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NEWS



Victim Offender Reconciliation Program
of the Central Valley, Inc.

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Reflections on Reconciliation-Noelle Daoudian

It's one of the most wonderful times of the year, people are generally in good spirits (despite the economic recession), parties are being thrown, gifts are exchanged, family and friends are gathered close, and for some school is ending for the semester! I have the privilege of teaching a class at Fresno Pacific University in which the students take the VORP training and work on a case. This semester, as others in the past, the students really enjoyed the practical experience they received through their VORP case. Two students, Noelle Jeschien and Tamara Gerbrandt worked on a case where a boy jumped on the hood and roof of a car while the victim was at a stoplight and damaged the car. When they met with the boy and his father, they learned that the day before this offense, the boy's father had expressed how proud he was of him since he hadn't got into any trouble. The next day he got a call from his son from juvenile hall asking for a ride home. Needless to say his father was disappointed and they both agreed to meet with the victim to try and make things right with her.

The same day the mediators met with the victim as both she and the offender lived outside of Fresno. Right after the meeting with the offender they called the victim (who lived down the street) and she said to come by her home. The victim was very open and eager to meet with the offender. She thought this was a great opportunity for her to reach out and help him be accountable for what he had done.

The car which was damaged was her "dream" car and she had been saving for it for years. It was only shortly after she bought it that the offense occurred. She wanted him to understand the impact his actions have on others as well as the consequences of his actions. She mentioned that when her daughter was younger she got into some trouble and said that she would have loved it if her daughter could have gone through a program like VORP.

The victim and offender came together the following week for mediation. They shared their stories and the offender apologized for what he had done. The victim was able to share how she was upset at what happened and that she was afraid that he might come back again. He said he would not do anything like this again and they agreed that instead of paying her back for the damages, she wanted him to work it off volunteering for a public service department like the fire station so he would learn the value of money. She also said that if they saw each other on the street she would like to be able to say "hi". The mediators reported that they truly felt that reconciliation had taken place. On reflection of the case, Noelle wrote: *"I have fed the homeless and cared for the sick, but it wasn't as fulfilling as the VORP mediation."*

This time of year as we celebrate the hope of reconciliation with God through the birth of His son, Jesus Christ, may we strive to put our faith into practice and bring reconciliation to others around us.

May you and your family have a blessed Christmas.

- Noelle



VORP Mediation Training Dates

January 30-31

February 20-21

March 20-21

All trainings are 2 days:

Friday 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm and
Saturday from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Trainings are held on the campus of Fresno Pacific University.

Please call (559) 455-9803 to register or for more information.

Volunteering With VORP

My name is Danielle Bove and I am a Mennonite volunteer working with VORP for the year. I've spent the last three years in St. Paul, MN. Before that, I lived in Seattle for nine years, and consider the Northwest my home, though I do love cold, snowy Midwestern winters. I missed the West coast; originally I had planned to volunteer in Seattle, but their unit was full, so I came to Fresno. I'd never visited California and relished the adventure. I volunteered with MVS because I wanted meaningful, Christian work in my life again. I have certainly found that with VORP.

VORP and MVS have had a long relationship; I am just one of the many volunteers that have been placed at this worthy organization.

Before coming to work for VORP I'd had little knowledge of restorative justice. As a mediator, it's been an awesome experience to witness reconciliation between a victim and offender. I also work with the Sustaining Friends program, and I am continually amazed at the community's support for and belief in our organization.

Not many people have heard of Mennonite Voluntary Service or Mennonites. They are a Protestant European sect that formed in the 16th century. They take their name from Menno Simons, one of their leaders who was martyred in 1561. Mennonites believe that baptism should be received as an adult, they are committed to peace and non-violence, and see service and com-

munity as pillars of their faith. The MVS program places volunteers all over North America and the world. Life as a volunteer has its challenges. In exchange for a year of unpaid service, my roommates and I receive room and board and a small monthly stipend of \$50. We share a house together, share chores and eat communal meals. Satisfying the culinary tastes of four different people can be tricky at times and we must practice generosity with a single shower and one television. The community and relationships we're building, however, are worth it. I am very grateful for the work and living experience MVS has given me.



Thank you for your year-long support. Please remember VORP in your year-end giving. All contributions are greatly appreciated as without them we would be unable to do the reconciliation work in our community.
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

VORP Board Members

Arthur Wint	Chair
Jose Chaparro	Vice-Chair
Magi Fainer-Towne	Treasurer
Dave Purvis	Secretary
Jason Ekk	

VORP Staff

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

Center for Peacemaking

Ron Claassen	Director
Holly McFarlin	Administrator
Duane Ruth-Heffelbower	VORP Webmaster

Nativity: A Christmas Poem by John Donne

*Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb,
 Now leaves His well belov'd imprisonment,
 There He hath made Himself to His intent
 Weak enough, now into the world to come;
 But O, for thee, for Him, hath the inn no room?
 Yet lay him in this stall, and from the Orient,
 Stars and wise men will travel to prevent
 The effect of Herod's jealous general doom.
 Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith's eyes, how He
 Which fills all place, yet none holds Him, doth lie?
 Was not His pity towards thee wondrous high,
 That would have need to be pitied by thee?
 Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,
 With His kind mother, who partakes thy woe.*



Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia

WE NEED INTERPRETERS!!

If you speak any other language in addition to English, we need your help. We are building a strong database of interpreters and are in special need of Hmong, Vietnamese, and Cambodian. Without interpreters, these cases become very difficult to coordinate and mediate. Thank you for your help.

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