

THE CENTER LETTER

Volume 15, Issue 3

September 2021



THE MEDIATION CENTER OF THE PACIFIC

In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity. - Sun Tzu

Despite the chaos created by the COVID pandemic, thanks to the generous support of many, The Mediation Center of the Pacific (MCP) has persevered, providing much needed mediation and dispute resolution services for all. In fact, because of the pandemic, MCP's services are needed now more than ever. During the recently ended 2020-2021 fiscal year, MCP achieved a significant milestone of serving more people than in any prior year in the 43-year history of the organization. Equally important, despite shifting the majority of mediations to a remote platform, MCP has continued to successfully expand current programs, as well as create new programs in response to changing community needs and novel issues that have been created by the pandemic.

And while MCP's achievements in fiscal year 2020-2021 were significant, the first two months of the current fiscal year 2021-2022, have already proven to be even busier. In July and August, MCP opened 718 cases, more than half of the number of cases opened in the first six months of calendar year 2021. In August, MCP launched the new Eviction Mediation Program and has already opened over 500 cases. To keep up with this steady growth, the MCP staff has been expanded and every office at the Earl M. Chapman Mediation Center of the Pacific is in use. The atmosphere is charged with positive energy and enthusiasm.

As we head into the Fall season, we are grateful to MCP's many generous supporters, the dedicated mediators, the resilient staff, and our many partners who continue to help us weather the storm created by the pandemic. Thanks to everyone who believes in MCP, MCP has been able to take advantage of the opportunity to expand and take its services to a whole new level! Mahalo and Happy Fall!



"Autumn is a second Spring where every leaf is a flower."

- Albert Camus

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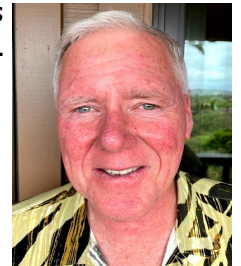
***Bringing people together to talk,
negotiate, and
resolve conflict creatively.***

MAHALO PAST PRESIDENT SID AYABE, WELCOME PRESIDENT DAVID SIMONS AND THE 2021-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



MCP is fortunate to have an outstanding, dedicated board of directors who have helped MCP grow and flourish, even during the pandemic. We are grateful to Sidney Ayabe for his leadership and perseverance over the past two years as President. He steadfastly promoted the work of MCP and raised the funds needed to purchase MCP's beautiful building. Without Sid, the vision of having a permanent home would never have become a reality. A big mahalo to Sid!

MCP also bids aloha and mahalo to Judge Jessi Hall for serving as an active director for the past six years, including serving in the role as secretary, for her final three years on the board. MCP is grateful for all of her support and great work as a director.



And while it is always a loss to say aloha to great board members, MCP is extremely pleased to welcome David Simons, long-time supporter and mediator for MCP, as the new Board President. David is joined by John Morris as Vice-President/President-elect, Lee Erwin as Treasurer, and Emily Marr as Secretary. Fellow board members include: Justice Simeon Acoba (Ret.), Sid Ayabe, Judge Rebecca Copeland, Mike Cruise, William Darrah, Kale Feldman, Signe Godfrey, Jason Graves, Susan Ichinose, Sharon On Leng, Bruce McEwan, Gary Shiraishi, and Tina Smith. With a strong board and continued great leadership, MCP will continue to grow in this new fiscal year.

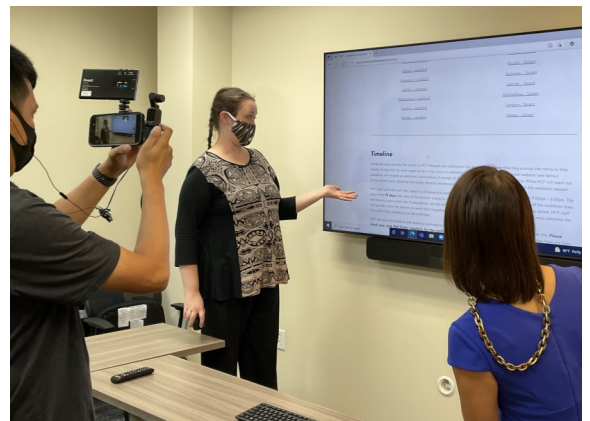
HELPING LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

At the beginning of 2021, the number of requests for landlord-tenant mediation was steadily growing. To quickly meet these requests, MCP reached out to private mediators with Dispute Prevention and Resolution Hawaii. Six mediators immediately responded to the call for help to volunteer their services. MCP is grateful to mediators Jerry Clay, Chuck Crumpton, Roy Hughes, Jeff Portnoy, Tina Smith, and Judge Mike Town for generously volunteering their services. Thanks to their willingness to jump in and help with the rest of MCP's mediators, mediations were scheduled quickly and conducted both in-house at MCP, as well as on Zoom. Their work laid the foundation for the new program MCP implemented when the state moratorium on evictions ended.

To prevent a potential flood of evictions after the ending of the moratorium, Act 57 was created and signed into law by Governor Ige. The Act creates a tiered system of filing for evictions, increases the notice requirement to tenants to fifteen days, and requires landlords to participate in mediation if the tenant agrees to mediate within the fifteen-day notice period before the landlord can file for eviction. MCP is providing the mediation services for this new State Eviction Mediation Program (SEMP) for tenants residing on Oahu.

To ensure MCP was ready to quickly and efficiently manage a potentially overwhelming number of cases through this program, while still managing all other cases, three full-time temporary case managers were hired, as well as a team of 15 independent contractor mediators. The staff also implemented an electronic scheduling system to quickly schedule the mediation sessions. As a result of these efforts, between August 7th and September 18th, MCP opened 525 SEMP cases and mediated 164 cases. 90% of the mediations resulted in agreements, ultimately allowing the landlords and tenants to avoid the courts and the eviction process.

To promote the program and the important opportunity mediation provides for landlords and tenants, the MCP staff have been conducting regular outreach and public forums, including a short segment on Hawaii News Now. MCP is grateful to the Hawaii Community Foundation for creating the beautiful flyers that are helping get the word out about the program and are now on MCP's website.



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CHILD WELFARE MEDIATION TRAINING

MCP was honored to be selected by the Family Court of the First Circuit to conduct a twenty-seven hour mediation training in August, for ten attorneys and social workers who will now mediate for the Oahu Child Welfare Mediation Program (OCWMP). The goals of OCWMP are to keep children safe and to facilitate permanency for them, encourage parents to participate in their case, and promote mutual decision-making and planning in the child's best interest. Over the past several years, this highly specialized mediation program has been successful in assisting parents and child welfare experts with engaging in difficult conversations and decision-making regarding the safety and permanent placement of children whose parents are no longer able to take care of them. With the addition of the newly trained mediators, the program will soon be expanded to the neighbor island courts.



MCP is grateful to Katie Bennett and Laurie Tochiki, experienced Child Welfare mediators, who shared their expertise and conducted segments of the training. A big mahalo is also extended to MCP mediators, Kevin Adaniya, Chuck Buckla, Constance Hassell, Erika Ireland, and Lisa Jacobs, for assisting with the final mediation practice. Thanks to everyone, the training was engaging and interactive. The MCP staff is proud to have the opportunity to work with the outstanding training participants and mediators. A follow-up workshop for the OCWMP mediators on mediation techniques via Zoom, will be conducted in the later part of September.



MCP SELECTED FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD

MCP was excited to learn that it has been selected to be an honoree at Pacific Business News' 20th annual **Business Leadership Hawaii Awards**. This event honors Hawaii's top business leaders and nonprofit organizations throughout the State. The celebration will be an in-person awards dinner with a livestream option.



It will be held on Thursday, **November 4**, from 5:30pm to 9:00pm at the *Royal Hawaiian – Monarch Ballroom*. If you would like to attend the event, you may register at: <https://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/event/166717/2021/business-leadership-hawaii>

FOODLAND GIVE ALOHA PROGRAM



MCP is once again participating in the annual Foodland Give Aloha Program. During September, you may make a donation to MCP at any Foodland or Sack N Save checkout. Foodland and the Western Union Foundation will then make a donation to MCP too!

MCP's Donation Code Number is 77248

To donate through the program, following these simple steps: 1) Shop at Foodland or Sack N Save! 2) Show your Maika'i card to the cashier at checkout. 3) Tell the cashier MCP's code and the amount of your donation (up to \$249). 4) Review your receipt to confirm the following appears: MCP's name and code number; your donation amount; and your Maika'i number. 5) Send a copy of the receipt to MCP so we can properly thank and acknowledge you. (Foodland will not notify us if you have donated through the program). Mahalo!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Basic Mediation Training

(Online via Zoom)

\$600 per person

Thursday October 21, Friday October 22, and Saturday October 23

Thursday and Friday 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. & Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The online Basic Mediation Training offers an introduction to mediation basics and the core skills of effective listening, asking powerful questions, maintaining neutrality, interest identification, negotiation, agreement writing, ethical considerations, and managing challenges. Tips on managing mediations via Zoom are provided throughout the training. The training is interactive and provides individualized coaching during simulated mediation practice. All materials are emailed and mailed to the participants in advance of the training.

[Note: All participants must have a computer with camera, microphone, and internet access. Basic knowledge of participating in the Zoom platform is required].

Accelerated Divorce Mediation Training

Clarence T. C. Ching Training Institute - 1301 Young Street 2nd Floor

\$600 per person

Friday, Feb. 4, 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. & Saturday, Feb. 11, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 11, 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. & Saturday, Feb. 12, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Divorce Mediation offers a custom model for a neutral mediator to assist divorcing couples in negotiating agreements on property division and custody and visitation issues, while focusing on the "best interests of the child."

Mediation Skills for Managers

A customized one-day training for businesses.

Managers learn an 8-step informal mediation process to empower employees to resolve their own disputes.

Contact katie@mediatehawaii.org to schedule

Annual Recognition and Holiday Gathering

(Online via Zoom)

Friday December 10th, 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Go to www.mediatehawaii.org to register for trainings or contact mcpadmin@mediatehawaii.org for additional information

*Seating in trainings is limited. Early registration is encouraged.