
Ann Elliott
Whitney Evans
Pat Forbis and Joel Duncan
Steve and Sandra Francis
Francis Family Fund of Central Carolina Community Foundation
Diane Frea
Rannie French
Heather Heckman
Kay Taylor Hightower
William Hubbard
Stephen Hudson
Gina Jones
J. Mark Jones
Synaya Jones
Cecile King
LaLima Law Firm
Bill Latham
David Milliman
Hayes Mizell
Lee Morris
Dwight Mosby
Nelson, Mullins, Riley & Scarborough, LLP
Nancy Nance
Shawn O'Rourke
Beth Padgett
Dianne Parker
Kathleen Pavelcak
Linda Perkins
Kathleen Pierce
Stephanie Price
Shawn and Amy Reeves
Jessica Robertson
Sandifer Law Firm
Nancy Shultz
Joel A. Smith, III
Eve Moredock Stacey
Deb Stirling
Sullivan Firm
James Swick
Mullen Taylor
Karen Tebrich
Dale Watson
Eddie Weinberg
Daniel Westbrook
David White
Sharon Williams
Loretta Winburn
Kathryn Zenger



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CONNECT WITH US

[Facebook.com/midlandsmediation](https://www.facebook.com/midlandsmediation)



UPCOMING EVENT

We'll be 20 years strong in 2018 — save the date to help us celebrate!



Online donations may be made anytime through our website.

midlandsmediation.org

Mediation: Let's Talk About It



“ Mediation is almost always the first opportunity parties get to present their cases to a neutral third party. This allows for an open discussion of both the strengths and weaknesses of a given case and gives parties the opportunity to explore all possible outcomes. Once the possible outcomes are discussed, the mediation process then allows the parties to take an active role in the resolution of their case.”

-Volunteer mediator **Cooper Lynn**

“ Time and again I hear that the parties felt someone actually cared enough to listen closely to their points of view. And often, after both parties have aired their points of view, they themselves engaged with one another to sort out the problems.”

-Volunteer mediator **Deb Stirling**