



AVP/CA Facilitator Facts

Alternatives to Violence Project/California Summer 2008
P.O. Box 3294, Santa Barbara, CA 93130-3294
www.AVPCalifornia.org 800/905-6765

For facilitators of California workshops

Calendar THIS: November 15 & 16

Every Fall, AVP/California holds a gathering of facilitators to share ideas and update on the amazing activity happening statewide. This year the East Bay Council is hosting. An extra half day of education has been added on Sunday.

Details were emailed.

What we learned at National

On Labor Day weekend a group 10 AVP/CA facilitators took the train to Seattle, then drove on to Bellingham, WA, where the AVP/USA annual conference was held. Four additional California facilitators also attended. Four of this California group facilitated workshops.

On the train the traveling facilitators met to discuss several topics including mentoring lead facilitators and apprentice facilitators (see "Mentoring") and the relationship of the local councils and AVP/CA.

The highlight of any conference of course is the opportunity to spend time with your peers from elsewhere. Barbara Moulton especially liked this quote from an Australian, "Listeners' and facilitators' job is to "hold a still and generous space".

Diana Couch enthused "I bring home the excitement of how AVP is making an impact on a world that really needs help. It encourages me to know that as I learn so are others and we share in a great adventure".

AVP/CA compared to other states!

The annual report on the activities of local and regional groups in the USA was presented at the conference and all the work you have done showed AVP/CA ahead of all states. Even our mothership NY didn't measure up in number of

Basic workshops (CA100 with 1544 participants, NY-81 with 1015 participants) and Training for Facilitators workshops (CA-20 with 222 participants, NY 54-147). It looks like we are offering more community workshops this Fall than all states combined and we have AVP in the same number of prisons as New York. WOW, keep up the good work!

New Outside Prison Coordinators

Three new Outside Prison Coordinators have just begun overseeing the programs in Vacaville's California Medical Facility, Guari Delgado, Blythe's Ironwood State Prison, Lynn Wolf living in Phoenix coming from the Minnesota program and when it is opened Solano State Prison in Vacaville, Jim Avera.

Outreach

San Joaquin Valley

One of the 2008 goals of AVP/CA was to focus outreach efforts in the San Joaquin Valley. 13 new facilitators were trained in Fresno launching the San Joaquin Valley Council after an six-month steady outreach effort by two people.

Internal

Another goal was to reach facilitators in the state to determine their interest. Intern Amy Watts and facilitator Gerald Haynes have been contacting as many facilitators as they can reach. Already we are seeing new people on teams as a result of an increased consciousness on the part of all Leads.

Desert

Ruth Davis, Community Partnership Manager at Ironwood State Prison has been working with Pat Hardy to seriously continue making the two prisons in Blythe independent, in other words- A local facilitators' council.

Facilitate a workshop this month. Check www.avpcalifornia.org for WORKSHOPS or watch your email for PRISON SCHEDULE

Gina Chapa has also been tapping her resources in the Coachella Valley (So. Cal. Desert) and has been contracted as Outreach Coordinator.

Bay Area

Over 30 facilitators came to a recent meeting of this local council and they are taking on all kinds of responsibilities locally and in five institutions. Thanks to Katherine Youngmeister's steady care.

Book Review: *Circle of Fire*

Circle of Fire by R.DoFray

Written by Pat Hardy

During the past year I have had the pleasure of getting to know Bertha Ford as she went through community AVP workshops and began facilitating. Her initial interest in AVP was her incarcerated husband's enthusiasm for the program. Early on she shared that they were writing a book and recently they published this 550-page tome themselves. As happens with self-publishing the retail cost of the final product is a hefty \$30+ and there is little editorial assistance by the "publishing house". These are my only problems with this insightful and powerful book.

Ray and Bertha Ford have written a classic portrayal of soft, wonderful family lives affected by the harsh realities of the California justice system over the past 40 years. The changes in the system and in life on the street affect the story during this period providing historical insights.

This story has many facets including vivid descriptions of violent situations in prison played out with that backdrop of the ever-present, underlying fear and the constant need for vigilance that all parts of the system can evoke. The lives affected by the system are tenderly portrayed bringing tears to my eyes often.

Ford movingly describes the feelings of all involved and articulately puts voices to these. Just in case you don't get what is going on, a voice crops up and interprets it for you. Though this is disconcerting in the beginning, because the story doesn't seem to need it. I found these insertions a voice that is concerned about me as a reader and meeting the need of the writer to assure this foreign world is clearly understood.

Rarely does one get the insights into prison life that this book provides. Knowing someone who has been in prison seems to be not unlike knowing someone who has been in a war... the reality is too difficult for those involved to describe and often is never shared with others. This book disregards that pattern and lays it out for all to experience. Be forewarned, this book is hard to get into, but easy to read; a challenge to one's sensibilities, but and important one.

For anyone concerned or even curious about the world of those enmeshed in the criminal justice system, this book is a must. For those concerned about how this system impacts on our society and the innocent lives within its web, reading this is a crucial step.

To order contact: gigi4haha@yahoo.com or visit <http://rdofray.com/services>

Inmates make it happen!!\$

Donations from inmate groups go a long way toward helping us at AVP/CA meet the expenses of putting on workshops and to bringing the program to more people in more prisons. They are a practical way that AVPers on the inside can contribute to this exciting statewide effort, and a moving statement of commitment to the vital work of nonviolent transformation. And our treasurer is glad to report they are on the increase!

In 2005 and 2006 we received \$2,000 from NA and AA groups at Chuckawalla Valley SP in Blythe, the first prison to have our workshops when we started expanding our programs in CDCR three years ago.

In 2007 the Long Termers' Organization at Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla held a food sale and donated \$2,500 of the proceeds to AVP/CA.

And already this year we've received \$3,800 from inmate sponsored food sales: that's \$800 at High Desert State Prison in Susanville and \$3,000 from the Coalition for Cultural Awareness at Valley SP for Women in Chowchilla. That's \$8,300 in three years, for which we thank our inmate contributors and sponsoring organizations from the bottom of our hearts! Together we're making it happen!