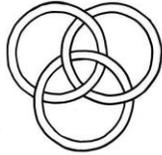


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## 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

*Strengthening Community in the San Luis Valley by bridging conflict and restoring relationships.*

### **Executive Director's Report**

2010 has been a year of stretching for CRP. This has been true both in terms of expanding our program horizons, as well as in the physical sense of preparing to race headlong into our third decade. Our new building has become a welcoming and busy hub for inter-agency and family meetings. This has raised our profile in the community and stretched our day-to-day relationships through more frequent and meaningful contacts with a variety of other youth-serving partners. Our formal contracts for services have also expanded. Along with on-going work with the Alamosa schools, we entered into new agreements with three other local entities. These included a year-long training contract with Sanford school district, to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. In addition, contracts were added to provide family-centered facilitation in two new arenas for CRP. These are described more fully in the section on Family Services below.

We have also been stretching internally. This has entailed a systematic process of reviewing and updating our organizational infrastructure – from technology and library resources to by-laws, personnel policies, and an operations manual for our building. This comprehensive internal agenda was graciously supported through funding and organizational consulting from the Partnership for Families & Children. The board took advantage of this internal review to adopt a new mission statement as well (see above). Though brief in words, it aims to convey the broad sweep and intent of our programs, and their positive impact on Valley life.

Our internal focus on organizational development has included preparations for a new generation of leadership as well. Early in 2010, the Board and I began discussion executive succession plan. There was no urgency involved on either my part or the Center's. We were simply fortunate to have a candidate who was well-

prepared and ready to join us. Luke Yoder served with CRP from 2004 - 2006, as a full-time Mennonite Volunteer. After earning an MBA and a Masters in Conflict Resolution from DU and filling a management position at a youth and family agency in Denver, Luke returned to Alamosa in September. He has been serving as associate director and I have been mentoring him to assume the executive director position. This transition is scheduled for May 2011, and will come on the heels of yet another stretching experience. CRP's first major fundraising event, a gala party and opening night production of Romeo & Juliet at ASC, is scheduled for late April. So we hope by then that we are ready to sprint!

I could not be happier or more confident about CRP's future. Having worked with non-profits for over 35 years, I know executive succession, especially from a founder to a second generation of leadership, can be a rocky journey. I am grateful that our transition is grounded in intentionality, honesty, deliberation, careful process, and the counsel of two wise outside consultants. It is gratifying that this transition is happening in conjunction with the many other "stretching" opportunities that bode well for CRP's sustainability for the long run.

Alice M. Price, Executive Director



CRP Staff and Board accept an award from Ride the Rockies 2010.

### **Family-centered Facilitation Services**

Our annual report for 2009 addressed ways in which we have been broadening and deepening our work. Much of this development has focused on family-centered facilitation. In 2003, we stepped a bit outside of our work with the juvenile justice system and schools, to pilot a Parent-Teen mediation project. We did this at the request of some of our community partners, as well as a few direct requests from parents. There were two notions at work. One was that if

adolescent concerns could be caught early, as they bubbled up in the family setting, youth might avoid entering the juvenile justice system or experiencing more serious school or social issues. The other was that families in which youth have already crossed certain lines often struggle to maintain open and positive communication as they search for ways to rebound. In the absence of this, youth may not be able to remain at home or at school, and will enter the statistics of run-aways, truants, or youth who are expelled and/or in residential facilities.

The Parent-Teen mediation project has not grown significantly, because referrals often come too late for a mediation intervention. However, it has brought CRP more deeply into the arena of family interventions. Our experience and our family-centered approach to problem-solving has allowed CRP to be instrumental in helping to develop and facilitate intensive Wrap-Around services for families with youth who are already involved in at least two systems such as probation, school suspension, mental health services, etc. By the end of 2010, CRP was contracted to facilitate WRAP family teams through both the Mental Health Center and Senate Bill 94, on behalf of a broad community collaborative. A separate agreement was also been initiated by Alamosa DHS, for CRP staff to facilitate Family Group Decision-Making meetings. This process brings together extended family to identify family-based living opportunities for youth who are unable to remain in their primary home. These new endeavors bring our competencies in facilitation and process design to the table on behalf of high-risk families and the varied community partners who serve them, and represent a new cutting edge for our long-time restorative justice work with youth.

### **Victim-Offender Dialogue and Restorative Discipline Conferences**

In 2010, our annual caseload increased because of our early intervention work with the Alamosa School District. Paula Medina and Luke Yoder worked together on many of these victim-offender/school referrals, as these cases often had issues that were interwoven between these two program areas. 106 new referrals were received overall, with a majority of the offenses or conflicts being school-site incidents. 78 referrals were initiated directly by school personnel. This included a combination of teen-to-teen harassment and fights, school disciplinary offenses, truancy, teacher-student conflict and other school concerns, along with 13 truancy-related referrals. Of the 97 cases closed during the year, 90 completed mediation or restorative dialogue, or were otherwise conciliated, for a 93% completion rate. Of the remaining 7 cases, parties chose not to proceed with

services after intake, one party was unavailable, or other circumstances prevented proceeding with services. We began the year with 19 open cases and will carry 21 open cases into 2011.

Our referral level stayed fairly steady throughout the year, with cases received from most counties in the valley. The majority came from our close partnership with the Alamosa School District. The new administrators there have continued the proactive stance of making student referrals before they reach more escalated levels. We have also facilitated discussions with administration, parents and students who are at risk of expulsion and need to have a preventative behavior plan in place. Additional referrals came from social services offices throughout the Valley and Alamosa Municipal Court

Paula Medina continues to provide oversight to this program area, as well as general coordination of our volunteer mediators. We have a small, but dedicated group of volunteers. Without them, we could not serve our widespread communities as effectively. We will be training new mediators in February 2011

Paula also volunteered weekly with Alamosa County Judge Mike Gonzales in the small claims arena, continuing a service initiated by former staff member Claire McArdle. She mediated approximately 2 cases per month. This work is outside our main focus area and not included in our case statistics. However, this pro bono contribution is made to strengthen our partnership with the local courts and promote positive resolution of minor conflicts.

### **School Programs**

As usual, 2010 held many opportunities for strengthened relationships with Valley schools. During the first part of the year, Joanna Visser and Claire McArdle provided guidance to this program area. After Claire and then Joanna moved on to pursue graduate school and west-coast living respectively, Luke Yoder took on the primary coordinating role for school programs since his arrival in September.

As noted above, many of our offender-focused case referrals were generated through school contacts. We also continue to offer truancy mediation, Girls Circles, Boys Councils, peer mediation training and bullying intervention and prevention. We have also been active participants in the Alamosa Safe Schools

team and with the student-focused work of the Alamosa and Valley prevention coalitions.

Truancy Mediation– Although we continue to focus our truancy model primarily on early family-centered interventions at the elementary level, 2010 saw requests for truancy intervention with older youth at both the middle school and high school levels. We anticipate working in the coming year with secondary school administrators to address these growing truancy concerns and explore best practices available for interventions with older youth.

Girls Circle and Boys Council Model – CRP staff and volunteers continue to facilitate several Girls Circles a year. During 2010, this included Circles in Sanford, Alamosa, Antonito, and Center. We are now equipped to facilitate Boys Councils as well. In addition to facilitating circles, CRP has played an important role in coordinating the multiple agencies in the Valley who offer Circles as part of their services. By maintaining a roster of trained volunteer facilitators and serving as a central location for data collection, CRP is helping to ensure that Circles and Councils can be offered on a wide-spread and consistent basis throughout the Valley. This has strengthened our partnership with both Tu Casa and the SLV Mental Health Center, who are active in using these models.

Peer Mediation – In Fall 2010, CRP held four full-day trainings for nine area high schools and middle schools. Over 90 youth and adult sponsors attended. High school teams were Alamosa Open, Antonito, Centauri, Center, Cotopaxi, Creede and Sanford. Middle school teams were Antonito and Ortega. This year we continued to offer both advanced and beginner tracks. Advanced students had the opportunity to explore more serious and challenging mediation situations, and demonstrate what mediation looks like for their beginner peers. All students had the opportunity to learn and fine tune their skills through role-playing mediation-appropriate scenarios.

Other Training Activities – Our staff provided professional development and consultation throughout the year for educators in various public schools, after-school sites and higher education settings. This included a one-year consulting contract to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program at Sanford Schools, as well as multiple school climate and youth leadership trainings provided to Alamosa Open High School staff and students. Another exciting event

was our annual youth summit. “Stepping Up for Youth Leaders” was led by Kit Chalberg from the Community Relations Service, US Department of Justice. These two day-long seminars focused on strategies for youth leaders related to diversity in their school communities and ways to create positive, inclusive school climates. Around 80 youth leaders from 10 different area schools participated in the event.



US Dept. of Justice staff person Kit Chalberg leads youth leaders in a discussion on creating a positive, inclusive school climate.

**Prepared by CRP Staff: Alice M. Price, Paula Medina, Luke Yoder**