Dispute Resolution
Fulcrum continues its dedication to dispute resolution, mediating conflicts ranging from foreclosure to parenting plans and from USDA cases to teenage curfews. In the first quarter of 2017, 34 mediations were performed, making it one of the highest mediation trajectories ever for Fulcrum, well over the yearly average. Although success in mediation is always difficult, Fulcrum mediators boast an astounding 88% settlement rate, where both parties agree to a mutually-crafted solution. Additionally, a week-long intensive course for new mediators was completed, training fresh minds to take up the work of resolving disputes. In keeping with the goal of training up new mediators, Fulcrum places mediation interns alongside trained mediators in real disputes, allowing students to observe and learn the mediation process first-hand.

Ash Street Station
In its second year, the Ash Street Station continues to be an asset in the community. The top floor houses three one-bedroom apartments, which are always in high demand and have been consistently filled since their opening. The main floor is home to Ammonite Ink, a business that produces custom screen art, and a vintage store with a juice bar. Both are locally owned and operated, with the juice bar being staffed by workers from Career Path and NextGenZone. The warehouse serves multiple purposes in the community, including a biological project run by the Lands Council to study the functioning of mycelium. In addition, job skills classes are taught in the Ash Street classroom, and the building’s large workshop area hosts maker’s classes and the robotics club of the Community School, a project-based, District 81 high school.

Interchange
Interchange staff continue to work tirelessly, supervising parent/child visitations 7 days a week, from 8:00am to 8:00pm. Visit supervisors drive long distances, often in inhospitable weather and times, to pick up and drop off children from various locations. Interchange staff totaled 45,000 miles of travel in the last 3 months. Administration has worked relentlessly to accurately report visitation statistics, time management and tracking to WA State via OLIVER, a new statewide tracking program. In February of this year, Fulcrum opened another office in Colfax, WA, and began offering services to clients. The office provides Interchange parent/child visits to clients, and upon opening immediately started functioning at full capacity. The organization is thankful for the leadership of Linda Hanson in running the new office. Fulcrum now has offices in Colfax, Colville, Coeur d’Alene and Spokane.
Basic Food and Employment Training (BFET):
Run by Coordinator Elizabeth Lien, BFET provides vital pathways to employment for individuals who qualify for food stamp benefits. When clients apply, they are enrolled in a two-day job training class, which teaches skills to improve communication, flexibility, job expectations and readiness. The second day is focused on properly filling out job applications online and on paper, and concludes with a resume writing workshop. In addition to classroom training, clients are given a personal case manager who assists with job searches, interview success and follow-up. BFET now places between 10 and 8 clients per week in new jobs, and has enrolled over 261 individuals in the past quarter, bringing the current number of BFET clients to 489.

Business Roundtable
With over 300 participating businesses, Fulcrum’s Business Roundtable is a key component to finding clients employment. While many employers are hesitant to overcome the barriers that many Fulcrum clients face, members of the BRT are fully aware of these challenges. For their own sake, BRT participants can be assured that the workers they hire are motivated, reliable and have completed job training courses. By taking a step of solidarity and faith, businesses also help to develop the community by providing employment to individuals who need it most. To facilitate strong working relationships, Fulcrum’s BRT Coordinator makes routine calls to BRT members inquiring about job leads, supplying the BFET and RISE clients with clear pathways to employment.

Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE):
A WA State pilot program, Resources to Initiate Successful Employment provides all of the same services as Fulcrum’s BFET program, namely, job training, skills and help with employment placements, and additionally provides help reducing other barriers to employment, such as housing. Case managers work actively to ensure that clients have the best possible chance of obtaining employment. When applying for RISE, if they qualify, clients are randomized between entrance into BFET or RISE, and then tracked for success over their search for employment to explore the efficacy of new methods of service. In the second year of the 3 year RISE program, Fulcrum has by far been the most successful in the state and even the nation. Of 17 current RISE providers in WA state, Fulcrum alone performs 25% of all RISE services.
Education Programs

Under Justin Van Elsberg the education department has flourished, teaching classes covering a wide range of subjects. With updated curriculum, Fulcrum teaches anger management, moral reconation therapy and theft awareness, in addition to Sharing the Children classes for parents undergoing divorce. Multiple instructors cover an array of different topics, holding sessions at the Ash Street Station and Fulcrum DRC for those in the BFET and RISE programs. Classes are also held at Geiger Corrections Center, teaching relationship management, creative writing and parenthood. This quarter, 57% of incarcerated students graduated, with 76% of attendance loss being attributed to release from jail or transfer to another correctional institution.

Why Take Classes?
Education of any kind is a powerful tool for any activity, whether looking for a job, crafting a resume, dealing with children, developing relationships or building other skills. Fulcrum offers diverse classes for a wide array of needs and people, and does so at very low cost to clients. Additionally, some classes, such as Sharing the Children, a course on caring for children well through a divorce, can be court-ordered, and Fulcrum is more than happy to teach classes to fulfill court requirements.

Why Mediate?
People have disagreements. The legal system is usually the preferred way to settle disputes, but courts can be expensive or take significant periods of time, and at the end of the day can leave both parties unsatisfied. Mediation provides a quicker, cheaper way to settle disagreements with a mutually agreed-upon, win-win solution. Mediation is effective for a variety of different disputes, ranging from employment to foreclosure to small claims.

Can Fulcrum Help Me Get A Job?
The RISE and BFET programs are employment pathways for individuals who currently qualify for federal food assistance benefits. If you fit the criterion, then you are eligible to be part of the RISE or BFET programs. Both programs offer 40 hours of job training classes to help find employment, work with clients to write resumes and make job inquiries online or in person.
I have spent the past 3 months serving as an intern at the Fulcrum Institute DRC. As a function of my internship, I have spent time in nearly every one of the numerous programs run by the organization, so have gained a holistic picture of the work being done in the community. With my time reaching a close, I have the chance to reflect back on some of the observations I have made over the past 3 months, and arrive at a few overarching conclusions. The first major point to be recognized is that Fulcrum employees care about clients.

Whether case managers in the BFET and RISE offices, Interchange visit supervisors, intake specialists, instructors or mediators, each employee does their very best to do right by their clients and support them effectively. This task is doubly impressive because of the demographic to which Fulcrum caters; individuals who find themselves in tough situations, with limited resources. Emphasis on caring for clients runs from the lowest levels all the way to the top. Multiple staff meetings addressed ways in which Fulcrum can be more compassionate to clients, how processes can be made simpler, or how important it is to be accommodating to individual problems.

A second takeaway from my time in each department is the positive impact that Fulcrum has on members of the community. Time and time again, even in cases where problems were ultimately unsolved, clients thanked Fulcrum staff profusely and left assured that everything possible had been done. If nothing else, individuals could come to a place where they would be sure to be heard, respected and given consideration.

While job placement numbers and successful mediations are of course an enormous factor in community development, other impacts are more difficult to measure. Putting a number on the joy a parent feels when greeting their child, a family whose father is now able to provide for them, the worker who learns to navigate the internet, or a hopeless woman who finds support is unworkable, but are all pieces of the work Fulcrum does to partner with the people of the Inland Northwest.

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