



# Community Solutions of Central Oregon

## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

### *Helping people have difficult conversations*

To our stakeholders, partners, employees, volunteers, and clients - past, present, and future,

This past year has been one of initiative and transition. As such, Community Solutions has never been busier. We've seen changes on our Board of Directors, made a key addition to our staff, and enjoyed wide-ranging volunteer service, all while increasing our caseload and services to community members throughout Central Oregon.

Several initiatives were undertaken in 2016. In close collaboration with the Members of our Board of Directors, we've put in place the organization's first comprehensive Strategic Plan. In doing so, Community Solutions has forged a vision to bring our unique brand of dispute resolution programs and services to as many people and organizations as possible. All we do is directly linked to this Strategy and the far-reaching goals and objectives within it. Another initiative undertaken this past year was the expansion of our facilitation services. With several facilitation cases taken on thus far, we see this as a valuable contribution to groups and organizations in need of clarity, focus, or consensus on issues of importance for both themselves and the community.

Transition however, is rapidly upon us. Our organization has moved to improve internal policies and best practices, expand our use of the web and social media, and revitalize our mediation training, community outreach, and collaboration with partners current and emerging. Considering these and several other priorities on the path to transition, our organization is at a critical point in its 19-year history. With a view to further diversify, improve our dispute resolution skills, and expand our capacity to do more community-wide, we remain confident the coming year will provide us with opportunities to take advantage of the hard work undertaken in 2016.

As we begin our 20<sup>th</sup> year of community service, enjoy this brief look back at 2016 in this year's Annual Report.

Transforming communities through communication,

Gary Winterstein  
Executive Director

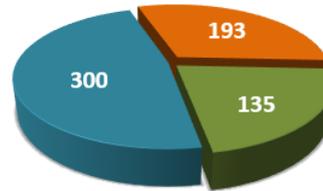
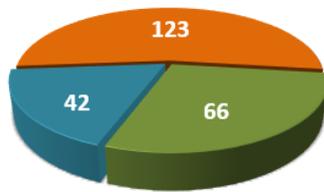
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**Our Impact: *By the numbers***

During 2016 our current dispute resolution programs handled 231 total cases, directly serving 600+ people. Our efforts contributed to a combined *mediation* agreement success rate of 70+ %.

**231 Total Dispute Resolution Cases**

**628 Total People Directly Served**



- Community Mediation & Facilitation Programs
- Home Foreclosure Avoidance Program
- Pre-trial Mediation Program

Note: Statistics for our Community Mediation & Facilitation Programs include casework in support of Deschutes County, City of Bend, and Oregon’s Manufactured Communities Resource Center (MCRC).

**Our Volunteers: *Committed and invaluable contributors***

Several volunteers are committed to our organization and its mission. Their time and talents contributed 600+ hours of service to a variety of casework and support to our staff.



610 Contributed Hours



81% Volunteer Participation



Note: All volunteers have completed basic mediation training as stipulated by the Oregon Association of Conflict Dispute Resolution Centers (OACDRC) and the University of Oregon (UO) School of Law. Many have additional, specialized certifications.

**Our Brand: *Central Oregon’s dispute resolution leader***

Our branding strategy is underway, serving to inspire community members to become advocates for our organization, mission, and three signature services: *Mediation, Facilitation, and Education*.

- Neighborhood Issues Facilitation
- Board Strategy Facilitation
- Public Forum Facilitation
- Community Mediation Program
- Home Foreclosure Avoidance Program
- Pre-Trial Mediation Program
- Conflict Coaching
- Basic Mediation Training
- Volunteer Continuing Education



**Trends: *Community needs and opportunities***

The demand for some of our services has remained steady, while others have increased. These trends, along with taking initial steps to diversify our approach to doing business, present several opportunities.

Our view from 2016:

- More than 50% of our Community mediation efforts support the needs of families;
- Neighborhood Associations have increased needs for mediation and training services;
- Community needs for dispute resolution and Restorative Justice in schools have emerged;
- Championing agriculture and environmental stewardship are trending regional needs;
- The public is savvy in their use of information technology to help resolve conflicts.

**Partnerships: *Both current and emergent***

We realize the synergy that results from teaming with other organizations. This includes activities to resolve conflict, inform or train others, or explore new methods or program possibilities. Partners engaged throughout 2016:



Note: Some, but not all, of our partners are stakeholders who continue to provide funding as either grantors or rewarders of contracts for our services. Several new partners are collaborators, potential funders, or providers of training and technology.

**Testimonials: *Real people, real conflict***

All our clients are asked to provide us feedback following *mediation* cases, regardless of the outcome. Some offer brief insight, others provide detailed recommendations or appreciation for help received.

What people said in 2016:

"The mediator was great, well-mannered and a good communicator...a great asset to the court."  
- Pre-Trial Mediation Program Client, Redmond, Oregon

"I avoided foreclosure...it was great and the facilitator was wonderful."  
- Home Foreclosure Avoidance Program Client, Bend, Oregon

"Thank you...mediation is a valuable service to many people."  
- Landlord-Tenant Dispute Client, LaPine, Oregon

"Wonderful, kind and understanding mediators."

- *Parenting Dispute Client, Redmond, Oregon*

"Thank you! I would likely have lost an employee."

- *Small Business Workplace Dispute Client, Bend, Oregon*

Note: Regardless of outcome, our mediators have a 90+ % approval rating from clients, as determined from post-mediation session surveys. Most rate our mediators' service as either 'helpful' or 'very helpful', with equally as many stating that they would 'recommend' or 'highly recommend' mediation to other persons in similar disputes.

### **The Year Ahead: *Initiatives and expectations in 2017***

Our organization has a blueprint for the year ahead. Many of our initiatives will require combined efforts that include staff expertise, volunteer commitment, Board support, and partner collaboration. Community Solutions 'Top 5' for 2017:

- Provision of a restructured and updated Basic Mediation Training (BMT) course
- Launch of an Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) pilot-program
- Further development of a Restorative Justice (RJ) program for Central Oregon schools
- Increased certification of volunteers in Agricultural Mediation (AGMED)
- Submission of capacity-building grants to resource new programs and services

### **Welcome and Farewell: *Board members and employee***

Community Solutions welcomed a new Board Member and a new Case Manager during 2016, while also bidding farewell to two long serving Board Members.

*Welcome Joan Gallinger, new Board Member.* Joan joined our Board in April, 2016 and comes with a wide-range of State agency management and executive experience. She now provides sound insight into our best practices and management practices. Joan is also a volunteer mediator with a wealth of experience in family and home foreclosure casework. She lives in Bend.

*Welcome Sherrene Hagenbach, new Case Manager.* Sherrene joined our staff in March, 2016 and comes with in depth volunteer and small business administrative experience. Sherrene previously served in an internship with our organization, and recently completed her graduate studies in Negotiation & Conflict Resolution. She lives in Redmond.

*Farewell Jim Ruff, former Vice President of the Board of Directors.* Jim joined our Board in 2013 and brought a wealth of management and executive expertise from the financial services industry. He was voted in as Board Vice President in 2014 and served as the organization co-managing director for an interim period that same year. Jim is also a volunteer mediator and is taking on a new role as our lead trainer. He and his wife live in Bend.

*Farewell Anne George, former Board Member.* Anne joined our Board in 2014 and brought a variety of community service and professional experience as an independent business consultant. She also served as the organization co-managing director for an interim period during 2014. Anne is also a volunteer mediator and facilitator. She and her husband and family live in Bend.

### **Conflict or dispute? *Contact us today to get results***

(541) 383-0187 or support@solutionsco.org