



AVP/California Update

Alternatives to Violence Project/California Spring 2008

P.O. Box 3294, Santa Barbara, CA 93130-3294

www.AVPCalifornia.org 800/905-6765

Celebrations in prisons

Two prison AVP programs celebrated birthdays recently. Susanville's CCC partied with AVP prisoner-graduates with exercises and games. California Men's Colony/San Luis Obispo celebrated eight years with a party for the facilitators. One parolee was allowed to join the festivities where warden and staff joined ten outside facilitators three of whom helped launch the program in 2000. Refreshments were sponsored by the local council of facilitators through donations from the local Quaker Meeting and an inmate-facilitator.

AVP/CA Goals for 2007-2008

With a desire to give focus to the state's AVP activities and to define a few limits on our creative expansion, at the Fall 2007 Gathering of facilitators the following hopes for the upcoming year were set.

- **Outreach Team Focusing on San Joaquin Valley** With an urgent need to develop volunteers in local areas near prisons and funding not forthcoming for Outreach Coordinators, a team of Pat Hardy and Katherine Youngmeister, began meeting with people in Fresno. *Two workshops held, 3 more scheduled this summer*
 - **Internal Outreach** Given the number of trained facilitators in the AVP/CA database who are not facilitating, much expertise is untapped. Finding ways to encourage more participation is easier than finding new people. Bird in the hand approach. *Newsletter and calling has brought a dozen new facilitators to workshops*
 - **Standards and Assessments with Prisons** With the varying support of individual prisons and the lack of local councils in many areas, a plan to evaluate how well the program is working is being developed for programs already
- Facilitate a workshop this month.** Check www.avpcalifornia.org for WORKSHOPS or watch your email for PRISON SCHEDULE

inside prisons by Vicki Rumbaugh and Steve Birdleough.

- **Expand number of prisons in which AVP operates only according to criteria** developed by Steering Committee.
- **Internet and Data Base reporting system team to refine and develop system:** George Ramos, Steve Birdleough, Pat Hardy are meeting. New name is Quick Easy Workshop Reporting (QEW-*pronounced cure*) with the goal in the name. *Developer working on this.*
- **Hire a grant writer** with purpose of funding an outreach coordinator. *Two letters of inquiry.*
- **Teambuilding and Conflict Transformation (TaCT) Prison-Staff Training manual completed** and one free pilot program offered to CDCR. Vicki Rumbaugh and Ann Boone are finalizing the manual. *March meeting with administration met enthusiastic acceptance until staff costs were calculated. On back burner.*
- **Explore whether TaCT** where facilitators are paid should be separate from AVP/CA. *Done/no.*
- **Try "dialogue sessions" with inmates at prisons** where we are already established. As in Florida, outside facilitators will not be required to be present. *See later articles.*
- **Continue operating AVP workshops in CDCR prisons** as successfully as we are now (*All of Us*).

Support groups: CTF Soledad

Support Groups are now being held at both CTF Central and CTF North. At CTF-Central they have been going on since January, 2007.

A meeting of workshop graduates is held from 4:00 to 6:00 on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month facilitated by the several inside facilitators and the one or two outside facilitators. Six agendas have been developed

and are repeated until all graduates have had a chance to experience each agenda. Each agenda has a theme. Some of the themes have been: self-esteem, racism and stereotypes, community, and trust. Standard AVP exercises are used, with an emphasis on the theme topic of that session. For example, during the Concentric Circles exercise, the topics addressed are all related to racism and stereotyping in the racism and stereotyping agenda.

What is most interesting is how people are invited. Basic workshop groups stay together. Every meeting has as many as 40 invitees who are from one or the other of two workshops. Reinforcing the bonding and trust that took place in the original workshop while at the same time introducing people to others who have experienced the Basic workshop. This mixing is done in hopes that the participants will develop ongoing relationships with other AVP graduates and then support one another in applying the practices in their daily lives.

A staff person is present, outside the room, during the meeting. The extremely capable inmate clerk who manages the workshop attendance lists also manages the invitation lists.

This format is the one used in Florida where Dialogue Groups are led by experienced inside facilitators and no outside staff

Explaining AVP Inside

How do you assure that prisoner participants get the word on what an AVP workshop is about? Dazzling Dan at CVSP, Blythe, created and refined a piece, which is now available on www.avpcalifornia.org. Designed so you can revise it easily for your prison, this piece is easy to read and has the answers to oft-asked questions, many of which may not occur to outsiders.

After repeatedly explaining the workshop he now hands out the bi-fold brochure when men ask about it. Also a poster is part of the project too. This is especially valuable when going into a yard or prison for the first time.

Setting up inside groups

Recently a couple of prisons have met the requirements for creating groups that can be AVP Activity groups. These groups can raise money for AVP as well as be the group that organized dialogue or support groups. The biggest concern is that these groups be conscious of the flat, team-and consensus-based organization that AVP strives to be. Samples of these By Laws are available by writing AVP/CA.

Where does AVP get \$?

AVP/CA volunteers' travel and workshop expenses are totally sustained by individual or small group contributions, both inside and outside the prison.

Three prisoner groups have donated over \$4,000 to AVP from fundraisers offered in the prison. CCWF/Chowchilla, CVSP/Blythe, CCI/Susanville. CMC inmates have personally contributed over \$1500 to the local council.

Quaker Meetings and local churches have designated over \$3000.

In the past three years, foundations have donated \$22,500. San Diego AVP and Hands of Peace groups have donated over \$4000.

Of course, as you read this, tens of thousands of dollars in donated mileage, food and time are being contributed by facilitators somewhere in a state prison offering workshops.

Still, we are looking for funds to hire a temporary Outreach Coordinator to help find workshop participants in areas where we are looking to expand or where we now have people traveling hundreds of miles for each workshop.

2007 AVP/California Workshops

14 prisons, 139 workshops, 2143 grads
21 community workshops, 268 grads

Locations: Salinas-CTF, SVSP;
San Luis Obispo-CMC; Blythe-CVSP;
Susanville- HDSP, CCC; El Centro-CEN;
Chowchilla-CCWF, VSPW; San Diego-RJD;
Vacaville-CMF; Chino-HGS; Jamestown-SCC

Donations are gratefully accepted. Just mail them to the address on the header above.