

VORP News

Volume 24, Issue 8, August 2006

From The Administrator

Part of VORP's goal is to assist the churches in their mission of reconciliation. Long time VORP mediator and supporter Tony Redfern has been spear-heading a project to help do just that. VORP has been rapidly expanding our church-based VORP's. In addition to our regular trainings, the following churches will be offering a training for their members. **St. Paul Newman Center** -Aug. 2, 9 and 16; evenings 6-8:45
St. Johns Cathedral- Aug. 11-12 Fri. 6:30-9:30, Sat. 8:30-3:30.

Sanger Ministerial Union Sept. 9 and 23. 8-12 noon.

People's Church Sept. 22-23 Fri. 6:30-9:30, Sat. 9:30-3:30.

If you are interested in any of the trainings please contact the VORP office. Thank you.

CHANGE

-Jenna Preheim

After a wonderful year at VORP I will be heading east to the land of Goshen, Indiana to major in Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies at Goshen College. This year as Mediation Manager and volunteer mediator at VORP has been one of extreme growth and learning for me. This setting for experiential learning has been crucial in helping me gain clarity about what I want to do in future.

Working with all of the mediators has been one of the most joy giving parts of my job. They welcomed me in with open arms. Mediators- I have appreciated your hard work and willingness to help very much. I loved getting to know you in and out of the VORP setting. I enjoyed hearing all of your stories about experiences in mediation.

It has also been an extreme pleasure working with the people at the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies. One cannot help but learn by simply being in their presence. I want to express my extreme appreciation to everyone at CPACS. You have nurtured me in my journey and exposed me to so much more than I ever anticipated. Thank you for welcoming me so fully and for taking time to help me learn from you.

I have had so many meaningful experiences at VORP. To close, I will share one that was very significant to me and just one example of many stories I will value as a result of my time at VORP.

I was assigned a case with a long-time conflict between two neighbors that originated between the victim and the young offender's father, who apparently had not been a very good example to his son and had passed away since the time of the offense at hand: threats and a near brawl between the young offender and the victim- a culmination of many years of trouble. Now the young offender, Andy, was living with his mom. When I visited with them they agreed that they would like to participate in mediation. Andy told me, "I am willing to meet with Rick (the victim) but he will never want to meet with me." Sure enough, when I went to visit Rick, the first thing he told me as I sat with him was, "I don't ever want to see Andy again".
Well, this will be a very short

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Volunteer Mediator Training

September 15-16, 2006

October 6-7, 2006

Friday 6:30pm - 9:30pm

Saturday 8:30am - 3:30pm

Victim Offender Reconciliation Program of the Central Valley, Inc.

4882 E. Townsend Ave., Fresno, CA 93727

Phone: (559) 455-9803; Fax: (559) 252-4800

Email: vorp@fresno.edu | <http://vorp.org>

Hello, my name is Noelle Daoudian and I will be the new temporary case manager for VORP. I have been working with Jenna Preheim (the current case manager) and am very excited to be able to be more involved with this great program! I have worked with a few VORP cases during the year and I strongly believe in the benefit of the program as a better alternative to the juvenile court system. I have been working at the Center for Peacemaking doing civil court mediation. I am the main case manager for that program, thus I am familiar with the role as it is very similar to the system at VORP. I am also a student in the Peacemaking and Conflict Studies Master's Program at Fresno Pacific and will be graduating in a year.

VORP RECEIVED FRESNO REGIONAL FOUNDATION GRANT!

VORP has gotten another piece of great news. We have been selected as a recipient of a grant from the Fresno Regional Foundation. We will receive \$2,500 (which will also count toward our \$100,000 Matching Grant to make a total of \$5,000) which will be used to purchase new computers and software at VORP. We have been having a great deal of computer trouble and so the prospect of having updated technology is extremely thrilling for all of us in the office. We would like to thank the CEO, Dan Desantis, and the Regional Foundation for this wonderful opportunity, and also Holly Mattos the Administrative Director of the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies for her time and brilliant work in writing the grant.

Baptist Temple's Graffiti Abatement Program

My name is Darryl Curry. I am the coordinator for Baptist Temple's Graffiti Abatement Program. We are working with VORP. We provide juvenile offenders, who are to perform community service to pay restitution, with jobs removing graffiti. VORP provides the youth and the City of Fresno provides the solvents.

The offenders remove graffiti from public, private and business properties. They scrub light poles, street signs, sidewalks, walls, garbage cans and anything that has been tagged (painted or drawn on). We always see huge smiles on the victim's faces, when they see their properties being restored by the very people who are responsible for its defacement. I believe that it does something for the youth also. When they see the pain they cause people by destroying the appearances of their properties, makes them realize just how extremely detrimental graffiti is.

The youth are working diligently to undo the wrong they've done. Thanks to Johnny Phouthachack, VORP Agreement Manager, staying on them and encouraging them to perform assiduously. We are enjoying this very positive attitude from the youth. One of the juvenile offenders, when asked how he felt about tagging now that he had worked with the graffiti abatement team at Baptist Temple said, "It is really bad. I didn't know that before."

Depending on how many show up, we send them out in groups. Thanks to Set Free Ministries, directed by Pastor David Zamora, (also known as "Two Dog") we have adult supervision to watch over the offenders. Someone from Set Free Ministries will meticulously search the areas designated for cleaning for graffiti. Our motto is, "We clean it all, big or small." They then mark down every job performed on a piece of paper to be tallied and reported at the end of the work week.

I know that many people think that these are bad kids, but they are not. Many are just kids who made a mistake and got with the wrong crowd. Most of these youth have seen the error of their ways, and are well on their way to being rehabilitated without the horrors of institutionalization. I thank God that we have the opportunity to detour these children from possibly spending the rest of their life in prison. This is our chance to redirect their course of life from a negative destiny to a possible positive one.

I hope that you are able to help us in this effort to clean up our city and to re-educate our youth. If you have money or time, we can use either one. Please send donations for "VORP" or "Baptist Temple Graffiti Abatement Program" to the VORP office.

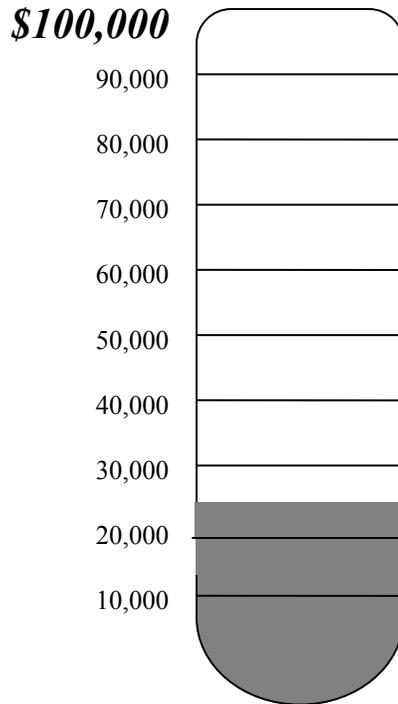
meeting ...I thought to myself. But for the next hour, Rick shared with me all that he had experienced with Andy and Andy's father, who had not been a very good example to Andy. Rick went through a wide range of emotions surprising me with his quick changes of temperament. He shared his extreme anger at Andy, and his desire to get violent revenge, then the next moment about his hope that Andy would grow into a responsible, honorable young man. Rick confided his great fear for his wife who is alone during the week when he leaves town for work. "What if Andy comes to hurt my wife when I'm not here to protect her?" He was housing enormous anger. At the end of the meeting, Rick agreed he would at least consider meeting with Andy.

A week later Rick called to say, "I am willing to meet with Andy, but he will never actually show up to the meeting." I had to chuckle. But only a few days before the mediation, Rick called to let me know he would not be coming after all because his truck had been egged. "I just know it was Andy." His anger and fear was again evident. After I spoke again with both parties, Rick decided that he would come after all. I had been a bit anxious about the upcoming mediation, there were a few discrepancies in the story, Rick was very angry. But the day before the meeting I felt a very calm feeling come over me.

Andy and his mother arrived first and when Rick pulled up, Andy said, "Wow...he *did* show-up." Rick and Andy shared their experiences of not only the offense, but the long-standing disrespect and animosity between them. Andy apologized for the things that he had done to Rick and also assured him that he need not be afraid for his wife, he promised he would not cause any more problems. Andy was sincere and Rick somehow seemed to know that Andy

meant what he said. Without even asking Andy about whether he had been involved in the egging of his truck, Rick told him, "Last week my truck got egged and I was sure it was you, but now, I realize it wasn't." At the end of the meeting, Andy extended his hand, and Rick shook it warmly. In talking to Rick afterwards, I was amazed to find a remarkably different man. Something had changed between these two people. It was extraordinary.

Growing



\$22,843

Matching Grant

June 2006

12th Annual Restorative Justice Conference

Theme: "The Victim in Focus"

Dates: October 19-21

Location: Fresno Pacific University
McDonald Hall, Ashley Auditorium

Keynote Speaker: Dr. John Dussich
American Society of Victimology

*Details in next month's issue.

VORP Staff

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Jenna Preheim	Mediation Manager
Noelle Daoudian	Mediation Manager
Barry Guenther	Finance Manager
Katherine Palomino	Intern

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