

# Peacing It Together

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## Turning Hatred into Cooperation by Eve Hanan

A call from the Office of the State's Attorney alerted us to a sensitive case they were referring to Community Conferencing. About a week before, the press reported an incident that occurred in the same neighborhood – a neighborhood with a history of tension between its Jewish and African American residents. In this referral for Community Conferencing, an 11-year-old African American youth, Darnell, was accused of breaking the arm of a 14-year-old Jewish youth, David.

I called David's parents and spoke to his mother, Ms. Esther. She was very distressed about what happened to her son, and was concerned that he was still in danger. She said that the back of her house faced the back of Darnell's house and the two boys could see each other in their backyards. She said she heard Darnell had a lot of problems at school with other kids, and that she had no idea who he lived with or if there was any adult who could help him take responsibility for his actions. Ms. Ester thought Darrell might be "completely unsupervised over there." I explained that if we were able to have a community conference, she would have the opportunity to meet the adults in Darnell's life and ask them any question that she wanted to. She said she would be willing to bring David to a community conference if he agreed.

David was a lot less upset than his mother. He told me that Darnell and another boy whom he did not know had yelled "Jew boy" at him, and threw rocks. He said that he went right over to them and confronted them. Darius pushed him. David fell and broke his arm. David said Darius came over to his house the next day to apologize.

Ms. Esther told me that she would like their rabbi to come to the conference as he witnessed what happened. I called the Rabbi and left a message. His wife called back and said, "My husband is not interested in participating in any "kumbaya" stuff." I told Ms. Esther that the rabbi would not be coming to the conference, and she gave me the name of another rabbi, Rabbi Benowitz who agreed to come to the conference.

I called Darnell's family and learned that he lived with his great grandparents, Ms. Lily and Mr. Jared. His parents were out of the picture. His grandmother, Ms. Shirley, looked after him sometimes, but does not live with him. Ms. Lily told me that she was very hurt when the police came to arrest Darnell and she heard what happened. She was hurt that the neighbors did not come to her directly and tell her what Darnell did. She said that she has lived in the same home for over 40 years, and that she always had good relations with the neighbors, but that she had not met David's parents. Both she and Mr. Jared agreed to come to the conference. Ms. Shirley agreed to come to the conference.

The participants met at their neighborhood library. It was the first time that the two families whose houses were back-to-back had ever met. I asked Darnell to talk about what happened. He told the participants that he and another boy were playing when they saw David. He had seen David in the neighborhood, but they never really had any problems before. This time, he heard David called them "bitches." Darnell's friend started yelling "Jew boy" at David, and throwing rocks his way. Then David came up to him and he felt scared, thinking they might fight. Darnell's friend backed up to get out of the way. David pushed Darnell and then turned around to walk away. Then Darnell pushed David on his back. David fell. Darnell and his friend ran away.

Darnell said everyone was affected by what happened – David had a broken arm, his mom had to take him to the hospital, Darnell got arrested, and his great grandparents were worried and had to go to court.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

## Dear Friends



This past year, a great deal of change has come to the Community Conferencing Center. In the beginning of the year, Julie Gabrielli stepped down as board president and we welcomed our current president, Ted Capshaw. We are thankful to Julie for her service and support in helping the Community Conferencing Center grow. We are also grateful for her help in making Mr. Capshaw's transition effortless. We are lucky to have his leadership. We also said goodbye to Schoene Mahmood and Patricia Escarfuller in the beginning of the year and at the end of the year, David Williams and Carrie McCann. Although, we were sad to see them go, we were equally excited to welcome new staff Larell Smith, Intake Coordinator and Jennifer Will-Thapa, Facilitator. We were fortunate to also bring on part-time Facilitators Eve Hanan and Lacey Benton and Daily Rap Coordinator, Kimberly Scott. They have been great additions to our office and bring a wealth of skill and experience to the group.

In that same vein, with today's economy, it has been tight for a lot of nonprofits and thanks to the leadership of our Executive Director, Dr. Lauren Abramson, the Community Conferencing Center has been able to weather the storm. The staff is grateful for her leadership in keeping us afloat. Thank you Lauren!

This next fiscal year continues to bring more change to our Center. In November, we will be moving into a larger space to accommodate our growing staff and program. We are excited to be joining the Union Mill complex that caters to Baltimore nonprofit organizations that focus on education, human service and health needs. It's a good thing!

My hope for this next year is that the Community Conferencing Center continues to stay true to our mission and vision because they haven't steered us wrong. As Lauren always says, may you continue to treat each other and treat our planet with all the love and respect you can muster. Wishing you a great year full of peace!

C. Nicole Glass  
Deputy Director

## Welcome to the Anne Arundel County Partnership (AACP)



The Community Conferencing Center would like to welcome Vince Taylor and the newly formed Anne Arundel County Partnership to the Community Conferencing Statewide Network.

As a 32-year veteran of the Department of Juvenile Services, Vince Taylor facilitated over 200 Community Conferences. He was originally trained in Community Conferencing in 1997 by John McDonald and David Moore (*Transformative Justice Australia*). He recently took a refresher training in February (2011) to gear up for his new role as Program Coordinator for the AA Partnership. He officially retired from DJS in March (2011). The AACP currently has eight volunteer facilitators and are currently accepting referrals.

For more information about the Anne Arundel County Partnership and/or to request a Community Conference, please call Vince Taylor at 410-222-7824.

*This is the second Community Conferencing program in Anne Arundel County. Community Conferencing is also available through the Anne Arundel County Conflict Resolution Center.*

## CCC is Graphically Recorded

Recently, CCC hosted Peter Durand, a graphic recorder of Alphachimp Studios. **Alphachimp Studio Inc** is a visual learning company that supports business innovation, strategic planning, and collaborative design via graphic images. Peter was able to capture the Community Conferencing process in 5 visual posters during our Facilitator Training. Below are two of the images. The complete set is now available for minimum \$10 donation to the Center. Call 410-889-7400.



## Christian Vainieri Says Goodbye



The Staff and Board would like to thank retiring board member Christian Vainieri. As Board Treasurer, he was instrumental and supportive in keeping the Community Conferencing Center afloat during these trying financial times. Mr. Vainieri recently announced that he is stepping down to spend more time with his growing family. He brought creativity, energy and laughter to the board. We thank him again for his service and support of our mission and vision.

**Community Conferencing  
Report Card**

(thru 6/30/2011)

CC = Community Conferences



	FY10	FY11
Youth referred	1,185	1,463
Minority youth referred	1,121	1,387
Cases referred	461	652
Community Conferences	220	271
Participants in a CC	1,640	1,963
Youth in a CC	604	729
Minority Youth in a CC	558	686
% of CC's resulting in agreement	98%	94%
% Compliance with their agreement	97%	93%

**Join us for the 4th Annual  
September 30, 2011**

7pm - 11pm

**Peacing It Together Awards**



**Ceremony begins at 8 pm**

**TICKETS**

**\$40/tickets ♦ \$350/tables (seats 10)**

**Casual attire ♦ Live Raffle**

**DJ for Dancing ♦ Silent Auction**

**Michael's Eighth Avenue**

**7220 Greyburn Drive**

**Glen Burnie, MD 21061**

**100% of proceeds benefit**

**Community Conferencing Center**

**Call 410.889.7400 for more information**

**or visit us at**

**communityconferencing.org**

**Turning Hatred into Cooperation (continued from page 1)**

David said that he heard Darnell call him a “bitch” first, and that he then went up to Darnell and his friend and said, “Who are you calling a bitch?” and pushed Darnell. He then turned to walk away and felt a push to his back. He fell and “in a freak accident,” his arm broke. He said that he felt angry at the time because he thought Darnell and his friend were making fun of him. The broken arm hurt and he had to have surgery. He said that Darnell came over to apologize and, as far as he was concerned, it was over.

David’s mom, Ms. Esther, talked about how frightened and angry she was. She talked about taking David to the hospital to get a cast put on his arm, and how he had needed surgery to set the bone. She went to Darnell’s school and asked the principal for Darnell’s phone number. The school told her that they could not give out the phone number. If she wanted to take action, she had to go to the police.

Ms. Lily said how upset she was about the whole situation. She asked why Ms. Esther hadn’t just walked to her house to talk about what happened. Ms. Esther said that she didn’t really know where Darnell lived. David admitted that he knew where Darnell lived, but hadn’t told his mother because he wanted to forget about the whole thing after Darnell apologized to him in private. Ms. Lily assured Ms. Esther that she could come over anytime, that Darnell’s family wanted to know about any problems with the boys, and the families agreed to exchange phone numbers.

Mr. Jared talked about how much he cared about Darnell, and how disappointed he was in his Darnell’s actions & judgment. He pointed out that Darnell’s friend was really an Instigator. Darnell and David talked about the misunderstanding – both thought that the other one had started the name calling, and then neither wanted to back down. Rabbi Benowitz talked to the boys about what he has seen in the neighborhood over the years. He said that African Americans and Jewish people had lived together in the neighborhood for a long time but rarely took the time to get to know each other. He brought up the similarities between the African American and Jewish experiences throughout history, and said, “Black people and Jewish people need to stick together.” Everyone nodded, and Ms. Lily told Darnell, “You need to hear this.”

The group came up with an agreement they thought would repair the harm. Their agreement included apologies, some strategies for staying out of trouble in the future and the families exchanged telephone numbers. The adults commended the kids for telling the truth and being good kids.

I followed up with both families one month after the conference. There had been no further problems between the boys, or with any other boys in the neighborhood. Conferencing always challenges my assumptions. When I saw that this referral was for a “hate crime” in a neighborhood which was getting a lot of press for racial tensions, I thought that the conference would be about deep-seated issues between African American and Jewish families, issues that the young people were acting out. I thought that the breaking of David’s arm was evidence of hatred or serious malice. As it turned out, the fight between the boys made reference to their different backgrounds, but it was more about human misunderstanding and youth unsure of how to relate to each other on the street. It could have hardened into hatred, but instead the families were able to sit in a circle and talk it out. They are neighbors who know each other now.

**Names have been changed to protect the participant’s privacy.**

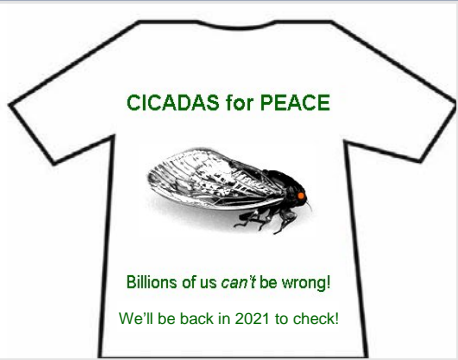


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**TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

A 2 1/2 day Community Conference Facilitator Training Workshop  
 is offered in Baltimore City. The next training dates are:

**February 22-24, 2012 & July 18-20, 2012**

Visit [communityconferencing.org](http://communityconferencing.org) for info and to register.

**DAILY RAP** training is available by calling (410) 889-7400.

Technical Assistance is available for programs  
 interested in adding **Community Conferencing** to their services.

Technical Assistance is also available for  
 programs/schools who want to add **Daily Rap** to their curriculum.

Contact our offices at **(410) 889-7400** or  
[info@communityconferencing.org](mailto:info@communityconferencing.org)

All checks should be made  
 payable to **Community  
 Conferencing Center**  
 (a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit  
 organization).

**Maryland Tax Credits**  
 Donations of \$500 or more are  
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 Call us to learn more.

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