



SCTF Community Spotlight

Community Mediation Services

Hello Readers,

Welcome to another Community Spotlight where we feature organizations and resources within Clark County.

One of our wonderful partners is **Community Mediation Services**. Their staff attend all our community meetings and they help people with conflicts to have constructive conversations with each other. The aim is to assist them in reaching some agreements; if that doesn't happen, people still benefit from the opportunity to say what's important to them, be heard and gain greater understanding of each other's views.

In this article I'll outline my conversation with Savenia Falquist, Executive Director and Victoria Clevenger, Mediation Program Manager.

If there were only three things you could tell someone about your program, what would they be?

Victoria:

- 1) "It's hard to think and speak effectively when we're frustrated. We can help disputants with strong feelings regain their better thinking and talk together to create solutions.
- 2) Being listened to in an interested and non-judgmental way really helps. A caller to CMS says, 'I felt better and more hopeful after talking with you!'
- 3) We offer coaching and mediations to help parents, neighbors, landlords and tenants, co-workers, plaintiffs and defendants increase their shared understanding and resolve their issues."

What should the community know about Community Mediation Services?

Victoria: "Everyone experiences conflict. When people want to move beyond avoidance but aren't able to work it out themselves, we can provide affordable, confidential and supportive assistance. We also offer facilitation, customized trainings and consultation to help individuals and organizations improve their communication and experience more connection with each other. We want to empower individuals with skills so they can reduce their stress and increase long-term relationships that are healthier.

What is the impact you see Community Mediation Services having on youth or young adults?

Savenia: "Through our family program, we offer affordable parenting plans for families in Clark County. We are also looking at ways to encourage restorative interactions between youth and the adults who teach and care for them."



Can you describe a service/memory/experience/opportunity that makes you proud?

Victoria: "There are many examples:

- Two neighbors who each received dog barking complaints now have doggie dates with each other.
- An older woman who was frantic about being evicted from her mobile home was able to communicate effectively with the manager and keep her home.
- Separating parents were able to put their hurt aside and come up with a plan that truly was in the best interests of their children.
- A small claims case mediation between a landlord and a tenant (who in the past had been best friends) helped heal their painful separation due to lack of communication so they could resume their friendship."

Are there ways the community can get involved in Community Mediation Services?

Savenia: "We are always looking for volunteers to a) get trained to provide mediation services, b) serve on our Board of Directors, or c) help out at events. We also welcome donations that support our ability to offer low cost services for individuals and families who qualify."



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Thank You!