

# VORP News

Volume 23, Issue 2 April 2005

## From the Administrator

People have been receiving VORP mediator training in Fresno for over twenty years. Lately, we've had a couple of new wrinkles worth telling you about. Both involve groups that came together and asked for trainings so that they could form a new node in the VORP network. Barbara Maselli is giving leadership to a group in Visalia working to get VORP going there again. Their initial group of mediators had its training in one long day at the new Fresno Pacific University center in Visalia. This method worked pretty well. The tension between training that is either too long or too short has been an issue for us from the beginning. Our Friday night and most of Saturday method has served well. It was good to try the one day version and feel good about the result.

The Reedley Peace Center also asked us to come and train their group so that they could take south county cases and manage them with minimal impact on Fresno VORP and that the group will do everything else independently at some point. This group also received the one-day version of the training with good results. Their maturity and previous knowledge of VORP helped.

We are hopeful that other groups will see themselves as nodes in the network. There is power in working together. We also know that work of other groups can benefit from the VORP training whether they do cases or not. The reconciling injustices model we teach works anywhere. Let us know if your group would like to benefit from VORP in this way.

Duane Ruth-Heffelbower

**Victim Offender Reconciliation Program  
of the Central Valley, Inc.**  
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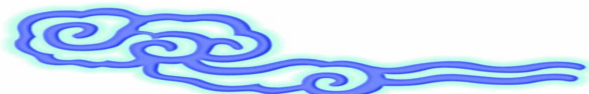
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• "Never place a period where •  
• God has placed a comma." •  
• Gracie Allen •  
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## A Mediation Story

In July 2004, two VORP mediators facilitated the mediation for a case where 3 kids "keyed" 5 cars in a mall parking lot. The agreement resulting from this meeting between the 3 kids and 4 of the victims included: restitution to pay for the damage to the vehicles, apology letters, written monthly updates from the offenders to the victims, and the promise that, if the kids re-offended, they would not be allowed to get their drivers licenses until age eighteen.

One of the offenders finished every aspect of the agreement right away. And in December 2004, one of the victims took it upon herself to write an encouraging letter to this young man. In her note to VORP she said "I truly believe in your program... I hope that my own two boys never get in trouble but if they do; I hope they have you on their side... keep up the good work. Those kids out there need positive reinforcement!!!!"

Since that time, another one of the offenders has completed his restitution payments and the third is still working with our Agreement Manager, Johnny Phouthachack, to complete his agreement successfully. Thank you to the victims for their patience with this process, these young men, their parents, and the mediators.



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**Volunteer Mediator Training**  
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June 11 & 12  
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Friday 6:30pm - 9:30pm  
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Saturday 8:30am - 3:30pm  
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Call 455-9803 to reserve a spot.  
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**Upcoming VORP Benefit**  
Wallace Prowell, a VORP supporter from Oregon has offered to present a program to benefit VORP. He does dramatic biblical character monologues. He will be at Mennonite Community Church (Willow and Olive in Fresno) for Sunday morning worship on either May 29 or June 5. The offering will be given directly to VORP. More information will be available soon. Check next month's newsletter or Call 455-9803.

## TEN EASY THINGS

### YOU CAN DO

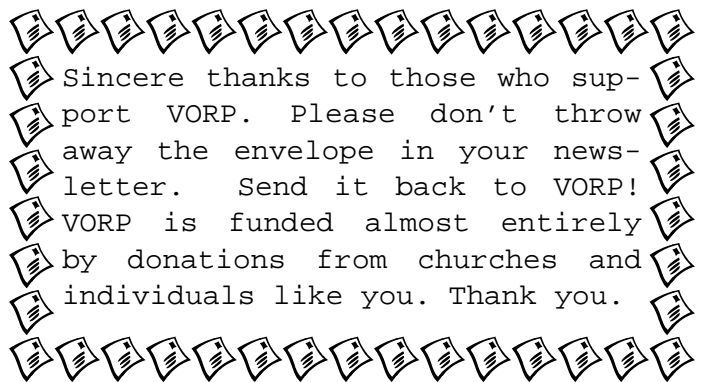
### TO SUPPORT VORP:

1. Invite a friend to become a volunteer mediator. Or find a friend to attend the VORP training together with you.
- 2. Empty the change out of your pockets or purse (maybe even look under your sofa cushions...) then send it to VORP in the envelope in this newsletter.**
3. Start mediating again...even if it's been many years and you feel rusty, we'll make sure you know what you're doing.
- 4. Provide jobs for kids to earn restitution money.**
5. Ask your church or community group if they would like someone from VORP to come do a presentation for them.
- 6. Ask your spouse why she or he is not a VORP mediator.**
7. Let your local and state government know that you support the work of VORP and that they should too!
- 8. Place \$10 in your envelope and send it back to its home at the VORP office.**
9. Come to the office once a month and fold newsletters.
- 10. Come to our office on a Wednesday night where kids come to give and receive encouragement in keeping their agreements. They do leadership activities, community service projects, job searching, and much more.**

## Fundraising

PLEASE CALL VORP AT 455-9803 IF:

- You have a project at home that you could use a little help with: housekeeping, cleaning out the garage or the attic, yard work, washing the car, or anything else you can think of.
- You would like to have VORP kids pick up your recyclables on a regular basis.
- You would like to buy discount coupon books or cookbooks.
- You have fundraising experience and would be willing to share any ideas with us.
- You have time to volunteer helping coordinate projects and supervising kids while they work.



### VORP Staff

Duane Ruth-Heffelbower	Administrator
Johnny Phouthachack	Agreement Manager
Adriana Mendoza	Agreement Manager
Megan Thompson	Mediation Manager
Joe Montanez	Intern
Barry Guenther	Finance Manager

### VORP Board Members

Michael Blue, Chair	Arthur Wint
Dave Purvis, Secretary/Treasurer	José Chaparro
Eleanor Richards	Faith Young

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