



Board members and honorees at the 2017 Pathways Award Luncheon, left to right: Cindy Tierney, Concord Mediation Center Executive Director; Pat Bourne, Board President; Gene Klein, Project Harmony Executive Director and 2017 Pathways Award honoree; Annie Bird, Board Vice President; Mark Draper, Board member; Elizebeth Murphy, Board member; Tom Richards, Board member; Kristi Gibbs, Board member; Andy Rikli, Board Secretary; Grant Story, 2017 Volkmer Practitioner Award recipient; Greg London, Board member; Ron Volkmer, Board Treasurer. (Photos courtesy of Abe Jackson.)

## 2017 Pathways Award Luncheon

The 5th Annual Pathways Award Luncheon took place on Friday, June 23, at Field Club of Omaha.

“We are fortunate to live in a community with so many talented, caring people! We were delighted to honor **Gene Klein, Executive Director at Project Harmony, and Grant Story, mediator, minister and therapist**, during our Luncheon. This event allowed us to publicly recognize members in our community who share our values of peaceful conflict resolution, open communication and bringing communities together, as well as the opportunity to educate our event guests about Concord Mediation Center’s many beneficial programs and services,” said Concord Mediation Center Executive Director Cindy Tierney.

## Highlights of Fiscal Year 2016-17

### Serving Our Clients and Our Community...

During the July 2016-June 2017 fiscal year, Concord Mediation Center closed 944 cases. This included:

- 129 Parenting Plan mediations
- 147 SADR Parenting Plan mediations
- 370 General/Community mediations
- 261 Child Welfare facilitations
- 4 Victim-Offender meetings

We invite you to read our Success Stories, as examples of our agency’s impact in the community.

## Success Stories

### Open Dialogue Beneficial for Reuniting Family

The three small children were living with a foster family, but were eager to return home. Their father, who was in a drug treatment program, was working hard on his sobriety. A permanency hearing had been scheduled by the court.

A Permanency Pre-Hearing Conference (PPHC) was arranged by Concord Mediation Center’s Child Welfare Facilitation Coordinators. Around the table was the dad, grandmother, attorneys, DHHS/NFC case managers and other providers with family concerns. The Facilitators helped the group identify the meeting goals (family reunification) and reviewed any concerns and barriers for achieving goals (the father’s drug abuse).

During the ensuing discussion, a miscommunication was revealed. The records had not accurately reflected the father’s adherence to the drug treatment program. The attorney noted he would share the father’s progress at court during the upcoming hearing, keeping reunification as a goal.

Without the clarification reached through the work of the Facilitators at this PPHC, this family may have been moving toward the father’s relinquishment of his parental rights, rather than a potential reunification.

### Teens Empowered to Resolve Their Own Issues

The lessons extended beyond book learning for the high school students who participated in a Victim Youth Conference (VYC).

Three youths were engaged in conflict stemming from highly inappropriate messages they shared via social media. School administrators became aware of the

*(continued on reverse)*



We raised \$1,340 during **Omaha Gives** in May, with the theme "Picture a Peaceful Future." We partnered with Blackburn Alternative Project and Art Teacher Hilary George's students created an art piece for us, to celebrate Omaha Gives. The students were tasked with reflecting upon what peace means to them, then bringing that vision to life. The art piece was also displayed at the 5th Annual Pathways Award Luncheon. *(photo above and inset, right)*



*Leighton and Holden Wilson, above, helped us celebrate Omaha Gives by "Picturing a Peaceful Future" via sidewalk chalk, outside the office.*

### **Outreach, Facilitations and Training**

We expanded awareness of our programs and services with outreach efforts, including the following key presentations, trainings and facilitations:

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| Operation Youth Success  | Pawnee Elementary School               |
| Bryan Middle School  | <b>Voice Educator's Council</b>        |
| Salvation Army staff   | L.E.N.D. students at Munroe-Meyer      |
| Omaha 360  | Offutt Special Education Resource Fair |
| Child Support Enforcement Professionals                                |  |
| Papillion LaVista Community Schools (Kick-Off & Year-End Celebrations) |  |
| OPS EPIC Program with Douglas County Detention Center                  |  |
| Through the Eyes of a Child Committee                                  |  |
| Nebraska Families Collaborative Community Advisory Council             |  |
| Nebraska Mediation Association   |  |

### **Moving FORWARD because of our excellent BOARD!**

We achieved many objectives, thanks in no small part to our dedicated Board of Directors!

#### **Thanks to:**

Patrick Bourne, Vice President, AON, President of the Board; Annie Bird, Vice President of the Board, Community Leader/Volunteer; Andrew Rikli, Ph.D., Secretary of the Board, Superintendent - Papillion-LaVista Public Schools; Ronald Volkmer, Treasurer of the Board, Professor of Law Emeritus, Creighton University School of Law; Mark C. Draper, Ed.S., PRSE, Consultant to Nebraska Department of Education; Cindy Ellis, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, Munroe-Meyer Institute University of Nebraska Medical Center; Kristi Gibbs, Ed.D., Head of **School, Brownell Talbot; Greg London, MPA, Chief Deputy Sarpy County Sheriff's Office;** Elizebeth Murphy, President, Emspace Group; Tom Richards, Manager – Governmental Affairs & Community Relations, OPPD; Cindy Tierney, Executive Director, Concord Mediation Center. Members Mark Draper, Greg London and Kristi Gibbs joined the Board in 2017.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to retired Board member Tom Warren, Urban League of Nebraska. His support, talents and insights will be missed.

### **Success Stories - continued**

messages and were concerned the issue was escalating into threats and affecting other students. Offered the opportunity to resolve their issues in a VYC, the high school students met with Mediators from Concord Mediation Center Mediators.

The Mediators first met with each student individually, to build trust and rapport. When the youth and Mediators met as a group, the teenagers were able to open up, each speaking to his or her part in the aggression at school. This led the Mediators to learn about the inappropriate cyber activity.

The teens were empowered to develop a plan to shut down their social media taunts and addressed how they would interact with one another if their paths crossed at school.

A few weeks after the VYC, one of the youth asked for a meeting with the principal, noting the students weren't adhering to their agreement. The principal was pleased when the students engaged in productive dialogue and came up with their own solution, based on their mediated agreement.

The principal reported the students utilized the conflict resolution skills they learned in the VYC, and he was not forced to be the "bad guy" in this situation.

The success of the VYC also demonstrates the power of mediation. When these students met, they learned there is another way to solve their problems, without guns and violence.



### **6th Annual Family Holiday Movie & Raffle**

Children's laughter echoed through Aksarben Cinema during our 6th annual Family Holiday Movie and Raffle fundraising activity. The evening included a showing of the movie "Fred Claus," goodie bags for the little ones and fantastic raffle prizes during the annual event on Monday, December 12. This event garnered approximately \$2,000. We were fortunate to be supported with sponsorships and raffle prize donations provided by many local businesses and our Board members!