



THE BRIDGE

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-worker
- Sandy Millar, Mediator/ Case-
worker.
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- Mike Nolin, Resource Centre.

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74% of cases closed

Justice that Builds Community

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Who Is Saskatoon Community Mediation Services ?

Saskatoon Community Mediation Services (SCMS) began in 1983. It was founded by the John Howard Society (Saskatoon) and the Mennonite Central Committee (Saskatchewan). SCMS was incorporated in 1989 as a not for profit organization.

The organization reports to a volunteer Board of Directors. Our goal in offering services is to reduce conflict and violence in community and institutional settings by strengthening people’s ability to respond to conflicts before they escalate and also to provide a restorative approach when conflict does happen. One of our strategies is to establish alliances with like minded community groups and individuals to make these changes together.

Our programs include:

Adult Diversion Program

Community Mediation

Respectful Conflict Resolution and Mediation Training

Public Education and Awareness

Reflections by the Co-Directors

By Helen Smith-McIntyre

As SCMS marks its 25th year, there is cause to reflect—where have we been—where are we going? What does success mean? What can we take from the past to the future?

As I reflect on these questions, I always come back to the same theme, our success rests in who and how we are. Over the years, we have dedicated ourselves to an ethos of respect and care. We continue to make it our goal that every person whom we encounter will part from us feeling respected and cared for. Rooted in this ethos of ‘radical’ or ‘absolute’ respect, we continue to be passionate about philosophy of “Restorative Justice”.

In March 2008, in partnership with Regina Alternative Measures and others, we organized and facilitated a Provincial Restorative Justice Conference in Saskatoon. One of the themes chosen for the conference was renewal. It was noted that after 25 years, some of the passion has waned in the community. Routine has set in, and the work of ‘restorative justice’ was being driven more by procedures rather than by principles. The goal of the conference was to rekindle the passion for true and healing justice for the future.

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More Serious Cases Pilot Project - new to SCMS

In 2006, SCMS and Regina Alternative Measures Program (RAMP) were approached by the Saskatchewan Department of Justice about developing a program for more serious cases.

The pilot project would explore offering restorative processes for cases which were not referable under the Saskatchewan Justice Guidelines for Alternative Measures, either because the harm caused was too serious, the accused had already accumulated a significant criminal record or the Crown Prosecutor believed that conviction was necessary.

The casework is directed at healing and closure, rather than having the charge withdrawn. Research has shown that both victims and offenders benefit from participation in the process, with victims rating such programs as surprisingly satisfactory.

SCMS has pursued this initiative by requesting and receiving referrals of cases which the crown has considered more serious. The hope is that by initially concentrating on casework, some common themes for success may evolve.

So far many of the cases have involved family dynamics.

Children and Youth in the Sex Trade: Exploitation and Exiting

(by Jessie Buydens)

This masters thesis for the University of Saskatchewan College of Law explores the current treatment of children and youth who are being exploited by the street sex trade. The author argues that children and youth are forced into the sex trade by social and economic factors that are outside of their control.

Young people do not have realistic alternatives to engaging in the street sex trade. Their involvement in the sex trade amounts to survival sex which may be the only way they are able to provide for themselves.

Buydens forcefully suggests that Canada's prostitution laws, found in sections 210 through 213, inclusive, in the *Criminal Code*, violate the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as they pertain to children, because the age of consent, which was recently raised to 16, by the Conservative Government, deems certain age groups incapable of consenting to the very sexual activity they are accused of selling contrary to the *Criminal Code*.

Buydens points out that the system routinely fails those youth aged 16 to 18, by failing to provide meaningful programs which address the youths' basic needs, such as food, shelter, employment and money, thus perpetuating the

Buydens calls for programs that aim to address the root issues leading to sexual exploitation through the sex trade. These programs should attempt to divert children and youth off the streets as a more permanent solution, rather than resorting to sanctions available pursuant to the *Criminal Code*. It should be noted that programs exist to redress offenders (users of prostitutes) in the form of "John" schools, however, programming is virtually non-existent to assist sex trade workers in transition.

About the Author

Jessie Buydens is a lawyer in private practice in Saskatoon with Scott Phelps & Mason. She has degrees in Psychology and Sociology that she obtained from the University of Saskatchewan. She obtained her LLB and LLM from the University of Saskatchewan College of Law. While completing her LLM she clerked with the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan here in Saskatoon. She is active in our community. She is a former director of the Student Help Centre at the U of S, and she is a member of Girls Action and Information Network (GAIN), an outreach program for sex trade workers.

Saskatoon Community Mediation Services is offering a Mediation (Level 2) Training Workshop

**February 17, 18, & 19, 2009
COST: \$ 500.00**

(Space is limited to 5 participants at a reduced rate for individuals with little or no income)



SCMS Fundraiser

— SCMS is pleased to announce the Saskatoon Co-operative Association Limited is hosting: —

***BRUNCH AT THE CO-OP CAFETERIAS
8th STREET and 33rd STREET LOCATIONS
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2009
10:00 am to 2:00 pm
\$4.99/PLATE***

***\$1.00 of each Brunch purchased will be donated to SCMS
SCMS WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE SASKATOON CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION
FOR ITS GENEROSITY!!!!!!***

Reflections continued:

Some 200 people came together from across the province and out-of-province people were clamoring to attend. The speakers/facilitators were people who are the shining lights of restorative justice in Canada and the world. In summary, the conclusion of the conference was that renewal is about holding steady to the values. “Restorative Justice” we heard, is about respect and care, and it is also about love, acceptance, forgiveness, hope and empowerment. Yes, we need procedures and strategies but they must be rooted in the historical values, otherwise we will not be successful.

When we talk about success, we mean that we have supported people toward healing, toward respect for self and others, and toward a desire to live in a more positive way. When others measure success, they talk about ‘recidivism’ (re-offending), cost savings and freeing up the courts. I would say that the latter are outcomes of our success.

INTRODUCING: Each Newsletter SCMS will be Introducing a new Staff member. In this edition:

SCMS would like to welcome Mike Nolin as its new co-ordinator, of Fundraising, Education and Public Awareness. Mike is a former lawyer who brings a wealth of experience from the non-profit sector as a former president of the Saskatchewan Rugby Union, and Board of Director, of the Prairie Fire, a Rugby Canada Super League Club based out of Regina. As a former criminal defence lawyer, Mike brings a pragmatic and fresh perspective to restorative justice and the core beliefs of SCMS.

Mike has already assisted in re-invigorating SCMS’ community consultation process in order to chart our future. He has conducted workshops on Restorative Justice for the Grade 8 EcoQuest Class at Buena Vista Elementary School.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION - OPEN INVITATION FOR IDEAS

Once again SCMS is undertaking a consultation process to refine and possibly expand its role in the community. Particularly, we are concerned with our future presence in Saskatoon Schools. For eight years, 1999 – 2007, we offered a respectful conflict resolution program with an option of peer mediation training to elementary schools in Saskatoon and Area. Sadly, by 2007, we were no longer able to find enough funding to continue the program with a full time staff person. As a result, we were forced to stop offering the program. We were instrumental in setting up the program that continues to run at Mount Royal Collegiate, now spearheaded by the Saskatoon Rotary Club.

Equally, unfortunate, is the need for resources of this nature has grown exponentially since 1999. The Rotarians have established a comparable program at 3 high schools, however, they have encountered the very same challenges to sustainability as we did. Currently, their volunteer organization, lacks the infrastructure to meet the needs of the Saskatoon High Schools requesting assistance from Community Organizations. Unfortunately, there is a gaping hole at the Elementary School level since we discontinued our program.

We still believe in the work that we were and are continuing to do in this area and we are committed to supporting the community with our experience and our resources. Kindly drop us a line with your thoughts on this important subject. We would be more than happy to meet with you and/or your organization to identify areas where there is limited coverage and a need for further community involvement.

Saskatoon Community Mediation Services

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Saskatoon, SK S7K 1M1

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Justice That Builds Community



Visit us at

Http://
mediate.sasktelwebsi

74% of Cases Closed Successfully

Over a recent period from April 1, 2008 - September 30, 2008, 477 individual offenders were referred to our office, representing an average of 79.5 offenders per month. The annual contract between Sask. Justice and SCMS allows for 1100 referred offenders per year which equates to an average of 91.66 per month.

These 477 offenders generated 545 cases. Cases are counted by the number of victims. Justice system charges are not considered as separate cases. Of the 477 offenders, the Federal Crown Prosecutor's office referred 108 cases in the reporting period, a sharp increase from the historical average.

Statistical Report Highlights:

- 74% of cases were closed successfully
- 14% of cases were closed because of bench warrant
- Theft under \$5000 (cc334(b)) was the most commonly referred charge
- \$25,052.00 was collected as restitution/donations for cases closed during the time period.
- 382 hours of community service work was performed

Coming Events SMCS and the BRIDGE CITY ARTISTS
Are hosting a Banquet and Art Sale

BUILDING BRIDGES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Saturday, March 14th, 2009

Terrace Room, Prairieland Park Saskatoon

Viewing at 4:00pm

Cocktails at 4:30pm

Dinner at 7:00pm

Watch for a line-up of entertainment!!!!

Annual Membership Drive!!!!

SCMS is a membership driven organization. The goal is to have members who represent different sectors of the Saskatoon Community. The hope is that members will guide and direct the work of the organization so that SCMS is responsive to the needs of the community. To become a member please take the time to complete the attached coupon and return it to our office. A minimum donation of \$10 is required.

Saskatoon Community Mediation Services
#208, 220 - 3rd Ave South
Saskatoon, SK S7K 1M1

Phone: (306) 244-0440: Fax: (306) 244-0512

- YES, I want to be a member of SCMS
 NO, I don't want to be a member, but I am sending a donation

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

I am enclosing...

\$10.00

\$25.00

\$50.00

\$100.00

\$ _____

Please make cheques payable to SCMS