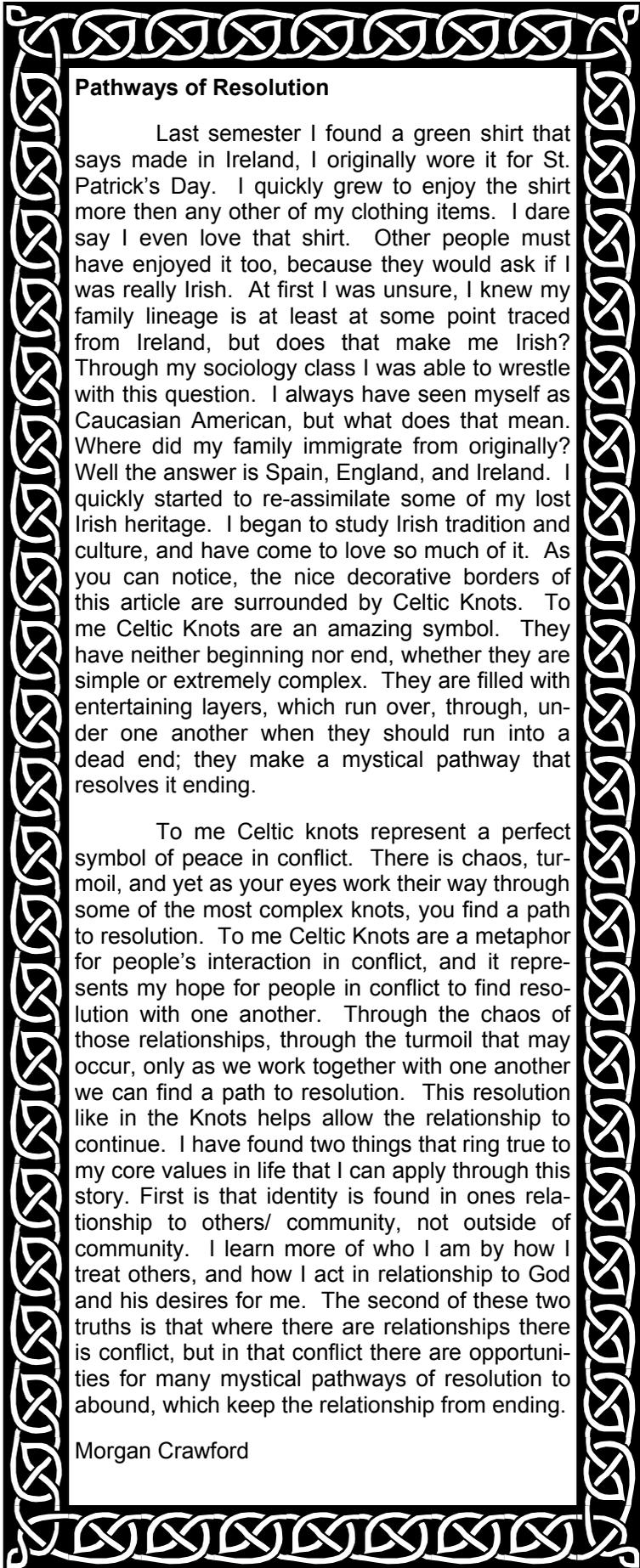




**Victim Offender Reconciliation
Program of the Central Valley, Inc.**
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Pathways of Resolution

Last semester I found a green shirt that says made in Ireland, I originally wore it for St. Patrick's Day. I quickly grew to enjoy the shirt more than any other of my clothing items. I dare say I even love that shirt. Other people must have enjoyed it too, because they would ask if I was really Irish. At first I was unsure, I knew my family lineage is at least at some point traced from Ireland, but does that make me Irish? Through my sociology class I was able to wrestle with this question. I always have seen myself as Caucasian American, but what does that mean. Where did my family immigrate from originally? Well the answer is Spain, England, and Ireland. I quickly started to re-assimilate some of my lost Irish heritage. I began to study Irish tradition and culture, and have come to love so much of it. As you can notice, the nice decorative borders of this article are surrounded by Celtic Knots. To me Celtic Knots are an amazing symbol. They have neither beginning nor end, whether they are simple or extremely complex. They are filled with entertaining layers, which run over, through, under one another when they should run into a dead end; they make a mystical pathway that resolves it ending.

To me Celtic knots represent a perfect symbol of peace in conflict. There is chaos, turmoil, and yet as your eyes work their way through some of the most complex knots, you find a path to resolution. To me Celtic Knots are a metaphor for people's interaction in conflict, and it represents my hope for people in conflict to find resolution with one another. Through the chaos of those relationships, through the turmoil that may occur, only as we work together with one another we can find a path to resolution. This resolution like in the Knots helps allow the relationship to continue. I have found two things that ring true to my core values in life that I can apply through this story. First is that identity is found in ones relationship to others/ community, not outside of community. I learn more of who I am by how I treat others, and how I act in relationship to God and his desires for me. The second of these two truths is that where there are relationships there is conflict, but in that conflict there are opportunities for many mystical pathways of resolution to abound, which keep the relationship from ending.

Morgan Crawford

Mediation Memoirs

Jeff Klein

In the spring of 2007, Tony Redfern approached our church, Central Community Church of Fresno, to see if we were interested in the church based VORP program. After learning about VORP in general and how churches can be of help, it was decided to join in this very worthwhile service to our community. Central Community is located in the Highway City area of Fresno and is committed to serving the Central Unified School District in particular and Fresno at large, so the Ministry of VORP fits right in with the mission of our church. I was appointed coordinator and began recruiting volunteers who would go through a training given by Tony at our church and just like that God brought a new and exciting opportunity to reach out to a hurting segment of our community.

For the past four years I have been working as a School Resource Chaplain in the Central Unified district. This is a volunteer position through the Fresno County Sheriffs Office where you become a trained and certified (including background check) Chaplain for both the officer side of Chaplaincy and School Resource Chaplaincy. I have chosen to work primarily and thus far totally, in the schools because over time God has given me a passion to reach "at risk" youth that unfortunately are all around us at this time. Because of this background it did not take much arm twisting to get me involved with VORP.

The first case that I was assigned involved a single offender and a victim which happened to be a school. I was somewhat nervous as I began working the case but just tried to rely on God to guide the way. The case ended up with a willing offender and Mom, but an unwilling principal of the school, I believe mainly because it was summer break. So it was on to the next one.

My second case involved three offenders who had done damage to city property. When I made my first call to offender number one, my attempt at scheduling an appointment was totally rejected by his mother. My first thought was, here we go again, I am going to fail on another case. However, after contacting offenders two and three, appointments were made which encouraged me greatly. The two meetings went well with both young men being very responsive and parents who really seemed to buy into the value of the mediation process helping shape the future of their sons. Going through the chain of command in the city government to find who would represent them took a few stops, but turned out great. The meager efforts of those who are about His work.

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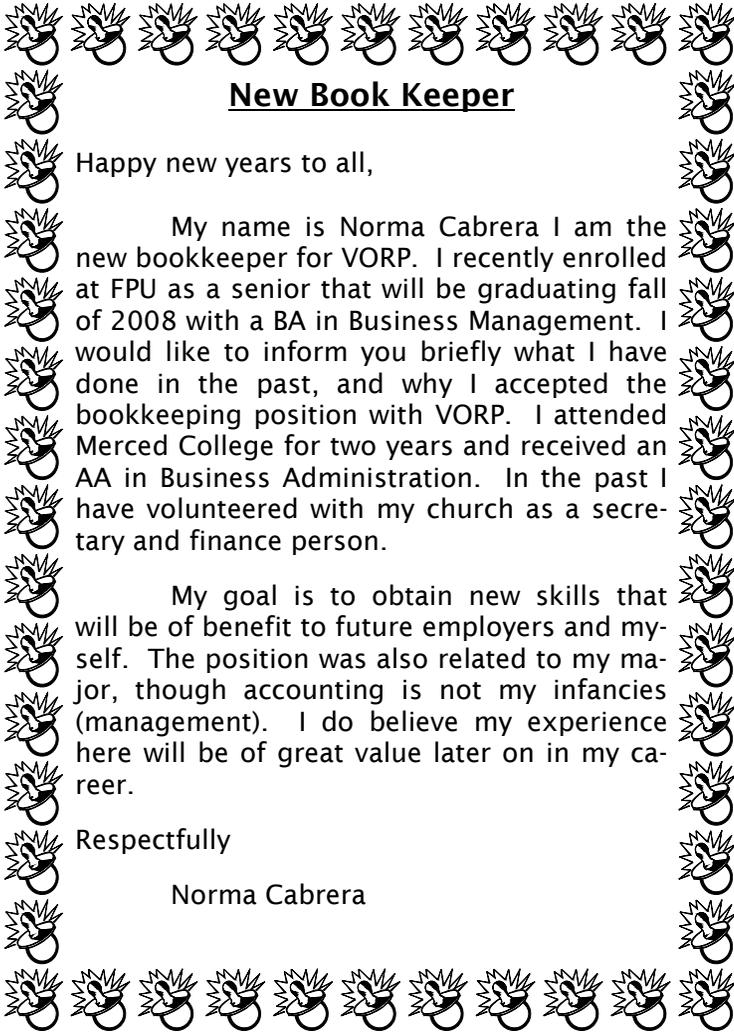
I would like to make a new year tax-deductible donation to VORP:



\$200 \$100 \$50 Other _____

Name: _____

Change of Address or Phone # : _____



New Book Keeper

Happy new years to all,

My name is Norma Cabrera I am the new bookkeeper for VORP. I recently enrolled at FPU as a senior that will be graduating fall of 2008 with a BA in Business Management. I would like to inform you briefly what I have done in the past, and why I accepted the bookkeeping position with VORP. I attended Merced College for two years and received an AA in Business Administration. In the past I have volunteered with my church as a secretary and finance person.

My goal is to obtain new skills that will be of benefit to future employers and myself. The position was also related to my major, though accounting is not my infancies (management). I do believe my experience here will be of great value later on in my career.

Respectfully

Norma Cabrera

(Understanding Cont.)

This man, after hearing what the program was about, seemed genuinely excited to participate. We were able to set up a time for the mediation the following week at a local church, which incidentally asked for a meeting with Tony to learn more about how they could possibly become involved with VORP. This was an added blessing and another example of how God is working in and through The mediation went very smoothly with good participation from everyone involved and an agreement was reached. God was very good to me, with this being my first mediation, in that all parties seemed genuinely committed to working together on an agreement for fair retribution and also a good plan for the future. I left the meeting feeling blessed and pretty confident that these young offenders would not find themselves in this kind of activity again.

I feel strongly that this program of restorative justice can make the difference in young people's lives. We as a community will win some and lose some, but if we as followers of Christ sit back and do nothing, we will lose them all. As we begin this New Year, may God continue to stir in our hearts the desire to share His love to all, and especially those referred to the VORP Ministry.

Jeff Klein is our VORP Coordinator for our newest church to the VORP family, Central Community Church, in addition to his regular duties as a volunteer mediator.

Volunteer Mediator Training

February 8 & 9
 March 28 & 29

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

Call 455-9803 to reserve a spot.

VORP Staff	
Noelle Daoudian	Director
Johnny Phouthachack	Agreement Manager
Morgan Crawford	Case Manager
Norma Cabrera	Bookkeeper

VORP Board Members	
Michael Blue, <i>Chair</i>	Arthur Wint
Dave Purvis, <i>Secretary/Treasurer</i>	José Chaparro
Ron Blalack	Magi Fainer-Towne



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