



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

April 2, 2022 - March 31, 2023



**WHERE YOU WILL FIND A PATH
TO COMMON GROUND**

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to help you find a path from conflict to mutual understanding. By working to remove barriers to communication, you are given voice and empowered to reach a common ground.



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Stuart Breslow

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Camille Freedner

Sharifa Perry

Cecelia Elinson

Phyllis Granat

Stuart Ober

Brenda Eckstein

Silke Fuchshoven

Marty Goldsmith

Dear Friends:

2022 was a year of transition. Transition from a three-year new normal of virtual meditation, then slowly transitioning back again to live. Finally, we were able to return to in-person workshops at schools, offering once again restorative circles, conflict resolution, and peer mediation to youth.

A Re-branding - We saw the need to create a new, modern company logo, a new web design and, most importantly, a new Mission Statement. The website came together beautifully thanks to the techno-savvy and talented Emma Werner. Next came a stylish and contemporary logo design by Susan Ascher of Silverasch Design.

Jackie and Steve Dunn's Post and Beam barn created the perfect setting to work on a new Mission Statement for the organization. With the wonderful facilitative skills of our colleague and Common Ground mediator Christiana Wall, we redefined our mission to reflect a new statement that better captures our purpose and ever-evolving profession. Remarkably, the revitalized mission statement and graphic branding are the only changes the organization have made since Common Ground incorporated in 1989! Transitions!

I am so grateful for the support from our volunteers and partners as we re-tooled our craft to provide you with the highest quality mediation and alternative dispute resolution services in our community. Virtual had become the new normal, and we needed to learn how to maintain the quality of the mediation process in a strange new world. You rose to the occasion, and we got it done!

I am excited to share our achievements over this last year and thankful to you, for making all this possible.

Dawn K. Wallant
Executive Director

Common Ground Dispute Resolution is part of a state-wide network of non-profit community-based mediation centers, committed to fostering conversations among individuals and communities to help reach difficult decisions in a variety of conflict situations. Specially trained volunteers from your community are essential to the success of these programs. Typical conflicts are child custody, neighborhood and housing disputes, and small claims matters. In addition, Common Ground provides specially tailored workshops to teach better communication and problem-solving skills in schools and your community.



School and Community Partners

Catskill Central School District
Germantown Central School District
Cairo-Durham Central School District
Ichabod Crane Central School District
Greene County Family Court
Columbia County Family Court
Greene County Youth Bureau
Columbia County Youth Bureau
The Bank of Greene County
The Dyson Foundation
Berkshire-Taconic
Community Foundation
Stewart's Shops
Greene County Chamber of Commerce
Columbia County Chamber of Commerce



Ichabod Crane Middle School

Major Accomplishments

Training Volunteer mediators, staff, students, school personnel, and parties to mediation participated in 400 hours of mediation and training opportunities. The Courts had just begun to return to full services, yet still were operating through video conferencing, in the late fall of 2021. In the fall of 2022, we piloted a referral and pre-hearing intake process with the Greene Family Court to increase settlement rates. After shuttering their doors to non-essential school personnel, schools re-opened to allow in-person workshops in September.

All trainings, mediations, and case intake, except the week-long Restorative Justice Training and school workshops, were conducted through video conferencing technology. We provided hands-on training to our volunteers to ensure both technological competence as well as best-practices in mediation.

Meeting at regular intervals throughout the year with Youth Coordinator Penny Calyer, middle, high and elementary school students practiced skills in conflict resolution and examined cultural differences through diversity awareness workshops. Sixth grade classmates in Germantown met in weekly Restorative Justice circles, building trust and empathy among their peers.



Cairo-Durham Middle School



Germantown Central School District

At Ichabod Crane High School, peer mediators practiced and enriched their mediation skills. Cairo-Durham and Germantown elementary school students and Catskill middle schoolers met regularly to practice communication and problem-solving skills. Anti-bullying and cultural and racial diversity and inclusivity awareness programs were infused in all the programs. None of these programs were "one-offs," but were on-going programs, each one building upon the next.

We are proud to announce that this year we trained over 270 youth throughout the school districts in our community!

Mediation

Common Ground processed 158 cases. 118 of those cases involved parenting issues and were primarily from Greene County Family Court; 49 of them were successfully resolved through mediation. Total served from each case were 328 parents and children. The Courts have just begun to resume referrals, but we anticipate developing a similar diversion program in Columbia Family Court and court-side mediations in Hudson Small Claims Court in 2023, which will, hopefully, result in a rise in both caseload and conversion rates.

Development and Growth

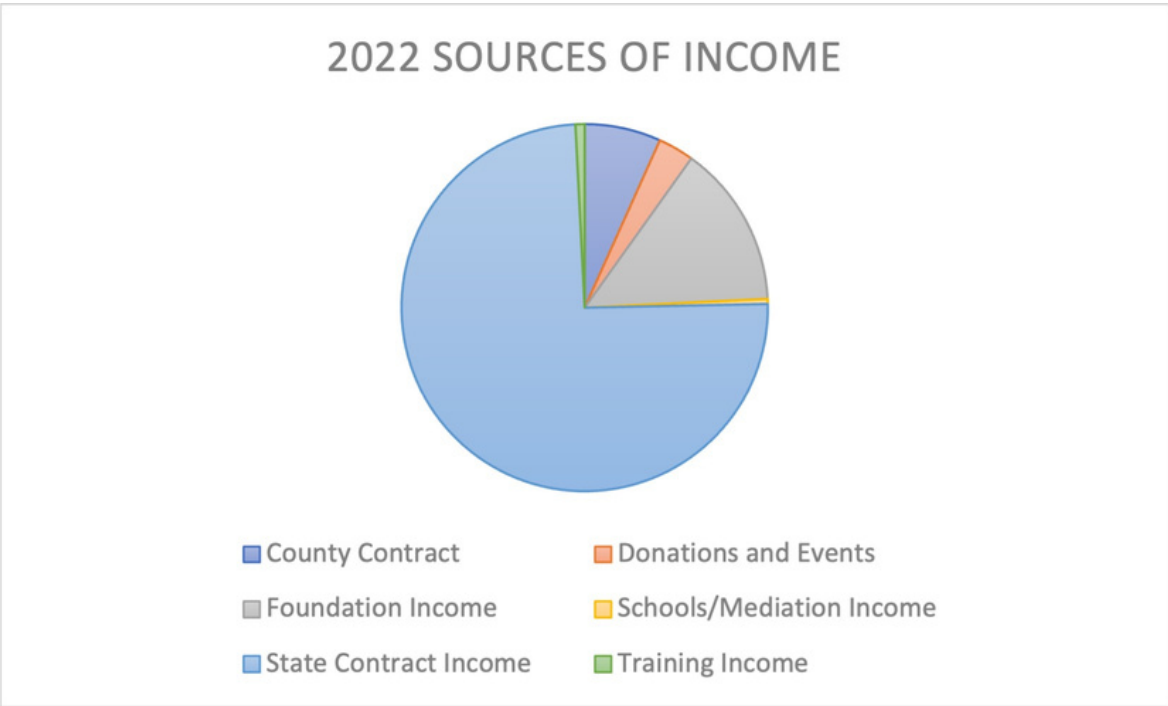
Common Ground added four volunteer mediators to its roster--Welcome Brenda Epstein, Sandra Krieger, Stuart Breslow and Silke Fuchshofen!

Through the Giving Tuesday and Annual Campaigns, we raised over \$6,000! THANK YOU!! Foundation, State, County, Corporate, and State income were either stable or increased from the previous fiscal year.

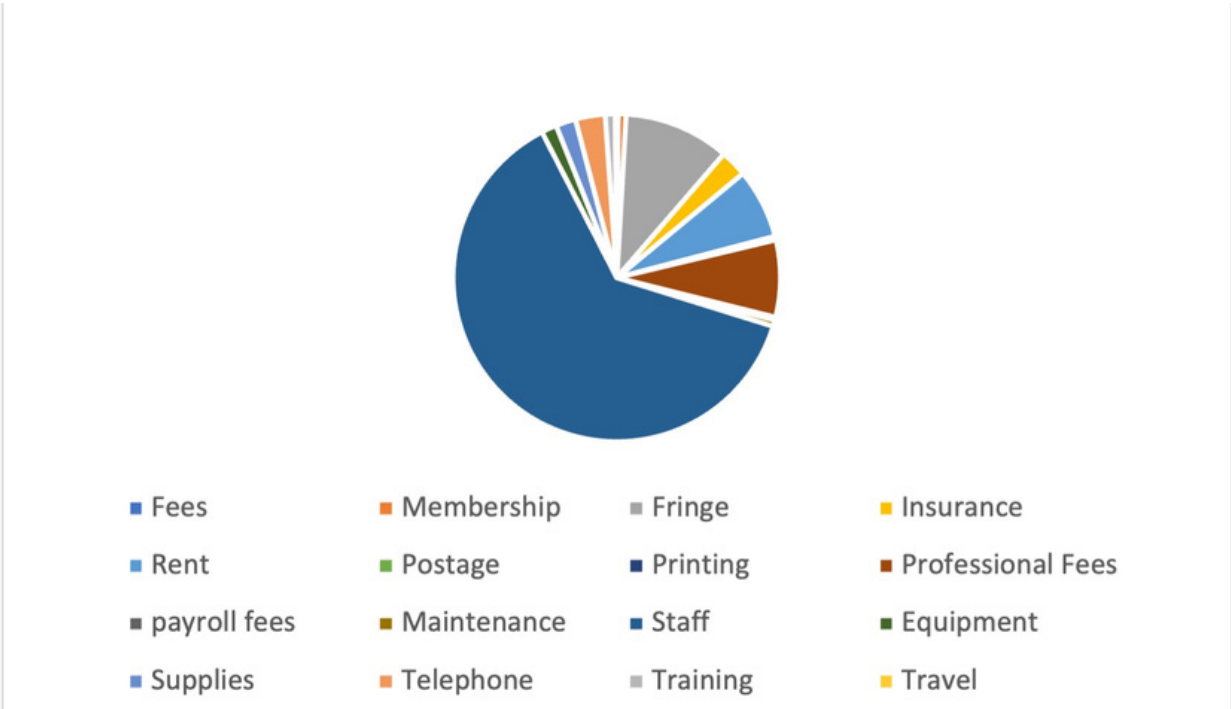
The Board has set goals to increase the organization's presence in schools and raise levels of caseload and conversion rates. To accomplish this, we are committed to increase staffing by hiring a half-time person.

2022 SOURCES OF INCOME - FISCAL YEAR ENDING 3/31/23

Total Income: \$189,265



Total Expenses: \$166,589



2022 DONORS - FISCAL YEAR ENDNG 3/31/23

Fern and John Rosenberg
Charles Schaeffer
Perry and Susan Ascher
Nancy Ursprung
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Stuart Breslow and Ann Miller
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Michael Horgan
Christine Galvin
Sam Allen
Casey Benchimol
Jacqueline and Stephen Dunn
John Benchimol
Diane Dean
Camille and Jerry Freeder
Darwin Abraham
Bob Green

STATE and COUNTY CONTRACTS

NY Unified Court System
Greene County Youth Bureau
Columbia County Youth Bureau

FOUNDATION INCOME

The Dyson Foundation
Berkshire-Taconic Community Foundation
Stewart's Shops
The Bank of Greene County
IOLA in partnership with the New York
State Dispute Resolution Association



Germantown Middle School

Below are a few Insights from a Circles Training

"The windshield is bigger than the rear window for a reason," 4th grade boy. "

Don't trip on what's behind you," 4th grade boy.

"We have your back!"

"I'm sitting in a good place today."

