



## Victim Offender Reconciliation Program

VORP NEWS - SEPTEMBER 1985

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!** Gail, our Mennonite Voluntary Service Worker, left this morning for Harvard Divinity School. As we began our staff meeting we really experienced grief in her leaving. We also worked at how we are going to cope until her replacement arrives. (We don't know at this point when that will be.) We are committed to volunteer mediators and yet 'staff' have mediated approximately 70% of the cases. We are now committed, from vision and necessity, to reversing the percentages so that 70% of the cases will be mediated by volunteers. To accomplish this we will need help. We will need those volunteers who have already been trained to accept more cases and we will need to train additional volunteers. With this change and with Greg and Roxanne sharing Gail's case management responsibilities, we plan to continue offering the same high quality, efficient, and effective service to victims and offenders without reducing our case load.

**PRESENTATIONS ARE AVAILABLE!** We know that many people don't yet know about VORP and this "ministry of reconciliation". We are available to make presentations to churches or Sunday school classes or other church or civic groups. We have two excellent slide/tape sets ("The Broken Community" and "Mediating the Conflict") which are each approximately 12 minutes in length. We prefer having 45 minutes to 1 hour in order to allow time to share some local stories and to answer some of the many questions that a VORP presentation stimulates. We will also invite participation. We need volunteer mediators, financial support and prayer support.

**CONTRIBUTORS ARE IMPORTANT PEOPLE!** VORP relies on individuals and churches for support. Our 1985 budget is \$30,000.00. (The cost to incarcerate one juvenile in Juvenile Hall for one year is approximately \$22,000.) To be on target we should have received \$20,000 through August. Donations through August are actually \$15,800. We have small grant applications in with two church agencies. The need for your help is clear. The VORP ministry is a gift of the church to people in need. Contributors help make it possible. Ten to twenty-five dollars per month is a BIG help.

**FOLLOW-UP LETTERS ARE BEING SENT TO VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS.** While the mediator often is asked why they are involved, there are also times when this question is not asked. The mediation is a tremendous service and is good. Yet, we often felt that we were withholding important information by not sharing clearly what motivates the service and giving opportunity for further discussion. As a result of many hours of discussion and many drafts, our staff has decided to send the following letters to victims and offenders when a case is complete.



Victim Offender Reconciliation Program

Dear

We, at VORP, wish to congratulate you for participating in the VORP program. We know that it was probably not easy to face up to the person who was hurt by your offense. We also know that it was a big step toward taking responsibility for what happened, working through that and feeling good about yourself again.

We believe that when you took the steps to make it right with the victim, that brought peace to you, the victim, and your families. We believe that you did it right. The peace we feel with each other is a taste of what you did. We believe that each of us is a taste of what it feels like to be at peace with God. God loves all of us--victims, offenders, and VORP workers--very much. The Bible tells us that no matter what we have done in our lives, God wants us to have peace with Him.

You may already be at peace with God. Whether you are or not, we would be glad to discuss this with you further, or suggest someone from a nearby church who would be glad to meet with you.

You may have some other problems or questions (like family conflicts, alcohol or drug problems, financial problems) that you would like to discuss. We would be glad to meet with you or to refer you to someone. Please feel free to contact anyone on our staff at 291-1120.

Sincerely,

Ron Claassen  
Program Director

2829 Willow Avenue • Clovis, California 93612 • (209) 291-1120



Victim Offender Reconciliation Program

Dear

We, at VORP, wish to congratulate you for participating in the VORP program. It may have been difficult to confront the person who victimized you. You certainly did not have to do that but you were willing to make an extra effort to resolve the conflict and put it behind you.

We believe that when you and the offender took the steps toward resolving the conflict and making things right, that brought peace to you, the offender, and your families. We believe that this is God at work. The peace we feel with each other is a taste of what it feels like to be at peace with God. God loves all of us--victims, offenders, and VORP workers--very much. The Bible tells us that no matter what we have done in our lives, God wants us to have peace with Him.

You may already be at peace with God. Whether you are or not, we would be glad to discuss this with you further, or suggest someone from a nearby church who would be glad to meet with you.

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Sincerely,

Ron Claassen  
Program Director

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VOLUNTEER TRAINING REGISTRATION - SEPTEMBER 19 and 26, 6:00 to 10:00 PM

Please pre-register if you plan to attend the two session training. There is no cost to the volunteer. At the end of the training sessions we will discuss your commitment to accepting cases. We think it is important that you have the freedom to decide against accepting cases if after the training you decide that you are not well suited to this ministry. The training sessions will be at the College Community Mennonite Brethren Church, 25229 Willow Ave, Clovis, CA. To pre-register complete and return the form below or call our office at 291-1120.

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Yes, I am planning to attend the two part training session to be held on September 19 and 26.  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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Shalom,  
Ron Claassen  
Program Director

V. O. R. P.  
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CLOVIS, CA 93612

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