

Victim Offender Reconciliation Program of the Central Valley, Inc  
 4882 E. Townsend Ave. Fresno, CA 93727  
 phone (559) 455-9803 fax (559) 252-4800 <http://vorp.org>

## Rose Bush

As I write this article from my new home in St. Louis, MO, I realize that I've missed golden California more than I thought I would. My mind wanders back to San Francisco's narrow, fogged streets, to the blessed, salty coolness of the coast, to Los Angeles, the epicenter of freedom. Yet it is Fresno's fruit lined streets, lovely mountain views and all my friends that I miss most. Before beginning my term with Mennonite Voluntary Service as a VORP volunteer, I had never even visited California, knew rather little about Fresno and even less about restorative justice. Here are a few of the things I have learned:

1. Trying to affect systematic change is the most challenging of endeavors.
2. Always look on the bright side. Hackneyed but true, a positive attitude is the best defense against cynicism and fatigue. Noelle's chocolate chip cookies always helped brighten the office mood as well!
3. There's always more than one side to a story and an open mind can accommodate both of them.
4. In a nonprofit office coffee is as necessary as toner and staples.
5. Learn how to make yourself fit into an environment rather than expecting it to change for you.
6. Don't fret over things you can't change.
7. Community is the playing field for empathy and is essential to peacemaking.

8. The heartening fellowship of a church community, especially Fresno's Mennonite Community Church, is an amazing thing.

9. Love, like fruit off a tree, should be shared with as many people as possible. And many thanks to our neighbors, who begged us to come pick their plums and apricots!

10. There should be more focus on all the good things Fresno has going on: a vibrant arts scene, a diverse community of friendly people, fantastic Mexican paletas, Armenian pastries! Where else can you get constant sunshine, eat cactus for breakfast and have oranges rolling into your path on the sidewalk?

One of the things I've enjoyed the most about living in Fresno is the roses and they give me a fitting metaphor for my two years at VORP. Restorative justice, I think, is like a rose bush. In full bloom it dazzles and gladdens us with its perfect beauty. Like roses, mediation seems so difficult to cultivate but once the seeds are planted it flowers far beyond expectation. Restorative justice is tough, able to weather scorn, fear and disbelief like rose bushes bear the relentless August heat. There is a saying that roses don't know when to quit. Neither does restorative justice.

By: Daniella Bove

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### **VORP Mediator Training**

**November 12 & 13th**

Call (559) 455-9803 for reservations or check out our website for more information:

<http://vorp.org/training.shtml>

All trainings held at Fresno Pacific University



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## Introducing New Communication and Marketing Assistant



Hi, my name is Marrissa Lopez, and I am the new Communication and Marketing Assistant here at the VORP office.

This means that I will be working very hard on the social media websites that VORP is connected with as well as the newsletter that VORP puts out.

I originate from Hanford, CA, but I moved to Fresno when it came time for college. I am a recent graduate of Fresno Pacific University. I spent all four years of my college education there; I majored in Psychology, minored in Criminal Justice and did my focus series in Peacemaking and Conflict Studies. It was in the spring of my sophomore year that I first became familiar with VORP. I decided to take a class for my focus series called Victims, Trauma and Recovery; this class encompassed a media-

tion practicum. This practicum consisted of me completing the VORP training as well as one case through the VORP office.

The case that I completed for VORP had a profound effect on me; I had been toying with the idea of changing what my focus would be in psychology for the future. I had originally thought of going into a forensic psychology program after college, but after I completed this case I started to lean more towards the counseling side of psychology.

I am now a full-time graduate student at Fresno Pacific University—Seminary. I am working on a Master of Arts in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling. Had I not experienced the VORP case that I had, I do not know if this is the program that I would have chosen for myself. I am truly grateful for the experience I had with my VORP case and I look forward to working in this office and helping to spread the word about VORP.

### Meet the Interns!



**Samantha Tanney**— I am currently a senior at Fresno State University. I am pursuing my Bachelors degree in Victimology. Along with going to school and interning at VORP, I work for my family's business. I

hope to continue with victim advocacy in the future.



**Ashley Rudd**- I was born and raised her in Fresno. I am a senior at Fresno State and am majoring in Criminology with a victimology focus. Along with school and this internship I also work as a server at

Tahoe Joes. I hope to work as a victim advocate in the court system after I graduate.



**Chelsi Ryan**— I am a senior at Fresno State majoring in Behavioral Science. I am originally from a small town called Lompoc, and I moved to Fresno for school. I learned about VORP through a friend who had interned here the year before. Although an internship is not

required for my major I took it upon myself to get one in the hopes of bettering myself in the real world. I love working with juveniles and I hope to continue to do so after I graduate.

## California Victim Offender Program Network Gathering

On November 3rd there was a gathering at Fresno Pacific University of Victim Offender Programs from all over California. Groups came together to share what work is being done in their area and the results that have been seen from that work. There were also individuals hoping to learn so that they might implement these programs in their own area. Not only were statistics heard from the other groups, but it was also a time of learning from each other. We were able to see what different techniques are being used as well as what other programs have sprung up from VORP's in different areas. More details will come later about what was shared and learned in this meeting so stay tuned for more information about what is happening elsewhere in California.

HTTP://VORP.ORG

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FRESNO, CA 93727

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