

**The Mediation Center of the Pacific**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**



**FY 2012 - 2013**

**FY 2012-2013  
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\* Serving first three-year term

\*\* Serving second three-year term

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## Meeting the Needs of Oahu's Communities

The Mediation Center continues to be extremely fortunate to have so many supporters and friends who help us make a difference in Hawaii. With your support, in FY 2012-2013, the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers focused their energy on creating a virtual mediation room named in memory of past Board President Michael Nauyokas; strengthening the Divorce Mediation Program; and expanding the Kupuna Pono Program.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Friends of Hawaii Charities, the Mediation Center was able to strengthen the Kupuna Pono Program. The grant enabled the Mediation Center's staff to continue to reach out and meet with various providers to discuss the value of the Kupuna Pono Program and develop partnerships for referring families to the Program. As a result of this work, the Mediation Center initiated a potential partnership with Kaiser Permanente in Nanakuli and is laying the foundation for a pilot Guardianship Mediation Program with the Family Court in the First Circuit.

The Mediation Center is also grateful to the Pettus and Bretzlaff Foundations who have consistently supported the work of the Mediation Center for many years. It is thanks to these foundations that the Mediation Center has been able to strengthen and grow its Divorce and Paternity Mediation Programs. In particular, the Paternity Mediation Program has grown significantly over the past three years. Through the Program, unmarried couples with children are helped to agree on time-sharing, visitation and co-parenting arrangements. With the support of the Pettus Foundation, the Mediation Center has been able to grow this Program from serving 30 cases in 2011 to 196 cases (158 in-house at the Mediation Center and 38 on-site at Family Court in Kapolei) in 2013. Of the 178 cases that were mediated in this area, 56% reached a written agreement.

During the year the Mediation Center also continued to strengthen partnerships with many other organizations throughout the State to better serve Oahu's communities. Initiatives with various partners included work with: the Access to Justice Commission and other civil Legal Services Providers to create new strategies and support for better serving Hawaii's most vulnerable populations; the co-tenants in the Kukui Center to create a strategic plan focusing on the needs of children and the vulnerable populations; the Alzheimer and other Related Dementias Task Force to create stronger support system for families and caregivers; the Family Law Section of the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) to strengthen the divorce mediation program; Mediation Services of Maui to discuss a potential consolidation; and the Rotary Peacemaker Committee to expand the impact of peacemaking in Hawaii through mediation.

These are just a few of the many accomplishments that were made possible through the generosity of your financial contributions and the thousands of hours donated by the mediators, trainers and directors of the Mediation Center's Board. Thanks to you, the Mediation Center continued to help more people talk and resolve their conflicts creatively in FY 2012-2013.

Mahalo Nui Loa for making it all happen!

# Mahalo for Your Support

Aloha United Way  
 Bretzlaff Foundation  
 Combined Federal Campaign  
 Earl & Margery Chapman Foundation  
 Foodland Supermarket, Ltd.  
 Friends of Hawai'i Charities

Hawai'i Community Foundation  
 Hawai'i Justice Foundation  
 The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation  
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## UNDER THE MEDIATION MOON

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**\$6,000**

Robbie and Cynthia Alm  
 Ian L. Mattoch

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 Clay Chapman Iwamura Pulice & Nervell  
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**MICHAEL NAUYOKAS INNOVATION  
AND EXCELLENCE IN MEDIATION FUND**

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Calvin Young  
Raymond J. Zeason

***Bringing people together to talk and resolve their differences***

**FY12-13**

<b>Referral Source</b>	<b>Mediated: Agreement</b>	<b>Mediated: No Agreement</b>	<b>Conciliations</b>	<b>Closed</b>	<b>Pending</b>	<b>Total</b>
Attorney	30	35	3	60	23	151
HCRC	19	10	0	6	5	40
Circuit Court	0	0	0	1	0	1
Family Court	82	56	0	40	45	223
District Court	378	500	0	18	6	902
DOE	9	1	0	7	0	17
Police	1	0	0	3	0	4
Family/Friend	12	11	1	21	4	49
Self	51	29	1	109	18	208
Social Service Agency	2	0	0	4	1	7
Community Organization	1	1	0	9	1	12
Other	11	4	1	22	1	39
<b>TOTAL *</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>1653</b>

\* Includes pending cases carried over from prior year

**OUTCOMES \***

\* Reported by mediation participants through written surveys completed at the end of each mediation

**OUTPUTS**

Mediation is useful process	93%	Number of mediation hours	2,800
Would use mediation again	89%	Number of mediation sessions	1,321
Mediation clarified my issues	81%	Number of people served through mediation programs	3,306
Mediation improved communication	69%	Number of hours in training & education	210

Permanently restricted funds are the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation endowment of \$1,000,000 and the Earl and Margery Chapman Foundation match of \$300,000.

\* **NOTE: Based on audited financial statements.**

July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013		Prior Year
<b>Revenue &amp; Support:</b>		
Contributions:		
Donated services	423,457	479,718
Net assets released from temporary restrictions	49,494	51,659
Unrestricted contributions	68,818	63,283
Total contributions	541,769	594,660
Government contracts	262,709	257,215
Program service fees	100,057	92,009
Special events, net of direct cost	28,641	24,640
Investment & other income	3,645	6,673
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>936,821</b>	<b>975,197</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Mediation services	851,478	879,484
Management and general	77,199	74,333
Fundraising	15,411	18,837
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>944,088</b>	<b>972,654</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(7,267)</b>	<b>2,543</b>

Statements of Cash Flows		
	As of June 30, 2013	Prior Year
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Increase in net assets	27,302	17,206
Adjustments to reconcile increase in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	4,150	3,412
Net realized gains (losses) on investments	0	0
Net unrealized gains (losses) on investments	(31,866)	(2,150)
(Increase) decrease in:		
Accounts receivable	31,803	12,761
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	(75)	189
Increase (decrease) in:		
Accounts payable	(8)	6,210
Accrued liabilities	13,668	(12,750)
Net cash provided (used) by operating activities	91,281	24,878
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Sales of investments	300,000	350,000
Purchases of investments	(315,972)	(362,873)
Additions to property and equipment	(6,682)	(3,170)
Decrease in lease deposits	111	0
Net cash used by investing activities	(22,543)	(16,043)
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Addition to note payable		0
Repayment of note payable	(745)	(954)
Net cash provided by financing activities	(745)	(954)
<b>NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH</b>	<b>67,993</b>	<b>7,881</b>
<b>CASH – Beginning of the year</b>	<b>190,464</b>	<b>182,583</b>
<b>CASH – End of the year</b>	<b><u>258,457</u></b>	<b><u>190,464</u></b>

## OUR MISSION AND SERVICES

The Mediation Center of the Pacific is a not-for-profit, Aloha United Way Agency. For 34 years, the Mediation Center has served Oahu's communities by offering high quality mediation and dispute resolution services, including conflict resolution training for organizations and businesses.

The underlying goals of the mission are:

- **ACCESS:** to ensure that high quality alternative dispute resolution services are accessible to groups and individuals in all of Oahu's communities, focusing on those communities that are underserved.
- **OUTREACH:** to promote broad community understanding and use of alternative dispute resolution by providing and supporting training, awareness and educational activities in varied organizational and community settings.
- **QUALITY:** to continually improve the quality of dispute resolution services through training, evaluation and revision.
- **SELF SUFFICIENCY:** to broaden community support and representation, secure multiple sources of funding, and provide adequate resources for its operations, programs and its most valuable asset – the volunteers.

The Mediation Center's purpose has been identified as "building stronger communities through families, schools, the workplace and neighborhoods by reducing conflict; building collaboration; improving communication; teaching skills in managing conflict and self sufficiency; and providing a model of practice for conflict resolution."

To accomplish its mission, the Mediation Center offers six key programs, including Community Mediation; Specialized Mediation; ACCESS ADR; Schools and Youth; Poor and Needy; and Training.

### COMMUNITY MEDIATION

The Community Mediation Program provides mediation services for a broad variety of cases involving relationships between neighbors, co-workers, families and friends. To support the mission of providing affordable services, the Mediation Center has developed an excellent recruitment and training system, enabling it to rely upon a pool of approximately 150 professional mediators who volunteer their services. To be eligible to mediate cases in the Community Mediation Program, each mediator is required to complete approximately 45 hours of training, mediate ten cases with mentor mediators, and be successfully evaluated for mastery of basic skills. After completion of their Apprenticeship, mediators are required to complete 20 hours of continuing education annually. Services offered through the Community Mediation Program include:

- **Consumers and Merchants:** Billing disputes, contract clauses, poor merchandise or service and similar issues are referred from Hawaii's Regulated Industries Complaints Office (RICO), Hawaii Better Business Bureau (BBB) and others.
- **Landlord/Tenant:** Disputes regarding payment of rent, security deposits and damage can be resolved directly at The Mediation Center rather than filing a complaint at District Court.
- **Employment/Job Related:** Workplace conflicts arising between co-workers from personality clashes, employment disagreements, discipline, office atmosphere, downsizing, and cultural or generational differences are referred to mediation by Human Resource Professionals, Management or others.



- ❑ **Family Business Disputes:** Small family owned businesses often foster unique problems from blending personal and business ties. Through mediation, agreements can be reached and relationships preserved.
- ❑ **Family Estate Planning:** Decisions about property division, loans, asset management and appointment of trustees.
- ❑ **Elder Issues:** Family decisions about caregiver selection, housing options, financing care, and other related issues.
- ❑ **Juvenile Restitution:** Victims, juveniles and the parents of the youth have the opportunity to meet face to face to work out some form of restitution.
- ❑ **Neighbors:** Barking dogs, over-hanging trees, vehicle parking, smoke and noise are just a few of the issues that may be mediated between neighbors. Cases are self-referred, as well as through the courts, police, friends, community organizations and others.
- ❑ **Temporary Restraining Orders (TROs):** Friends, neighbors, classmates, and co-workers may request District Court to issue a TRO. When appropriate, cases are referred by the courts to mediation. The mediators assist the parties in resolving the underlying issues or defining clear boundaries to limit contact and stay away from each other.
- ❑ **Court On-Site Mediation:** The Mediation Center provides mediators directly on-site at District Court for all pending lawsuits in Small Claims Court and Summary Possession matters, as well as for select TRO cases.

### **SPECIALIZED MEDIATION**

The Specialized Mediation Program provides mediation services in areas such as divorce, paternity, civil rights, adult guardianship, condominium, real estate, mortgage foreclosure and special education. Mediators who provide services in the Specialized Mediation Program are experienced mediators who have completed additional training in the specific area and have subject matter knowledge in that area. The training curriculum in each area includes the policies, protocols and laws governing the respective area, as well as modifications to the basic mediation model designed to assist parties in reaching resolutions on the issues unique to the area. The mediators are required to participate in quarterly workshops, trainings and updates to remain current in the specialized areas. The areas include:

- ❑ **Divorce:** Mediators assist parties with property division, child custody and visitation, spousal support and other issues involved in marital separation. Mediators also help the parties improve communication, develop “Parenting Plans”, and work through the divorce decree to ensure that they have addressed all issues to finalize the uncontested divorce on their own.
- ❑ **Paternity:** Mediators assist unmarried couples with children to resolve issues of custody and visitation, where the child(ren) will live, a child’s name and medical insurance coverage.
- ❑ **Civil Rights:** The Mediation Center receives referrals from the Hawai’i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) and Legal Aid Society of Hawai’i involving various types of workplace, housing and merchant discrimination complaints.
- ❑ **Adult Guardianship:** Mediators assist families in dispute regarding who should make decisions for their elder member.
- ❑ **Condominiums:** Disputes arising between owners, board members, property managers, resident managers, vendors and others relating to condominium or homeowner associations. Issues include violations of house rules, by-laws, declarations and more.
- ❑ **Real Estate:** Disputes between buyers, sellers and real estate agents involving sales, rentals and encroachments.
- ❑ **Mortgage Foreclosure:** Neutrals assist lenders and borrowers of owner-occupied residential property in both Judicial and non-Judicial foreclosures.

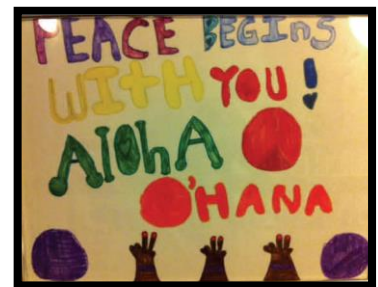
- **Special Education:** The Mediation Center offers conciliation and mediation services to assist parents of children with special needs and schools to resolve conflicts, as well as facilitation of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings to promote collaboration and effective meeting management.
- **Court On-Site Mediation:** The Mediation Center provides mediators directly on-site at Family Court in Kapolei for select paternity cases.

### **ACCESS ADR**

The Mediation Center maintains a separate panel of experienced mediators and facilitators referred to as the ACCESS ADR (Affordable and Accessible Dispute Resolution Options) program. The panels were created in response to requests from clients who desire access to low-cost services with the option of reviewing the background and selecting the dispute resolution professional to meet their specific needs. Clients pay an hourly fee for the services, which can be provided anywhere statewide. The mediators and facilitators are independent contractors who apply to be on the panels.

### **SCHOOLS AND YOUTH**

The Mediation Center works with public and private schools throughout the State to create and support a culture of peaceful conflict prevention and resolution. Services provided include training and workshops for adults and youth, consultation, mediation and facilitation. Additionally, the Mediation Center creates opportunities to support the development and preservation of young mediators and peer mediation programs in the schools through collaborations with the Hawai'i Association of Conflict Resolution (ACR Hawai'i), the Hawai'i State Judiciary's Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CADR), the University of Hawaii's Program on Conflict Resolution, and other professional mediators, to host events such as the annual Posters for Peace Contest for elementary students and the annual Statewide Peer Mediation Conference for middle/intermediate and high school student peer mediators.



### **POOR AND NEEDY**

While the Hawai'i Access to Justice Commission has worked hard since its inception to address the growing needs of the low-income and gap group populations in the State, solutions remain complex, costly and obscure. The Mediation Center is the only low-cost alternative dispute resolution option for individuals in the low-income population on Oahu. In addition to providing direct mediation services, the Mediation Center also conducts trainings for the poor and needy as well as for groups serving clients in the low-income population to provide them with skills that will enable them to better serve their clients.

The Mediation Center is fortunate to have an endowment from the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation that supports the provision of services to the poor and needy. In addition, the Mediation Center is a recipient of funding from the Hawai'i State Judiciary's Indigent Legal Assistance Fund (ILAF) that supports the provision of dispute resolution services to members of the indigent population.

### **TRAINING**

Throughout the year, the Mediation Center offers training in conflict resolution, mediation and facilitation to the public, government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses and the military on a fee-for-service basis. The outside training services support the goals of improving Self-Sufficiency and Outreach. Through the program, hundreds of individuals develop a better understanding and use of conflict resolution and mediation skills for preventing and resolving conflicts within their respective organizations and communities. All proceeds from the program directly benefit and support the Mediation Center's Community Mediation Program.

## YEAR IN REVIEW: 2012 - 2013

In fiscal year 2012-2013 (FY12-13), the Mediation Center served a total of **6,465 people** through its mediation and training programs including opening **1,578 new cases** and conducting **205 hours of trainings and workshops** for mediators, businesses and organizations throughout the State. These accomplishments were made possible through the dedication of the approximately **150** facilitators, mediators and trainers who donated **over 3,500 hours** of their time to assist Hawaii's people in preventing and resolving conflict.

### Community and Specialized Mediation

In FY12-13, the Mediation Center continued to provide mediation services for a broad variety of disputes under the Community and Specialized Mediation Programs, including domestic, special education, family, landlord/tenant, condominium, and civil rights, among others. Of the **1,243** cases mediated, **48% resulted in written agreements overall and 58% of the in-house cases resulted in written agreements.**

*"Everyone was extremely friendly, helpful, and willing to genuinely help my family and all the issues involved."*

*"You guys are angels."*

*"The mediators were wonderfully articulate and patient."*

*"Mediation is great. Will definitely come back for future problems."*

*"This must be recommended to all parties to reduce time, effort and money to be spent on trials and preparation for trials. It seems mediation is an alternative to free legal and volunteer legal services. Your excellent service is very much appreciated."*

*"I feel that this worked for us and was very helpful and our mediators were great."*

*"Should of looked into doing this sooner. I enjoyed the process."*

*"The mediators were very courteous and made me feel at ease."*

*"I think using mediation is very helpful and useful. Made me understand that communication is important."*

*"The Mediation Center was very helpful for me. I highly recommend it to anyone with any sort of conflict in their life."*

*"Mahalo nui loa for your help and understanding."*

*"I appreciate the Mediation staff's patience, kindness and calm. Very professional and helpful."*

*"Super grateful for the staff here and appreciate all the help. The mediators were awesome."*

*"We made a lot of progress and I'm thankful to leave mediation in a more positive state than when I initially came here."*

*"Excellent job! Fair, respectful, honest and a perfect way to settle a problem."*

*"Great job by both mediators to learn both sides and then empathize with both sides & communicate effectively with both parties."*

*"Thank you for helping us to resolve this. I greatly appreciate your time and fairness in dealing with our issues."*

*"Resolved most if not all issues. Allowed for a less stressful environment to resolve issues."*

*"I appreciate the mediators' beliefs in communication and civil alternatives to conflict and disagreements."*

*"Mediators were very helpful, listened to the problem, and helped us resolve our issue."*

To ensure that the mediators maintained high quality skills as well as subject matter knowledge in the specialized areas, **136 hours of internal trainings and workshops** were conducted in FY11-12 including: Accelerated Divorce Mediation; Adult Guardianship Mediation; Advanced Divorce Mediation; Advanced Mediation; Basic Mediation; Best Practices in Divorce Mediation; Building Rapport in Mediation; Divorce Law in Hawaii; Divorce Mediation Best Practices; Facilitation; Family Conferencing for Elder Issues; Foreclosure Dispute Resolution; On-Site TRO Mediation; and Special Education Mediation and Facilitation. In addition, mediator gatherings such as The Mediation Center Town Hall, Mediator Talk Story Session, and Mediator Recognition & Holiday Gathering were held during the fiscal year.



The Mediation Center is grateful to the professional mediators and outside experts who contributed over **200 hours** of their time to assist with the trainings and workshops including: **Cynthia Alm, Judge Riki Amano (Ret.), Linda Anzai, Professor Bruce Barnes, Daniel Bent, Barbara Bishop, Dr. Patricia Blanchette, Judge Mark Browning, Wendy Burkholder, Louis Chang, Gerald Clay, Linda Colburn, Michael Collins, Dr. Barbara Cook, James Cooke, Seth Corpuz-Lahne, William Darrah, Nicholas DeWitt, Joni Domingues, Jerry Durham, Thomas Farrell, Jeff Gilbreath, Andrew Goff, Sonja Gonzaga, Connye Harper, Steven Hartley, Dr. James Hoenig, Frank Hogan, Arlynn Howell-Livingston, Leo Hura, Charles Hurd, Jason Johnson, Hugh Jones, Keri Kalilikane, Kealii, Elizabeth Kent, Miles Kimhan, Derek Kobayashi, Roberta Lee-Driscoll, Giuseppe Leone, Dee Dee Letts, Stephen Levins, Alan Ma, Scott Makuakane, Judge Victoria Marks (Ret.), Dr. Kamal Masaki, Bruce McEwan, Robin Stout Migala, Reina Miyamoto, John Morris, Mei Nakamoto, Joyce Neeley, Philip Nerney, Dennis Oshiro, Cheryl Peterson, Leta Price, Randy Prothero, Seth Reiss, Dr. Craig Robinson, Adam Rosenberg, Wendy Saito, Tytina Smith, Donald Spafford, Clyde Tanaka, Marlynn Tanji, Jim Teson, Ryker Wada, Jana Wolff, Beth Worrall-Daily and Raymond Zeason.**

### **ACCESS ADR**

The Mediation Center staff and ACCESS ADR panelists provided 19 hours of mediation and facilitation services for individuals or representatives from private businesses, schools, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations throughout the State during the fiscal year.

### **Schools and Youth**

The Mediation Center once again collaborated with **Mediation Works, ACR Hawai'i, the Hawai'i Department of Education, Hawai'i State Judiciary's Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CADR), University of Hawaii's Matsunaga Peace Institute's Program on Conflict Resolution** and private mediators to host the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Peer Mediation Conference held on February 22, 2013 at the University of Hawaii Campus Center Ballroom. More than 100 students and adults hailing from 6 middle and high schools located on the islands of Oahu and Kauai participated. The Conference theme – "Mediators Rock!" – offered workshops on a broad variety of current topics impacting today's youth such as: "Commonalities and Uniquities", "Cyberbullying", "Conflict Resolution and Anger Awareness", "Leadership", and more. The students uniformly agreed that the Conference helped them to learn new skills and ideas that they would take back to their respective schools to strengthen and grow their Peer Mediation Programs.

## Poor and Needy

With the continued support of the **Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation** endowment, **Hawai'i Justice Foundation**, **Pettus Foundation**, **Bretzlaff Foundation**, **individual contributions** and the

proceeds from the annual Under the Mediation Moon fundraiser, the Mediation Center was able to continue providing services to the growing number of clients in the low income and vulnerable populations. To support the provision of increased services to these populations, the Mediation Center remained actively involved with the Consortium of Legal Service providers, and the Access to Justice Commission and its various committees.



## Training & Facilitation

A total of **86 hours of external trainings/workshops and presentations** were conducted for various agencies, businesses, schools and individuals including: the Suzanna Wesley Center; the Alzheimer's Association; the Rotary Youth Interact Program; and various members of the community.



To promote mediation in the area of divorce, the Mediation Center was a co-presenter for the monthly Divorce Law in Hawai'i Program hosted by the Hawai'i State Judiciary. The Mediation Center staff also taught a Mediation Workshop for the University of Hawaii's William S. Richardson School of Law from August through October. Various forums addressing issues relating to dispute resolution were provided for diverse audiences in collaboration with ACR Hawai'i, the ADR Section of the Hawai'i State Bar Association, the Access to Justice Commission, and the Hawai'i State Judiciary.

Finally, thirty-one (31) hours of facilitation were provided for a variety of groups such as WRAP Hawaii that assists youth in the Child Welfare system; the Sex Abuse Division of DHS; and other non-profit and professional organizations. MCOP also customized the Partnering process to help more groups collaborate and achieve their vision and goals.

## Fundraising and Community Relations



Thanks to a pro-active Board of Directors and generous supporters, fundraising efforts were increased this fiscal year to offset the reduction in funding from the Judiciary, Aloha United Way and the Weinberg Endowment. The celebration of the Mediation



Center's 34 years of providing high quality yet affordable mediation and dispute resolution services to Hawaii's communities at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual **Under the Mediation Moon** on May 4, raised additional funds to support Community Mediation and increased access for individuals in the low-income and underserved populations. Moreover, the event was an opportunity to recognize Hawaii's Mediator Pioneers and to pay tribute to the three honorees: Keith Hunter, Karen Cross, and Chief Justice Ronald T.Y. Moon.

## Looking Ahead in 2013 - 2014

In FY 2013-2014, the Mediation Center will continue to develop the Kupuna Pono Program and grow the Paternity Mediation Program, as well as implement new initiatives including a new Adopt-a-Court Mediation Program and a community outreach and awareness program called the Mediation Pledge Program.

One of the new initiatives the Mediation Center is implementing is the Adopt-A-Court Program to recruit and train managers as mediators for Small Claims and Summary Possession cases at District Court. Currently the Mediation Center provides mediators for the six District Courts located throughout Oahu. Last year, 754 cases were mediated at Court. Of the summary possession (eviction) cases that were mediated, 126 were mediated to a successful resolution, allowing the tenants and their families, including 85 children, to remain on the property. This is significant because had the tenants been evicted, they may not have had any place to go and could have potentially ended up homeless.

While the on-site court mediation program is valuable, the Mediation Center has consistently experienced difficulty in recruiting and maintaining a sufficient number of volunteer mediators for the Program. To address this need and strengthen the Program, the Mediation Center's staff and Board members have reached out to businesses located near the various courts to encourage them to do their community service by adopting the court and allowing 4 - 8 of their managers to be trained as volunteer mediators to mediate at the court one day each week. Thanks to an enthusiastic Board Director who has agreed to champion the Program, two companies have agreed to participate by adopting the Wahiawa and Ewa District Courts. Over the next three months, the Mediation Center's staff and volunteer mediators will train and mentor 8 managers from the two companies to serve as volunteer mediators at the two court locations.

Finally, another new initiative, the Mediation Pledge Program, is designed to help every member of the community understand what mediation is and why it is important to use mediation first before going to court. The Board and staff have already created a speaker's bureau for the Program. Presentations will be made to community groups, churches, parent/teacher associations, caregiver groups, property managers and more. The presentation will emphasize the difference between talking through conflicts in mediation versus fighting it out in court, particularly when a relationship is involved such as when unmarried couples need to reach agreements about their children.

Working with the leadership of the various groups, the respective members will be encouraged to sign a Mediation Pledge as an aspirational goal to try mediation as the first step to resolving conflicts. As a consequence, friends, neighbors, co-workers, families and more will use mediation to start talking and negotiating solutions that work for them. In particular, a goal is to encourage more unmarried couples with children to come directly to the Mediation Center rather than court, to work out time-sharing and co-parenting agreements.

Through the new initiatives and the continued generous support of the many generous funders, friends and volunteers who help the Mediation Center accomplish so much, the Mediation Center's Board and staff anticipates making an even bigger impact in Hawaii's communities in fiscal year 2013-2014.