DEAR CCR FAMILY,

For 42 years CCR has been incredibly proud of our ability to respond when and how our community needs it most. In 1979, this meant providing one of the earliest programs to respond to the need for access to justice – mediation as an alternative to the traditional court process. Ten years ago, this was CCR’s key role in the Circuit Court of Cook County’s Foreclosure Mediation Program. Over the last five years, it’s been a doubling of CCR’s case volume serving parents who are attempting to work out agreements on parenting time, decision-making, and finances. And since March of 2020, CCR has been at the forefront of community response to COVID-19.

Within one week, CCR transitioned all mediation and training services to fully virtual, and we’ve since mediated more than 1,000 cases using the Zoom platform. As community-police relations became one of the biggest issues facing Chicago, CCR facilitated listening sessions and focus groups related to Chicago Police Department (CPD) policies, and CCR’s Programs Director, Rae Kyritsi, served as the neutral facilitator for the group focused on recommending changes to the CPD’s Use of Force Policy. Now, CCR is gearing up to offer a new pilot program for Community-Police Mediation.

CCR has also played a key role in response to the eviction crisis in Cook County and throughout Illinois. In the Early Resolution Program, supported by Cook County, the Circuit Court of Cook County and the Chicago Bar Foundation, CCR staff members serve in the role of virtual-court intake, connecting tenants and landlords to legal aid and rental assistance resources, as well as CCR’s own mediation services. CCR is on pace to serve thousands of community members annually through this program.

Building mediation infrastructure statewide, CCR has also played an important role in the Eviction Help Illinois Program. Funded by the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, CCR has trained more than 100 mediators around the state to serve in eviction cases. This work would not be possible without YOU!

Each of you – volunteer mediators and trainers, Volunteer Council members, Board and Auxiliary Board members, Past Presidents, funders, community partners and staff members – has a key role to play in helping CCR move forward. Each new program we begin and each new volunteer we train contributes to strengthening our community and preserving relationships. We extend our thanks for all you have done and all you continue to do for CCR, and look forward to all we can accomplish in the next 42 years and beyond.

Sincerely,

Ceylan Eatherton
President, Board of Directors

Cassandra Lively, Ph.D.
Executive Director
In March of 2020, the country shut down. And so did CCR’s mediations…but not for long. Within one week, CCR was up and running on Zoom. Since the start of the pandemic, CCR has opened nearly 2,000 cases for mediation. CCR was able to swiftly pivot to all-virtual mediations because CCR had already created a Zoom mediation program in 2018: CCR had a Zoom account and best practices in place and did not have to start at the very beginning. CCR had developed the Zoom mediation program in order to address limitations in accessibility to mediation. Programs Director Rae Kyritsi points out, “We’d worked on it as a limited option for parties that were long distance or couldn’t physically be in the office.” CCR still conducts all mediations virtually, though in September 2020 CCR opened office space for clients who need support accessing technology to participate in Zoom mediations.

“When we’re not in-person, we can’t see or use body language as efficiently,” says Kyritsi. “But there are also things that are gained through Zoom. People are typically in their own home and more comfortable and relaxed. It’s easier to take breaks. And there’s been a dramatic decrease in our no-show rate. People tend to show up when it’s from their own home!” In addition, virtual mediation has been easier for some mediators since they don’t have to drive downtown or to a courthouse.

“I don’t think virtual mediation will ever go away,” says Kyritsi, “but I’m looking forward to a time when we can choose in-person or virtual depending on what’s most useful in each particular situation. I’m really proud of our work.”

The pandemic has brought a lot of change to how organizations operate, including CCR’s Training Department. In March of 2020, CCR went virtual with all training programs. Initially, there were a lot of cancellations as everyone figured out how to operate in this new landscape. However, around May of 2020 people started booking trainings after realizing that conflict doesn’t stop just because work moves from in-office to remote. In fact, it’s more important than ever to learn how to deal with conflict! While the pandemic in some ways makes it easier to avoid difficult conversations, they’re still necessary.

Many at CCR found the shift to all virtual training difficult at first. It’s a totally different type of training. In person, there’s a lot of natural connections that people make, and the pace of training is different. But CCR’s training department quickly adapted, taking advantage of Zoom’s breakout rooms, the chat feature, and even some procedures, like bringing in remote team members, that weren’t possible with in-person trainings. CCR has offered 19 40-hour trainings virtually since last March, educating nearly 150 mediators, and 17 workshops for private clients on topics such as conflict resolution, conflict management, mediation and “mediation lite,” giving and receiving feedback, conflict styles, and interest-based bargaining. Pari Karim, CCR’s Training Director, says, “Even though we’re all anxious to get back to in-person trainings, virtual training will always be an offering going forward.”

"The mediation helped us both get our points across and allowed us to be heard." 

"The mediation helped us both get our points across and allowed us to be heard."
In 2020 and 2021, in order to build statewide capacity to deal with the pandemic-related eviction crisis, the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation (IEJF) made grants available to many new and existing eviction mediation programs across Illinois. Since CCR has mediated evictions cases since 1989, the organization applied for and received IEJF funding to train mediators in these programs.

Since May 2021, CCR has offered three distinct training programs for Illinois (and national) mediators over Zoom:

- CCR’s 40-hour training for new mediators
- 1-day refresher course for mediators who have had training in the past but need a review, as well as training for issues that specifically come up in eviction cases
- 2-hour program for experienced mediators who need training specific to evictions (addressing topics like mediating in 60 minutes or less, mediating with pro se litigants, or special considerations in evictions mediations)

The 40-hour training is essentially CCR’s traditional 40-hour program, while the 1-day course is adapted from a current Essentials training offered for CCR volunteer mediators. The 2-hour eviction training, however, is brand-new, specifically created for current circumstances, and is incorporated into all three IEJF-funded trainings. It takes into consideration the ever-changing guidance on evictions, moratoriums and layers of moratoriums. CCR is pleased to work with the IEJF and proud to be making a significant impact on the crisis.

CCR’s participation in Cook County’s Early Resolution Program (ERP) is unlike anything CCR has undertaken before. Because it is virtual, the program allows us to serve people all over Cook County simultaneously. The ERP was developed in partnership with Cook County courts, Chicago Bar Foundation, and eight Chicago area legal aid organizations. The program is designed to respond to increases in three distinct court case types as a result of the pandemic: tax deed cases, consumer debt cases, and evictions cases. ERP launched in early 2021. Rae Kyritsi, CCR’s Programs Director, says, “One of the reasons we were well-suited to take on this central role in the program is that we were serving in all of the courthouses before the pandemic began and had strong relationships we were able to build on for the successful start to the program.”

CCR plays a number of roles in the ERP. First, CCR acts as a court case manager and live intake case manager throughout the day in 25 virtual court calls each week. This means CCR helps direct plaintiffs or respondents to the next step in the process, whether that is to speak to a legal aid organization or enter mediation to attempt to resolve the case. Second, CCR acts as mediator in ERP cases when mediation is required, whether the case is referred to mediation by a judge or a legal aid organization. Finally, CCR updates the court on the status of a case on the date when the case returns to court. CCR hopes the program will make court more accessible and provide resources for litigants that help them resolve their disputes or leave them better prepared for managing their case going forward.
providing the community with a safe space to have and promote these conversations. Feedback also showed a community appetite for workshops, organizational support, skills trainings, and open dialogue. Multiple community members identified partnership with the Chicago Police Department to work on community-police relations as a way CCR could serve as a resource.

The Healing Illinois-funded events have given CCR a frame for our work moving forward. Training Director Pari Karim has established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training for CCR trainers, 81% of whom have received the training so far. CCR believes this will have a lasting impact on the experience of community members who attend training events. CCR has also held an all-staff follow up meeting to evaluate the feedback from our trainings and listening sessions, created action items, and developed a strategy for continued engagement moving forward toward healing.

After establishing a set of Core Values in 2019, CCR polled staff and volunteers in 2020 to determine where the organization should focus efforts in the coming year. The clear place for opportunity was around the Core Value of Inclusivity. In an effort to live this value as an organization, CCR applied for a Healing Illinois grant in 2021. Healing Illinois is a racial healing initiative of the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), in partnership with The Chicago Community Trust, designed to distribute $4.5 million in grants to organizations across the state to begin, or continue, the work of racial healing.

The funds CCR received were used to support several programs. Four senior staff members received six hours of inclusive leadership training from Carla Kupe of The Impact Alliance. Funds also supported three 2-hour anti-racism training workshops for a group of 30 CCR staff and volunteers. The Healing Illinois-funded trainings gave CCR leadership, staff, and volunteers an opportunity to reflect on our individual and holistic efforts to operate as an inclusive and equitable organization. The trainings culminated in three “On the Table” events in which staff and volunteers hosted and facilitated events to gather public input on ways a community mediation center like CCR can support the work of racial healing in Illinois.

Through the On the Table events, CCR was able to engage with 70 participants from the community. CCR learned that it is on the right track and that CCR can be a resource for the community moving forward. The participants offered thoughtful and actionable feedback to support future work in racial healing and racial equity. Specifically, CCR learned that people are hungry for connection and engagement generally and have energy to engage in dialogue with people who are not like-minded. As a community mediation center, CCR can keep
JONAH ORLOFSKY

In his 11 years as a volunteer mediator, Jonah Orlofsky has mediated every type of case CCR handles.

Jonah is a semi-retired attorney who litigated complex commercial litigation for 35 years. He now serves as an arbitrator with AAA and FINRA and has a private mediation business handling commercial disputes like breach of contract, insurance, and employment discrimination. Jonah chairs CCR’s Continuing Education Volunteer Committee, acts as a trainer for CCR’s 40-hour training program, and is a mentor for CCR’s Mediator Mentorship Program (MMP).

Jonah began mediating with CCR through our foreclosure mediation program in 2011, near what turned out to be the end of the 2008 housing crisis. He volunteered with CCR one day a week and estimates he mediated 80-100 foreclosure cases through that program. In 2014, he applied to CCR’s MMP and was accepted. Jonah was named Peacemaker of the Year in 2018 and Trainer of the Year in 2019.

When Jonah’s not mediating or arbitrating, you can find him at the piano. He describes himself as a “serious amateur jazz musician” and has played piano his whole life. He currently plays with several small ensembles and two swing big bands.

Jonah’s memorable mediation:

Jonah once mediated a Stalking/No Contact case between Jane and Mary, two women who had been close friends. Both women were deaf. Jane had, for a while, placed her son in the care of Mary because she felt it was a better environment for her son.

The mediation was memorable for a couple of reasons. First, the logistics were somewhat complicated with three sign language interpreters present. Both Jane and Mary had their own interpreters and then there was an interpreter who spoke to Jonah. Second, and more importantly, the resolution of the case felt particularly memorable and moving.

Jane and Mary were both very angry at one another. Jane felt that her son was not being treated well by Mary. Mary was afraid because she felt that Jane was threatening her and was also angry that Jane was no longer reimbursing her for the expenses of caring for Jane’s son.

Through the course of the mediation, each of them discovered some fundamental misunderstandings. Jane ended up expressing appreciation of Mary for caring for her son and recognized the importance of reimbursing her for expenses. Mary realized, through discussion, that Jane was, in fact, not threatening her by the end of the case, not only was the Stalking/No Contact order dismissed, but the women were friends again.

Jane and Mary had been sitting at opposite ends of a long table, on the same side, not looking at each other throughout the mediation. Once the case was wrapping up and they had reached an agreement, Jonah suggested that they turn to each other and sign rather than speaking through the interpreters. They did, and were smiling and laughing together at the conclusion of the case.

JACK KANDE

Jack Kande worked as a flight attendant with United Airlines for 27 years. He now flies once a month to keep up his skills and stay connected to his profession. He was set to fly to India the weekend after the interview for this profile.

For the last eight years, Jack has worked full-time as a labor negotiator with the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA). He is also an arbitrator for the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA). Jack first learned about mediation through his work with the AFA. The interest-based discussions of mediation mirrored some of the same values and skills he was using as a negotiator. Jack was enthusiastic that through CCR, he could get hands-on mediation experience, and he pursued training with CCR.

He took CCR’s 40-hour training in 2013 and was accepted into the MMP in 2016. Since graduating from the MMP, he has mediated in court (small claims and evictions) as well as long-model juvenile family cases and attorney fee disputes. He is also Vice-Chair of the Volunteer Council.

When not working as a negotiator or flying with United, Jack is caring for his two-year-old daughter or studying for a BS in criminal justice through Central State University. He also enjoys jogging and Thai kickboxing. He was an avid scuba diver when he lived in Thailand, but says that “a little more difficult” to do in Chicago.

Jack’s memorable mediation:

Jack’s most memorable mediation was a juvenile case where a young man named Will had been involved in a fight with a fellow student at school and was also accused of stealing the other student’s phone.

The accusing student did not attend the mediation, but Will’s parents did. Jack was able to facilitate a conversation between Will and his parents that improved their relationship and hopefully impacted Will’s prospects for the future. Jack says the mediation was like “striking a match – once they started talking, they were talking like they hadn’t before.” It was through this experience that Jack realized that “the impact we (mediators) can have on the lives of some of the juvenile offenders is tremendous.”
She insists she is not musical, but she's taken several dance classes there. Brazilian dance is her favorite.

When she's not volunteering with CCR, Kim is very involved with her kids' school and serves on the board of the Old Town School of Folk Music. The Center (JTDC) was supported by her research and her efforts as a liaison between CCR, the JTDC, and the State's Attorney's office.

Kim's memorable mediation: While finishing up her Masters of Jurisprudence in Child and Family Law at Loyola in 2019, Kim reached out to see if there was way she could help.

In caucus, Ryan admitted that he thrives on the unpredictable. The police were periodically called to the house during verbal altercations between her and Ryan.

During crosstalk, Ryan and his father described an angry outburst of Ryan's when he was 17 over being passed up for promotions due to his bad grades. He has been passed up for promotions due to his bad grades. Although he was doing well in school and was expected to go to college or, as a Plan B, join the army or attend trade school.

In his caucus, Kevin described anger with Ryan's constant picking on his insecurities. He hoped to talk about it in the job search once a week. They also agreed to go out to dinner once a week. They also agreed to check in about the job search once a week, which brought a smile to Ryan's face. Having a tangible agreement helped to put closure on what had been such a contentious time in their relationship.

Colette Marie Davion says she has been a peacemaker ever since she was young. She holds an MA in conflict resolution from Dominican University. Now, as an adjunct professor there, she acts as a coach in Dominican’s 40-hour mediation class and teaches a sophomore seminar called Conflict and Mediation: Life in the Natural World, which is one of her favorite classes.

Colette first heard about CCR during her work on her MA and “knew it was something that was part of what I believed in.” In November 2019, she applied and was accepted to the MMP. Since graduating from the MMP, she has mediated nearly every type of case CCR offers. She is also on the 2021 Core Values Team, which focuses on the implementation of CCR’s Core Values throughout the organization, and recently completed the Train the Trainer course, so she will soon be coaching new mediators.

When Colette is not mediating or working, she likes to travel and recently took a trip to Sedona, Arizona, which she recommends highly. She also recently completed a Train the Trainer course, so she will soon be coaching new mediators.

Collette's memorable mediation: Collette remembered a stalking case contact that she mediated between a man and a woman.

Larry had revoked his Stalking/No Contact order against her. Larry cried twice during the mediation. Sue cried as well. Colette, despite herself, had tears in her eyes at the end of the mediation. In the end, they came to an agreement that Larry would contact Sue when he felt the time was right. Colette recalls, “It was just so wonderful.

During early caucus, although both Larry and Sue were upset and angry, each had good things to say about the other. During crosstalk, it came out that when Sue said something like ‘you’re crazy,’ Sue’s PTSD was triggered. Sue then understood why he had put the restraining order on her and seemed to understand how hard it was for Larry to do so.

Later, it came out that Sue’s mother was explosive and unpredictable. The police were periodically called to her house over the years.

In addition, Sue had two other severe injuries. While in Afghanistan, Larry had a brain injury from his service in Afghanistan. Sue said Larry’s PTSD was triggered. Sue then understood why he had put the restraining order on her and seemed to understand how hard it was for Larry to do so.
Bob Lipton has been Managing Director of Business Development at Cave Creek Capital Management since 2018. Prior to that, he owned a legal recruiting firm in NYC, where he grew up. His firm opened a branch office in Chicago in 2007 and Bob moved here in 2011.

In Chicago, Bob wanted to “contribute to society in a way that wasn’t pecuniary.” A friend who was a partner at a law firm and did a lot of mediation work suggested getting involved with CCR. After taking the 40-Hour training in 2015, Bob applied to the MMP and graduated in 2016. He has mediated tons of cases at Markham (landlord/tenant, small claims). In fact, during his initial 18-month commitment, when he was required to do two cases a month, he so enjoyed mediating that he would often do four to six cases a month. He has also mediated many traditional long model cases (juvenile cases, attorney fee cases) and cases through CCR’s Better Business Bureau partnership. Bob was named Peacemaker of the Year in 2018 at CCR’s annual volunteer appreciation party.

In addition to mediating, Bob served for several years on CCR’s Continuing Education Committee and has served on the Volunteer Council (VC) for three years, where he is chair of the recruiting committee for the VC. Most recently, he served on the VC subcommittee that created a program for new volunteers which assigns them an advisor who will answer questions about logistics, give direction, and generally act as a volunteer “buddy.”

When he’s not volunteering with CCR or working, you can find Bob cycling, hiking, cooking, or (pre-Covid) traveling with his wife. Their most interesting recent trip was to Japan two summers ago for their 20th wedding anniversary.

Bob’s Reflection on Mediation:
“Mediation can be a transformative process. It can help turn people who have trouble communicating into people who have found a way to resolve their conflict. As a mediator for CCR since 2016, I am still surprised by how facilitating communication between disputing parties enables them to talk to one another and to feel they are being heard for the first time. The transformation comes from being heard and gaining an understanding of the core interests that underlie their dispute—enabling people to put their conflict behind them. For me, helping people move past what seemed like an irreconcilable dispute is the most gratifying outcome I have experienced as a mediator.”

Wheaton College
As VP for Student Development at Wheaton College, Dr. Paul Chelsen oversees much of the learning that takes place outside of the classroom – athletics, resident life, student wellness, student engagement offices, equity, and Title 9 all fall under his purview. Four years ago, when Dr. Chelsen was helping to develop a conflict management and communication seminar for leadership at the college, he immediately thought of CCR. He’d previously taken CCR’s 40-hour training and knew that CCR would be “an excellent training partner” for this type of offering.

CCR teaches the first day of Wheaton’s 2-day seminar, which has been offered for the last three years and has trained well over a hundred Wheaton employees. CCR teaches core conflict resolution skills like active listening, understanding needs and interests, and reality testing.

CCR also teaches the first five days of Dr. Chelsen’s six-day conflict mediation graduate course. The course is now required training for students in Wheaton’s higher education MA curriculum, which trains would-be higher education staff and administrators. Chelsen says that out of more than 280 MA programs in the country, Wheaton’s is the only one that offers a mediation skills training component. “Those of us who work in higher education know that a lot of the job involves working with people and people in conflict and I knew CCR was the best at providing that sort of training.”

“One of the benefits of training with CCR is that most people have not had training on how to respond to conflict in a healthy way. Because of that, many people are afraid of conflict and that leads to not feeling confident when you’re in a conflict situation. CCR’s training and materials build a sense of confidence through the information, perspective, and skill-based training they provide. CCR has expertise that we don’t have at Wheaton, so the fact that they’re willing to partner with us has really benefited Wheaton College.”
CCR continues to thrive thanks to the generosity of so many organizations and individuals. To all of our contributors, we extend our most sincere gratitude.

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## Statement of Activities: 2020
(For year ended May 31, 2020)

### SUPPORT AND REVENUE
- Grants and contributions - Note 9
- Dispute Resolution Center Act grant - Note 9
- Training fees
- Donated services, Circuit Court of Cook County - Notes 6 and 9
- Special event revenue - Note
- Less: Costs of direct benefits to donors
- Rental income - Note 3
- Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness - Note 4
- Interest income

### Net support and revenue
- Net assets released from restrictions - Note 5

### EXPENSES
- Program services
- Mediation services
- Training

### Supporting Services
- Management and general
- Fundraising

### Total Expenses

### Change in Net Assets
- Beginning of year, as originally stated in 2020
- Prior period adjustment - Note 10
- Beginning of year, as restated in 2020
- End of Year

### NET ASSETS
- Beginning of year, as originally stated in 2020
- Prior period adjustment - Note 10
- Beginning of year, as restated in 2020
- End of Year

## Statement of Activities: 2021
(For year ended May 31, 2021)

### SUPPORT AND REVENUE
- Grants and contributions - Note 9
- Dispute Resolution Center Act grant - Note 9
- Training fees
- Donated services, Circuit Court of Cook County - Notes 6 and 9
- Special event revenue - Note
- Less: Costs of direct benefits to donors
- Rental income - Note 3
- Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness - Note 4
- Interest income

### Net support and revenue
- Net assets released from restrictions - Note 5

### EXPENSES
- Program services
- Mediation services
- Training

### Supporting Services
- Management and general
- Fundraising

### Total Expenses

### Change in Net Assets
- Beginning of year, as originally stated in 2020
- Prior period adjustment - Note 10
- Beginning of year, as restated in 2020
- End of Year

### NET ASSETS
- Beginning of year, as originally stated in 2020
- Prior period adjustment - Note 10
- Beginning of year, as restated in 2020
- End of Year
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Pictured top left to bottom right: Aaron D. Harris, Brian J. Gold, Ceylan Ayasli Eatherton, Christa C. Cottrell, Elizabeth Herrmann Smith, Erin Haldorson Weber, Frank Day, Honorable Patrice Ball-Reed, Jack L. Block, Joseph R. Dosch, Jennifer L. Dressler, Emily Harte, Elizabeth Herrmann Smith, Matthew T. Jenkins, Michelle M. Jochner, Jenny Plagman, Jonah Orlofsky, Jaran R. Moten.
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Kerberos Capital Management

Mediation Participant Satisfaction Rate
90%

Pictured top left to bottom right on the following page: Aaron Hanlon, Alex C. Weinstein, Alexandre L. Passo, Eric Yeager, Erica Henry, Jeff Herbert, Jamal Memar, Jeff Herbert, Kelli Garcia, Kimberly Dean, Kwaku Osebreh, Rahul Sangal, Stacey M. Jonas Weiler, Tymisha Janer, Michaela Kabat

CCR Auxiliary Board 2020 and 2021
In the past 6 months, CCR has worked on nearly 900 cases, serving over 2,000 people in conflict.
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