

# YOUNG TALK TELEGRAPH

## Inside this issue:

What's New at Young Talk?	2
What are peer mediators saying?	3
School Profiles—Auchinraith Primary and Mid Calder Primary	4
Peer Mediation in America	5
Mid Calder at the 2016 Young Talk Conference	6
Ideas Tree Contributions (Quotes from Mediators)	7
Rachel Friel Mini Interview	8
Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution shout out!	8
The jigsaw classroom	9
Mediation vs restorative Practice	10



Excited peer mediators settling in at the Young Talk conference 2016, held at the start of September

## Welcome to the fourth issue of the Young Talk Telegraph!

Welcome to the fourth issue of our Young Talk Newsletter. We hope you'll enjoy reading this issue and finding out more about what's been happening around peer mediation in Scotland lately. Oh and as always, we would love to hear from you, whether you're a peer mediator or a teacher/adult working with peer mediators. So please don't be shy—get in touch! Our contact details are on the end of this newsletter.



Young Talk award handed out at the conference to one of our brilliant peer mediators



Peer Mediators in Scotland  
Getting Together

## What's new at Young Talk?

So we spent a lot of time during spring and early summer this year chatting about what we've done as part of Young Talk so far, what we could do better, and what the future might look like. After some thinking we decided to turn to the experts to let us know what was what. Who are these experts you might ask...? YOU GUYS of course. Peer mediators across Scotland. We ventured out to Auchinraith Primary, Mid Calder Primary and James Young High to find out what the peer mediators there had to say. There were many similarities between the schools in ideas and thoughts as you can see in the first article of this issue (page 2). We also got some glorious footage and now have a new version of the Peer Mediators' Voices film available on the updated website! Check it out!

There's been some changes in the staff team at the Scottish Mediation Network (Young Talk's mother organisation). Wonderful Carol Hope has left the team BUT she is still very involved in peer mediation in Scotland and happy to hear from you all. We have Kathryn Hilditch back from maternity leave - Kathryn has assisted with peer mediation in the past and is super enthusiastic about it. Welcome back Kathryn! Finally we also have a completely new staff member who some of you will have met at the conference, Amanda Rigby-Greenhaugh. Amanda is a family and community mediator and also very keen on peer mediation - welcome Amanda!

Currently we are looking at what we are going to do with the time we have left of our two year funding. It runs out in December but we are looking at how to keep all the important and exciting things related to Young Talk and peer mediation going. We will get out to all of our members with information about the future of the project at the end of the year and in the meantime, if you've got any questions, comments or suggestions for the last stretch of the project, or for future avenues – please give us a shout.

Finally, let us tell you about the Young Talk Conference 2016! We held this amazing event earlier in the month, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, at Dundee University. It was a day we had been looking forward to for a long time and spent a lot of time planning and preparing

and it turned out WONDERFULLY thanks to all of our young peer mediators! We had attendees from 13 schools around Scotland and Carol chaired the day. Most of the schools were based in Dundee but we had some schools from South Lanarkshire, West Lothian and Angus as well. Apart from our attendees we also had some fantastic speakers, presenters and workshop facilitators there to help our mediators develop their skills and understanding of conflict resolution. In the afternoon we had two brilliant presentations by pupils from Auchinraith Primary and Mid Calder Primary who told us about their peer mediation journeys at their schools. After that we had an exciting skype conference call with an American high school in Massachusetts that has been practising peer mediation for a long time and were happy to share their wisdom with us. Finally we rounded off the day with an awards ceremony. We had the pleasure of handing out three awards - Mid Calder Primary (West Lothian) was awarded for their Outstanding Contribution to Peer Mediation in Scotland in the last year, Thomas Bradley at Fintry Primary (Dundee) was awarded for the enthusiasm and courage he has shown as a fresh peer mediator, and Jill Lindsay (DHT at Auchinraith Primary, South Lanarkshire) was given an award for wholeheartedly supporting and championing peer mediation at her school. Three young mediators were also given prizes for their insightful contributions to the Ideas Tree Competition where they had to answer the question: What impact has mediation had on you? See the winning answers and other contributions on page 7...



Excited peer mediators at the Young Talk Conference

## What do the peer mediators have to say?!

What is the good, happy, exciting stuff when it comes to peer mediation? How has it helped you? What is difficult or tricky? And what can be done to make peer mediation better in the future? These are all questions we have been asking our mediators out in Scotland —here's what they said....

### MID CALDER PRIMARY (WEST LOTHIAN)

**THE GOOD STUFF:** Increased confidence, improved communication skills, better problem solving skills, feeling like role models in school and being valued in the school.

**THE HARD STUFF:** Not being taken seriously by the younger pupils, not enough awareness in the school around mediation and a better space needed for mediation

**IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE:** Meeting other schools to share tips and tricks, getting input and support from adult professional mediators, more conferences and events bringing peer mediators together, videos of example mediations and role-plays to use for training

### AUCHINRAITH PRIMARY (SOUTH LANARKSHIRE)

**THE GOOD STUFF:** Increased confidence, improved communication skills, more patience, and getting general conflict resolution skills to use in family life and specifically with siblings

**THE HARD STUFF:** Not being taken seriously by the younger pupils, a better space needed for mediating, and handling paperwork in an efficient way is tricky too

**IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE:** Meeting other schools to share best practice, more opportunities to develop mediation skills and practice mediation, videos of example mediations and role-plays to use for training, getting professional mediators and external mediation parties coming in to do awareness sessions at school so more people know about and understand mediation



Lots of our peer mediators say that peer mediation has increased their confidence and given them better communication skills

### JAMES YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL (WEST LOTHIAN)

**THE GOOD STUFF:** Increased confidence, improved communication skills, being able to relate to and understand others, feeling more comfortable with transition between the years

**THE HARD STUFF:** Peer mediation not being used enough, not enough awareness in the school around mediation including staff and teachers not being clued up about mediation, more diverse peer mediators group needed (different years, genders, groups), not enough meetings and communication between peer mediators.

**IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE:** Meeting other schools to learn from them, having more opportunities to develop mediation skills and practice mediation, videos of example mediations and role-plays to use for training, getting professional mediators and external mediation parties coming in to do awareness sessions at school so more people know about and understand mediation

## SCHOOL PROFILES – THE PRACTICAL SIDE

### Mid Calder Primary (West Lothian)

**Where:** Music and Drama classrooms (dependent on age group)

**When:** Lunch break and break time

**Rota:** 3 teams of 4 mediators, when it is their week (every three weeks) they are on mediation duty every day.

**Log books include:** Date, time, description of issue, name, class, whether issue was resolved or not and signature by the mediators

**Who:** P7s, around 12 mediators

**Peer mediation coordinator:** Sarah Burton (Deputy Head Teacher)

**Application process:** Self nomination through written application, much like a job application

**Publicity and promotion in the school:** Assembly announcement and posters around the school

**Referral system:** Mostly mediators approaching the disputants if they notice something has happened, or sometimes disputants coming to them.



Magical Mediators (as they are called in the school) from Mid Calder PS with their mediation vests on at the YT conference

### Auchinraith Primary (South Lanarkshire)

**Where:** The playground mediation stop (there are other stops too e.g. buddy stop)

**When:** Lunch break

**Rota:** 30 mediators, Group 1 and 2 (one week each), 2 or 3 mediators on duty each day

**Log books include:** Who attended, date, time, outcomes, mediators, lesson learnt, self-assessment

**Who:** 30 out of 55 of P6's in year group

**PM coordinator:** Jill Lindsay (Deputy Head Teacher)

**Application process:** Self-nomination through written application and then interview with two members of staff (1 PSA + DHT)

**Advertising/promotion:** Jill speaking at assembly, along with some of the mediators. Also a Mediation board (a real eye catcher) in the hallway

**Referral system:** Pupils approach the mediators (at the mediation stop where the mediators are based in the playground) or mediators approach them if they can see something has happened. Sometimes support staff refer cases to the peer mediators.



Auchinraith mediators, with their yellow mediation caps on, presenting at the Young Talk conference

## The School Mediation Associates—Peer Mediation in America

The School Mediation Associates was founded in 1984 by Richard Cohen in Massachusetts in America. It's the first American organisation devoted to the promotion and application of peer mediation in schools and is internationally recognised for its contribution to peer mediation. SMA has trained and supported thousands of schools and organisations around the U.S. (and internationally) in setting up peer mediation services. They also specialise in other conflict management and student leadership initiatives. SMA has a number of books and online resources available at different prices to support schools in implementing and managing mediation services. They also offer a free 'Quick Guide to Implementing a Peer Mediation Programme' on their website (<http://www.schoolmediation.com>).

We were put in touch with two high schools in Massachusetts through SMA to exchange information and learn more about mediation. Here's what the peer mediation coordinators at these two schools have to say

### Cambridge Public Schools

"We have 22 students on the team at our high school (population 1,800) and one program at a middle school in our city. The students have done between 2 and 9 mediations each, so far this year and many have been in the program for multiple years so some have a lot of experience. They range from 9th to 12th grade.

We have high achieving students as well as students with lower academic proficiency, boys and girls, of all races and a variety of nationalities with a variety of languages as well. The students participate in 20 hours of training before school starts to get into the program, and I try to provide them with opportunities to improve their skills over the school year. For example, 7 of our Mediators completed 8 hours of Negotiation training with Harvard Law School earlier this month.

The students are picked to mediate based on the nature of the conflict. Anyone can get picked any day. If they are in a class taking a test or doing something important that can't be missed I move on to another student or push the mediation to another time in the day. I also try to use mediators that are one year older than the parties and match them with race and gender as well."

- Chandra Banks, Peer Mediation Coordinator



### Lowell High School

"The Peer Mediation program at Lowell High School has been in existence since 1991. It began with two adult coordinators each working three days a week. It is now an alternating four day and five day a week program because the position is grant funded.

All of the practical aspects of the program are handled by me – the adult coordinator. That is, all referrals are sent to me. I do the intakes (meeting with students before mediation takes place) and decide whether it's appropriate for mediation, and if appropriate and the students agree a mediation takes place. We receive referrals mostly from housemasters which are the equivalent of vice principals. However, anyone can refer which includes security guards, clerks, guidance counsellors, teachers, self-referrals, students, social workers etc.

Mediators are recommended by teachers and then we have current mediators briefly interview them. We receive 80 recommendations and only accept 25 students. By the end we end up training 20 mediators. They go through a three day training, two school days and a Saturday. When we request recommendations we stress that we are looking for students who represent the student body here (3200 students). So they do not have to be the high honor students/ We try to make sure that our pool of mediators is diverse although we only train sophomores and juniors because we like them to be able to mediate at least 2-3 years. We also conduct mediations in different languages, so we specifically recruit students who speak other languages. The only paperwork our students do is reading the participation agreement, going over ground rules and writing up the agreement."

- Yvette Cheeks, Peer Mediation Coordinator

## A Mid Calder PS Blog Post about the YT Conference

### Magical Mediators Receive Scottish School Award

**Today the Magical Mediators were invited to attend the Young Talks Conference at Dundee University organised by the Scottish Mediation Network.**

**We listened to presentations from Tam Baillie (The Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland), Nick Patel (a Mediation Magician) and from people who have a full time career in Mediation. We also attended two different workshops.**

**We were one of two schools who were asked to share our peer mediation journey. Keira, Anna, Sean and Caitlin presented at the school's showcase to over 100 participants.**

**We took part in a Skype video chat with a school in America, it was interesting to see how peer mediation operates in another country. We also watched a video about peer mediation in Scotland and it was lovely to see our P7 peer mediators from last year.**

**The biggest surprise of all was when we received the award for our *Outstanding Contribution to Peer Mediation in Scotland by a School* and the prize of a free mediation training session from Jeremy Scuse (the managing director at Catalyst Mediation Ltd).**

**We are so proud of our Magical Mediators, both from last session and this session and all their achievements – congratulations!**



## The Ideas Tree Competition at the Conference

There was a competition at the YT conference where peer mediators had to write down the answer to a specific question on a little note and hang it up in a tree (aka the ideas tree). Some answers were then picked out and awarded. We were blown away by all the contributions and it was incredibly hard to choose. We've included some of the answers (including the winning ones) here. The question was:

⇒ **What impact has peer mediation had on you? What has it meant to you?**

*"Peer mediation has had a massive effect on me, it means a lot because one of my family members got really badly bullied and so did I and we both felt like we couldn't speak to the teachers so having your peers there for you makes it more comforting"*

*"It means bullying will stop forever"*

*"Peer mediating has changed me because now I feel more happy knowing that I've helped someone"*

*"Peer mediation means a lot to me because from now on I can solve problems much better! Peer mediation has made me more confident and I think that I will make better choices"*

*"Peer mediation has made me to be more patient with others and to communicate better with others around the school"*

*"Before I had mediation training I was very shy and timid but here I am today taking every opportunity that comes and look where it has got me. I am about to do a presentation here today and I am going for house captain. Thanks for getting me here."*

*"Helping people to help themselves"*

*"Mediation has given me skills I never thought I would have. It has given me a lot more confidence and helped me help other people"*

*"Peer Mediation has made me listen and accept peoples choices and communicate better"*

*"It allows me to improve my confidence through active listening and having the necessary skills. This allows me to contribute to society in a fuller sense. This makes me feel more apart of the school and wider community"*



Peer mediators hanging up their contributions to the competition in the tree

## Mini Interview with Rachel Friel

The lovely Rachel Friel is a principal teacher at St Leonard's Primary School in South Lanarkshire. She has been a big champion of peer mediation within the school and delivers the training herself to each lot of new mediators. She has also written a research report on peer mediation and its connection to the curriculum for excellence in Scotland, and is just a generally very peer mediation savvy lady!

**How long have you had peer mediation at St. Leonard's Primary?**

We have had Peer Mediators in St. Leonard's for 3 years

**Why did you bring peer mediation into the school?**

We brought Peer Mediation into St. Leonard's to try and equip children with the skills to resolve minor conflict in a peaceful way that both parties were happy with.

**How has it affected the school and the pupils?**

The children in the school are more able to resolve conflict on their own without adult intervention.

**What do you think is the best thing about peer mediation?**

I think the best thing about Peer Mediation is that the children make the decisions about what they would like to happen and how they would like to resolve their own conflict. The solution that is reached is one that both people are in mutual agreement about.

**And what is the most challenging?**

The most challenging thing is for the Peer Mediators not to get too involved in the issue and teaching them that if the disputants agree that they want to stay away from each other then that is still a solution to the problem and that they cannot make two people apologise if that is not what they want to do.

**How has it affected your job?**

It has made me enjoy my job even more as it is fantastic to see the children develop these essential life skills!

**Why is peer mediation important for Scotland?**

It is really important as the children in school now are our future and if we can equip them with the skills to resolve conflict peacefully then they will take those skills into work places and the wider community!

## The Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution

We just want to do a wee shout out to a great organisation—the SCCR has done some really great work for struggling young people and their families in Scotland over the past couple of years, and is an excellent source of information around mediation and conflict resolution. Their website is well worth a look at to see and hear some of the stories they have gathered from young people and families that they have helped, and to explore the world of mediation and conflict resolution in general. On the website you can also take quizzes, access their blog and read articles. They've also got a Youtube channel with videos of young people and their families talking about the benefits of mediation and also other resources on mediation. Have a look for yourself.





# The Jigsaw Classroom

## What is the jigsaw classroom?

The jigsaw classroom is a cooperative learning approach that helps reduce conflict and segregation within schools. What does this actually mean? Well in the early 1970's social psychologist Elliot Aronson was called into a school district in Texas (America) due to the heavy level of conflict and abuse that had been happening there following the bringing together of schools that had once been separated due to race.



Young people from different racial backgrounds were constantly in conflict with each other in the schools and also on the streets of Texas. Aronson and his team were asked to come up with a solution that could be used within schools to deal with this level of conflict. The outcome was the jigsaw technique, which sought to address inter-group hostility and the unnecessary competitiveness that standard classroom environments promote. The jigsaw classroom has been researched and assessed many times through the years and always with the same conclusion: it works. It reduces conflict, it reduces absence from school, and it increases liking for the schools by pupils.

In the jigsaw classroom each pupil becomes a valuable resource for their peers, and a necessary contributor to the overall learning experience of the group. It is this important element of interdependence (everyone in the group being dependent on each other) that is the key to the jigsaw technique.

"this way of learning promotes listening, engagement, and empathy"

## How does it work?

So the way it works is that pupils in a classroom are divided into small jigsaw groups of 5 or 6 for example. If the task of the day is to learn about Robert Burns' life then the topic will be divided into 5 or 6 areas of research, matching the number of pupils in the groups. For example the topic could be divided into: 1. Early life, 2. Career, 3. Famous poems, 4. Family and social life, and 5. Legacy. Each person in the jigsaw group is then assigned one of the sub-topics and allowed time to research the topic. Subsequently each pupil takes their research and knowledge on their sub-topic back to the group in order to educate their peers so that in the end all the team members will have learnt about all of the sub-topics. However, before each pupil brings their research back to their jigsaw groups there is another element. Each pupil will first convene with other pupils who have the same sub-topic as them in the other jigsaw groups in the class to form 'expert groups' and exchange information. This is to ensure the information they have is as accurate and complete as possible, and to give them a chance to practice the presentation they are taking back to their jigsaw group. After each pupil has done their presentation in their jigsaw group there is a test to see what they have learnt about the topic as a whole.



of

## Benefits

Extensive research shows that the jigsaw classroom is a very successful way to learn the material in an academic activity. But even more important, this way of learning promotes listening, engagement, and empathy. All of the group members are dependent on each other to reach their common goal and therefore want each other to succeed. Every single person has to do well for the group as a whole to do well. As a consequence pupils who work together start respecting, encouraging and even liking each other more while also learning more effectively.

**CHECK OUT [www.jigsaw.org](http://www.jigsaw.org) FOR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE ON HOW TO SET UP JIGSAW**

## Mediation and Restorative Practice?

There's often talk about restorative practice as an alternative to mediation when dealing with conflict, so we thought it might be useful to explain a bit about it and how it is similar/different to mediation.

### MEDIATION

- ◆ In a mediation parties are expected to be morally balanced, which means they are treated the same and with neutrality
- ◆ We talk about conflict between people
- ◆ The conflict may concern a difference in opinions where both parties believe themselves to be in the right and no harm is done to either
- ◆ In mediation either one of the parties can speak first
- ◆ There is a focus on reaching an agreement that both parties are satisfied with
- ◆ There doesn't have to be face-to-face preparation work done and there is seldom follow ups and reviews

### RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

- ◆ In restorative practice there is usually a victim and a n offender and this imbalance must be acknowledged
- ◆ We talk about harm being done by one person to another
- ◆ Harm has been done by one person to another and this person is willingly taking on responsibility for it
- ◆ In RP usually the offender will speak first to take on responsibility for what they have done
- ◆ There is a focus is on people being able to express feelings in a safe and constructive way, and an agreement in secondary
- ◆ There is almost always face-to-face preparation work done and follow ups and reviews

*That's us at the end of the fourth issue folks! The next issue will hopefully be out in springtime. Again, we would absolutely love your feedback, or ideas for upcoming issues.*

*Roxan Nazifshirayi is the Young Talk Coordinator—if there's anything you are wondering about, have comments on, just drop her a line. After Christmas, please email admin instead. Contact details below.*

*A huge thanks to our peer mediators, and those working with them—you are all absolutely amazing, and your hard work is paying off.*

Phone: 01315561221

E-mail: roxan@scottishmediation.org.uk

or: admin@scottishmediation.org.uk

The Scottish Mediation Network  
18 York Place, EH1 3EP, Edinburgh



Peer Mediators in Scotland  
Getting Together

Young Talk is part of..  
**scottish**  
mediation  
network

Check us out at:

[www.scottishmediation.org.uk/young-talk/](http://www.scottishmediation.org.uk/young-talk/)