

## CLASS SCHEDULES

### ON-SITE COURSES JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2004

Call Heather for more information at 303-433-3983 Ext. 21

#### MONDAYS

##### ANGER MANAGEMENT FOR ADULTS

Class focuses on physical signs of anger, anger awareness, 21 ways to de-escalate anger and how thoughts affect anger, triggers, getting to the root of anger and passive/aggressive/assertive behaviors.

TIME: 6:00-8:00 PM

FEES: \$20.00 PER CLASS, 4 CLASSES PER SERIES

June 7, 14, 21, 28 OR August 2, 9, 16, 23

##### CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR ADULTS

Class focuses on conflict styles, defense-mechanisms, communication skills, dealing with difficult people, fair fighting and effective problem-solving strategies and negotiation skills.

TIME: 6:00-8:00 PM

FEES: \$20.00 PER CLASS, 4 CLASSES PER SERIES

July 5, 12, 19, 26 OR September 6, 13, 20, 27

##### BUILDING BRIDGES: BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEENS

Class focuses on skills in communication, problem-solving, anger management, negotiation and alternative discipline in fun and interactive ways.

TIME: 5:30-7:30 PM (FOUR 8-WEEK SERIES)

FEES: \$25.00 PER CLASS FOR PARENT(S) AND TEEN(S), 4 CLASSES PER SERIES

June 7, 14, 21, 28 (Anger Management)

August 2, 9, 16, 23 (Anger Management)

July 5, 12, 19, 26 (Conflict Management)

September 6, 13, 20, 27 (Conflict Management)

#### TUESDAYS

##### SMART SKILLS FOR ADULTS

TIME: 6:30-8:30 PM

FEES: \$25.00 PER CLASS

*On-going (Court Ordered Adults and Employer Referred)*

Please call Vickie Samland at 303-433-4983 for more information.

#### WEDNESDAYS

##### TEEN/GIRLS "CHALLENGES"

Classes raise awareness about violence and teach skills in conflict and anger management, assertiveness, problem-solving and communication.

TIME: 4:45-6:00 PM

FEES: \$50.00 FOR SERIES, 8 CLASSES PER SERIES

May 26, June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, July 7, 14

June 30, July 7, 14, 21, 28, Aug. 4, 11, 18

Aug. 4, 11, 18, 25, Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22

Aug. 25, Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Oct. 6, 13

#### THURSDAYS

##### TEEN/BOYS "CHOICES"

Classes raise awareness about violence and teach skills in conflict and anger management, assertiveness, problem-solving and communication.

TIME: 4:45-6:00 PM

FEES: \$50.00 FOR SERIES, 8 CLASSES PER SERIES

May 27, June 3, 10, 17, 24, July 1, 8, 15

July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Aug. 5, 12, 19

Aug. 5, 12, 19, 26, Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23

Aug. 26, Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Oct. 7, 14

##### STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS (For Parents and Children Ages 5-11)

Class focuses on skills in communication, problem-solving, anger management, redirection techniques and why children misbehave.

TIME: 5:00-7:00 PM

FEES: \$25.00 PER CLASS, 4 CLASSES PER SERIES

JULY 8, 15, 22, 29 OR SEPTEMBER 2, 9, 16, 23



4140 TEJON STREET  
DENVER, COLORADO 80211

## UPCOMING

SAVE THE DATE...

### *Ambassador of Peace* OCT. 15

MORE INFORMATION INSIDE

#### VOLUNTEERS:

##### VOLUNTEER INTRODUCTION

Wednesday, August 25, 2004

6:00 - 8:00 PM

*For Reservations:*

*Contact Elsie Polak*

*303-433-3983 or*

*elsie.polak@conflictcenter.org*

SOLVING PROBLEMS, CREATING

# solutions

SUMMER 2004

REAL PEOPLE. REAL LIVES.

## Rising Violence

**RECENT BULLYING AND GANG ACTIVITIES: THERE IS A SOLUTION.** The recent rise in gang violence and recent reports on bullying in the Denver metropolitan area have a lot in common. They both terrorize. Bullies terrorize individuals and so do gang members. Gang members just have more practice and have a bullying support group some call their “homies.” Bullying behavior leads to all kinds of harm and loss, including gang activities. It’s far easier to look at gang members as the bigger menaces to society because they seem to hold a culture of more organized violent behavior. However, gangs are still the smaller group in this problem. They are not the majority. It is much more difficult to look at one’s own contributions to bullying behavior and acknowledge that bullying behavior originates from almost half the youth in Colorado. In the 2003 Colorado High School Survey, youth risk behavior survey results indicate that one-third of our youth experienced a physical fight one or more times in the past year. In the 2002 Colorado Trust *Ask The Children* Study, two-thirds of our youth stated that they had been teased or gossiped about in the past month. In a 2002 Gun Violence Prevention grant survey of 9th grade students at two area high schools, 46% of those students admitted to bullying other students. Based on these statistics, violence in our schools isn’t from just a few bullies or just from gang members. It is reported to originate from almost half our Colorado youth and negatively affects a majority them. The problem is bigger than many people might think.

There is a solution. It comes from building on the strengths of our kids. There is still a bigger half of Colorado youth (54%) who did not bully. In the same 2002 Gun Violence Prevention grant survey mentioned above, 73% of the 9th graders at the two area high schools indicated that they believed they did not have to fight to get respect (these were at schools with significant gang activity). These statistics may indicate a huge gap in what youth think is



MORE RISING VIOLENCE...PG 4

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SAVE THE DATE...

*Ambassador of Peace* OCT. 15

MORE INFORMATION INSIDE

OUR MISSION IS TO REDUCE LEVELS OF PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND VERBAL VIOLENCE. WE TEACH AND APPLY SKILLS TO HELP PEOPLE IN A DIVERSE COMMUNITY MANAGE THEIR EVERYDAY CONFLICTS NONVIOLENTLY.

CONFLICT IS INEVITABLE VIOLENCE IS NOT



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MICHELLE BINKOWSKI



The Conflict Center was established in 1987 as a nonprofit organization committed to violence prevention. Through the leadership of Michelle Binkowski and a dedicated community board and staff, the organization serves more than 18,000 people each year.

Fifty percent of our work is with people living in poverty.

CONFLICT CENTER  
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*Executive Director*

SOLUTIONS NEWSLETTER:

Mag & Ken Seaman, *Editors*  
Laura Naranjo, *Coordinator*  
Ellen Stark, *Layout & Design*

Contributors: TCC staff, interns  
and volunteers

THE CONFLICT CENTER  
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[www.conflictcenter.org](http://www.conflictcenter.org)

# *Is trust earned or given?*

This question surfaces when there is conflict in a relationship between two or more people. Often the first response I get from a majority of people when I do a training on conflict management is that trust is earned. A few people in the group will state that it is given and one or two (if any) say that it takes both. At The Conflict Center, we teach people how to manage conflicts and when possible solve problems. To solve problems, building relationships is critical. This is where the trust question comes in.

We live in a society where solutions are almost always the focus. We see problems with others and then assume we know the solution for those problems. We quickly jump to conclusions and think or state "If only you would do this..." or "You should do that." We don't take the time to truly hear what is going on. It is very tempting to ask questions to collect information. Collecting information alone often leads to decision making on only one side of a problem. This may work for internal problem solving but it doesn't work in managing conflict with others. Effective communication is an exchange rather than a collection of facts. It requires the desire to get into the other person's frame of reference and try to see the world as they do; to understand their experience as it relates to the conflict.

Giving trust and earning trust is a critical part of building a relationship. When I teach anger management, students often reveal to me that a fight results from not checking out the truth in a situation. It's all too easy to go on what is heard from others rather than going to the person(s) directly involved in a conflict. That takes skill building, practice and lots of courage.

I personally believe that trust can be given and earned by going directly to the person of concern in a conflict. To be effective in conflict management is important to ask clarifying questions and to actively listen to the other person. Actively listening with another person and working to help that person feel heard builds trust. Building trust is building a relationship. Active listening doesn't mean agreeing with the person. It means to practice hearing the concern. Asking clarifying questions and repeating back what we think we are hearing allows the other person to respond to how we are hearing them. We may hear something that is totally different than what the other person may be trying to communicate. In many cases where trust is broken, it is because an individual took the concern to a different person than the one directly involved in the conflict. The act of communicating directly back and forth is more important than jumping to a conclusion and assuming we already have the answer or a solution for the problem as we see it. Remember that we tend to see things as we are rather than as they are (Arabic proverb).

Building trust requires getting to an understanding of one's own needs in a relationship as well as the needs of others. It requires establishing (and re-establishing) parameters which are defined by both people in a relationship. Ask yourself the following questions: Am I really actively listening to the other person's concern in a situation? Does that person feel heard? How do I know this person feels heard? Were parameters established in our relationship prior to this situation? Do we need different parameters now? The challenge is then to actually go to that person and begin to actively listen. Try to avoid jumping to a solution. Trust the communication process. You will be amazed at the trust you can build in relationships by doing the simple act of active listening. Remember to be patient with yourself. This takes practice.

YOURS IN PEACEMAKING,

*Michelle*



NICOLE FORWARD, MANAGER OF PROGRAMS

# 2003 was an exciting year FOR THE CONFLICT CENTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

We served a total of 7,847 students, teachers, staff, administrators and parents.

We worked with over 50 schools and child care organizations last year. Schools have a variety of program options available to them. Of those we worked with, over 90% self reported learning new skills.

The year long whole school program works with school staff, students, administrators, teachers and parents. The objective is to change the school culture to one of safety and non-violence. Some of the other program options are Playground Conflict Managers, Peer Mediators, Alternatives to Suspension, Reading for Peace, Peace Day, parenting/family classes, Restorative Justice Initiatives and many others.

We worked with 3 year-long schools, trying out some new programs while improving some of the tried and true. Diversity and bullying are hot topics in schools and we are being asked to help schools address them. The schools had on average, a 50% reduction of fights and office referrals.

We provided parenting skills training in 6 schools and trained staff at 8 child care facilities. We also finished up our grant with the Department of Criminal Justice to implement a Restorative Justice program in three Northwest Denver Middle Schools. The grant provided lots of opportunities for learning. One of the schools is actively looking for ways to continue the program.

In a staff training on classroom management, a high school teacher commented "This workshop made me think a great deal. I will try to apply these methods in my classroom. You gave me a mirror to see myself and my responsibility in escalating a destructive situation."

Students had this to say about the classes they attended on diversity and leadership. "These classes will help me how to be respectful without having to fight. Respect can be obtained by communicating, having a conversation."

"I need to not stereotype. Stereotype leads to violence. See, when I do it, I'm rude. Then they get in my face. Then out comes the fists. I need to work on that anyway. Thanks for the help."

An administrator who hired the Conflict Center to provide training to the parents at her child care facility commented: "The training we received was of high quality. The trainer was knowledgeable and related well to parents. Seventeen parents attended. We've never had that many parents attend! Our parents are asking for training. The Conflict Center is making the world a safer and better place."

The Youth Peace Leadership Conference was a huge success. We had almost 500 students and teachers in attendance. Participants came from as far as Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, Nederland, Greeley, and Fort Collins. It is truly becoming a statewide conference. Work has already begun on the 2004 conference. We are planning for over 600 students this year!

There are many obstacles working with schools, most especially budget cuts and standardized testing. The Conflict Center school program is working on better addressing the needs of schools within the current restraints. We will be talking to school administrators and faculty to learn how we can better serve them. We will be adding a supplement to our curriculum that aligns the TCC curriculum with Colorado academic standards. We are designing new programs for leadership programs and high school orientations. We are well on the way to making 2004 a great year for schools.



*"These classes will help me learn how to be respectful without having to fight. Respect can be obtained by communicating, having a conversation."*



## LIZ LOESCHER TO ADDRESS ECUMENICAL WOMEN



Liz Loescher, the founder of The Conflict Center, will be the keynote speaker at 11th Annual Day of Solidarity. "Claiming your Spiritual Voice in a Conflicted World" will be her topic.

This year's event will be held at Central Christian Church at 3690 Cherry Creek South Drive in Denver on Saturday, September 18 from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM. The Ecumenical Women's Committee conducts the event.

For more information, call (303) 651-3210 or [www.ecumenicalwomen.org](http://www.ecumenicalwomen.org).



# Starting Point

Last Solution's issue was dedicated to looking at the appearance of gang members in Conflict Center classes and describing their situations. This issue, we will look at some ways in which to help teens in this predicament by using conversation to influence their eventual departure from this violent environment.

*“Some ex-members were jumped-out, or beaten-up in order to receive the gang’s permission to exit...”*

—JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

With the amazing number of youth claiming allegiance to their “hoods” and taking on an “all or nothing” vision of how gangs work, it is difficult to figure out ways in which to show them the detriment of their choices. Especially when they believe that nothing can supplant the incredible power associated with these groups.

But, that is just it...power. Many youth feel disempowered by the disparate economic classes, educational facilities and communities in our country and see a wealth of power in that derived from a group that is feared. Often, from a youth’s perspective, a veteran gang member can be making plenty of money from any number of illegal activities; can demand supplication from their followers, and can make their own rules. In this way, gang membership is glamorized and misperceived.

What can be done?

There is no perfect answer to this question, as the reasons for being in a gang are so varied. But, a starting point is to have the conversation with your youth. Telling your kids, “Don’t get involved with gangs”, does not give them any proof as to why the gang life is so much worse than their current life. In this respect, perhaps the conversation about the future is a starting point. Consider these questions for youth:

- Where do you see yourself in one month? A year? Two years? After graduation?
- What do you usually think happens to long-term gang-members?
- Once in, if you decided to get out, how would you?
- Have you ever talked to an ex-gang member? How do they view gangs now?

In a Juvenile Justice Bulletin from May of 2000 about gangs called, “Second Chances – Giving Kids a Chance To Make a Change”, it states that “Some ex-members were jumped-out, or beaten-up in order to receive the gang’s permission to exit. More often, various ex-members reported that they gradually stopped hanging out with the gang and found new friends or pursued new interests.”

In essence, a family must not pretend that something is happening and must pursue productive activities for their children. Organizations like “The Spot”, “Girls Inc.” and neighborhood community centers can provide safe harbors. As important, a frank conversation about gang issues may prevent the onset of imminent violence. The shorter the time that a youth is involved with a gang, the younger they are, the more likely their chances of escaping the repercussions of the bad decision to join. This idea, of exploring the choices and consequences of these decisions, is a building-block of TCC culture. To teach a youth good-decision making is securing a positive autonomy for their future.

1This article also outlined the life of Lawrence Wu, a New York City youth who was arrested for attempted murder, fighting and other crimes related to his involvement with a gang. For the complete article you can look at the website: [www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org).

## MORE RISING VIOLENCE FROM PG 1

the norm and the true norm. Since youth are incredibly influenced by their peers correcting their misperception of the norms around bullying behavior just makes sense. It also makes sense to give them (and school personnel) the skills and systems to build a healthier community. We can use the assets of the majority to strengthen the assets of the minority in bullying situations. While intervention and skill-building for bullying is a slightly different approach than traditional conflict management, the approaches are similar in that they focus on building assets in youth for when they are victims to bullying behavior and for students when they themselves employ bullying behavior.

We can all help. Parents can support their students and schools by offering a willingness to help in anyway possible. We at The Conflict Center can offer almost two decades of experience working strengthen school communities with skill building for everyone (kids, youth, teachers, family members, bus drivers, administrators, cafeteria workers and custodians). We’ve worked in over 200 schools in the metro area. In the schools implementing our curricula, fights in schools have been dramatically decreased (by as much as 83% among inner city ninth graders after 26 lessons in conflict management and bully prevention). Community building really does work. -MICHELLE BINKOWSKI





# Families Gain Skills

IN THE BUILDING  
BRIDGES CLASSES FOR PARENTS AND TEENS

Are you ready for some peace! Come to the Conflict Center any Monday evening and you will see peace at work within families. Under the caring guidance of our talented volunteer trainer Matt Wallington and Conflict Center program associate Carema Cook-Masaud, families learn and practice better ways to communicate, solve problems and to set and follow rules during the Building Bridges course for parents and teens. The classes run four weeks exploring anger management and four weeks practicing conflict management skills. Along with anger and conflict management, teens also become skilled at positive power and decision-making, and parents are trained in various positive parenting proficiencies. Our diverse students all have the common goal of building relationships while finding peaceful ways to solve conflicts.

A recent letter from a mother whose family completed eight weeks of Building Bridges, attending both the anger and conflict management sections, explained that the classes helped with better communication between her children and her ex-spouse. She stated, "Learning about anger being a second emotion was something I never knew. It helped me see beyond what my ex-spouse was angry about and (to) get to root of our communication problems."

She also shared that she overheard her two children use an "I messages" during a conflict, and added with humor, "Unfortunately, (my children) took the negotiation skills to presume that, if asked, I would let them stay up later. (Instead) we had a discussion instead of fighting, and they did go to bed on time."

Her letter concluded with the affirming statement, "Everyday I try to practice what I learned, and know that this was the right class at the right time in my life. I appreciate the wisdom that was shared and I got so much out of these sessions."

*If you would like to learn more about Building Bridges, please call Carema or Heather at the Conflict Center. We would love to answer any of your questions.*



*"The important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said."*

— PETER DRUCKER

## MADAME SOLUTIONS

Dear Mme. Solutions:

I'm a social worker and my partner is also in Human Services Administration. Our problem is that my son married early and his marriage is suffering from his tirades, disappearances and horrible fights. We believe it is a matter of time before he is arrested for his extreme anger issue. We're top professionals and do not know how to ask for help because we are in such a state of disbelief. Although we're able to direct projects in our work lives, we cannot fathom what the steps are to offer help in our own family. What kind of professional paralysis is this and how do we overcome it? — Signed, Support Group Candidates



Dear Support Group Candidates,

Oh my dears, you are distressed! Like a good piece of furniture. Being a professional in any field does not assure that you are the best resource for your family. You are among so many others who are skilled on the job and distraught when dealing with personal, not personnel, issues.

Step One: Always remember to ask "Whose problem is it? Whose goals are being obstructed?" Your son's early marriage and angry, destructive behaviors are not your problem, but his. Are you about to be arrested? What are the consequences for YOU? When talking with your son focus on what affects you. Use those "I Message" ... without blaming! (Trite but true.) Need a refresher course or coaching on productively stating your concerns? Call The Conflict Center 303-433-4983.

If your son is concerned about his choices and the consequences, he will hear your ideas and suggestions. When he is ready, he can learn how to handle anger. If your son is not concerned, he will determine what happens in his life and live with the consequences, learning from the lessons he chooses.

To break free of that "professional paralysis", brainstorm options for solving your problems. Vent to trusted friends, express your anger, and then look at the situation as objectively as you can. Be open to incoming information - be courageous enough to talk to your colleagues, people you send clients to, your physician, and psychologists about resources available to you and your son. Search the Internet (I tried a search for "he's screwing up" and can't recommend it). Continue to model decision-making skills and make positive choices for yourselves.

Doing nothing makes us feel helpless... which we are NOT! —Madame Solutions



## COMMUNITY

### 2004 ENCHANTED GARDENS OF NORTHWEST DENVER

# Much Thanks & Appreciation

TO ALL OF OUR 2004 GARDEN TOUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS WHO HELPED MAKE THIS YEAR'S EVENT A HUGE SUCCESS.

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John Irvin  
Brian Gansmann  
Patrick Cordova  
Tammy Sherwood  
Ronnie Weiss



Youth visiting Kathy Quinn's  
feng shui garden



Volunteer spreading the word about  
The Conflict Center at the Garden  
Tour

This year's event was attended by over 350 individuals and raised over \$11,000 to support the violence prevention work of The Conflict Center.

*Many thanks to everyone who helped plant seeds of peace.*

# Peace

EIGHTH ANNUAL  
AMBASSADOR of PEACE  
AWARD EVENT

Friday October 15th, 2004  
6:00 pm  
The Doubletree Hotel, Denver  
\$100 per person

## 2004 Award Recipient and Keynote Speaker OPALANGA

Nationally renowned entertainer and African-American storyteller. Opalanga serves the peace community with her personal life stories and metaphors about solving personal problems non-violently. She has won the Mayor's award for excellence in the arts twice and Westword's Best storyteller honor.

*For information on sponsorship opportunities or to purchase tickets call 303-433-4983  
or visit us on the web [www.conflictcenter.org](http://www.conflictcenter.org)*



## OUR VOLUNTEERS

# A New Look

FOR THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

What do you do when a vital piece of your program needs to be replaced? That is the issue that faced the Volunteer Committee when **MARY ZINN-STEWART**, our long-time volunteer coordinator, decided to refocus her contributions to The Conflict Center by returning to a more extensive teaching role.

Knowing that replacing Mary would not be possible, the Committee began to consider other ways to restructure our program. We are pleased to introduce the volunteers who have undertaken leadership roles in our restructured program.



Sue Mitchell introduces Eilis McNamara, the new Volunteer Coordinator

The new Volunteer Coordinator is **EILIS MCNAMARA**. Although the role of coordinator has been restructured, Eilis will still have a key role in responding to prospective volunteers and will work closely with the Committee, the Executive Director and the Volunteer Request Coordinator. Eilis has an extensive background in volunteer work and is currently teaching in our Youth at Risk program

**PAULINE GRIFFIN** has become the Volunteer Request Coordinator. She works with staff and committees to fill requests for volunteers. She is the one who will call or e-mail you when your help is needed. Pauline participates in Reading for Peace and the Youth Peace Leadership event. This year she

was honored as one of our 2003 Outstanding Volunteers.

**EMILY DANGEL**, a long-time Committee member, is coordinating the work of the Volunteer Guides whose task it is to make the actual calls to prospective volunteers and become their first contact with TCC.

**SUE MITCHELL** is working with the Volunteer Introduction Team. Both **MARTHA FULFORD** and **MARY ANN TARPEY** will continue to be volunteer staff in the Volunteer Office.

The Volunteer Committee has oversight of the program. That committee, chaired by Sue Mitchell, includes Isabel Alvarado-Bailey, Mary Bediz, Michelle Binkowski, Emily Dangel, Pauline Griffin, Cary Leher, Martha Fulford, Eilis McNamara, Elsie Polak, Mary Ann Tarpey, and Mary Zinn-Stewart.

If you would like to assist this group of dedicated volunteers, please leave a message for Sue Mitchell at The Conflict Center.



## WE CELEBRATE OUR VOLUNTEERS!

On April 18, 2004 The Conflict Center celebrated the contributions of the World's Best Volunteers - the people who lend us their time and talents. The party was held at the Liff School of Theology.

This year 204 volunteers contributed 8268 hours, the equivalent of \$124,020 added to The Conflict Center's budget.

The contributions of all volunteers were honored but three special people were chosen as 2003 honorees.



photo by George Mitchell

**PAULINE GRIFFIN** (center) was selected for her contributions in administrative leadership. After working with Reading for Peace and the Youth Peace Leadership Conference, she has become the new Volunteer Request Coordinator.

**MATT WALLINGTON** (right) was chosen for the energy, talent and creativity he brings to the classes he teaches. No matter what the age group, Matt is able to relate to our clients in a special way.

**BILL MURPHY** (left) is an outstanding committee person. As Vice President of the Board of Directors he serves on many committees and is equally willing to lend his handyman talents to keeping our building in good order.



Volunteer Cary Leher takes photos at the event



TCC Staff making their presentation to the volunteers

## D-NOTE BIZ CONNECTION

### THE CONFLICT CENTER IS THE FEATURED CHARITY FOR THE MONTH OF JULY

D-Note Biz Connection happens every Wednesday from 5:30pm -7:30pm. The event is designed to give business owners the opportunity to develop new business and personal relationships in a relaxed and comfortable environment. Later that night you can stay and enjoy some live jazz. The \$5.00 entrance fee will be donated to The Conflict Center on Wednesdays for the entire month of July. Mark your calendars and join a few of The Conflict Center's staff at the D-Note located at 7519 Grandview Ave. in Arvada [www.dnote.us](http://www.dnote.us) <<http://www.dnote.us/>>