



Winter 2013

## Taking mediation to the courthouse

A look at the new Private Warrant Court

By: Rhonda Taylor

There's a new court process in town that saves money, time and puts the decision-making abilities back into the hands of the parties involved. In November of 2012, The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations' Dispute Settlement Program (DSP) partnered with the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office (DA) and Mecklenburg County District Court Judges to launch the new Private Warrant Court.

This new court works to resolve citizen initiated misdemeanors by offering the involved parties an opportunity to have their disputes mediated before having their court case tried in front of a judge. The court has provided and equipped mediation space within the courthouse for DSP use. If the dispute is resolved by mediation, then all arrest charges are dropped, criminal

conviction records are avoided, and the trial is dismissed. The decision to have the case mediated first is voluntary on the part of complainants and defendants involved in the court cases.

**“Each case resolved by mediation saves about 2 hours of court time and about \$200 in court costs.”**

“This new program is very efficient in reducing the court dockets,” said Mary Williams, Dispute Settlement Program Manager. “A lot of times people go to court thinking that their issue will be resolved and are instead given another court date months in the future. With the Private Warrant Court program, citizens can go to their first appearance and, if they choose to attempt mediation, resolve their disputes that very same day.”

To date, DSP volunteer mediators have mediated as many as 15 cases in one court session

with a dispute resolution rate of approximately 90%. Each case resolved by mediation saves about 2 hours of court time and about \$200 in court costs.

For District Court Judge, Theo X. Nixon, the Private Warrant Court process is a welcome addition to the courthouse. In a letter

to the Dispute Settlement Program he wrote, “I am pleased with the progress in Citizens Warrant Court... I thank you, your staff, and the mediators for being timely and efficient.”

Citizens involved in the court cases like the mediation process because of its confidential nature and because it opens up the lines of communication between complainants and defendants. The parties solve their own disputes as opposed to having the Judge decide the outcome of their disagreements. Resolu-

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## Community Relations celebrates legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations, the Martin Luther King Planning Committee, and the Charlotte Regional Visitors Association partnered with the McCrorey YMCA for the City's 2013 Martin Luther King celebration. The events commemorating Dr. King's life included a wreath laying ceremony, a parade and a prayer breakfast in which awards were given to Charlotteans who exemplify his legacy.



MLK wreath laying ceremony at Marshall Park



West Charlotte High School marching band at MLK parade

# Dismantling racism workshop: Two participant perspectives

By: Jill Santuccio and Connie Green-Johnson



In January, several Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee members had the opportunity to participate in a Dismantling Racism Workshop organized by Race Matters for Juvenile Justice. This two day training is designed to help its participants proactively understand and address institutionalized racism.

The following reflections come from two committee members who participated — one is a white female, the other is African



American.

## Jill Santuccio:

As a relatively new member of the CRC, I was privileged to take part in a recent two-day Dismantling Racism workshop alongside representatives of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD), Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS), among others. The two-day workshop has impacted hundreds in Charlotte, around the state and across the country, and I am fortunate to have been one of them.

As numerous other participants commented over the two days, this fact and history based session offered more insights, data and concrete explanations on

the role of race in today's society than any other diversity training any of us had experienced. Although much of the information presented and several of the exercises made most, if not all, of the participants uncomfortable, the way our amazing facilitators presented facts, dates and how history has shaped where we are today was refreshingly unbiased.

All of which — unemotionally — support the ongoing and very emotional issues of race: how it has evolved, how it has no roots in human biology, how we got to where we are today. Perhaps the most profound was how our systems: political, governmental, social, financial and every other system you can think of, are so inherently intertwined that it is easy, albeit sad, to see how “dismantling racism” can — and will be — a painful process.

Personally, I came through the two days feeling very uncomfortable for reasons I wouldn't have anticipated before I began the journey. My logical mind grappled with knowing that I did nothing personally to bring about the root causes of racism, while the empathetic and emotional side of me wanted to weep, scream and “go out and fix it.”

In the meanwhile, I also wrestled with emotions of being ashamed of what “white” (and that word can be defined in a myriad of ways) means, has meant and will mean moving forward. The stark realization over the two days that while we are surrounded by deliberate acts of racial hatred anywhere from our community to on a global scale, there is a more sinister side to it. I learned that so much of racism is subconscious, unintended, unspoken and yet so pervasive in our lives today. All of us, regardless of the color of our skin, act

in racist ways without knowing we are. Does that make us bad people, or have we been conditioned by our previous generations, our history books and our society to act in ways which we aren't even aware or intentional?

While I did not come away from the Dismantling Racism workshop with all — or perhaps even some — of the answers, it changed me. It made me more aware of myself, those around me and how, even if it is the slightest shift in how we speak or interact with one another, all change starts within us. We all have the power to dismantle racism, regardless of how long it may take or how uncomfortable the process.



## Connie Green-Johnson:

I recently attended the Dismantling Racism workshop and was blown away by the experience. As an African American woman with some measurement of success, I sit at the intersection of privilege (classism) and racism. This workshop inspired me to move out of my comfort zone and begin the dialogue of responsibility with other African Americans.

Dismantling Racism gave me a

wake-up call and reminder that I have not done enough to raise the consciousness of my young people. Committing crimes, killing one another and dropping out of school are unacceptable behaviors and they simply must stop. African Americans see and hear so many negative messages that it has become the standard in their lives. We have to articulate that everyone cannot be a star athlete, singer, or movie star — but that an average Black citizen raising a family, paying taxes, and contributing to the community is a worthy lifestyle.

Education is the hallmark of any great society, so we have to change the public school system that educates our children. All of us must feel a sense of civic responsibility to work in varied ways in order to transform America's educational landscape. American society as a whole will be the better for it.

Until all the races begin to sit down and discuss race honestly, we will not solve any of the ills that are still in place today. We cannot avoid the issues. The groups have to be honest and say, “I am somewhat to blame.” Personally, I am willing to review my moral compass to help navigate through the weeds of racism as it relates to my life. Racism is like a malignant tumor that grows and destroys.

There is much work to be done to heal the ills of this country we call America and the Dismantling Racism workshop was an important first step in understanding some of the root causes of the problems.

I left the workshop with Maya Angelou's words in my heart and mind, “When you know better you do better”

# Private Warrant Court

(continued from page 1)

tion agreements allow victims to recoup their financial losses and ongoing relationships can be saved or strengthened.

The Private Warrant Court has been so successful and received such positive community response and notoriety that court segments have been filmed by and shown on Time Warner Cable's News 14 Carolina television channel. It's no surprise that judges, attorneys, and citizens alike refer to the program as one

of Charlotte's best kept secrets.

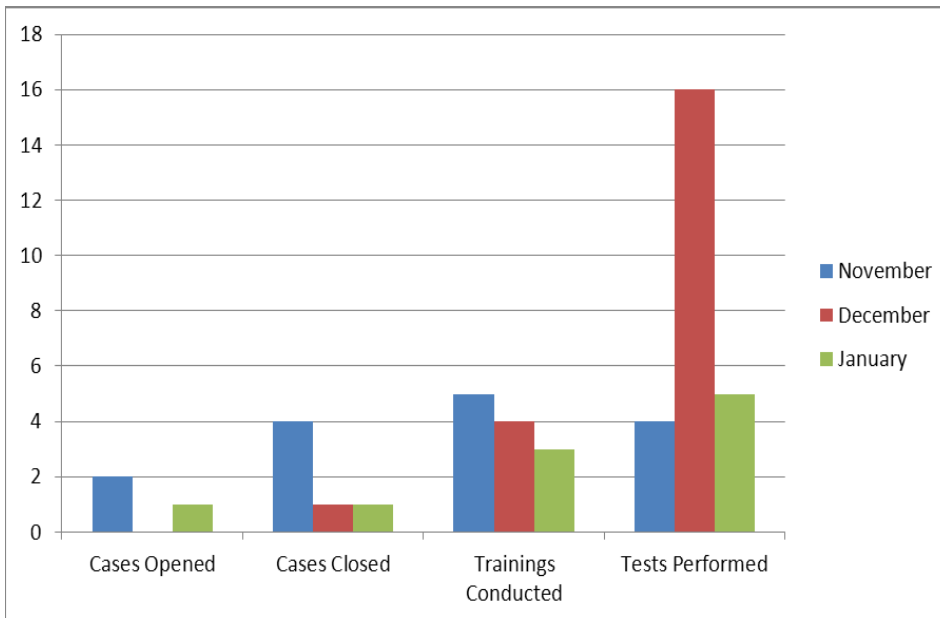
If you would like more information about the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations' Dispute Settlement program, please contact 704-336-2903.



Mecklenburg county courthouse

*"Resolution agreements allow victims to recoup their financial losses and ongoing relationships can be saved or strengthened."*

## Fair housing highlights



### Fair housing accomplishments

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations fair housing staff hosted HUD's Region IV FHAP Partnership training conference in January. Civil Rights advocates from North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida attended.
- Fair housing staff was instrumental in obtaining an accessible parking space for a Complainant with a physical disability.

## Police review highlights

### November

- Staff worked with CMPD to redesign police-community relations brochure
- Staff participated in 3 ride-along activities with CMPD officers

### December

- Staff attended 2 police chain of command hearings
- Staff conducted 1 allegation of police misconduct
- Staff participated in 1 training through CMPD Internal Affairs department

### January

- Staff attended 8 police chain of command hearings
- Staff conducted 1 police complaint intake





# CRC to co-host local events commemorating anniversary of Emancipation Proclamation

By: Ailen Arreaza

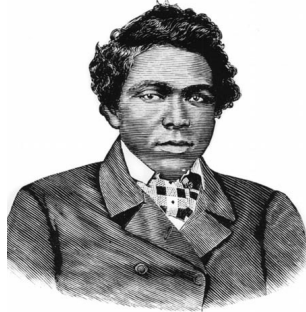
This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. A document signed by President Abraham Lincoln which stated that “all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”

In honor of this critical and consequential moment in our nation’s history, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations has partnered with several area organizations to commemorate the significance and impact of the Emancipation Proclamation, particularly on North Carolina.

## Fire of Freedom

The Levine Museum of the New South, in collaboration with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations, UNC Press, the Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society and the African American Genealogy Interest Group, will host a book signing and lecture by Dr. David Cecelski on Sunday, February 17 at 3:00 p.m. His new book, *The Fire of Freedom: Abraham Galloway and the Slaves’ Civil War*, tells the remarkable story of Abraham Galloway, a North Carolina slave who served as a spy for the Union during the Civil War and went on to become one of the first African

Americans elected to the North Carolina Legislature.



Abraham Galloway

“This is one of those people whose life enriches our understanding of African American and Southern history,” said Dr. Tom Hanchett, staff historian at the museum. Galloway, who was a skilled artisan and a brick mason, was born into slavery in Wilmington, NC and escaped to Philadelphia in 1857. However, once the Civil War broke out, he returned to the South and risked his freedom to help the Union as an intelligence agent.

“As someone who was raised in the segregated South where blacks were often perceived as not amounting to much, I’m always amazed to hear stories like this one,” commented Hanchett.

Perhaps the most astonishing thing about Galloway’s life is that, although a renowned orator and leader in the issue of

African American suffrage, he could neither read nor write. For Hanchett, this is the part of the story that is most important today. “It teaches that you don’t have to be rich and powerful to make history. Even during slavery times there were people who didn’t wait for others to give them permission to do things, they just did them.”

Persons attending the event will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the issues presented in the book as well as listen to a choir perform songs that were popular during the time Galloway was alive.

## Panel Discussion

On Saturday, February 23, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations in collaboration with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library and UNC Charlotte will co-host a panel discussion about the Emancipation Proclamation, its constitutionality and legacy and the 13th Amendment.

The panelists will include Dr. David Goldfield, History Professor, UNCC, Dr. Cheryl Hicks, Associate Professor, UNCC and Dr. Scott Broyles, Assistant Professor, Charlotte School of Law,

“It’s important for us to discuss the Emancipation Proclamation because it was such a crucial part of the history of this country as it relates to race and race relations,” said Willie Ratchford,

Executive Director of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations. “Before this document, our country was not living up to the ideas it claimed to stand for — life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The Emancipation Proclamation was the first step toward equality and although we’ve come a long way in race relations, we are not there yet. This type of discussion provides a safe place where people can speak about these issues.”

**Both events are FREE and open to the public.**

**Sunday, February 13  
3:00 p.m. @ The Levine Museum**

*The Fire of Freedom: Abraham Galloway and the Slaves’ Civil War.*

RSVP by calling 704-333-1887 ext. 501, or [rsvp@museumofthenewsouth.org](mailto:rsvp@museumofthenewsouth.org).

Parking is available in the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Station deck next door; the Museum will validate.

**Saturday, February 23  
2:00 p.m.**

**UNCC Center City Building, 320 E. 9th Street, in the 2nd floor auditorium**

Panel Discussion about the Emancipation Proclamation

We love to hear from CRC Link readers! If you have a suggestion, feedback or a great story idea, please do not hesitate to contact us at [aarreaza@charlottenc.gov](mailto:aarreaza@charlottenc.gov). The CRC Link is a quarterly publication of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee

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# From the Chair's desk: My vision for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee

By: Patricia Albritton

*In November, Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx and Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners Chair Harold Cogdell Jr. appointed Patricia Albritton and Rev. Dwayne Walker as CRC's Chair and Vice Chair.*

*Before her appointment as Chair, Ms. Albritton served as Program Advisor for the CRC and was a member of the leadership team. She also graduated from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department Citizens Academy Program in June. In addition, Ms. Albritton was instrumental in the planning of Community Relations' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.*

*Rev. Walker is the pastor of Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. Dr. Walker currently serves as a member of The Board of Trustees of Livingstone College, The Board of Dorothy Walls Conference and Retreat Center, a member of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission for the City of Charlotte, member of the Black Political Caucus, the NAACP, and as the Chairman of the Little Rock Community Development Corporation.*

*The following is CRC Chair Patricia Albritton's vision for the organization's future:*

I have been a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee (CRC) since March 2011. I joined the

CRC through an appointment by a member of the Charlotte City Council. I saw the CRC as an opportunity to reach the goals I had when I moved to Charlotte – to make a difference in a growing and developing city.



Spending parts of my life living in the South and traveling the world, I have an appreciation for what people may accomplish when there is a sense of community between multiple cultures.

In November 2012, I was appointed as chair of the CRC. As the new chair, I am honored with the opportunity to lead the CRC in making a difference in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community. As a manager by profession, I know firsthand about the accomplishments that are achieved when teams learn to work well together. Successful teams are a result of a culture of leadership, diversity, variable talents and inclusion. As the chair of the CRC, I hope to use all of these elements to move the CRC to new actions.

The CRC has a rich history in Charlotte. When our organiza-

tion was formed in 1961, the committee became the focal point to improve race relations. Today, the focus remains race relations and community harmony. However, effectively engaging our citizens with our mission – an inclusive community where trust, acceptance, fairness and equity are the community norms – has become a challenge.

What are the opportunities for Charlotte-Mecklenburg? The CRC members have a responsibility to assist in identifying those opportunities. Once the CRC identifies opportunities, what are we going to do? How do we develop plans and turn opportunities into actions?

As the chair of the CRC, I will do my part to assist all of us in coming together to take actions that further our mission and vision. This will occur through:

- Community dialogues with action plans developed by CRC members
- Community partnerships with Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools to assist and improve educational opportunities, life-sustaining lessons and student growth and development
- Ad hoc committees to designed to expediently ad-

dress unexpected challenges as they arise in our communities

- Input from CRC members on what they are seeing and hearing in our communities and what response they believe may be required from the CRC
- Open and active engagements with the public servants who have appointed us: Mayor Foxx, the Charlotte City Council and the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners
- Informative communications with regular newsletters and an active website.

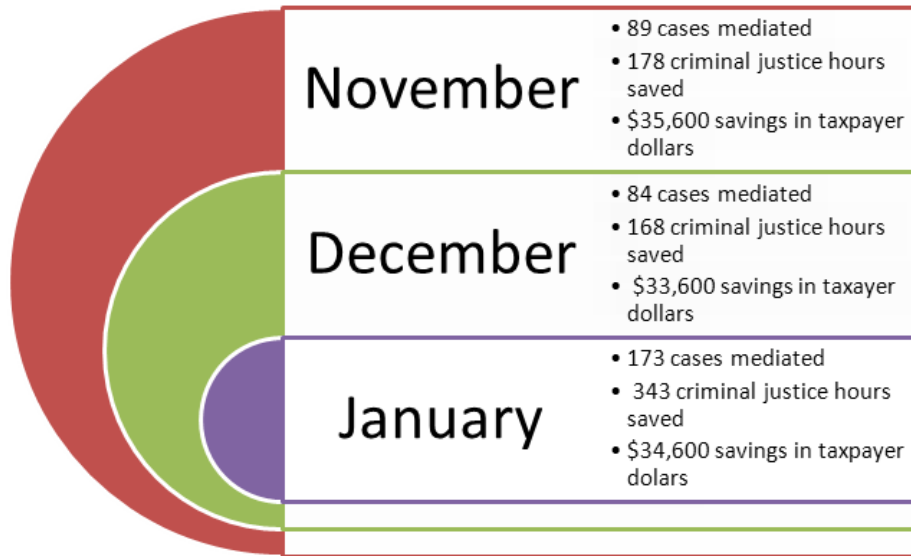
I welcome responses and ideas from the CRC members and the citizens of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and look forward to my tenure as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee Chair.

## CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG COMMUNITY RELATIONS MISSION & VISION

**Our Mission:** We advocate for an inclusive community where trust, acceptance, fairness and equity are the community norms.

**Our Vision:** A Charlotte-Mecklenburg where people's differences are acknowledged, understood and appreciated.

# Dispute settlement highlights



## CRC Staff

### **Executive Director**

Willie Ratchford

### **Community Relations Managers**

Ledger Morrisette  
Mary Williams  
Terry Bradley

### **Community Relations Specialists**

Ailen Arreaza  
Melissa Baker  
Luis Matta  
Donna Murrell  
Stephanie Randolph  
Terry Stokes

### **Administrative Assistants**

Renee Thompson  
Sue Green

## CRC Members

### **Chair**

Patricia Albritton

### **Vice-Chair**

Rev. Dwayne Walker

### **Members**

Jaye Alexander	Dave Nichols
Jeanette Ayeni	Kathleen Odum
Madelyn Baer	Aaron Orr
JR Black	Marty Puckett
Toria Boldware	Kenneth Rance
Clair Craig-Lane	Jacqlin Robinson
Larry Edwards	Lisa Rudisill
Maya Engle	Jill Santuccio
Marc Friedland	Omar Saxton
Constance Green-Johnson	Bill Schreiner
Tyyawdi Hands	Andy Silver
Brenda Hayden	David Smith
Mabel Hemphill	Ruth Stevenson
Gwendolyn High	Pat Taft
Jibril Hough	Michael Tanck
Janet Lama	Rhonda Taylor
Melvin Lowery	Glenn Thomas
Edward Mattison	Thomas Vinson
Lawana Mayfield	Bahiyyah Walker
Sharon Merritt	Doug Wilson
Damon Miller	

## CRC seeks nominations for police awards

Do you know a police officer who goes above and beyond the call of duty? Who has made a difference in your neighborhood? Who is a trusted and vital part of your community? If so, nominate him or her for a Police Community Relations Award!

Nominations may be made by citizens in the patrol area, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools personnel, groups and individuals. Nominations may be submitted by writing, requesting a nomination form or visiting the website, [crc.charmeck.org](http://crc.charmeck.org), and completing a form online. The deadline for submitting nominations is **Monday, April 1**.

For more information, you may contact Donna Murrell at [dmurrell@charlottenc.gov](mailto:dmurrell@charlottenc.gov).

## Upcoming events and announcements

### **CRC's 34th Annual Police Community Relations Awards will be Thursday, May 16 2013**

This annual feature of Charlotte's Law Enforcement Week celebration, recognizes officers and work teams from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department who have made outstanding contributions to the improvement of local police community relations. For more information contact Donna Murrell directly at [dmurrell@charlottenc.gov](mailto:dmurrell@charlottenc.gov).

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual World Parade and Festival** will be held at **Independence Park** on **April 20, 2013 from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm**. More than 6,500 attended last year.

The best part about the festival is that it is **FREE!** For more info, visit [www.worldparadefestival.org](http://www.worldparadefestival.org)