

VORP INTERN EDITION:

Experiencing Reconciliation

VICTIM OFFENDER RECONCILIATION PROGRAM OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY, INC.

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My name is Cassie Florence I am a student at California State University of Fresno. Currently, I am working toward a degree in Criminology with an option in Victimology and will be graduating at the end of May. I have been a VORP intern since December of 2008 and it has been a wonderful experience. One of the requirements VORP wants is for interns to participate in the mediation process between the offender and victim. I just recently completed my mediation and it was successful. The offender and his older brother had broken into the victim's home and burglarized the home taking various items and then rode off on the victim's two bikes. The individual meetings

between victim and offender went extremely well and were a big step forward in completing the process of reconciliation between victim and offender. The joint meeting turned out very well and both parties showed immense respect for one another. It was really amazing to watch the process of the victim and offender expressing their feelings towards one another. By watching the offender interact with the victim you could immediately see that it was not easy for the offender to express their wrongdoing. The victim was very open about expressing their feelings, but showed signs of nervousness too. After they talked for a while they got more comfortable and were able to

move forward and learn from the experience. The restitution they decided on was good for both parties and an agreement was made. VORP is a wonderful and unique organization. The reason why I love interning with them is because people are given a second chance, not only to better their own lives, but to also better their community. VORP also gives a chance for the victim to be heard and to receive restitution for their victimization. It has been a privilege interning with VORP and this first hand experience will only better my career in the future.

More Great Interns

Michael Garcia

I am a student at CSU, Fresno majoring in victimology/criminology, and I am in intern at VORP. As a intern with VORP for the spring semester 2009, I've been fortunate to learn and perform a number of new objectives. Some of my responsibilities include: working on cases involving offenses between victims and offenders, participating in mediation sessions, and assisting the VORP staff when communicating with non-English speaking personnel. Overall, my time spent with VORP has been a great experience, and I'm glad to have worked along side its professional staff.

Seth Hadley

I am an intern here at VORP for the Spring semester. I am originally from Exeter, CA and will receive a bachelors of science degree in Criminology with an option in victimology this May. VORP is a great way to socially communicate with all types of different cultures in the Fresno County area, so the experience is unique as well as rewarding. I believe the restorative justice VORP stands for is key in restructuring and repairing relationships between offenders and victims.

Megumi Tajima

I'm here for the internship from Fresno State University. My major is criminology with an option in Victimology. I am actually an international student from Japan. The reason why I came here was that I would like to talk to both victim and offenders, and the criminal justice system in the U.S. is much better than in Japan. Finally I found VORP in Fresno. VORP was absolutely what I wanted to do. I was really lucky because this year will be the last year for me! I would like to enjoy the internship and seriously, I would like to seriously complete a case by the end!

Case Opportunities in Outlying Cities

I would like to first off say thank you to all the mediators who have been diligent in seeing their cases through from start to finish, whatever the results, you are a tremendous asset and I appreciate all the hard work day in and out that you do to accomplish your VORP cases. I also wanted to take this opportunity to let anyone who may be in the areas of **Orange Cove, Firebaugh, or Kerman** know that if you are interested or able to take a case it would be greatly appreciated by all here in the VORP office.

Currently I have several cases that have been pending in these areas but have not been able to proceed in any of them because our mediation resources do not extend currently out to these areas. One of the Fresno Juvenile Probation Officers who has always been diligent in faxing cases to VORP was recently transferred to the outlying counties, so the great news is he continues to fax us cases, unfortunately a lot of these cases as you can

tell are in the farther outlying areas of Fresno County.

I have discussed it with Noelle and unfortunately if no one is currently able to take these cases in these communities we will have to return them and future cases from these areas back to Probation. In years past VORP has had individuals in these areas, it is my hope to re-establish connection with churches or individuals in these areas so we wont have to return these cases to Fresno Probation without presenting the opportunity for those involved in these cases to go through mediation and experience the VORP model of Restorative Justice.

Thank you all again for your tremendous work,

Morgan

A Big Thanks to Our Interns!

Every semester I have the privilege of working with about nine interns from California State University mostly from the Criminology/ Victimology department, as many of you can tell. It is exciting to be part of their educational journey especially as many of them will go on to work in the criminal justice field and maybe in the juvenile justice field. It is wonderful to see their eyes open to the world of restorative justice and understand and identify the benefit for both victims and offenders as well as their families. Interns are also instrumental in the everyday operations of case management and agreement management through the year. Our office would not function as smoothly or efficiently without them! Plus, they add new life and ideas to the office which allows us to grow and progress as an organization.

Over and over again I get referrals from past interns who tell their friends at school that VORP is a place where they will get great hands-on experience as well as great training during their internship. To me, when someone tells someone else that they need to give their time and talent to a particular organization, when there are many options out there, it speaks to the caliber of the program and the mission which we hope to spread throughout our community of accountability, reconciliation, and healing. Thanks for all you do!

- Noelle



Victim Offender Reconciliation Program of the Central Valley, Inc.

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