



AVP California Update

Alternatives to Violence Project

Spring 2006

P.O. Box 3294, Santa Barbara CA 93130 800/905-6765

www.AVPCalifornia.org

THANK YOU...

During the past nine months, AVP/CA has been very fortunate to receive the support of donors, prison staff and a core of dedicated facilitators who have all made it possible to launch monthly AVP workshops in eight additional California prisons, offering workshops to 600 prisoners and bringing to 11 the number of our state prisons with an active AVP presence. In corresponding fashion, the number of community workshops is also up, with 22 held around the state since June 2005.

Thank you to prison staff

The support for AVP and the sincere welcome extended by wardens and their staff has been heartwarming and encouraging.

An example of this commitment is Chuckawalla Valley State Prison (CVSP), in Blythe. After our May 2005 presentation to the wardens of all the state prisons, Acting Warden Madeline Muntz called AVP/CA, saying she wanted CVSP to be the first on board in this new era.

Supervisor of Academic Instruction Kenya Williams, through her thorough paperwork and unbridled enthusiasm, has since made it possible to train facilitators in all four yards of the prison. And the new warden, John Salazar, has stepped up to back the early commitments. Four staff members at Chuckawalla have taken a community workshop, and are interested in facilitating as volunteers at CVSP's next door neighbor, Ironwood State Prison, and with prison staff. Two of them are making AVP a part of the focus of their graduate studies.

The keenness of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) prisons for AVP continues in all seven new locations. There are dedicated men and women in every prison where we are now active who have

supported the project beyond our wildest imaginations. More on them in future Updates.

Thank you to prisoners for donations

At most of the prisons where we are facilitating, inmate participants have brought up the question of raising money for AVP. Prisoners at California Men's Colony (CMC) in San Luis Obispo have been donating money to the AVP program there for several years, and already two different Narcotics Anonymous groups at Chuckawalla have donated \$500 each to support AVP/CA.

Often the discussion turns to really serious fundraising through food sales in prison, which we are researching with the prison system. This seems to be a method that the prisoners are excited about in several facilities.

The dedication these donations represent is immensely gratifying.

11 active AVP programs in CDCR

San Diego- R.J. Donovan Corr. Facility
San Luis Obispo -CMC
Chino - Herman G. Stark Youth Corr. Fac.
Blythe – Chuckwalla VSP
Jamestown - Sierra Conservation Ctr.
Susanville - Cal. Corr. Ctr.
Soledad - Corr. Training Facility
El Centro - Centinela S.P.
Folsom S.P.
Chowchilla - Ctrl. Cal. Women's Fac.
Nevada City- Washington Ridge Fire Camp

Changes in CDCR

Many of you are probably wondering if we have been affected by Secretary Rod Hickman's resignation due to lack of political support. The truth is that at the level of the individual prisons we have seen no difference; it appears that the department is still on the path set by Hickman with Acting Secretary Jeanne Woodford. (Remember, she has described AVP

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Call for information at 800/905-6765. Sign up for a workshop at www.AVPCalifornia.org

as an “awesome program.”) We can only speculate about who will fill the Secretary position permanently.

In January, AVP/CA invited nationally recognized AVP trainer of prison staff John Shuford to make a presentation to officials of the CDCR Staff Development division on how AVP/CA might work to implement a staff training program. Nothing has resulted from this meeting yet, but AVP/CA has been certified by the department to offer training to prison staff via their own organizations. As a result of this certification, the Chicano Correctional Workers Association has invited AVP/CA to make a presentation this fall. John Shuford will be coming to train AVP/CA facilitators in his methods and to assist with this presentation.

Thank you to local communities

Developing local participation is the greatest challenge now, and it seems to be happening slowly. In almost every community where we have prison workshops, at least one person from the local community is stepping up to show an interest in the program. These individuals need a great deal of support from AVP/CA and some of us on the Steering Committee are learning a lot about doing outreach in small towns and new communities.

Thanks to a grant from the Fund for Santa Barbara, the AVP council for the Central Coast area has been able to hire a part time Community Outreach Coordinator five weeks prior to a Basic workshop to develop community interest and recruit a diverse group of participants. Might this prove to be a model for others?

Local AVP councils have been offering more workshops in their communities than ever before. Last fall and winter, there were 12, and the commitment to preparing facilitators for this new challenge continues, with 14 scheduled this spring!

Community involvement is the heart of a sustainable AVP prison program. With a local group of trained facilitators several things happen. The costs of the program go down dramatically as the need to bring in outside facilitators (whose travel and lodging expenses must be covered) is reduced. Workshops can happen more frequently, access and scheduling

become smoother, and inside and outside facilitators build up trust and a team spirit through repeated contact and shared experience. In addition, a core group of people become available who can offer workshops to local schools and civic groups, spreading the transforming power of AVP yet further into the community.

To find community workshops go to www.avpcalifornia.org.

Statistics on AVP/CA progress since June '05

AVP workshops

AVP graduates from Basic workshops

Prisoners – 557

Facilitators trained -146

Community - 82

Community facilitators located or trained - 102

Community Outreach

Speaking engagements – 10

Media articles - 6

Thank you to donors

People's financial generosity over the past nine months has been inspiring. Steering Committee members have contributed thousands of dollars (and many hours) in travel and office expenses. Individual donors have made substantial donations that have helped keep AVP/CA going financially and kept up spirits as well. Thanks to them, we were able to raise 99% of our \$21,000 budget for our first fiscal year, which ended in March.

Thank you to businesses

Two particular lodging partners have been very generous to AVP/CA over the past six months. Ravin Patel at the Days Inn in Blythe and Michael and Stephanie McCaffrey of the McCaffrey House B&B in Sonora have provided facilitators many nights of free lodging.

In addition, the Rotary Club of Blythe donated a scholarship to a recent Basic community workshop.

An older African-American man after one day in a Basic workshop looked across the room at a young, heavily tattooed (even on his shaven head) white man and said "Until this workshop I would have been afraid to talk to you. Now I know more about you, I feel like we can be friends." The young man nodded his agreement looking directly at his new compatriot and smiled for the first time in the workshop.