



News

Volume 22, Issue 6, August 2004

Chicken or Egg?

When it comes to restorative justice, is victim offender dialogue the chicken or the egg? Restorative justice is a much broader category, and victim offender dialogue is just one of many restorative practices, but which comes first?

Restorative justice programs can begin without victim offender dialogue. These programs tend to be part of the criminal justice system and include work-furlough, community service as part of sentences and that sort of thing. These programs have been recognized as being restorative, but weren't started as restorative justice programs. From the fairly extensive knowledge we have of RJ programs around the world, those that began intentionally as RJ programs probably started with victim offender dialogue as a component.

Whether chicken or egg, victim offender dialogue, similar to what we do at VORP, is the core of most restorative justice programs. Here in Fresno we are committed to it. Thanks for your commitment to the work of VORP!

Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, Administrator

A MEDIATION STORY

By Sally Vogl

At the initial meeting, my co-mediator Ivo and I went through the introductions with the offender and his mom. Then the four of us sat in their living room, all a little nervous. The offender and his mom seemed unsure of what to anticipate. Ivo and I had our own reasons for nervousness. Ivo was a student at Fresno Pacific University and this was his first case. I felt a little rusty, not having done a case for some time. It seemed appropriate to admit to our nervousness so we could take a deep breath and proceed. The young man of 15 admitted that he had entered the home of the vic-

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**Humility is like underwear—
essential, but indecent if it shows.**

Helen Nielson

tim and stole a stereo after another boy broke down the door. He and his mother indicated a willingness to meet with the victim and try to make things right. His mother expressed a concern that the victim might verbally insult her son. Ivo and I reassured her that we would follow the ground rules, including respect, when we met together for the joint session.

We met the victim, a college student, at McDonalds. He thoughtfully listened to the three-stage process of VORP, then told his story. Four boys had broken into the home he shares with other family members. Besides damaging the back door, the offenders took a stereo, play station, jewelry and a rifle. The victim expressed a concern about replacing all the items. We explained that only one offender had been referred to VORP and that his share of the restitution could not exceed one-fourth. Although he was disappointed, the victim understood the reason for this policy. He agreed to meet with the offender and his mom.

At the joint session, the offender spoke briefly, admitting to his share in stealing the stereo from the victim. When the victim told of his experiences, he mentioned the missing items, but also spoke of an uneasiness that his sister's privacy had been invaded when the offenders searched through her personal things. He recalled mistakes he made when he was younger and realized that a person can learn from his errors. Both the victim and the offender were courteous to each other and were able to reach an agreement. In the agreement portion, the victim asked for restitution, but also

STILL NEEDED: Upgraded Computers

Currently VORP is running its office on barely functioning Windows 98 computers. If you can donate a computer running Windows 2000 or XP, or any other accessories, please contact our office at 455-9803 or email us at vorp@fresno.edu

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.



2004 Volunteer Mediator Training

September 10-11

October 8-9

November 12-13

Friday 6:30pm -9:30pm Saturday 8:30am -3:30pm

Call our office to reserve dates: 455-9803.

asked that the parties be respectful of each other when they saw each other in their neighborhood. Completing this case felt good, as the victim and offender came to an agreement and Ivo had the opportunity to experience the VORP process.

Deep Thoughts

By Matt Schellenberg

Life is like a Chinese finger trap, because to the non-spiritual mind, God's way doesn't make sense. To most people, going God's way is like putting the fingers together- it doesn't make sense because they think they will become free by pulling them apart and so they try to go the other way. Many people attempt to go through life by pulling as hard as they can - in other words they try with all their might to satisfy their desires or think that achieving success or popularity will make them happy, but they are chasing a longing which can never be pacified. Obeying God seems counter-intuitive to reaching that goal, because those that do not follow Him cannot understand that a more fulfilling life awaits those who go the other way.

Humility is just as much the opposite of self-abasement as it is of self-exaltation.

Dag Hammarskjöld

VORP Board Members

Michael Blue, Chair	Arthur Wint
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Eleanor Richards	Faith Young

VORP Staff

Duane Ruth-Heffelbower	Administrator
Johnny Phouthachack	Agreement Manager
Megan Thompson	Mediation Manager
Barry Guenther	Finance Manager
Matt Schellenberg	Intern
Rodney Pearson	Intern

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

VORP kids are involved in a number of fundraising projects including selling "On the House" discount coupon books, cookbooks and tickets for the next carwash on August 15. Please call VORP (455-9803) if you'd like to support VORP kids in these efforts. The carwash held on July 24 was a big success. Thank you to the people with dirty cars, the kids and their parents.

PLEASE CALL THE VORP OFFICE IF:

- you would like to have VORP kids pick up your recyclables on a regular basis
- you have fundraising experience and would be willing to share any ideas with us
- you have any items to donate for future yard sales
- you have time to volunteer helping coordinate projects and supervising kids while they work

Keep your eyes peeled for more information about the upcoming VORP Basketball Tournament.

WELCOME

In July, VORP received a new intern from Fresno State's Peace & Conflict studies department. Rodney Pearson will be with the VORP staff for the remainder of the summer and into the fall as part of the meditation certification given through FSU. Rodney is currently completing his B.A. in History and plans to pursue post-baccalaureate study in government and law in Sacramento. He decided to intern with VORP because of his strong interest in restorative justice, peacemaking, and research in these areas.

Rodney grew up mainly on the east coast and has spent the majority of his life traveling. He first became interested in peacemaking while serving as a soldier during NATO Peacekeeping missions in the Former Yugoslavia. Since that time he has always tried to help people think of creative and alternate ways to build peace. He looks forward to his time with VORP and the opportunity to help others peacefully resolve conflict.

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