

Victim Offender Reconciliation Program of the Central Valley, Inc.

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NEWS

I received a VORP case in September from the Reedley Peace Center VORP coordinator, Carol Krehbiel. The offenders had already been told about VORP by their PO and were willing to meet with me so that I could explain the program to them. All of the boys had strong family support and all were willing to go to mediation. One of the Victims was also willing to go to mediation; he wanted the boys to take responsibility for their actions.

The mediation took place at the First Mennonite Church in Reedley on October 22, 2008, a day when the boys got out of school early. The boys were respectful, looked at the victim when speaking to him, told their story, and apologized. The victim was interested in learning what had happened to the other offenders in the case; the offenders stated that they didn't know. He also was interested in what the court had ordered as pun-

Taggers Take Responsibility

ishment and would relay that information to all the victims whose property had been tagged that night. The victim then told his story, the aggravation it caused him as well as the out-of-pocket expense he incurred to repaint the garage doors they tagged. He also told of the anger the neighbors experienced the next morning, when they awoke to find their houses and fences defaced.

The Victim stated that he spent \$500.00 to repaint his garage doors. He had cleaned them, but the tagging still showed. The boys were willing to each pay \$167.00 and wanted to pay it as soon as possible. One parent suggested that they give themselves enough time to find a job and the final pay date was set for March, 2009.

The offenders then reassured the victim that they would never do anything again that would cause another person aggravation because of defaced

property. They could relate to finding their own property tagged and would be angry. All of the offenders told of their plans for their futures and again apologized. Each offender had then written a letter of apology and handed it to the victim. The victim then invited the boys to stop by when they were in the neighborhood to watch football on TV. A short discussion followed about their favorite teams.

Before the meeting adjourned, the attending parent expressed her thanks to VORP for providing the opportunity for the offenders to make amends. She talked of the hardship this had been for the families of these offenders. I enjoyed meeting all of the people in this case and am encouraged to know that there are so many good people in this world.

Karen Peterson, Reedley
Peace Center VORP

Our new intern Ernesto

Hello everybody! My name is Ernesto Cazares and I am an intern from Fresno State University. I am a Criminology major with an option in Law Enforcement. I will be receiving my Bachelors Degree after the spring semester of 2009. I am so excited! I am also planning on obtaining a Masters in Social Work and also a P.P.S. credential for the purpose of one day becoming a high school counselor.

I first learned of this program when Noelle Daoudian came to one of my classes and did a presentation about VORP. I was immediately interested in the program because it is based on the concept of restorative justice. I wanted to volunteer for the program but, because of work and school I was unable to do so. However, the opportunity presented itself when it came time for me to do an internship. I believe that this is a great ex-

perience because I will be working with the youth of this area. VORP is a great program because it includes victims who are often excluded from the criminal justice system. Victims now have an avenue to voice their concerns, issues, and questions. Whether I become a high school counselor or a police officer, I will have had hands-on experience working with young men and women of this area.

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

\$200 \$100 \$50 Other

Name:

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On Saturday, November 22, Macy's is sponsoring Community Shopping Day. VORP is selling tickets that entitles you to a 20% discount off almost EVERYTHING at Macy's, plus an additional \$10 off of one purchase of \$25 or more. (You can pre-shop that week if you won't be available on the 22nd or would like to beat the crowds.) Enjoy special events, product samplings, beauty galas, and more!

Plus, enter to win a \$1,000 Macy's Shopping Spree! ALL proceeds from tickets sold by VORP will be donated directly to our organization, so buy your ticket today!

To purchase your \$10 ticket, contact the VORP office at 455-9803



A big **THANK YOU** goes out to all who attended, supported, donated, and volunteered at our fall 2008 fundraiser, "A Night in Tuscany!" It was a wonderful evening shared with many VORP volunteers and longtime supporters, as well as new faces who were just learning of the value of work we do. We had a lot of fun with the dessert auction- as the competitive side of some people came out- and we especially enjoyed the personal testi-

mony from Guillermo De La Isla, Jr. who shared so candidly and honestly of his life change and experience going through the VORP process. We were also privileged to have the Honorable Denise Whitehead receive her award for supporting partnership with VORP as well as Chief Probation Officer Linda Penner to receive the award honoring our 25 year relationship with Fresno County Probation.

Thanks again to all who made this event successful, not only from the staff, but from those who will benefit from our program in the future!



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