

VORP is one way of doing Restorative Justice. I say Restorative Justice because there is so much confusion about what we mean when we say "justice" that we have to add modifiers to clarify what we really mean. Retributive Justice is when we inflict pain (punishment) on the offender because they inflicted pain on a victim. Success is measured by whether the offender is convicted and punished. Restorative Justice is when the needs of the victim, community and offender are considered and steps are taken to make things as right as possible with those injured by the offense. Success is measured by whether those who were injured by the crime (victim, community, and offender) are restored.

VORP mediators are community volunteers who are trained to invite the offender and victim to decide individually if they are willing to look for a constructive resolution to the conflict and then, if they are willing, to lead them in a forgiveness/reconciliation process: 1. recognize the injustices (discuss the facts and feelings in the violation), 2. restore the equity or balance between them (agree on what can be done to make things as right as possible now - realizing that to some extent this is always symbolic), and 3. establish future commitments (give assurances and take steps to prevent the injustice from happening again).

In late 1992 a community task force lead by Mr. James Rowland met and made several recommendations to the VORP Board which were adopted and published in the January Newsletter as 1993 goals.

1. Continue to expand the juvenile VORP program.

In 1993 VORP received and worked with 489 cases...Up from 329 cases in 1992.

2. Start a pilot adult VORP program by Summer 1993.

The first adult cases have been received. Nov and Dec newsletters told the story of an adult case. Work is continuing to clarify some details in the referral system.

3. Provide leadership in the churches and community advocating the principles and values of Restorative Justice.

VORP ended 1993 with 35 Sustaining Friend Churches, up from 18 at the end of 1992.

120 new volunteers were trained in 1993.

Howard Zehr and Dan Van Ness (National Leaders in Restorative Justice) met with community and criminal justice leaders.

Monthly Newsletters (with victim/offender reconciliation stories) were sent to more than 2500 local individuals.

The primary support and initiative for VORP has come from churches and individuals who understand and care that God's desire is for people to experience shalom, peace as a result of responsible right relations between individuals and with God.

Churches who are "Sustaining Friends with VORP" have formalized their mutually supportive relationship with VORP. VORP "Sustaining Friends - Churches" in 1993 were: Apostolic Revival Tabernacle, Bethany Church, Bethel Temple Church, Butler Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church, Campus Baptist Church, College Church of Christ, College Community Mennonite Brethren Church, Downtown Church, First Congregational Church, Reedley First Mennonite Church, First Presbyterian Church, Fresno Christian Reformed Church, God's Family Church, Iglesia de Dios, Lord of All Nations Mission Church - Lutheran, Memorial United Methodist Church, Mennonite Community Church, New Hope Community Church, Northpark Community Church, Northwest Church, Peace Community Church - Mennonite, The Peoples Church, Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church, Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church, Sanger First Presbyterian Church, St. Columba's Episcopal Church, St. Paul Newman Center, Trinity Lutheran Church, United Japanese Christian Church, Valley Christian Center, Vineyard Christian Fellowship-Clovis, Vineyard Christian Fellowship-Fresno, Westside Church of God, Wesley United Methodist Church and West Side Miracle Revival Center. Elaine Enns has provided leadership to this effort. If your church is not a "Sustaining Friend," please call Elaine Enns at 291-1120.

## 1993 Summary

*Staff transition is part of our lives* because VORP relies heavily on short-term (1-2 years) volunteers. Although they are short term, they serve with energy and enthusiasm combined with high quality skills and competency. This combination and their willingness to serve for a subsistence monetary allowance

helps make it possible for the Fresno VORP to provide so much service at such a low cost. This year we were blessed in that both Linda Olthoff and Barbara Toews, from the Mennonite Voluntary Service program, extended their one year terms to two years. Barbara and Linda provided the primary leadership for the day to day case management and follow-up. Elaine Enns, who served 3 years as a volunteer, has been employed part-time for her second year while attending Seminary. I continue to be employed full-time by the Fresno Pacific College Center for Conflict Studies and Peacemaking (CCSP) with VORP contracting for 2 days per week of my time (no change from last year). Shannon Janzen serves as Administrative Assistant at the Center.

*This year we inaugurated our Director in Training program.* The goal of this program is to train an individual to assume full leadership of a Church Based VORP. Laura Fultz spent her first six months in training in the Fresno Office and then began providing leadership to the Madera County VORP. Todd Wenger was sent by Mennonite Central Committee. He spent approximately four months in training in preparation for his work in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Both Laura and Todd made significant contributions to VORP while training.

*VORP Board of Directors assume both financial and policy responsibility for VORP.* VORP is organized as a non-profit, public benefit corporation which is guided by a Board of Directors who come from a wide range of churches in the area. Denise Jackson, President; Joby Dupuis, Secretary/Treasurer; Deborah Owdom; Russell Templeton; Mike Manghera; Jim Parks; Richard Unruh; Ron Claassen; David Janzen, and new in 1993, Jonathan Villalobos. We want to express special appreciation to Richard and David who have resigned. Thank you for many years of service. The commitment, dedication, and wisdom of each board member is a vital part of what makes VORP work.

*VORP Mediators are people who put their values and faith into action.* They give up personal time to help victims and offenders find the opportunity in what otherwise seems like a totally negative experience. 1993 VORP mediators were: Mark Abate, Leta Abdulfattah, Julie Apperson, John Auer, Janet Baker, Nancy Barnes, Ed Barton, Brian Bauman, John Bergey, Luis Borja, Jim Carlson, Larry Carmean, Jean Chaffee, Judy Charbonneau, Greg Chittum, Roxanne Claassen, Ron Claassen, Heather Compton, Russanne Crum, Jinny Daily, Sheila Davidson-Rollin, Kristy Davis, Ed Deatherage, Chuck Deckert, Tracy Dexter, Jill Dunagan, Roger Dunlap, Jane Dupree, Joby Dupuis, Marwood Dyck, Megan Edwards,

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Mary Elizondo, Boback Emad, Elaine Enns, Mark Eversole, John Fisher, Yvonne Freve, Vernetta Friesen, Kim Fuller, Laura Fultz, Quentin Garland, Rick Gaston, Jon Glover, Susan Glover, George Gong, Scott Graber, Jay Griffith, Sherien Guindy, Pauline Harder, Glenda Hawkins, Julie Hershey Bergen, Andrew Hershey Bergen, Kathy Hilyard, Noemi Hines, Phil Hofer, Loma Hollett, Leon Indart, Denise Jackson, Nancy James, Beverly Jim, Nancy Jorgenson, Blaine Kelley, Larry Kenkel, Susan Lamadrid-Fujino, Carmen Lango, Jerry Linscheid, Judy Litten, Ted Loewen, Linda Mack, Mike Manghera, Pat Mares, Elmer Martins, Kay Mathison, Duane McAlister, Dale McNeil, Tracy Meadors, Roger Minassian, Willie Moore, Sally Moreno, Carla Moyer, Shaun Neal, Linda Olthoff, Julie Overton, Bruce Owdom, Kent Parr, Alain Patton, Steve Penner, Ron Perring, Lora Pizarro, Ben Ray, Tony Redfern, Deborah Rekoon, Juan Romero, Maite Gayo Romero, Jean Ruble, David Ryburn, Karen Ryburn, Wesley Schmidt, Silvia Schultz, Patti Silva, Kathy Smith, Bill Smoyer, Richard Stone, Blanca Sullivan, Barbara Toews, Jack Triplett, Bob Valett, Susan Vasquez, Melinda Vaughn, Fernando Velez, Pam Wall, Todd Wenger, Rose Willems, Sherri Williams, Susan Wilson, Maureen Wolf and Jane Yow. "Blessed are the Peacemakers."

Referrals were received from the Juvenile Probation Intake as a diversion from the court system for some juvenile offenders who are first or second time offenders. VORP also receives referrals from the court. Occasionally we work with a self referral, either victim or offender. VORP received 489 referrals (up 49%) in

1993. Special thanks to all of the criminal justice officials who made referrals or in some other way helped us to do our job. VORP couldn't work without your support. And thanks to Judge Lawrence Jones, Presiding Juvenile Judge; Verne Speirs, Chief Probation Officer; Roger Palimino, Juvenile Probation Director. We recognize the wealth of experience among you. We appreciate your cooperation, advice and counsel.

*Financial Contributors are those silent partners* who faithfully and without recognition give of their hard earned money because they support reconciliation and want to see both victims and offenders restored. Without your financial support VORP would not exist in Fresno. Contributions in 1993 totaled \$50,753 (up 14% from 1992): 9% from board members, 56% from individuals, 27% from churches, and 8% honorariums, training fees, etc. Because of your generous giving, VORP ended the year with all expenses paid and \$2,500 to begin 1994. Thanks also to: College Community Church for donating office space; Pacific Printing Press for brochures, letterhead, business cards, etc.; David Janzen for bookkeeping; Mark Hill newsletter layout; Oasis for preparing newsletter for mailing; and Mark Hill, David Kleschold, and David Janzen for maintaining our computers.

VORP continues to expand throughout California. I continue to work with our Expansion/Consultation Central Function, now called Restorative Justice Ministries through the College CCSP. The expansion and support activity is funded by a \$5,000 grant from Mennonite Central Committee-West Coast, MCC Office of Criminal Justice, and Mennonite Conciliation Service.

Next VORP Mediator training events are scheduled for Feb. 1, 8, and 15, March 11 and 12 and May 9, 16 and 23. For details call Linda or Barbara at 291-1120.

VORP relies entirely on your contributions! If you aren't actively supporting VORP with volunteer time, prayer, or financial support, we are praying that this will be the year you start. The need is great!! "Blessed are the Peacemakers."

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WORKS!!!** The last two newsletters told the story of a victim and adult offender who participated in VORP. The offender learned the impact of his actions and accepted responsibility. The victim felt great emotional relief and compensation for losses. Following are some comments from the Defense Attorney, Barry Rekoon. "I have appeared at the sentencing of over 200 criminal defendants, as their attorney, and I have never seen the court reduce an offense [from a felony] to a misdemeanor on its own motion. Usually this is done, if at all, at the request of defense counsel." "The court realized what a powerful tool VORP is..." "...all parties walked away satisfied that justice had been done."

Shalom

Ron Claassen, Director

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