



Northern Community Mediation

Where The Solution Is Up To You

As a seventh-grader, Brady Campbell got caught shoplifting \$2.56 worth of candy from a local store. Since it was his first offense, the prosecuting attorney referred the case to the First-Time Offender, Shoplifting Program administered by Northern Community Mediation (NCM). The purpose of this program is to give first-time offenders a second chance.

Although Brady came into the program with somewhat of a “chip on his shoulder,” his attitude soon changed. By having to meet face-to-face with the store owner, Brady came to understand that the store owner was an actual person—someone who had a family to support and employees who deserved a decent wage. Brady learned that for every \$1,000 shoplifted, a merchant has to sell 900 candy bars per week per year to recoup that loss.

Brady also learned that his parents were victims as well. They were embarrassed by and ashamed of his criminal activity. Of greatest impact, however, was the fact that his parents had lost their trust in him.

Brady had no choice but to take responsibility for his actions. Among other things, he had to pay restitution, pay a fee for the privilege of participating in the First-Time Offender, Shoplifting Program, meet with other first-time offenders and confess to them what he had done and why, write letters of apology to all victims in the case (including his parents), and fulfill a community service requirement.

All of this gave Brady insight into the consequences of his actions. In fact, several months after completing the program, he stopped by the NCM office to let us know how much he appreciated having the opportunity to get on the “straight-and-narrow” path. He told us that when he saw one of his friends trying to shoplift some candy, he told his friend that it was not worth it. This kept his friend from making a serious mistake.

All of this happened almost two years ago. Brady is now in ninth grade. He stops by every couple of months to let us know what is going on in his life, and he always tells us that having the opportunity to participate in the First-Time Offender, Shoplifting Program was one of the best things that has ever happened to him.

Admittedly, not all of the cases we mediate have happy endings. In the vast majority of the cases, however, the impact upon the participants is a positive one. NCM helps people resolve their conflicts humanely so that they can get on with their lives and be productive citizens.

In 2007, NCM handled 528 cases representing 1,227 people and 349 children. We want to continue offering quality, mediation services to the citizens of Charlevoix and Emmet Counties. To do so costs money. Therefore, we are enlisting your financial support by asking for a monetary contribution.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jane Millar, Ed.D.
Executive Director