

Worthy of Note

VORP continues to develop in new areas. We continue to work with our Expansion/Consultation program now called Restorative Justice Ministries through Fresno Pacific College CCSP.

We arranged and hosted the Seventh Annual California VORP Gathering. We arranged and hosted the Second Annual Restorative Justice Ministries Conference.

The 300 page "Church Based VORP—Organizing/Program Manual" was completed and is now available.

"Starting a Church Based VORP" is a three day workshop designed to provide training on developing and maintaining a Church Based VORP. Participants the two workshops offered in 1994 included people from Texas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Singapore, and several counties in California. The expansion and support activity is funded in part by Mennonite Central Committee-West Coast, Mennonite Conciliation Services, and MCC Office of Crime and Justice.

Finances, etc.

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 1994 totaled \$53,331: 6.5% from board members, 55% from 550 individuals, 23% from churches, 8.5% fundraiser, 7% honorariums, training fees, etc.

Because of your generous giving, VORP ended the year with all expenses paid and \$850 to begin 1995.

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 and Mark Roy for newsletter layout; Oasis for preparing newsletter for mailing; and Mark Hill, David Kleschold, and David Janzen for maintaining our computers.

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VORP NEWS

VORP of the Central Valley, Inc.

February 1995

Mediation can lead to respect forgiveness – reconciliation

CAN WE RESPOND CONSTRUCTIVELY?

A crime incident happens when a person disrespects other persons and/or their property. Crime is wrong. It shouldn't happen. When it does happen, the question then becomes, what is an appropriate response?

DANGER AND OPPORTUNITY

The situation now presents both dangers and opportunities. The *danger* is that no action is taken, or that the action taken continues and escalates the disrespect—for the victim(s) and now perhaps also for the offender. The *opportunity* is that action can be taken to recognize the disrespect and its impact, that steps can be taken to restore the damage and learn respect, and that increased respect can prevent future occurrences of disrespect.

VORP mediators are community volunteers trained to invite and encourage the offender and victim to decide individually if they are willing to look for a constructive resolution to the conflict and, if they are willing, to lead in a forgiveness/reconciliation process:

- (1) recognize the injustices (tell/listen/summarize the events and impact in the violation and offender accepting responsibility);
- (2) restore the equity or balance between them as much as possible (agree on what can be done to make things as right as possible now – realizing that to some extent this is always symbolic, restoring equity is a combination of restitution and grace); and
- (3) establish commitments for a safer, more just future (give assurances and take steps to prevent the injustice from happening again).

FROM INCREASING HATRED TO INCREASING CARE

I think of reconciliation as being movement along a continuum from increasing hatred (disrespect) to increasing care (respect). While reconciliation cannot be forced, it happens between people who experience the forgiveness process (see outline above). Those who report reconciliation also report a greater sense of justice and a greater sense of safety. Respect increases.

VORP relies entirely on your contributions!

Please don't wait. January income did not meet January expenses. VORP can only grow if financial support grows. 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."**

VORP board members serve with dedication

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.

Our current Board of Directors are: Mike Mangerha, President; Jim Parks, Vice President; Deborah Owdom, Secretary/Treasurer; Jonathan Villalobos, Pam Hatwig, Rich Smith, Carol Fransen, David Kleschold, and Ron Claassen.

These board members carry the responsibility and potential liability for VORP. They receive very little recognition. In addition to overall program guidance their participation provides significant encouragement to staff.

Spring '95 VORP Mediator Training

Peacemaking skills are healing skills which are needed in our community. If you would like to advance the VORP peacemaking vision – or if you would simply like to improve your conflict resolution and interpersonal relationship skills—you should attend one of our upcoming volunteer mediator training events:

March 20, 27 & April 3

(Monday evenings, 6:30-9:30 PM)

June 2 & 3

(Friday evening, 6:30-9:30 PM;
Saturday, 8:30 AM-3:30 PM)

To register or for additional information, call Trevor, Jesse, or Laura at the VORP office: 291-1120.

The commitment, dedication, and wisdom of each board member is a vital part of what makes VORP work.

Those who left the board in 1994 because their term of service was completed or because they moved are: Denise Jackson (moved to Seattle), Russel Templeton, Richard Unruh, Joby Dupuis (moved to Spain), David Janzen (is continuing to do our computer work on our financial books). Each board member has an impact on VORP and while their formal service on the board ends their contributed wisdom continues to provide direction.

Thanks again to those currently serving and to all of you who have served on the board in the past.

VORP survives personnel transition

Because VORP relies heavily on short-term (1-2 year) volunteers, staff transition is part of our lives. Although they are short term, our voluntary service workers are highly-skilled, and they serve with energy and enthusiasm. Their competency – combined with their willingness to accept a subsistence monetary allowance – is the reason why the Fresno VORP can provide so much service at such a low cost.

This year in August we sadly said goodbye to Linda Olthoff and Barbara Toews, both from the Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) program. Linda is now in Illinois attending law school. Barbara is starting a new VORP in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Linda and Barbara served our community very well, and we are grateful for the opportunity to have worked with them.

We now have two new persons from the MVS program, Trevor Siemens and Jesse Corwin. Trevor arrived in December '94 and Jesse in January '95. We sincerely welcome them, and we look forward to their time with us in Fresno. While their training continues, Trevor and Jesse are already assuming significant responsibilities.

Last summer and fall, during the interim period, we were blessed with several people who stepped in to fill the gap and made it possible for VORP to continue with uninterrupted service.

Kent Collin, a student at California State University, Fresno, assumed responsibility for restitution follow-up. Jennifer Gamble assumed a wide variety of office responsibilities. Both Kent and Jennifer simply donated their time. For both of them, it was a substantial and sacrificial contribution.

To cover our case management and volunteer support needs, Kathy Stück, who is working on a customized voluntary service arrangement as administrative assistant for Restorative Justice Ministries, combined her efforts with Laura Fultz, an MVS worker who has been developing a new VORP in Madera County.

Thank you Jennifer, Kent, Kathy and Laura for your expertise and willingness to serve. VORP would have suffered a severe setback without you.

Elaine Enns is employed by VORP part-time while attending the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. Elaine has provided training and oversight to VORP in addition to her Sustaining Friend Churches responsibilities. After two and a half years in voluntary service and three years as part-time VORP staff, Elaine is becoming an old pro around here.

I continue to be employed full-time by the Fresno Pacific College Center for Conflict Studies and Peacemaking (CCSP). VORP contracts for two days per week of my time, just as last year.

Shannon Janzen, who first served as a volunteer staff person with VORP and then as administrative assistant at CCSP, is now devoting her primary time and energy to parenting.

— Ron Claassen

'Director in Training,' spouse learn VORP, share talents

The goal of the *Director in Training* program is to train an individual to assume leadership of a Church Based VORP. Howard Enns, from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, spent five months in training in Fresno VORP. He made a significant contribution to the program while training.

His wife, Florence, contributed her expertise of editing, layout and design to help develop the Church Based VORP Organizing Manual. Thanks to both of you for your significant contributions to VORP while in Fresno:

Volunteer mediators put values, faith into action

VORP mediators are volunteers 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.

1994 VORP MEDIATORS

Mark Abate, Leta Abdulfattah, Anita Aguiler, John Auer, Candice Baldwin, Margaret Baldwin, Shon Baldwin, Ed Barton, John Bergey (VORG), Paul Beard, Rebecca Bernardasci, Sybil Blaauw, Mark Bollwinkel, Gordon Boettcher, Winton Boyd, Bill Braun, Cheryl Brown.

Jim Carlson, Larry Carmean, Suzanne Carr, Florine Cash, Jean Chaffee, Ron Claassen, Roxanne Claassen, Kent Collin, Heather Coompton, Vincent Correll, Patricia Costa, Wenda Costa, Ruth Costa, Christine Cozac, Jinny Daily, Shelia Davidson-Rollin, Kristy Davis, Chuck Deckert, Peggy Dominguez, Megan Edwards, Mary Elizondo, Jeanine Elliott, Elaine Enns, Howard Enns, Lowell Ens, Nohemi Escamilla.

John Fisher, Yvonne Freve, Vernette Friesen, Laura Fultz, Richard Gaston, Jennifer Gamble, Laurel Gerbrandt, Scot Ginther, Jon Glover, Susan Glover, George Gong, Matthew Gosling, Jay Griffith, Pauline Harder, Pamela Hatwig, Glenda Hawkins,

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David Herrmann, Julie Hershey-Bergen, Andrew Hershey-Bergen, Philip Hofer, Becky Hoppert, Lejon Howard.

Leon Indart, Norma Jackson, Nancy James, Beverly Jim, Larry Kenkel, Thad Kennedy, Ken Kister, David Kleschold, Cyndi Kliewer, Ronit Klipp, Tad Kroeker, Sam Kuna, Pamela Lackey, Carmen Lango, Mary Ann Larsen-Pusey, Karen Latham, Jerry Linscheid, Judy Litten, Ted Loewen.

Linda Mack, Mike Manghera, Stephen Marvin, Elmer Martens, Paul Mavarogorge, Kay Mathison, George McCormick, Dale McNeil, Laurie Mitchell, Juanda Moore, Willie Moore, Sally Moreno, Shoua Moua, Dora Mugica, Dan Neufeld, Linda Olthoff, Jerrold Petkau, Marcus Page, Kent Parr, Steve Penner, Carolyn Philips, Marcia Price, Tony Redfern, Deborah Rekoon, Jean Ruble.

Heidi Schmidt, Silvia Schultz, Jan Shoji, Aly Shropshire, Trevor Siemens, Daniel Silva, Patti Silva, Bill Smoyer, Robert Spencer, Arthur Stewart, Gigi Stone, Kathy Stück, Debra Templeton, Vernon Thomas, Barbara Towes, Alexis Valos, Terra Van Dyke, Anthony Velez, Lucile Wheaton, Rose Willems, Anitra Williams, Susan Wilson, Maureen Wolf, Jane Wyatt-Mejia.

"Blessed are the Peacemakers."

Margaret Hudson, VORP Auxiliary sponsor successful fund-raiser

The VORP Fundraiser, *An Evening in Margaret Hudson's Backyard*, was a great success. Many new people heard about and contributed to VORP because of the event and over \$4,500 was raised. Many individuals and several businesses contributed to make it such a success. Special thanks to Margaret Hudson. Margaret was on the VORP Board of Directors in the early years of VORP and has continued to support VORP very generously with financial contributions. Margaret encouraged me to continue in the early years when I was ready to give up. Thanks again Margaret! The VORP Auxiliary provided leadership for the event. Valarie Olmstead is serving as chair and Laura Fultz provided staff support. Shannon Janzen and Carol Fransen are also providing leadership. You will be hearing from them. These events are one good way to introduce your friends to VORP.

Probation, courts refer cases by hundreds

Referrals were received primarily from criminal justice officials. Most referrals were from Juvenile Probation as a diversion from the court system for those juvenile offenders who are first or second time offenders. VORP also receives referrals on more serious cases from the courts, both juvenile and adult. A few referrals were made directly by the police. And occasionally we receive a self referral, either victim or offender. (these tend to be the most serious cases). VORP is often part of a sanction or sentence but occasionally the sole sanction. VORP received 439 referrals in 1994. 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. Thank you Verne Speirs, Chief Probation Officer, and Norma Susuki, Juvenile Probation Director. We recognize the wealth of experience and wisdom among you and your staff. We appreciate your cooperation, advice and counsel.

Sustaining Friend Churches provide prayer, volunteer, financial support in 1994

VORP happens because of the efforts of many people. It would be impossible to recognize all the people and organizations who made significant contributions. But knowing that, we will try to recognize as many as possible.

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.

There are currently 41 churches that have formalized their mutually-supportive relationship as Sustaining Friend Churches with VORP. Elaine Enns is the VORP staff person who works with the Sustaining Friend Churches. If your church is listed below, thanks. If your church is not listed below, please contact Elaine (251-1549).

VORP Sustaining Friend Churches in 1994 were: Apostolic Revival Tabernacle, Bethany Church, Bethel Temple Church, Butler Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church, Campus Baptist Church, Collegé Church of Christ, College Community Church (Mennonite Brethren), The Downtown Church, Faith United Methodist Fellowship, First Congregational Church, First Mennonite Church (Reedley), First Presbyterian Church, Fresno Christian Reformed Church, God's Family Church, Harmony Free Will Baptist Church, Iglesia De Dios, Lord of All Nations Mission Church – Lutheran.

Memorial United Methodist Church, Mennonite Community Church, New Hope Community Church, North Fresno Church – Mennonite Brethren, Northpark Community Church, Northwest Church, Peace Community Church – Mennonite, The Peoples Church, Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church, St. Columba's Episcopal Church, St. Luke's United Methodist Church, St. Paul Newman Center, Sanger First Presbyterian Church, Second Baptist Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, United Japanese Christian Church, Valley Christian Center, Vineyard Christian Fellowship Clovis, Vineyard Christian Fellowship Fresno, Wesley United Methodist Church, Westside Church of God, West Side Miracle Revival Center.

Special Issue: 1994 in Perspective