



GREATER DALLAS
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

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June 2002

“300 people attend heated public housing hearing – all ends calmly”

“East Dallas residents and national grocery chain find resolution to disagreement over new store”

“Upscale department store apologizes to patron for clerk’s racially charged comment”

Did you read any of these headlines in your paper recently? To be honest, you really couldn’t have, because these stories weren’t reported. But they are just three of the positive resolutions to conflict recently coordinated by the Greater Dallas Community Relations Commission. And we need your support today to continue to build on this success.

Founded in 1969, the GDCRC works to improve race relations and multi-cultural understanding in the greater Dallas area. Even though we are a United Way affiliate, you may not know very much about our work. Due to confidentiality requirements, our multi-cultural team of trained mediators and facilitators can’t toot their own horns. We don’t grab the headlines. We work quietly, behind the scenes, to bring resolution to tensions that have plagued our city for decades.

In the last year, GDCRC mediators, facilitators and trainers have reached thousands of people with our programs. We’ve trained hundreds, including a number of elected officials, how to examine their own unconscious stereotypes and prejudices, and have given them communication skills that can de-escalate tensions during conflict. We also helped coordinate an ecumenical response to negative stereotypes about Muslims after the terrorist attacks of September 11. We held a mayoral forum that asked candidates to focus on issues of fairness and equity for all Dallasites.

GDCRC volunteers mediated a highly publicized conflict between East Dallas residents and a national grocery store chain that planned to build a store against the wishes of many residents. Staff members also facilitated an apology from a high end department store to a patron offended by the behavior and language of a clerk. And a combined staff and volunteer team facilitated a heated but peaceful public hearing for the Dallas Housing Authority regarding a new development planned for construction in a quiet,

upper middle income neighborhood. "We truly appreciate the work of the Greater Dallas Community Relations Commission. Their work makes our work a lot easier," DHA president Ann Lott said.

You haven't seen the GDCRC in the headlines. But if you've noticed that things have seemed a little less tense lately, perhaps it's a sign that our approach is working. Yet funding for these efforts is more and more difficult to find. The more our work succeeds, the less it seems it is needed. But we truly need your support so that our city can continue moving forward and doesn't revert back to old habits.

A number of non-profit organizations, including Girls, Inc. and the West Dallas Community Centers have requested our cultural diversity and conflict resolution training but have limited funds to cover the cost. Your contribution will help us offer organizations like these complementary training sessions, as well as community mediations and facilitations, dialogues and issues forums.

A significant amount of funding traditionally available to organizations like the GDCRC has been diverted to the very crucial needs of those affected by the September 11 attacks. Many GDCRC staff members and volunteers have contributed to that deserving cause. And yet, our local communities still need support as well. Please take a moment to write a check today and return it in the postage paid envelope enclosed. We will accept and put to use any amount you can contribute.

Thank you so much in advance for your contribution to help us continue moving Dallas from a culture of racial and ethnic tension to one of cooperation, equity and inclusion.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Flores-Velásquez
Executive Director

P.S. If you can't give a contribution right now, please consider becoming a volunteer mediator with the Commission. Our next training program is scheduled for August 11.