



**Southeastern Dispute Resolution Services
(SeDRS)**

2019 Annual Report

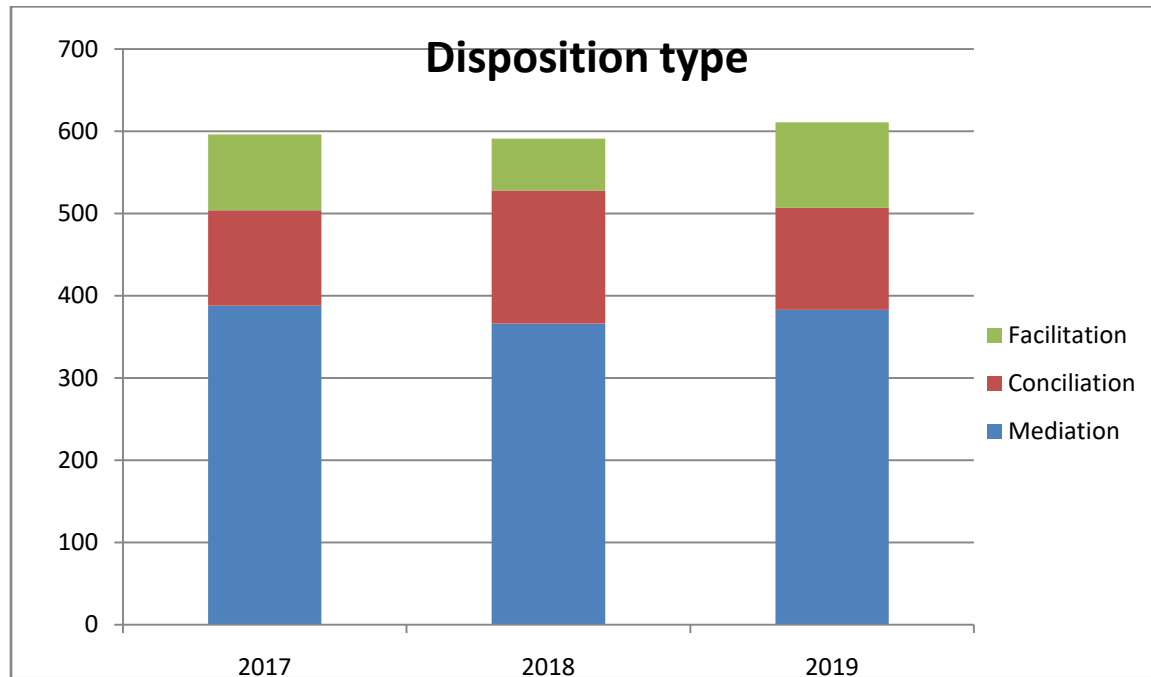
What is mediation?

Mediation is a process in which two or more people involved in a dispute meet in a confidential setting, and with the guidance of professionally trained mediators, attempt to work out a mutually-agreeable solution to their problem. Mediation allows all parties involved to explain their view of the situation in a non-threatening, neutral environment.

SeDRS provides facilitative mediation, restorative conferencing, conciliation and conflict management services. SeDRS is part of 18 CDRP centers in the State of Michigan, coordinated under the CDRP program of Michigan.

Mediation Statistics:

SeDRS obtained 803 case referrals and disposed of 798 cases in 2019. SeDRS volunteers mediated, conciliated or facilitated 611 of the 798 disposed cases.



(The chart shows the breakdown of mediations, conciliations and facilitations)

In 2019, of the 611 core cases (mediations, conciliations and facilitations) more than 78% reached full or partial agreement, 480. The average length of a core case in 2019 was 61 minutes.

Number of individuals served 2019:

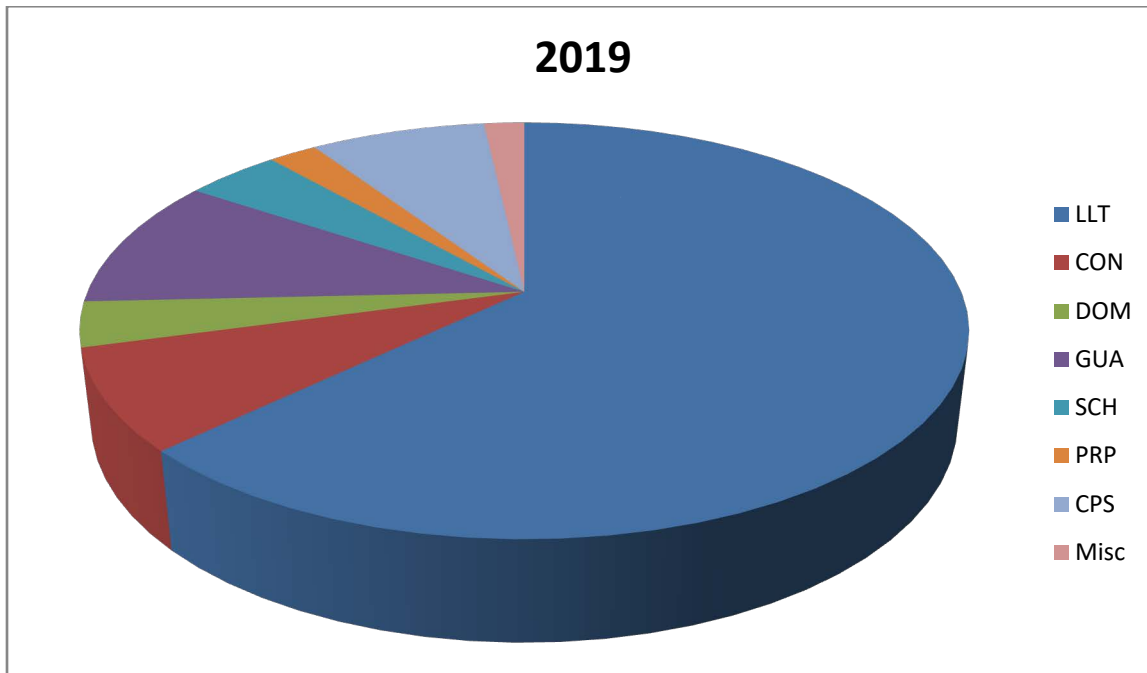
SeDRS served 3323 individuals throughout our service region during 2019 (Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee and Monroe Counties.) 1456 of these individuals were new to our center, which shows both a great deal of repeat users and growth for the services.

Referrals:

SeDRS case referrals from our regional courts remains 83% of our case load, which is roughly the same as in 2018 (85% of SeDRS referrals were court related). We did see a small increase in school related activity. There were changes in school administration for some of the schools we provided services and we had fewer court cases referred from the Lenawee Courts in 2019. Additional case referrals were made from: Private Attorneys, Community Organizations, Schools, Businesses and Individuals.

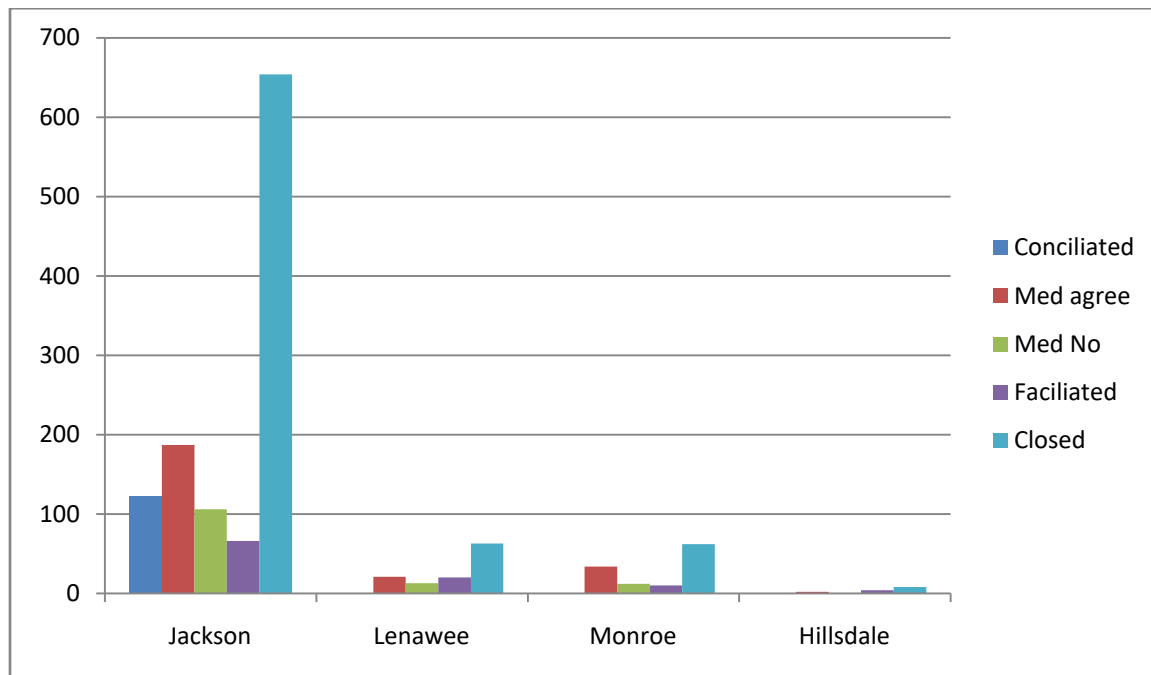
Dispute Types:

During 2019, the highest dispute type for cases handled by SeDRS was Landlord Tenant (63%). This category covers eviction, deposit, repair, rental arrears and other lease issues. The next highest dispute type dealt with Guardianship and Child Protections cases (10% and 7.6%), followed by Contractual and school related issues (10 and 9%). The rest of the cases handled included: domestic relations, guardianships, employment, property, and probate matters.



Cases referred by County in 2019:

SeDRS has a four county service region: Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee and Monroe Counties. The chart below represents the disposed cases in each county; cases which have been mediated, conciliated, and facilitated, to agreement or not. The data shows that there is definite emphasis in Jackson County. SeDRS feels very strongly, that there is large growth potential in Lenawee and Monroe for future programming and partnerships. SeDRS has several programs in the development and implementation stages in both of those counties. Our office was able to expanded some school related programs in the Reading Public Schools in Hillsdale County, North-Adams Jerome, and Hillsdale Public, and we have extended some Special Education Services in that County as well. In 2020, we'll begin brand new court related services for Hillsdale County Courts, so we'll hopefully see continued growth there, as well.

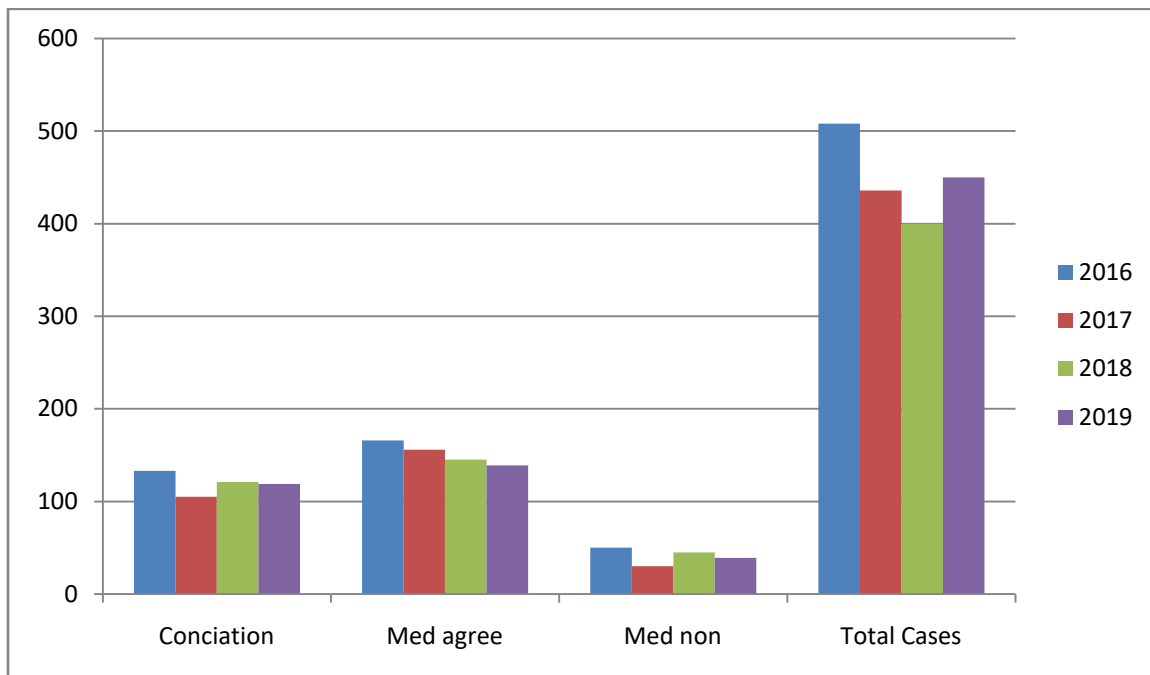


Highlighted Program:

Jackson County Eviction Diversion Program: In 2013, SeDRS partnered with Legal Services of South Central Michigan and Judge Darryl Mazur to pilot an eviction diversion program we thought the community would benefit from. For 6 months, Judge Mazur created a parallel Mediation docket for his Landlord Tenant cases, where each tenant and landlord would have access to community services, mediators and create negotiated conditional dismissals to each case.

When an eviction case was filed, each tenant would receive materials regarding the mediation project, access to financial supports and a personal budget assessment. The Tenants could then voluntarily agree to move their case to the mediation docket. On their hearing day, the tenants have the ability to speak with DHHS, CAA and TTI, regarding their financial situation, rental help and/or relocation help. The tenants can also have a legal consultation through the Legal Service office as well, if requested. With the information gathered with these consultations, parties are more ready to negotiate a conditional dismissal and plan to stay in the rental or design an exit strategy with the Landlord.

We expanded this program to all four district court judges in late 2013 and have had 3 full years of cases so far. We will also be beginning this process in Lenawee County, Feb. of 2016.



The mediation process has been highly successful. Since 2016, 1794 cases have been referred from the District Court to the EDP. Of the 1794 mediation docket cases, 1561, or 87%, have reached a conciliated or mediated agreement. These agreements range from an installment plan so the tenant can pay back the rent arrears with or without support, and remain in the rental, to a move out plan. This process tries to keep eviction judgments off tenant’s legal record, which helps to stabilize housing access in

the community. The process also allows the landlords and tenants maintain healthy dialogue and personal relationships during hard times. The landlords are made aware of financial services and availability of assistance at the time of the session, so they know whether payments can logically be made. Tenants are given the opportunity to discuss repair concerns they may have related to the current rental as well. The focus is creating an avenue that takes away eviction judgments from tenant permanent housing records, so they are not impacted negatively or ineligible for housing programs when in need.

The Lenawee District Court Eviction diversion program was implemented in Feb. of 2016 and, though it has far fewer cases, 45 for the first year and a half, our new mediators in Adrian did settle 42 of those cases. SeDRS is partnered with the Lenawee/Monroe office of South Central Legal services and received funding from the Weahterwax foundation to begin the program. The program only has 2 days a month where cases are mediated, but the program has begun to grow, and there is now a core planning/educational group attached to the program to help provide outreach to the community.

Highlighted Program II:

In 2016, SEDRS began participation in an evaluation and study of using mediation in Child Protection cases, in Lenawee and Monroe Probate Courts. By 2018, SeDRS had conducted many CPS related cases in Monroe and began them in Lenawee County, so SEDRS staff, volunteers, and the partnering Court created a complete Orientation for Probate Courts to promote and train participants in Permanency Planning mediation processes. The 2 hour orientation will describe the strengths of mediating Court Service Plans, Plea Agreements and Family Team meetings when navigating through Abuse and Neglect Cases, Guardianships and Other probate matters dealing with Family and permanency matters. These programs will be subsidized by grants to be created with collaboration with the local probate courts and supporters.

Grand Valley State University conducted and drafted the final report of the study, for SCAO and the Partnering CDRP and Courts. This report was shared with the State Department of Health and Human Services along with all Probate Courts. The Report will reflect on decrease in Court Hearing hours, Family Service plan outcome success, decrease in foster care time for children, and personal investment anecdotes. (Report can be sent upon request, or found on our website, SEDRS.org) The 2019 data relating to CPS and Minor Guardianship issues: 87 cases disposed: 58 mediated/facilitated agreements; 18 non agreements.

Programs of the Future:

SeDRS is very excited to have multiple new programs and trainings for our community.

1). SeDRS has won a competitive contract to be the Independent Facilitator for Lifeways clients/providers in Jackson and Hillsdale Counties. Melissa Divan has completed her program manual and will begin to schedule facilitations with local providers and behavioral health recipients in Feb of 2018. This will be a dynamic shift in service design and offering a truly neutral entity to help promote Person Centered Planning for those involved in the Behavioral Health System. This new program is named: **BHIF, Behavioral Health independent Facilitation**. This program is a fee for services funded project.

In 2019, Melissa Divan, SEDRS in house counsel and BHIF lead began case referrals from Lifeways, the Community Mental Health Provider for Jackson and Hillsdale Counties. Our initial case load was about 40 cases and we are expecting a great deal of growth.

2) 3) SeDRS will be offering Adult Minor and Adult Guardianship mediation and Family Group Decision making to the service region, in conjunction with the Region 2 Area Agency on Aging.

Negotiated Settlements:

From 2012 to 2017, SDRS and its volunteers have negotiated over \$2.32 million in agreements within the service region. 2012: \$268,760; 2013: \$194,321; 2014: \$387,294; 2015: \$398,512, 2016 \$465,170 and \$672,670 in 2017; **\$425,456 in 2019.**

Board Membership:

SeDRS currently has seven board members and two advisory members. Will Riley, moved from Chair to Secretary, Larry Socie from Treasurer to Chair, Patricia Gaddy, Joni Bibler, Phill Schaedler, L Graham Ward and Mallory Martin (both joined in 2018).

Funding:

SeDRS is funded, in part, by the State Court Administrative Office. The Community Dispute Resolution Program was established in 1988 by Public Act 260. SeDRS started providing mediation services on its own in 2015. During that year, SeDRS has received funding from the State based on core cases from the previous year. SeDRS is also funded through in-kind support from the Jackson, Lenawee and Monroe Courts, as well as mediation fees from parties, donations, individual grants, and service contracts.

Grant Highlight: SeDRS is excited to announce that it is one of 5 national award recipients for a two year Elder Law mediation planning and outreach grant from NAFCM

and the JAMS foundation. These are national mediation outreach and training groups. SeDRS will receive \$12,000 each of the next two years to design and implement broader mediation and conflict resolution services for Elder Law issues.

This project will be lead by our very own, Ann Lauderdale, who is also our lead Mediation Skills Trainer. SeDRS was offered support for the project by the Monroe Probate Court, the Lenawee Probate Court, Region 2 Area Agency on Aging and Legal Services for South Central Michigan. This grant project was joined by the ADR Section of the State Bar of Michigan to create a Public Mediation Action Team to enhance the outreach and capacity of SeDRS and the planning of the program.

In 2019, SEDRS was awarded competitive grants for the expansion, design and volunteer capacity growth from the **United Way of Monroe/Lenawee Counties**, and from the **Hillsdale County Community Foundation**. These new funds will help SEDRS subsidize mediation/facilitation training in each county, staff and volunteer travel, as well as funds to incentivize new volunteers to join our services.

Mediator Time 2019:

23 SeDRS mediators volunteers for a total of 539 mediation hours in 2019. Those are only mediation hours, however. We also had our volunteers involved in over 376 hours of additional training, including advanced trainings and working with update training. Based on the state assigned rate value of \$150.00 per hour, this calculates to \$161,711 for mediation and training services and \$22,170 in in-kind time and rooms donated to the mediation center for mediation and training purposes. SeDRS also had many hours donated for attending meetings, planning sessions, presentations, and clerical work.

SeDRS also participated in **the Externship program at Michigan State University College of Law** in 201 and hosted 3 law students from June through September. The students, Samantha Kaiser, Simon Xiao and Minghong Ji received advanced mediation training and skill building while working with our staff and the volunteers. Each of the students lead their own projects in the office and obtained law school credit, as well as a great deal of practical experience during their time with the office. SeDRS also had students from **Hillsdale College and Baker College** receive training and credit from us this year. Hannah Schaff, both mediated, took advanced trainings and volunteered through the year. SEDRS also had a Law Student from Toledo Law School shadow and observe our services while working at the Monroe County Court. Jordan Held was a participant with the Toledo Law Mediation Clinic.

SeDRS also began to obtain agency specialist match time. Through partnerships with local agencies and organizations, professionals became involved in our school services, and pledged employees to be available for mediations, referrals and circles. SeDRS received 2-3 hours a week of pledged employee and student hours from 3 agencies, starting in Sept. 2018. Toledo Law, Detroit Mercy Law, and Cooley Law Schools will be added to our internship process.

Training:

SeDRS added a new **Peace Circle Curriculum** to the program structure in 2018, as well as received accreditation for **Restorative Conferencing from IIRP**, PhillSchaedler is our lead trainer here. Matt Princler completed and conducted his **Non-Verbal Communication** training for us in 2018. Sandy Stanley, Melissa Divan, and PhillSchaedler joined our training group for **Circles, Peer mediation, Child Protection (Permanency Planning Mediation) and Independent Facilitation of Behavioral Health Services**).

Melissa Divan was also certified in Non Violent Crisis Prevention through CPI in 2019, so SEDRS can be contacted to offer this service as well. We have used this system with the Jackson Housing Commission and will use this as a foundational peace to our learning and awareness system.

SEDRS trainers continued update training and new curriculum processes in 2019 with Reading Public Schools, Morenci Schools, Jackson Public Schools, Monroe Public Schools and with the Jackson Housing Commission.

SeDRS trainers worked in Reading Public Schools, North Adams-Jerome, Hillsdale Community, Adrian Public, Monroe Public and the Monroe ISD. Trainers trained roughly 800 teachers, administrators and school staff in a vast array of conflict management skills and tools to help change cultures in our schools.

Katrina Duling, conducted 3 full circle keeper training seminars in 2018. The training series kicked off in July of 2017 with a Jackson County Educator training, where we trained 37 educators to run Peace Circles. In August, we worked with the staff and administrators of the 4th Street Learning Center and Reading Public Schools. We have staff onsite at 4th Street at least 1 day a week and in Reading 2 days a month. Katrina also trained all of the Elementary teachers at Columbia Schools in Brooklyn, and will provide them updates in early 2018.

Ann Lauderdale trained a group of volunteers from the Jackson Human Relations Council in December of 2017.

SeDRS completed its first SCAO and Michigan Court rule accredited 40 General Civil Mediation training curriculum during the 2016 year, thanks to the dedicated work and energy of Ann Lauderdale. Ms. Lauderdale also provides the Center with Restorative Justice leadership and expertise. Ron Brooks, helps co train with Ann, on the curriculum that was drafted. They provided a contracted Training for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, in Dowagiac, MI. They completed the first General Civil training for 24 members of the tribe and court administration there. SDRS will begin hosting its own trainings in 2016 in General Civil mediation and Restorative Justice. In 2014, SeDRS was able to provide 2 restorative justice trainings through a mini grant from SCAO and some funds from the Jackson Community Foundation. SeDRS trained 20 community

members in Restorative Justice meeting facilitation and 10 students and 3 staff in Peer Mediation skills at Vandercook Community Schools.

SeDRS also sent 5 volunteers and staff to Michigan State University's annual Circle Keeper training, provided by Kay Pranis, in June of 2016. The training provided skills and knowledge for the participants to become certified to train others in the skill of facilitating Peace Circles for a number of different situations. SeDRS has entered into technical assistance relationship with the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Tribe in Dowagiac, where we'll provide skill building modules and tools for use in their community and tribal courts. SeDRS also began using peace circles with the 4th Street Learning Center, an alternative middle school in Jackson. Facilitators worked with students on working through behavioral issues, communication issues and focus issues. This process allowed a great many students to avoid suspensions and other disciplinary actions.

SeDRS executive Director, Marc M. Stanley, through his membership as a member of the ADR Policy Council, of the State Bar of Michigan, has hosted three telephonic lunch and learns. Each of these conference calls has different topics and materials. Mr. Stanley, will continue to provide these lunches, as long as volunteers participate. Mrs. Melissa Divan was voted upon the ADR Policy Council of the State Bar of Michigan in 2019 as well. The office is also involved with the National Association of Community Mediation.

Awards:

SeDRS was proud to be a co-recipient of the 2015 Nancy S. Klein Award. The award is presented to an individual, program or entity at the State Bar of Michigan-ADR Section's Annual meeting. It is given in recognition of exemplary programs, initiatives and leaders in the field of Community Dispute Resolution. SeDRSs Board Chair, Will Riley, accepted the Award on behalf of SeDRS. The award was issued for SeDRSs leadership and innovative mediation/restorative Justice programming within the Cooper St. Prison Facility.

SeDRS is very proud to announce that the 2016 Nancy S. Klein Award was granted to JoAnn Luaderdale, SeDRS lead mediation curriculum developer and trainer. Ann was a member of the original legislation of the CDRP program in 1989 and was the first CDRP mediation center in Kalamazoo. She continued to expand her conflict management skills by obtaining certificates in Restorative Practices from the International Institute of Restorative Practice and was Dean of the Social Work Department at Siena Heights University. She also was director of the restorative justice office and taught conflict management courses for the University. In retirement, she has blessed SeDRS with her time, expertise and knowledge.