

DRC Volunteer Charlsie Moore Recognized for National Award

Charlsie, a longtime volunteer at the Montgomery Dispute Resolution Center, has been named Outstanding Community Based Volunteer Mediator for the last quarter of 2019 by the National Association for Community Mediation.

Charlsie's salt and pepper pixie cut head tilted encouragingly toward the nervous woman. "I know this must be difficult, I can't imagine having to do it myself, so I want you to know this is going to be fine," she said softly. Charlsie smiled as she grasped the woman's hands. The woman nodded, gave a small smile in return, and visibly relaxed.

Charlsie Moore, a volunteer mediator with the Montgomery County Dispute Resolution Center ("DRC-MC"), has conducted over a thousand Child Protective Services (CPS) mediations for children who may have been abused or neglected. Only a portion of the many thousands of mediations this TMCA Credentialed Distinguished Mediator has done in over two decades as a volunteer, the CPS cases hold a special place in Charlsie's heart. She's been the primary advocate for CPS mediations to enable families to develop family plans early in the process so they can begin working collaboratively for the best interests of the child(ren) as soon as possible. Everyone involved applauds her skillful, empathetic handling of these demanding cases.

"My CPS parent clients find her endearing and responsive as well as attuned to their feelings", said Michelle Finger Cantoni, Attorney at Law. "Charlsie allows the parents to have a voice, which is crucial when many times they are not allowed to be heard. She is an asset to mediations."

"Charlsie has been the mediator for well over 100 mediations in CPS cases where I represent either the children or the parents. She works well with attorneys, CASA, CPS, parents, and caregivers alike. She not only takes the time to understand the cases but encourages us to work outside the box to settle our cases amicably." said LeeAnne Hill, Divorce and Family Law Attorney. "She does amazing work and never gives up hope that we will settle keeping relationships intact."

Elaine Roberts, Executive Director of the DRC-MC said this about Charlsie, "Attorneys frequently request Charlsie to mediate their cases due to her passion for assisting others to resolve their disputes in mediation, ability, and compassion for others. Charlsie has set aside at least three full days weekly to facilitate CPS mediations as needed. Often, she handles six cases in the same week and she acts as a mentor to countless other volunteer mediators at the DRC-MC. Thanks in large part to Charlsie's hard work and dedication over the years, the DRC-MC has grown from conducting 17 mediations in 1989 to nearly 1,000 mediations each year."

Charlsie's untiring contributions don't stop at mediating cases, she consistently visits CPS judges about the benefits of sending CPS cases to mediation and brings them compilations of research in support of collaborative conflict resolution. She brings together opposing sides, including CASA, CPS

workers, attorneys, etc., for meals to encourage collaboration. She has served as a board member of DRC-MC and has acted as the Executive Director during transitions, ensuring continuity and steady leadership through the years. DRC-MC named a conference room the Charlsie Moore Mediation Room for her contributions to the organization. Texas Tech University awards a scholarship annually in her honor to allow individuals interested in conflict resolution to pay for their ADR education and training. The scholarship is given to the top-ranking student in the Advanced Mediation Clinic.

Mediator, trainer, mentor, Mama Bear – Charlsie performs each role with aplomb. Over the years, Charlsie has been a trainer for 23 General and 23 Family Mediation Training Classes and has taught 3 Child Protective Service Mediation Classes. Dressing up as Mama Bear so children can mediate the dispute between Goldilocks and the 3 Bears, Charlsie trains Montgomery County students in grades K-4 about conflict resolution. They love her as much as the adults. Through her educational outreach, she is passing on her passion and knowledge for mediation in multiple ways.

Recently, Charlsie's stellar contribution to community-based mediation was recognized internationally. The National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM) named her the Outstanding Community Based Volunteer Mediator in the United States and Canada for the last quarter of 2019. She was the only recipient of the NAFCM award for last quarter. NAFCM's mission is to advance the work of community mediation, aggregate the wisdom of community mediation, and project the voice of community peacemakers. The membership-based, non-profit organization "supports community-based mediators in the United States and Canada in creating safe spaces for the transformation of conflict to opportunities for engagement, resolution and partnership through the work and will of the participants and those impacted."

Charlsie has devoted decades of her time and energy to assist community members navigate what may be the most challenging personal issues of their lives. She has done this difficult work without hope of a political career or monetary award. Charlsie is an exemplary representative of the volunteers who give thousands of hours to make their communities a better place to live without any expectation of accolades or financial gain. Charlsie has been honored internationally for her decades of volunteer service and advocacy for mediation. She has advocated for mediation tirelessly and represents the best of the mediation community in Texas.

Article contributed by the DRC-MC, the Dispute Resolution Center of Montgomery County, Inc.