Victim Offender Reconciliation Program

2529 Willow Ave. Clovis, CA 93612 -(209) 291-1120

VORP News - Jaly 1984 - Fresno County

VORP is maturing in Fresno. Many of you have contributed to that growth. We have a long way to go before we can say that we have reached maturity (actually that will be a continuing process) but we are progressing. An important step in that process has been to move from being part of another organization (Criminal Justice Alternatives, Inc.) to becoming incorporated on our own. We are now functioning as a separate organization with a separate board of directors. They have assumed an increasing responsibility for the program. That feels good to me and I would like to recognize them now. President, Duane Heffelbower; Vice President, Mary Stegall; Secretary/Treasurer, Richard Unruh; Finance Committee Chairman, Steve Nilmeier; other directors include: Margaret Hudson, Doug Lanier, Kent Levis, Dave Purvis, and Kenneth Quenzer. These people are all giving of their time and money to help support VORP. One of their first actions as a board was to agree that all of them would contribute financially on a regular basis. Their commitment has been an encouragement to me and I am sure is to you as well. More than half of our monthly expense is provided for by regular monthly contributions.

Last month I referred to a call from a victim who had participated in the VORP process. He indicated that he worked for a company that had a foundation that made gifts to local charities based on the recommendation of employees. He wondered whether we accepted funds like that and if so he said he would like to recommend VORP for consideration. I put together the information that he needed in order to submit his request. When I took it out to him we had a chance to talk and reflect on his experience as a victim. His home had been broken into and vandalized and almost everything in it which was movable was stolen. You may recall the case. Leon Isaac had written his impression in working with it as a volunteer. This victim shared again with me how they had felt violated and how angry and bitter they had been. He also shared how helpful VORP had been to him in adjusting to what had happened. In his request to his company foundation he included the following, "As a victim ... I felt less bitter and it restores a faith back into our society and justice system." "The program does not solve our total crime problem, but it is a step in a constructive direction. If you were ever a victim, you can truly appreciate their efforts." I talked to this victim today and he reported that we had been approved for a \$100 grant. He said that there was alor of competition and that he hoped that next year he might get even more for VORP.

This experience is one that I wanted to share because I think that it is a remarkable affirmation for all of us involved in VORP.

A <u>VORP GATHERING</u> is being planned for <u>October 4, 1984</u>. Our main speaker for the evening will be Judge Fitch, Presiding Judge, Juvenile Court, County of Fresno. We want this to be an occasion for volunteers, financial contributors, board of directors, staff and others interested in VORP to get together for inspiration, encouragement, and celebration. We will gather at the fellowship hall of the College Community Church in Clovis. We will also share a potluck meal. The details will be included in future newsletters. I wanted to share the date with you now so you could <u>place this date on your calendar</u>.

Shalom, Ron Claassen, Program Director