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2022

**WDRC ANNUAL REPORT**

*Building Peace · Building Community*

# OUR TEAM

## Staff

### ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Moonwater

*Executive Director*

Emily Barnett Highleyman

*Program Director*

Jaina Gemin

*Office Manager*

Ariel Brownstein

*Com. Engagement Manager*

Tim Campbell

*Com. Engagement Coordinator*

Aaron Foss

*Administrative Assistant*

### MEDIATION TEAM

Gayle LaCroix

*Mediation Program Manager*

Britt Sullateskee

*Family Case Manager*

Cynthia Moore

*Family Case Manager*

Ramona Garcia Slagle

*Community Case Manager*

Mia Gover

*Eviction Resolution Specialist*

Cynthia Ward

*Eviction Resolution Specialist*

Annabelle Stefanoff

*ERPP Intake Specialist*

Ryan Gutheil

*ERPP Intake Specialist*

Megan Clay

*ERPP Administrative Assistant*

### EDUCATION TEAM

Hilary Goode

*Education Program Manager*

Darcy Calhoun

*Youth Program Coordinator*

Beth Girma

*Education Program Assistant*

### SUPERVISED VISITATION TEAM

Janne Sleeper

*SV Program Manager*

Jenalyn Brown

*SV Coordinator*

Gemma Roberts

*Lead Visit Supervisor*

Devin DiBernardo

*SV Staff*

*Thank you to past staff Emily Machin-Mayes, Jennifer Stephens, Kristy Gallegos, and Rosie O'Neil.*

# LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Greetings friends,

This past year brought the opportunity both to look back in celebration of our 30th anniversary, and to look forward as we envision the future. These moments of reflection affirmed the important and unique role our dispute resolution center holds through our provision of impartial services – from mediation, facilitation and coaching, to training, supervised visitation, and restorative practices.

Looking back, we reflected on the ways in which the WDRC has responded to our community's calls for support over the past three decades – from our longstanding programs to new and innovative responses to emerging needs. As we adapted to a hybrid service model in 2022 we saw demand for our services rise. Some program areas saw especially significant increases - we **more than doubled the number of mediation cases and facilitation sessions** – reflecting our dynamic community landscape and the need for accessible, trusted processes to navigate change, conflict, and communication in healthy ways.

Looking ahead, our Board and staff engaged a combination of discussion and reflection, stakeholder interviews, and a community survey to identify three key areas of focus for our new Strategic Plan - **equity, quality, and sustainability**. As we move forward we will prioritize efforts to:

- Adapt and respond to our community's changing needs with high-caliber, relevant, and effective services;
- Engage an equity lens to effect positive change throughout our organization;
- Intentionally foster a culture of staff joy and well-being;
- Strengthen relationships and community connections to bolster access and increase trust as a welcoming community resource; and,
- Ensure diversified, balanced, and robust funding sources to strengthen our long-term financial security.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to the health and well-being of our community through the provision of effective and accessible dispute resolution services. Together, we look forward to continuing to strengthen our social fabric – seeking common ground, improving communication, and repairing relationships within homes, schools, workplaces, and our community at large.

Thank you for joining with us,



Moonwater  
Executive Director



Matt Paxton  
Board President

## Board of Directors

Matt Paxton

Donna Loken

Michael Riber

Therese Norton

Cynthia Clay

Donnell Tanksley

Sarah Chan

Amy Rydel

Kirsten Drickey

Shasta Cano-Martin

Andy Day

Elke Stevens

## Advisory Board

Masa DeLara

Marian Exall

Dave Grant

Leon Henley

Phil Montgomery

CJ Nathon

Mary Sass

# celebrating 30 years of Building Peace



The WDRC's story began in 1992: volunteers, committed to helping the Whatcom County community re-humanize conflict, formed our local non-profit organization. Since that beginning, the WDRC has evolved and adapted to meet the changing needs of the community, especially during these times of COVID, social unrest, and world conflicts. Since our inception, we have helped over 50,000 individuals, children, families, businesses, and organizations resolve conflicts in creative and peaceful ways.

“ ...Peace is powerful.  
Peace is a promise.  
Peace is in all of us.  
Peace is a path to things  
words cannot explain.  
Peace helps the world turn round.  
Peace is for everyone.  
Everyone can make peace.  
Peace needs us...”



- excerpt from  
"What is Peace"  
by Aalyah Wilson,  
2022 Youth Poetry  
Contest Winner



The WDRC collaborated with ten local artists for the 30th Anniversary, each of whom painted a bench expressing their interpretation of peace; the benches were placed throughout Whatcom County during the summer.

## Investing in the Future

At the heart of our organization are the staff and volunteers who show up daily to support our community with compassion and humility. In 2022 we continued our investment in our people - from those doing the work, to those in need of assistance. We're proud to have invested in compensation and benefits to ensure a livable wage. We additionally enacted a 401(k) benefit for staff with no match requirement, ensuring that all eligible staff may receive the benefit, not just those who can afford to contribute.

We also invested in technology to advance our hybrid service delivery. Our meeting rooms are now equipped with smart boards to support virtual mediations and workshops. These essential devices are available to clients for whom technology or reliable internet service would otherwise be a barrier to accessing our services. Our partnership with the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center led to an American Sign Language video on our website, making our Eviction Resolution Pilot Program even more widely accessible.

## Looking Ahead

Our 2022 planning process engaged the perspectives of over 80 Board, staff, and community members. Our new five year Strategic Plan envisions the WDRC growing more equitable and more sustainable, while continuing to strengthen our high quality, reputable services. To view our new plan, visit [www.whatcomdrc.org/our-impact](http://www.whatcomdrc.org/our-impact) or scan the QR code.

Our Strategic Plan



# community

## Stabilizing Housing

In 2022, we opened more than 2,000 housing stability cases, successfully preventing a local tsunami of evictions.

Launched in late 2021, the **Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP)** was a response from the Washington state legislature to counter the economic hardships caused by COVID-19. ERPP creates a pause point in rent-related eviction cases and provides alternative resolution pathways prior to proceeding to court. By supporting tenants and landlords to resolve nonpayment of rent cases through mediation, rental assistance, and access to legal aid, ERPP has successfully diverted over 90% of cases from court.



“You've worked with my landlord and family for some time now and pretty much saved my family's life and health which fell apart during COVID. Thank you so much.”  
-ERPP Tenant

## Creating Spaces to be Heard

The **Safe Spaces Program** provides a neutral, alternative access point for community members to make a complaint about the City of Bellingham's services, or their experience interacting with or within the City of Bellingham. After using our services, a community member said *"I appreciate your time and patience working with me to capture and submit my concern. This situation has been very disturbing to me and I sincerely appreciate your kindness."*

## Building Skills

Our **Adult and Youth Education Programs** provide a wide range of workshops for community members of all ages to learn useful strategies for communicating across difference, collaborative negotiation, and effective conflict resolution. From short drop-in sessions to a 40 hour certification program, our trainings help build community capacity.

“I feel more prepared to express my needs and understand how I process stress so I can effectively communicate and collaborate with all of the people in my life.”  
-Understanding Conflict Participant

## Helping Groups Navigate Change

Through facilitation, we collaborate with clients to create opportunities for people to have conversations that matter. We hold space for discussions to occur constructively, and use participatory strategies that empower stakeholders to chart a positive path forward. This was a year of growth and impact for our facilitation services, doubling the number of facilitation sessions over last year.

Our facilitators had the honor of working with the Bellingham Public Library staff to strengthen safety and ease for library personnel. Over several months, staff and leadership shared experiences, identified key areas of challenge, generated ideas, and collaborated on selecting action steps to produce a guiding plan.

“Thank you! We have felt so fortunate to work with you on this journey; the sessions had such an open and collaborative feel. We so appreciate you and your work in our community.”

-Facilitation Participant





# family & youth

“Thank you for helping us come to a place where we could talk and be fair with each other.”  
 Family Mediation client

## Resolving Family Conflict

A family came to the WDRC after a divorce that had left both parents feeling frustrated and discouraged. Their daughter lived with her mother and was supposed to have two weekend visits a month with her father. Recently these visits had become inconsistent, and the father was feeling cut off from his daughter.

The parents first met individually with a mediator and described a pattern of conversations that always ended up with hurt feelings and one person walking away. When they met together, the mediator helped them focus on their goals and on their daughter. The father expressed how much he missed his daughter and how important it was to him to have time with her. The mother shared that her car had broken down and that she had been unable to repair it - making it difficult for her to provide her share of the transportation. They worked together to adjust their plan to reduce that barrier and also agreed on weekly video chats.

With the support of the WDRC Mediation Program, and despite the challenges of a painful separation, this family was able to listen, collaborate, and arrive at a resolution that will benefit each parent and their daughter in the future.

## Keeping Children and Parents Connected

The WDRC's Supervised Visitation Program offers a safe space to families during challenging times, building and nurturing connections between parents and children. Before her first visit with her dad, Marie was already in elementary school. At first the visits were virtual; they were also awkward, as they tried to figure out how they fit together, asking questions and sharing tidbits about themselves. During some visits both of them struggled to know what to say. They kept showing up for their visits, which eventually became in-person. Dad found games and toys that they both enjoyed, and these became their projects—something unique they were building, like their relationship. Marie had never moved to hug her dad until one day, after a visit, she ran back into the room and threw her arms around his legs, saying that she had had the “best time.”

## Building Peace, Picturing Justice

The WDRC Youth Program brings skill building workshops to community based organizations and into elementary, middle, and high schools throughout Whatcom County. In 2022, collaboration with our valuable partners led to a creative project with Squalicum High School, where our staff connected with more than 70 students about the importance of empathy and holding skilled conversations. The students enacted scenarios with their table mates and shared their perceptions of the needs and feelings underlying various situations, while focusing on how to communicate with empathy and care. The WDRC staff assisted the students in identifying issues surrounding equality, justice, and environmentalism. These were jumping off points for artistic endeavors that were later exhibited at the Whatcom Museum. Scan the QR code for more info.



Picturing Justice Exhibit

### Dandelion, by Adelaide Jones 2022 Youth Poetry Contest Winner

friendship is like a dandelion  
 never perfect but beautiful  
 then something blows it all apart  
 sometimes the little pieces reconnect to form all over again  
 friendship is like a dandelion

# 2022 Donors and Supporters

Anonymous  
Alfred and Harriet Arkley  
Kulwant and Baljit Aulakh  
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Rhonda Younker

## Business Supporters

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Backcountry Essentials  
The Bagelry  
Balladeer Studio  
Balloon Depot  
Barb's Pies and Pastries  
Barre3  
BECU  
Beeworks  
Bellingham Bells  
Bellingham Cider Co.  
Bellingham Tennis  
Bellingham Theater Guild  
Bellingham Treehouse  
Bellinghistory with the Good Time Girls  
Ben Mann Art  
Boundary Bay Brewery  
Brazen  
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The Cabin  
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Caffe Adagio  
Calypso Kitchen  
Carnal  
Chmelik, Sitkin, & Davis  
The Chrysalis  
The Colophon Café  
Community Boating Center

Creative Frog  
Cute But Crazy Socks  
Dakota Art Store  
Dandelion Organic Delivery  
Diamond Jim's Grill  
Dog On Computer Repair  
Ethos West Construction  
Fairhaven Runners and Walkers  
Final Touch Auto Spa  
Fringe Brewing  
Gato Verde Sailing  
GLP Personal Injury Attorneys  
Goods Local Brews  
Greene's Corner  
Happier Healthier Living  
Hardware Sales  
Hayden Construction and Woodworking  
Highline Construction  
Hyatt  
Hyline Hotel for Dogs  
Ideal Carefully Curated Goods  
Inn at Lynden  
Inn at Northrup Station  
Jack's BBQ  
Joe's Automotive Repair  
Julian & Company  
Juxt Taphouse  
Kite Paddle Surf  
Kona Mountain Bikes  
Koru Body Therapy  
Kristen Ingman Art  
K'UL Chocolate  
Living Pantry  
The Loft  
Louis Auto and Residential Glass  
Main Street Bar & Grill  
Maniac Coffee Roasters  
Menace Brewing  
Mindport  
Mount Baker Theater  
Naan and Brew  
Neko Cafe  
Nelson's Market and Marlin's Cafe  
North Bellingham Golf  
North Fork Brewery  
Northwest Yarns  
Nuu-Muu  
Osprey Hill Farm  
Ovn Wood Fire Pizza  
Pangea Ferments  
Peoples Bank  
Pet Stop  
Pickford Film Center  
Pizza'zza  
Pooties Grand Ave  
Pozie by Natelie  
Puget Sound Energy  
Pure Bliss  
Rabbit Field Farms  
Reference Media  
Sage Against the Machine  
Saltadena Bakery  
Sarah Pudell, LMT  
Saratoga Real Estate  
SaviBank  
Shake and Shine  
SilverReef Casino  
Sireno Gelato  
Smith & Just, PS  
Spark Museum  
Still Life Massage and Float  
Summit Adventure Park  
Third Planet  
Time and Materials  
Tony's Coffee  
Vermillion  
Village Books  
Vital Climbing Gym  
Vollr Bellingham  
Wander Brewing  
The Waterfront Seafood and Bar  
Whatcom Land Title  
Whatcom Sports & Recreation  
Wild Oats Bakery  
YMCA  
Zeeks Pizza

## Foundations

Boeing Foundation  
Chuckanut Health Foundation  
Dave Nelson Memorial Foundation  
Elaine and Vincent Bell Foundation  
James Boskey Memorial Foundation  
Jerry H Walton Foundation  
Kaiser Employee Foundation  
Lhaq'temish Foundation  
Loken Family Charitable Foundation  
Mighty Cause Foundation  
Whatcom Community Foundation Resilience Fund  
Whatcom Community Foundation Passthrough Grant Fund

## Grantors

Administrative Office of the Courts  
Bellingham Bay Rotary Club  
Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship  
BECU  
City of Bellingham  
Department of Social and Human Services  
Downtown Bellingham Partnership  
PSE  
Seeking Health  
Samson Rope  
St James Presbyterian Church  
St Pauls Episcopal Church  
Superfeet  
Whatcom Family and Community Network  
WA State Department of Commerce

## Associations & Coalitions

Association for Conflict Resolution  
Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce  
Birch Bay Thrives  
Building Healthy Communities Task Force  
Community Resource Network  
Downtown Bellingham Partnership  
Ferndale Chamber of Commerce  
Ferndale Community Coalition  
Healthy Whatcom/Community Health Improvement Planning  
Mt Baker Community Coalition  
National Association for Community Mediation  
Project Safer  
Resolution Washington  
Supervised Visitation Network  
Sustainable Connections  
Washington Mediation Association  
Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Whatcom County Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force  
Whatcom Family and Community Network  
Whatcom Prevention Coalition

## Bench Artists

Kevin Coleman  
David Syre  
Jason LaClair  
Gabriel's Art Kids and Robert Williams School of the Arts and Sciences  
Adrien Converse  
Taj Williams  
Rachel Simpson  
Faith Ellsworth  
Jim Dixon  
Whatcom Council for the Aging

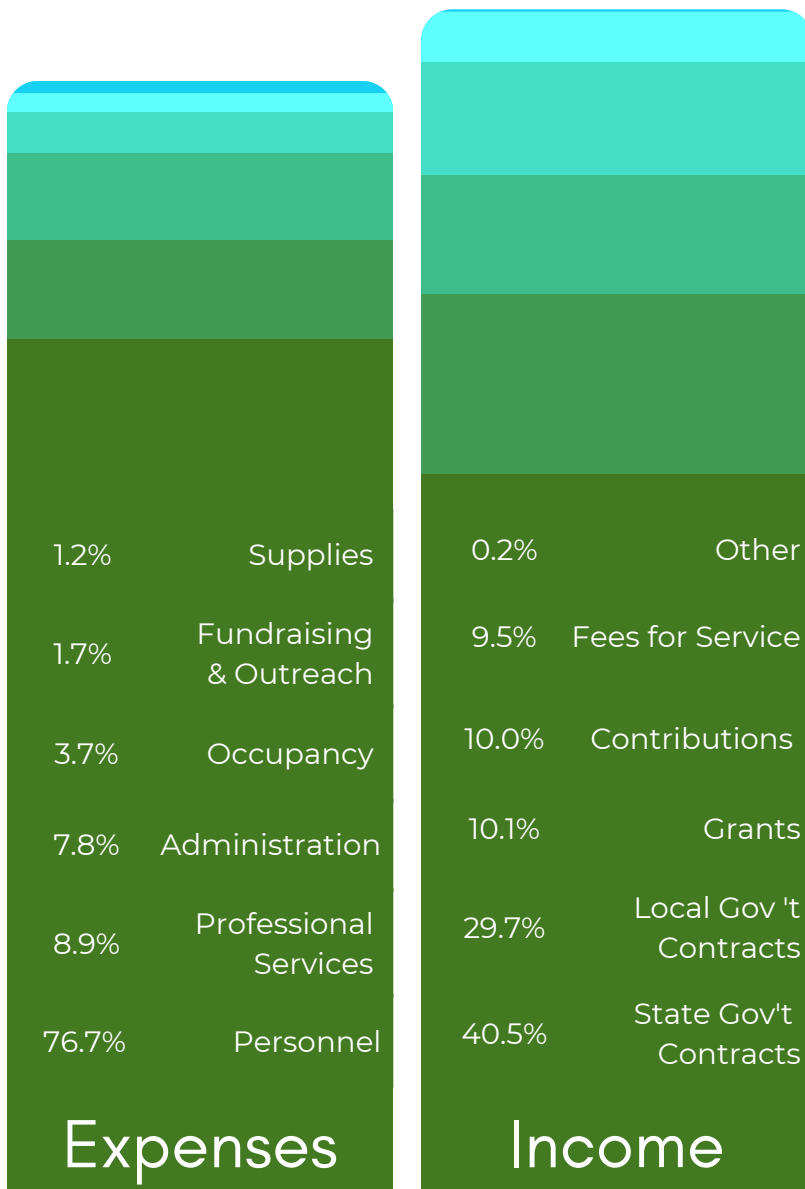
# THANK YOU

# financials

Total Income:  
\$1,202,089

Total Expense:  
\$1,171,484

Net Ordinary Income:  
\$30,605  
*(excludes annual depreciation)*



## Balance Sheet

### Assets

#### Current Assets

Cash & cash equivalents	\$539,839
Accounts receivable	\$136,330
Other	\$75
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>\$676,244</b>

#### Fixed Assets

Building & land	\$616,244
Building improvements	\$366,413
Other fixed assets	\$60,033
Depreciation	\$-140,618
<b>Total fixed assets</b>	<b>\$902,072</b>

**Total Assets** \$1,578,315

### Liabilities & Equity

#### Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$3,894
Other Current Liabilities	\$21,763
Mortgage payable	\$322,547
Capital loans payable	\$250,000
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>\$598,204</b>

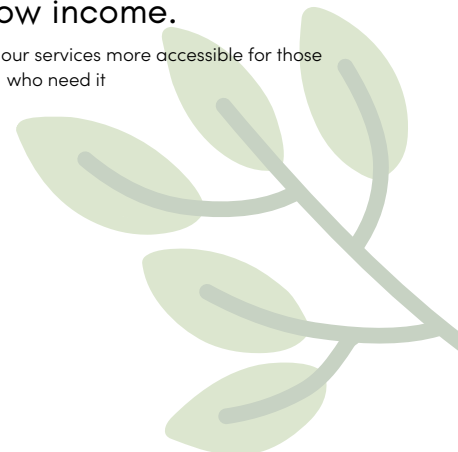
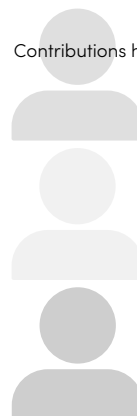
#### Equity

Unrestricted net assets	\$960,340
Temp. restricted net assets	\$9,957
Net Income	\$9,814
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$980,111</b>

**Total Liabilities & Equity** \$1,578,315

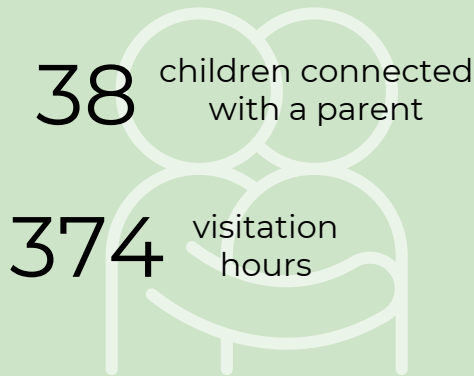
**68%** of clients reported extremely or very low income.

Contributions help make our services more accessible for those who need it

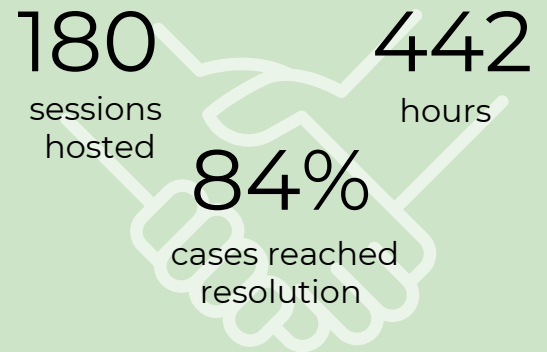


# WDRC 2022 Impact

## Supervised Visitation



## Mediation



## Training



5,690 people served in 2022!

## Facilitation



## Volunteers



## Community Presentations



## Eviction Resolution

