



AVP/California Update

Alternatives to Violence Project/California Summer 2007

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How important are you to AVP?

The success of AVP depends on everyone who comes into contact with the program.

Whether you are a prison warden or a prisoner, you bring a commitment to changing the culture of your prison.

Whether you are a facilitator or prison staff member opening a gate, you share your skills and knowledge in a unique way.

Whether you are a donor writing a check or a staff member writing ducats to release prisoners from their cells for a workshop, you contribute a part of yourself to introducing alternatives to violence into society, not just your world. Every single person who touches AVP makes a difference. Sometimes it is changing oneself. Sometimes we have a chance to impact others through our actions, whether bringing a smile to a correctional officer's face or the joy of facilitating a workshop where those participating discover from a deep visceral place that violence isn't the only way.

However it happens, the many drops of water into the great ocean of society are creating waves hitting a shore far beyond our imagining. A prisoner calling home and handling a conflict differently...a correctional officer experiencing a small kindness from an AVP participant...a community workshop participant who understands that parolees have a contribution to make to society—all these "drops of water" are making changes of which we are unaware.

"Why do you help people so much?" Diligent Dan asked a fellow lifer-facilitator who had tutored him for his GED. The response: "Someday you will be the neighbor of my family."

Celebrating those in CDCR who make AVP a joy

Without the people working inside, this project would not happen. We want to honor them for their willingness to take a risk to launch AVP, and for their perseverance in handling the myriad of details required to get 20 prisoners out of their jobs and cells for 20 hours, counted and fed, so that the workshop can proceed in a smooth flow.

Centinela State Prison, El Centro:

Maria Ochoa, Office Technician; Dee Long, Public Information Officer (now replaced by Richard Dubee); Warden Victor Almager.

Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe:

Kenya Williams, Vice Principal Academic Instruction; Warden John Salazar; Deputy Warden Madelene Muntz.

Heman G. Stark CYA, Chino:

Catholic Chaplain Ted Harder; Roxana Alberts, Volunteer Coordinator.

California Correctional Institution, Tehachapi:

Associate Wardens Michael Stainer and Tom Miguel.

Central California Women's Facility,

Chowchilla: Lynne Parker, CCWF Inmate Services Coordinator

Valley State Prison for Women, Chowchilla, (where we are being welcomed for the first time in July. Warden (A) Tina Hornbeak, Captain Laquitta Peterson and Lt. Gloria Robledo.)

These **CDCR Administrative Staff** have been particularly helpful : Randy Tronti, Assistant to the Director of Facility Operations; George Giurbino, High Security/Transitional Housing/Associate Director; Scott Kernan, Chief Deputy Secretary, Adult Operations; Del Sayles-Owen, Division of Community Partnerships Director.

ALSO, the many prisoners who help assemble materials, arrange lunches and maintain records of workshop participants and sign-ups.

AVP/California Workshops 4/2005-3/2007		
Prison	20-hr Wkshp	Total grad
CMC (San Luis Obispo)	8	202
RJD (San Diego)	6	104
CVSP (Blythe)	15	364
SCC (Jamestown)	14	229
CCC (Susanville)	15	205
CTF (Soledad)	13	219
CCWF (Chowchilla.)	9	113
CEN (El Centro)	12	206
FSP (Folsom)	2	35
*HDSP (Susanville)	9	107
*SVSP (Salinas)	2	37
*CCI (Tehachapi.)	1	21
ALL	106	1,650
2005-6	46	747
change	230%	221%
Community		
ALL	24	286
change	141%	138%

Whassup?

In May, AVP/CA had its two-year anniversary.

WHAT HAPPENED THIS PAST YEAR?

After a burst of expansion from three to 11 prisons the first year, the Steering Committee decided to stabilize and develop local support in 2006-7. While Folsom SP, CSPLA/Lancaster and Washington Ridge Fire Camp did not have the inside support to continue, **three new prisons** were added. (See * in box above)

While the growth appears less dramatic this year, in fact AVP/CA **expanded to new yards in almost every adult facility** where it had been operating. In many cases, several workshops are being offered a month. And we **doubled the number of AVP workshops and workshop graduates**, including the number of trained prisoner-facilitators.

It was time to build local groups to support the prisons. **Community workshops increased in number and graduates by 141%**, while **doubling the number of new facilitators** to 46.

Independent local councils developed in the Santa Cruz/Salinas area, and a group is on the verge of independence in the Jamestown. area. Regular workshops foster local support for existing groups statewide.

WHAT NEXT?

Gaps still exist.

San Joaquin Valley (with its eight prisons), Sacramento area (five) and the southern desert (four) each have individuals who have slowly laid the groundwork for development of local support, but more concentrated work is needed.

We have developed a plan to hire Outreach Coordinators (for two years) to introduce AVP into these areas, by talking to local community movers and shakers, organizing workshops, recruiting participants and encouraging the formation of local councils. Meanwhile, until we can find funding for this plan, a few volunteers work to build interest in these areas, and continue to offer workshops where the opportunity arises.

More prisons ready for AVP...As we go to press, Vacaville is ready to begin. Six prison wardens are awaiting AVP volunteers to start workshops in their prisons. Encouragement from Sacramento to include AVP continues to spur these requests. Prisons are finding space to offer workshops on weekends, allowing more volunteers to participate.

Core groups of diverse urban volunteers are being trained to travel to remote prison locations or in their own town. One workshop might see a parolee, a Latino high school student, the spouse of a prisoner, an African-American church pastor, an 80-year-old woman, the staff of a local agency working with the homeless, a member of the gay community, churchgoers.

Creative individual donations continue to keep facilitators on the road and sleeping in distant towns. One couple designated AVP/CA to receive donations in honor of their wedding. Others donated the proceeds from a moving sale and organized an event at a local farm, with garden tours, pony rides and a kids' water park. The Ristad Foundation and a repeat anonymous donor have boosted income by \$15,000.

The number of donors has tripled since 2005!