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HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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Harford County Community Mediation Announces New Restorative Justice Program; Seeks Volunteers

BEL AIR, Md., (Oct. 25, 2017) - The Harford County Community Mediation Program (HCCMP) has initiated a new restorative justice program for youth in Harford County through a partnership between the nonprofit Community Conferencing Center and the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. The program will offer community conferencing as an effective alternative for young people involved in crime and other harmful behavior. HCCMP is seeking volunteer facilitators to guide participants through the process; training will be provided.

Community conferencing empowers the community of people affected by an incident, including victims, offenders, and supporters, to collectively decide how to best repair the harm and prevent future occurrences. Because all stakeholders are included in decision-making, compliance averages 95% and the recidivism rate for youth offenders is 60% lower than in the juvenile justice system statewide, according to the Community Conferencing Center.

Volunteer facilitators must be over 18 and should be:

- passionate about providing young people with opportunities to thrive;
- able to let people make decisions for themselves without a need to “fix the problem”;
- comfortable with people expressing strong feelings.

Applications are now being accepted for a two-day training on Thursday, November 30 and Friday, December 1 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at a Harford County location to be determined. The

training will be co-facilitated by Community Conferencing Center's Executive Director Lauren Abramson. It will combine instruction and experiential learning and emphasize both the principles underlying the process and techniques of community conferencing facilitation. Trained volunteers will then be paired with an experienced facilitator for a period of apprenticeship before taking on cases of their own. Applications for the training are due by Monday, November 20, and are available online at <http://bit.ly/2ijGaCA>.

The Harford County Community Mediation Program is a part of the Harford County Department of Community Services and offers mediation and facilitation services at no charge to the citizens of Harford County.

Mediation is a cost-effective and proven method of resolving conflict. Under the administration of County Executive Barry Glassman, mediation services through HCCMP have expanded significantly. In the last 36 months, HCCMP has added re-entry services, which reconnect inmates to their families and employment, and mediation and planning services within families. More recently, HCCMP has paired trained peer recovery coaches with individuals in recovery and used the mediation model to establish protocols, long-term treatment, and sobriety maintenance strategies that reduce relapse. This fall HCCMP and Harford County Public Schools will offer attendance/truancy mediations and conflict resolution programming.

To learn more about available programs and initiatives, call 410-638-4807 or visit <http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/523/Mediation-Program>.

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