

CHILDREN'S STUDIES 3310: Children and the Law

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

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GUEST SPEAKER: MARK KLEIMAN

Executive Director and Founder, Community Mediation Services

Mark Kleiman is the founder and executive director of Community Mediation Services, Inc., which he incorporated over 20 years ago, in Jamaica, Queens. Beginning with a mentoring program designed to divert youth from the Family Court, it has grown to be a series of integrated programs with over 110 staff that divert over 15,000 people annually from the court system in Queens, New York. These programs utilize various empowering strategies to foster problem solving for positive change. Community and family mediation, youth development, case management, advocacy and school-based programs are coordinated with mental health, substance abuse and educational services for the benefit of clients. Among the pioneer programs they have developed are: the Family Mediation Program for the New York City Family Courts, Parent-teen mediation, a reentry program for delinquents, Homelessness Prevention Program and dozens of violence prevention and peer mediation programs in city schools.

A self described "recovering attorney", Mark worked initially with the Juvenile Rights Division of Legal Aid Society representing youth. The mentoring program was a response to his frustration with the court's difficulty in dealing effectively with the problems of youth and families. This led to a passion for the alternative dispute resolution field and its applications to families and youth. He is a founding member of the New York City and State divorce mediation councils, board member of the National Association for Community Mediation and former board member of the New York State Dispute Resolution Association.

The training he has developed includes a conflict resolution skills curriculum for Americorps volunteers and a program development training for the National Association for Community Mediation, the curriculum for custody visitation mediation for the New York State court system, curricula in community mediation, parent-teen mediation and many tailored trainings for state and city agencies, schools and private organizations.