



### Chapter News

Our Chapter is growing by leaps and bounds. We recently accepted our 101st member, which means that, per our bylaws, *we activate a new officer position, Vice President*, whose portfolio will mainly include work with Membership and planning of Chapter events.

Outgoing Chapter President Chris Shulman and his Business and Marketing Manager, Ellen, will be presenting a session at the DRC conference of particular interest to ACR Chapter members: “Nuts and Bolts of Running a Successful ADR Practice”.

In the next few weeks, you should receive an invitation to take an online survey of ACR Chapter members, to help your Board plan Chapter events and activities in the coming years. Please watch for it and participate. Your input is crucial to help us maximize the benefits your Chapter can provide.

Congratulations to Chapter Member (and DRC Executive Director) Sharon Press, who was recently elected to the ACR International Board, as a Director-at-Large!

Also, kudos to Chapter Member Deri Joy Ronis, PhD, who has been selected to represent Rotary International as a Scholar Professor and Goodwill Ambassador serving at Galen University in San Ignacio, Belize during the Spring 2007 semester.

Thanks to those of you who wrote in and provided articles in response to the editor’s request. We could not fit all the articles into this issue, but we expect to have another issue out soon.

### Our Annual Meeting

Our Annual Chapter meeting will occur in conjunction with the Florida Dispute Resolution Center’s 15th Annual Conference for Mediators and Arbitrators: *Honoring Our Past... Celebrating Our Future*, August 24-26, 2006 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando. We will hold the meeting on Friday evening, August 25, 2005 from 5:30 – 6:30. The location will be listed on a flyer you will receive at DRC.

At the meeting, we will elect officers and directors, and discuss our plans for the upcoming year. The vacancies to be filled will be: President-Elect (one-year term); Vice President (two-year term); Secretary (two-year term); and at least one Director (i.e., a member of the Board of Directors, each for a two-year term). Nominations for any or all of these positions may be sent to Chapter Secretary Carol Tresca, by email: [ctresca@co.pinellas.fl.us](mailto:ctresca@co.pinellas.fl.us), or by regular mail to ACR Florida Chapter, c/o Carol Tresca, Pinellas County Office of Human Rights, 400 S. Fort Harrison, Ave., 5th Floor, Clearwater, FL 33756. Self-nominations are welcomed.

We’ll see you at the Annual Meeting!

### Gaining Congressional Support For National Conflict Resolution Day

By: Leonard Helfand, Associate General Counsel, Florida State University

The ACR Board, building on the great success of the first Conflict Resolution Day in October 2005, has now designated the third Thursday in October for a permanent commemoration of National Conflict Resolution Day to increase public awareness about conflict resolution and its many benefits. The Resolution requests

Congress to issue a resolution for observance of Conflict Resolution Day in the United States with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and educational programs.

A listing of the Resolution, suggestions for celebration this year and 2005 events can be found on the ACR website, [www.acrnet.org](http://www.acrnet.org). Past and potential ideas for Conflict Resolution Day include pledges, proclamations, mock mediations, press releases and conferences, promotion materials, presentations, educational meetings, conferences, t-shirts, recognition of conflict resolution leaders and volunteers, and cooperative games for peer mediators and the public.

As we look forward to an even greater National Conflict Resolution Day on October 19, 2006, it would be helpful to keep pressing for a Congressional Resolution as exists for Law Day, National Children's Day, Earth Day, and most recently Constitution Day. We recall that former Senator George Mitchell of Maine, a great international mediator, in making the keynote address at the 2004 ACR Conference, inspired us to work toward a National Conflict Resolution Day and recognized the incipient efforts of ACR Florida members at that time.

Before the first National Conflict Resolution Day, Leonard Helfand, Sharon Press, and Jennifer Druliner, working through some key supporters, approached our Florida Senators, Nelson and Martinez and although they were supportive, we were not able to gain sponsorship at that time. We now have some new contacts who feel that we can approach the Senators again in the near future.

A Congressional Resolution is a non-partisan objective that all public officials who believe in peaceful means of resolving conflict in our schools, families, the world of business and commerce, international relations, and of course legal system, should be able to support. A Congressional Resolution will help pave the way for a new national blueprint and synergy of peaceful conflict solving in government, industry, and community life, and lead us to a more peaceful society.

If you feel you can help in this effort to secure a Congressional Resolution please contact Leonard Helfand, ACR member, FSU Associate General Counsel, and Co-Chair of the FSU Mediation Day Committee, at (850) 644-1779.

## **Children Teach What They Learn: Why Peace Education Is Crucial**

By Deri Joy Ronis, Ph.D.

The United Nations theme for the next decade is "Creating A Culture Of Peace." This is also the theme of the Men's International Peace Exchange (MIPE), which is an organization of men and women whose primary goal is to render men less violent by working with them to become more peaceful. In order to accomplish this goal, women are also involved in these efforts, since it has been the behavior of both sexes which has created many of the problems we have faced individually and collectively. This is why we now face a critical juncture which calls for us to impart a greater wisdom to our offspring.

How can we help to role model nonviolent behavior if we were never taught how to do so? We know that behavior can be changed. If adults learn how to practice healthy behavior, especially in their interpersonal relationships, then children can model that behavior versus all the violence they see around them. To create this culture of peace requires that we also resolve our problems without resorting to emotional or verbal abuse. Thus, allowing children to express what they are angry about provides a safe, emotional outlet for them, and there is no need to repress feelings.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children out of Washington, D.C. (NAEYC) has wonderful age-appropriate videos and pamphlets on the healthy expression of anger and discipline. It's important to recognize that anger is a normal human emotion. The gift of anger is that it lets us know *something needs to be changed*. While we can't change others, we can create safe boundaries for ourselves by not engaging in verbal and psychological struggles. It's all a matter of asking for what we

need. If someone is not willing to cooperate, take a break from each other for a mutually agreed upon period of time. Then, when you have cooled down, be willing to negotiate a good time for both of you to be able to dialogue. Can you imagine what the world would look like if children role modeled this healthy behavior to their caregivers?

If we truly hope to be a more enlightened species, what we do from now on will create the climate for positive change. One component of constructive anger is to let other people know what it is about their behavior that makes you angry. Since we know that behavior is learned, we can attack the problem and not the person by stating *"It hurts me when you...."* *"It bothers me when you...."* Or *"I'm really not comfortable when you...."* And *"I need to let you know that I am angry about...."* Using phrases such as these set up non-abusive communications. I bring out the aspect of verbal abuse, because it is an area that has not been given enough attention. Why do we assume it is OK to say anything we want to another person? Don't we all wish to be respected? Don't children deserve the opportunity to give and receive respect as well?

Children like to be involved in making their own decisions and not always being told what to do. When you offer them a choice, you are giving them an opportunity to make decisions for themselves and to accept the responsibility and consequences that go along with their choices. By doing this, both children and adults are capable of achieving a greater self-awareness. As a rule of thumb, it is a good idea to set flexible parameters when dealing with issues of conflict. In addition, voice tone reveals how you feel. I am reminded of the story of a person who tried to fool his dog by telling the dog in a nice way that he was very bad. Of course, the dog didn't know the difference because the voice quality and pitch were associated with good behavior. We can't use these behaviors with children.

One avenue of exploration in peace education with children that has seen some success is teaching children the benefits of meditation and

dream work. By helping them to develop their psycho-spiritual nature, they are given another opportunity to view conflicts in a positive light. For example, sixth-grade children kept a dream journal for a one-week period. During this week, part of their class time was devoted to sharing their dreams and interpretations. This work has also been very successful with adults in Jungian psychology, as an intervention method for severe conflict. When both children and adults become aware of alternative ways to solve problems, new perceptions are created. Thus, a glass of water can be seen as half-full or half-empty, and it would be OK to have both views. You can agree to disagree and still respect another's. After a while, you will notice that you get tired of arguing. The sheer drain of energy it takes to maintain conflict makes you want to get over it and move on. Eventually, your repertoire of problem-solving skills will be creative and productive. You will be generating helpful solutions that can be passed on to others.

In closing, my advice is to be cognizant of how you interact with everyone, especially children since they are so impressionable, and they will continue leading us into the new century.

### Sidebar ☺



NON SEQUITUR © 2004 Wiley Miller. Dist. By UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.



# ACR Florida Chapter News

Issue II, Spring 2006

In this edition:

<b>Our Next Meeting</b> .....	1
<b>Gaining Congressional Support For National Conflict Resolution Day</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter News</b> .....	1
<b>Children Teach What They Learn: Why Peace Education Is Crucial</b> .....	2
<b>Sidebar ☺</b> .....	3

---

Association for Conflict Resolution – Florida Chapter, Inc.  
a Florida Non-Profit Corporation  
3490 Beach Boulevard  
Jacksonville, FL 32207