



For Immediate Release
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Press Statement

**MEDIATION COUNCIL OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HOLDS
BENEFIT HONORING LOCAL MEDIATION AND RECONCILIATION EFFORTS**
*"A Celebration of Reconciliation" Benefitted Local Reconciliation Organizations
and the As We Forgive Initiative in Rwanda*

PITTSBURGH, PA – The Mediation Council of Western Pennsylvania ("MCWP") recently held an important benefit, "A Celebration of Reconciliation." This event, held in memory of Nelson Mandela, took place on March 31, 2014 at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild.

The benefit featured a screening of the Academy Award winning film, "As We Forgive," which showcases the amazing journey of two Rwandan women as they work through mediation to forgive the perpetrators of genocide against their families. In addition, the evening honored four local mediators/facilitators who are doing reconciliation work in the Pittsburgh area, including Pastor Ed Glover of Urban Impact, Jerome Jackson of Operation Better Block, Prabha Sankaranarayan of Mediators Beyond Borders International and Dawn Lehman of the Dialogue and Resolution Center at the Center for Victims. Following the screening there was a panel discussion facilitated by Andrea McDaniel, the national director of the As We Forgive Initiative, highlighting the work of the awardees.

Proceeds from the event totaled over \$5,000. \$4,000 was donated to the As We Forgive Initiative in Rwanda, to help rebuild communities where perpetrators and genocide survivors live side by side. In addition, a sum of \$500 was donated to both the Center for Victims at the Dialogue and Resolution Center in Pittsburgh and Urban Impact Pittsburgh, to assist with local reconciliation efforts that these organizations are involved in.

The Celebration of Reconciliation Planning Committee included MCWP members Sally Griffith Cimini, Mark Greenblatt, Patricia Henk, Gerald Kobell, Joel Pretz, Janice Seidenfeld, Donna Santucci, Selina Shultz and Susan Tanzer.

"It was an honor to have the opportunity to raise money for organizations that have been instrumental in mediation and reconciliation efforts both locally and abroad," stated Selina Shultz, Vice President of MCWP and Chair of the Celebration of Reconciliation Planning Committee. "The purpose of the evening was to inspire people with the idea that if the power of mediation and facilitated dialogue is strong enough to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda, it can certainly be used to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation in Pittsburgh families, schools and neighborhoods. The evening was a great success and was a wonderful way to honor the memory of Mr. Mandela."

The Mediation Council of Western Pennsylvania (MCWP) is a local organization that serves the public by providing education about mediation, information about mediator qualifications and assistance in finding qualified mediators. The MCWP also serves professional mediators by providing opportunities for advanced mediation training and continuing mediation education credit, standards of practice and a code of ethics. The MCWP is the only association of professional mediators in Western Pennsylvania. Its mission is to promote the use of mediation and other collaborative processes for resolving disputes and managing conflict, and support the professional development of mediation practitioners.