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Award winners, mediation participants and program coordinators available for interview

#MediationPartnershipsBenefitBaltimore

ERRICKA BRIDGEFORD RECOGNIZED FOR LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE VIOLENCE IN BALTIMORE CITY

Baltimore Community Mediation Center honors Erricka Bridgeford with Peacemaker of the Year award.

(Baltimore, MD) – On Thursday, September 28th, Community Mediation will celebrate 22 years of providing no-cost mediation services to Baltimore City residents with a cocktail celebration and silent auction from 6 to 8 PM at DLA Piper (6225 Smith Ave., Baltimore, MD 21209). Mayor Catherine Pugh will speak at the event and State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby and Police Commissioner Kevin Davis are expected to attend. The Booker T. Washington high school band will perform as well.

Erricka Bridgeford will be awarded Peacemaker of the Year for her long-standing support of the Center as a volunteer mediator and trainer and for her activist role in calling attention to peace-building through the Baltimore Ceasefire. Bridgeford passionately advocates for mediation and creates partnerships that build peacemaking efforts in Baltimore. Councilman Brandon Scott, who also sits on the board, will present the award.

Transformative Justice Committee will be recognized with the Partner of the Year award. This grassroots group is comprised of Gilmore Homes residents and Baltimore City Police Department officers and command staff who worked together on the Dialogue Circles program. These inclusive, neutral and community-based Circles, held over the 18 months, led to the implementation of community-based policing initiatives and policies.

Arundel Elementary School will be honored as the School Partner of the Year. Community Mediation regularly provides conflict resolution services, including conflict mediation, attendance mediation and conflict resolution training in Baltimore City schools. Arundel Elementary is deeply committed to helping students and families overcome obstacles to attendance and find collaborative and non-violent solutions to conflict.

Serena Hayes will be presented with the Volunteer of the Year award for her commitment to mediation. Since her training in 2016, Hayes has consistently mediated and expanded her service through strategic planning and presentations on behalf of the Center.

Community Mediation believes that mediation partnerships benefit Baltimore. Mediation lets people speak for themselves and make their own decisions. Mediation is an informal process done in a neutral and private setting with two professionally trained volunteer mediators. Mediations in the programs are neutral, voluntary, and confidential and model reflective listening and transparency. Programs focus on criminal justice, including prisoner re-entry and state’s attorney-referred cases, schools and communities. Mediation has proven to reduce recidivism by 10% for the first mediation session and an additional 7% for every subsequent session.

The event is open to the public and tickets are available at www.communitymediation.org.

Coming up: Run for ReEntry: October 7-8, Lorig Charkoudian will run from Hagerstown to Baltimore to highlight the challenges facing returning citizens and their families. The run will end at the Baltimore Community Mediation Center by 3 pm at 3333 Greenmount Avenue, where returning citizens and local elected officials will hold a press conference. More information at <http://reentrymediation.wixsite.com/run4reentry>.

Mediation Partnerships Benefit Baltimore. Baltimore Community Mediation Center is the go-to organization when people need to have difficult conversations with one another. We provide free mediation services and dispute resolution skills training to Baltimore City residents. Sixty-four volunteer mediators mediated 618 sessions in FY2016, working with partners ranging from the Baltimore City State’s Attorney office to Baltimore City Schools to community groups. All mediators have at least 55 hours of experiential training, hands-on experience, and continuous work to improve their skills. Community Mediation is a member of Community Mediation Maryland (CMM), a coalition of 15 community mediation centers throughout the state. Learn more at www.communitymediation.org.