

# Connections



Autumn 2010

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## Volunteer Spotlight: Galloway Beck & Jim Kennan

**Galloway Beck** was born in Mississippi, and was led to Southwestern Presbyterian University (now Rhodes College) in Memphis, Tennessee by the appeal of a small school with a hands-on curriculum. After graduating, he spent four years in the Air Force, and then earned a master's from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.



He taught for a year at the University of Texas, and worked for the city of Austin, eventually in human resources. In 1998, Galloway and his wife Carol moved to Virginia so that he could take his current job as Director of Human Resources for the city of Charlottesville.

Galloway did his first mediation training as part of the city of Austin's effort to develop an alternative dispute resolution program. After moving to Charlottesville, Galloway became involved in FOCUS, and eventually became a member of its board. At that time, the Mediation Center was part of FOCUS, and his contacts with FOCUS participants who were also involved in mediation began his formal association with the Mediation Center of Charlottesville (MCC).

Galloway is certified as a mediator in both the Juvenile & Domestic Relations (JDR) and General District courts. He also recently became a member of the MCC Board. He says, "I'm a believer in mediation. I believe in it in terms of the work that the Center does, but also in terms of a skill-set. It's a good process to have, especially within the workplace. Mediation skills are skills that are good to know, even if you don't do formal mediation. It's an alternative way to solve disputes other than in ways that could lead to violence, and be negative for ongoing contact among parties." Like many other mediators, Galloway cites maintaining neutrality as his greatest challenge. "Sometimes when you're engaged, the challenge is not letting yourself get pulled one way or the other by the parties involved. I'm very much aware of the fact that I don't have as much experience as some of the more seasoned mediators; I see myself in training mode. I'm new enough to this to be concerned I may do something that's going to cause people harm instead of helping." Here, he says, the co-mediation process is helpful in raising his confidence, remarking, "Hopefully, if I do something dumb, my co-mediator will kick me under the table!"

Galloway has gained "a further appreciation of the importance of children in peoples' lives", and has been interested to see "some of the things that people have been willing to compromise on. It's been things like where the kids are going to wake up on Christmas morning - I've gained an appreciation for the seriousness of what the Center does, what the issues are, and where people are in their lives." He also mentions the vast difference between the issues in General District cases versus JDR cases. "I wouldn't say that conflicts between landlord and tenant are less emotional, but when you're talking about children, that's different from talking about how much I owe you in back rent." What Galloway most enjoys about mediation is when parties reach an agreement, but he is quick to point out that mediation need not end in total agreement to be successful. "Even if you just get the parties to have a conversation they wouldn't have had otherwise, it brings a lot of personal satisfaction. Mediation is like anything else in life. You work at it, and you learn a lot about yourself and other people in the process. To me, mediation makes a whole lot of sense, and I like doing it."

(continued page 2)



## RECENT EVENTS

Take a look at our **website!** Log onto **www.mediationville.org** to see our updated and comprehensive webpages, which contain useful information and descriptions to let readers know how mediation can help them resolve conflict, foster happier relationships, and create harmony in the workplace, neighborhood and home.

### Our Clients Tell Us . . .

The very act of reaching common ground at MCC helps people achieve greater peace and emotional security, which benefits them, their children, and by extension all our community.

After sessions, our clients fill in evaluation forms, giving us their perceptions of the mediation process and of mediators themselves.

Even where resolving conflict has involved “heavy lifting”, our clients have wonderful words to share:

“Excellent mediators, I’d enjoy working with them again.”

“Very patient and insightful mediators.”

“Excellent at maintaining a neutral environment.”

“Mediation was what I hoped it would be.”

“Helpful, concise, neutral, as well as supportive.”

“I would use this service again, I felt the mediators were wonderful.”

“Great job, thank you very much!”

### Recent Trainings

Since early spring, MCC has done numerous trainings. We hosted Sally Campbell and Mandy Stallings of the Supreme Court of Virginia, who presented their highly interactive **ethics training** to 29 mediators on May 18. On July 28-30, trainers Bonnie Brewer, Cyndy Martin and Ronald Olsen again taught **Basic Mediation Skills** to 9 participants, including 3 police officers. On August 26, trainer Chris Reilly, Esq., presented **Virginia Judicial Systems** to 6 of those who had attended Basic Skills. For the second year, MCC trainers taught a special course in **Basic Skills at UVA’s School of Law** (see page 4 for details). Bonnie Brewer was the facilitator for a CME-approved session of **mediator peer consultation** on September 28, as part of our ongoing brownbag lunch series. After an **October brownbag** featuring attorney Ford Childress to answer questions in his role as a court-appointed guardian *ad litem*, this series will be on hiatus over the holidays, returning in January.

### What Is Mediation?

Mediation is a process that allows disputing parties to come together with neutral, trained mediators in order to resolve their differences peaceably. Mediators help individuals express their viewpoints, listen to one another, identify issues, and develop solutions acceptable to all parties. As a non-adversarial process, mediation helps those in conflict explore common ground, improve communication, and seek ways to come to agreement.

MCC provides mediation to all, regardless of their ability to pay.

### MAKE A DONATION TO MCC

I would like to make a \$50.00 donation to support one hour of mediation for a low-income client.

I would like to make an additional donation to help the work of MCC.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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You may also donate online using PayPal on our secure website: [www.mediationville.org](http://www.mediationville.org)

MCC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Mail to: Box 133, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Since 1984, MCC has provided mediation services to the greater Charlottesville area



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*Mission Statement*

*The Mediation Center of Charlottesville provides affordable and accessible dispute resolution services through mediation and education, enabling its clients to transform conflict into an opportunity for growth and change.*

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