Page 3 – What is Community Mediation?

**MEDIATION – IS IT AN ANSWER TO CONFLICT?**

Our research has shown us that conflict, when it can no longer be contained or avoided, is often expressed destructively - often resulting in an escalating cycle of violence/retaliation which has a negative impact on both individuals and the community.

A high proportion of community-based conflict results from differing perceptions of what constitutes social/anti-social behaviour, with no authority or organisation present in the early stages to arbitrate between differing perceptions and needs. Individual’s actions, when and if taken, often only serves to harden attitudes and increase negative perceptions. In the early stages, when conflict has begun but has not yet escalated to an intensity where government agencies must intervene, mediation addresses conflict in its infancy and fills the institutional gap. Mediation both helps resolve conflict and is a catalyst in transforming attitudes in individuals and communities which make conflict in the future more avoidable and less likely.

Through our experiences and successes over the years it is clear to us that ***a facility that promotes dialogue and learning between those who differ can resolve the source of conflict as well as personally empowering individuals by helping them recognise the needs of others***.