

PREVENT
EDUCATE
RESTORE

A publication for Friends & Supporters of CCR

Winter 2021

2020: YEAR IN REVIEW

Despite the challenges, CCR empowered and inspired our community to seek and practice peaceful solutions.

Though it was a year most want to forget, 2020 may be remembered at Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR) for the many positives that were born through adversity. We found opportunities for growth and new ways to connect with the community. We tested our resilience - *and discovered we are stronger than we think* - as we embraced our capacity for adaptive change.

Here are a few highlights of CCR's work in 2020:

Zoom is our friend.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, CCR recreated all trainings to fit virtual formats. We have four Zoom accounts that are busy most of the week with meetings and trainings.

Neighborhood Accountability.

CCR facilitated three virtual Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) trainings with about 40 community members to instill restorative justice principles into court processes when harm occurs. The KCMO Prosecutor's Office continues to refer many of these diversion cases to CCR.

Eviction Mediation.

In what has been a heartbreaking yet timely undertaking during the pandemic, CCR has managed a mediation program through KCMO Landlord/Tenant Court. To date we've mediated 10 cases in which landlords and tenants have come to agreements that avoid eviction. CCR attends court sessions in person, however when courts are closed due to COVID or protests, mediations take place via virtual format.

Re-Thinking Anger.

CCR conducted weekly virtual Re-Think Conflict (anger management) classes with up to 20 people per class who are involved with Jackson County Probation and Parole. The classwork and conversations have changed thinking that ultimately changes behaviors and lives.

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Our school team spent time in studio (socially distanced and masked when off camera) recording conflict resolution workshops in virtual-friendly formats for teachers, staff and students.

Visit [CCRKC.org](https://www.ccrkc.org) to learn of the many programs and training opportunities available to individuals, schools and business organizations.



FROM ANNETTE LANTZ-SIMMONS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello Everyone -

I look outside my living room window at another cold, grey day, and feel grumpy.

Psychologists tell us that sitting with our emotions for a time can actually help us move through them in a healthy way, so I try not to ignore how I'm feeling or strive for a lighter feeling too soon.

As I frequently do when I'm feeling low, I pick up something to read. This morning it's Zadie Smith's *Intimations*, an exploration of ideas, feelings and questions prompted by an unprecedented situation. Smith's writing makes me think, cry, laugh and stretch. By the end of the short essay, "A Hovering Young Man," I feel lighter.

The pandemic has highlighted what has always been true. So much about who we are as a society has to change, and it is hard work.

Here is my invitation: *Don't try to escape the hard stuff too quickly, but don't get stuck there.*

We can feel hopeful when so many people are doing important work and taking action to bring about positive change. We can feel hopeful when so many people are supporting each other to think, cry, laugh and stretch. And hope is right here in the stories of our work at CCR.

Thank you for all of the ways you call for equity, safety and dignity for all. We continue to work together to keep hope in view.

Sincerely,

Share a gift at [CCRKC.org](https://www.ccrkc.org)

The CCR Team: Meet Jaylon Verser

We pose a few questions to Jaylon Verser, a member of the Center for Conflict Resolution team since 2018 as a trained mediator and Restorative Justice facilitator. His role recently shifted to support the technical aspects of our virtual services, trainings, and workshops.

What is the greatest challenge for program participants in our new "virtual world"? Not surprisingly, learning and adjusting to new software is a big challenge for some. For many more, the difficulty comes in sitting at the computer for several hours at a time.

Are participants more guarded in a virtual setting, or do they share their emotions more freely?

There's an in-person vibe to our trainings that can absolutely prompt people to share difficult topics. We always emphasize that it's not something to be ashamed of -



that it's okay to express those feelings as a part of resolving conflict.

What do you enjoy in your down time? I love live music and taking walks. If there's an outdoor concert, I'm there.

Who's on your playlist? Musiq Soulchild, PJ Morton, and Mint Condition are definitely among the favorites!

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[Center for Conflict Resolution](https://www.youtube.com/CenterforConflictResolution)

TOGETHER

Just and peaceful solutions are possible as we work together to Prevent, Educate and Restore.

GIVE

Your gift in any amount helps sustain our vital mission. Please mail your check or give online at [CCRKC.org](https://www.ccrkc.org). Thank you!

OUR MISSION

Building bridges of communication and understanding in our community.



Partnership: CCR collaboration with Amethyst Place brings restorative practices to family reunification.

For families at Kansas City's Amethyst Place who have experienced the hurts and trauma related to substance use, there's always room for healing.

A recent collaboration with CCR is helping to equip the staff with restorative justice tools and practices to benefit the children and families living at its family housing complex on Troost Avenue in Kansas City, MO.



It is the only facility in the metro exclusively for women in addiction recovery where they can live long term with their children while receiving round-the-clock support. Two-thirds of moms at Amethyst Place have lost custody of their children due to substance use and poverty.

As families are reunified, there is great value in the opportunity to help them address conflict, past trauma and harm.

CCR's work with Amethyst Place in "restorative justice" processes will allow them to help residents affected by an incident of harm or wrongdoing. They can come together in a safe and controlled environment to share feelings and opinions truthfully and resolve together how best to deal with its aftermath.

The process is called "restorative" because it is concerned with restoring, as much as possible, the dignity and well-being of those harmed by the incident.

CCR's Mediation Coordinator Debbie Bayless says the partnership began with CCR facilitating a Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) training with the Amethyst Place staff and resident board.

"This equipped them with ideas and processes to use in their community to build relationships and create ways to address harm in restorative ways," says Debbie. "Going forward, they will be able to create regular circles to talk about issues and deal with problems when they arise."

"Restorative Justice processes empower people's imagination to think about other ways they can use the concept," says Debbie. "It is a means to upholding everyone's dignity and employing long term solutions."

To learn more about our restorative justice training opportunities, please contact CCR at 816.461.8255 or visit CCRKC.org.

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KC Hot Spots.

CCR worked year-round to serve the community in each of the four Jackson County, MO "hot spots" where incidents of violence and homicide continue to rise.

Restorative practices in schools.

CCR continued its presence in schools, training educators in restorative practices. This included virtual training for 108 teachers, administrators and staff at Brookside Charter School, as Genesis School, KIPP Endeavor Academy and Crossroads Academy.

Community Connections.

CCR's presence at the Conflict Resolution HUB at Gregg/Klice Community Center was stalled due to COVID, however CCR is now back serving students attending virtual school at eight KCMO Parks and Recreation community centers.

Our CCR staff coaches and mentors students who are experiencing difficulties with online school and social issues related to the pandemic.

Mediating through conflict.

Throughout 2020, CCR had about 10 opportunities each week to provide mediation services for a variety of issues: from neighbor disputes to interpersonal conflicts among community members.



CCR's annual Rise for Peace Breakfast was hosted virtually in October and featured Kansas City civic leaders including Dr. Mark Bedell, CEO and Superintendent of KCMO Public Schools. The event can be viewed on our website and YouTube Channel.

Healthy ways to deal with conflict in a divided world.

Mindfulness can help us manage our response to conflict and division with respect and dignity.

Let's face it: it's a rough world out there.

Not unlike other eras in history, we're living in a world where disagreements and disputes are inevitable. Whether at home or work - or both - without the mindfulness to manage in a healthy way, conflict can take a toll on relationships as well as our emotional and physical health.

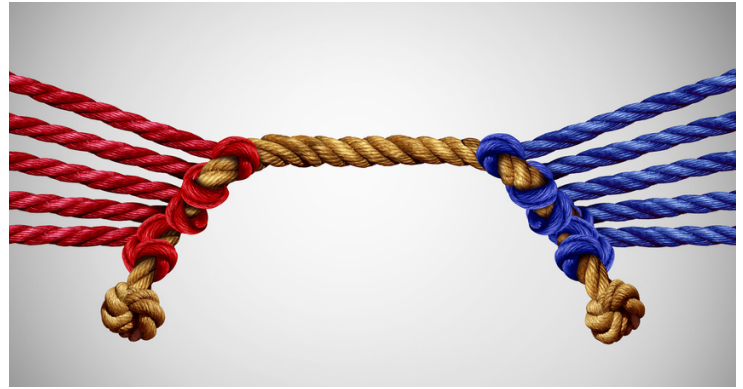
Perhaps these examples of healthy and unhealthy ways of responding to conflict may resonate with you.

Unhealthy responses to conflict

- An inability to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person.
- Explosive, angry, hurtful and resentful reactions.
- Withdrawing from relationships, resulting in rejection, isolation, shaming, or fear of abandonment.
- An inability to consider the other person's point-of-view.
- Avoiding conflict or being fearful; expecting a bad outcome.

Healthy responses to conflict

- The capacity to empathize with the other person's perspective.
- Calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions.
- A readiness to move through the conflict without holding resentment or anger.
- The ability to seek collaboration to meet everyone's needs.
- A belief that managing conflict can be positive for both sides when done with dignity and respect.



Successfully resolving conflict depends on our ability to:

- Manage stress quickly while remaining alert and calm. By staying calm, we can more accurately read and interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Acknowledge and control our emotions and behaviors.
- When in control of our emotions, we can communicate our needs without threatening, intimidating or punishing others.
- Pay attention to the feelings being expressed as well as the spoken words of others.
- Be aware of and respect differences. By avoiding disrespectful words and actions, we can almost always resolve conflict faster and peacefully.

Community Spotlight

International Paper advances two important initiatives at CCR with employee-directed grant



From left: International Paper staff members Ray Henderson and Bailey Barbour with CCR's Restorative Justice Strategist and Training Manager Greg Winship.

Thanks to an employee of Memphis-based International Paper, CCR is the grateful recipient of a grant to fund two important initiatives in our community.

The generous award funded a series of videos for Conflict Resolution Workshops that will be shown virtually to students in Kansas City area schools. Additionally, the grant allows CCR to offer a 4-hour workshop in February on Conflict Styles, including a profile assessment for each participant. It also funds an 8-hour Building Trauma Awareness and Resilience training coming in April.

International Paper is one of the world's leading producers of fiber-based packaging, pulp and paper, with more than 50,000 employees and more than 25,000 customers worldwide. It has several locations in the Kansas City area.

CCR salutes International Paper for its commitment to our community!

The February and April workshop sessions are open to the public on a first-come basis with limited capacity. Visit CCRKC.org for more information or to register.