



International Conflict Resolution Day by Sharon Press

In 2005, in order to increase public awareness about conflict resolution and its many benefits, the Association for Conflict Resolution Board of Directors adopted a resolution designating October 20, 2005 as Conflict Resolution Day. Prior to 2005, there were many annual celebrations for conflict resolution or mediation ACR, but they each took place at different times of the year thus limiting the possible impact and attention which could be garnered by a coordinated effort. As the primary mover behind ACR's efforts, I will share some of our early thinking on the creation of Conflict Resolution Day.

The initial goal was to seek a congressional proclamation. On the advice of a colleague who was knowledgeable about lobbying efforts, the ad hoc committee decided that the better approach would be to start with an ACR Board Proclamation and then, after the day was proven, to go back and seek some type of formal national recognition. We soon realized that there was no need to obtain a congressional proclamation. By creating the space, individuals and organizations eagerly planned and executed a range of exciting activities.

Our first task was to decide on a date which would work each year. Given ACR's strong connection with conflict resolution educators and our desire to use the day to support CR education, we chose a date when school was in session – but not so early in the term that peer mediators would not yet have been selected. We decided to stay away from the winter months in the US and ultimately opted for a date in the fall. Staying away from election day, thanksgiving, and the major Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we decided that a Thursday would be a good anchor with the expectation that celebrations could take place on either side of the “official” day. Ultimately, the third Thursday of October was selected for the annual celebration.

The goals for Conflict Resolution Day continue to be to:

- Promote awareness of mediation, arbitration, conciliation and other creative, peaceful means of resolving conflict;
- Promote the use of conflict resolution in schools, families, businesses, communities, governments and the legal system;
- Recognize the significant contributions of (peaceful) conflict resolvers; and
- Obtain national synergy by having celebrations happen across the country and around the world on the same day.

From the beginning, we decided that ACR's Conflict Resolution Day committee (which I have chaired since 2005) would host an activity or two but more importantly would encourage members, chapters, and other conflict resolution organizations to plan activities which were meaningful to them. The idea of Conflict Resolution Day was to create the container and to inspire grass roots activities – let 1000 flowers bloom! In order to assist, we created a logo. We worked with a designer who developed a beautiful (fall) tree with multi-color leaves and deep roots. The leaves represent the major forms of conflict resolution: mediation, arbitration, facilitation, conciliation and negotiation. Like a tree, conflict resolution processes grow and develop each year. Our hope as organizers of the International Conflict Resolution Day is that every person and every organization involved in conflict resolution will find their own way to plant seeds to spread the word.

I am pleased to have the Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution's 9 Adar Day join the many international celebrations of peaceful conflict resolution and look forward to increased opportunities to work together. For more information on Conflict Resolution Day visit: www.acrnet.org/crday Posters with the Conflict Resolution Day logo are available in a variety of languages including: English, Hebrew and Arabic.