NEWS

Victim Offender Reconciliation Program
of the Central Valley, Inc.
4882 E. Townsend Ave. Fresno, CA 93727
Phone: (559) 455-9803; Fax: (559) 252-4800
Email: vorp_fresno@fresno.edu; http://vorp.org

Partnering with VORP

Just this last month there have been two events which I would like to share with you that demonstrate the continued change and ongoing growth of VORP. During our last influx of VORP citation cases we noticed a large number had come from a local school for classroom behavior. I made a phone call asking the vice principal if it would be agreeable to sit down and talk about what role VORP could play in addressing the cases. The vice principal thought it was a good idea and set an appointment for the next week. Noelle and I drove over to the school and as we did we talked about what we should probably discuss and all of our options given all the information we had on the school. Upon arriving we sat down with the vice principal and their resource director and began to introduce ourselves and VORP. Before we got too far into the conversation Noelle asked if either of the two knew anything about VORP, to which the resource director smiled and said that he had actually gone through the program before. He had been the victim of one of the students and expressed his enthusiasm for the program and the positive outcome for his case. I was surprised because this dialogue hadn't come out before, so we continued to talk about the school's willingness to participate, and VORP's role in addressing the case load. Part of the enthusiasm I express is the measure in which the school was willing to lend its resources to VORP. One of the suggestions by the school officials was that there might be a portable classroom available to use for their mediations at the beginning of the new year. We talked about mediation, peer mediation, and the possibility of using it for their student leadership. What is important to note is the willingness of the school and their enthusiasm. Noelle and I smiled on the way home and I think we both agreed that there are doors being opened by God that I for one felt very blessed to be a part of.

The other event I wanted to share happened at one of our recent trainings. Two of the individuals who attended were probation officers assigned to Reedley. They stated that they have several grants and were interested in using VORP as a resource and partner. Once again VORP continues to grow and partner with others. The important thing to note is that with this potential new partnership more cases from Reedley will be available for those mediators living in that area that would like to get involved with your community. I hope you are all as happy and excited about this as I am, Happy Thanksgiving.

JMC

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I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to VORP:

[ ] $200 [ ] $100 [ ]$50 [ ] Other_____

Name: _____

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Being Thankful

Our VORP honorees:

Chief Linda Penner & Judge Denise Whitehead

Check out the rest our pictures from "A Night in Tuscany" on our website: vorp.org/events

During this time of Thanksgiving I spent time with several friends and extended family members, who I am grateful to know. This thanksgiving was definitely different from most. Thanksgiving went really well, all the family showed up cousins, nephews, aunts and uncles, just an amazing time for the group to be able to sit down and catch up and be thankful together. Although it was a great day it almost didn't happen, about a month before there were several families not sure if they would make it because of conflict between some of the families. It all seemed to be resolved prior to that because everyone did show up. The next morning early around 7 or so peace had dissolved and conflict reappeared. Late in the evening on Thursday an incident occurred which created tension, fears, and that put trust and honesty into question. At first I just caught wind that there was conflict within one of the families, and then it escalated to another family member being involved and as the conflict was talked about more and more. I could see people becoming more entangled in what I refer to as the conflict spiral of escalation. Not knowing my full role and other peoples comfortableness in dealing worth the conflict I quietly listened to the dialogue. After a while I started to ask questions and shortly after I expressed the desire and ability, if the family was interested, to try resolving some of the conflict. The family seemed relieved to have another option to explore and later that night I met with both parties separately to explain the guidelines of conduct, and asked about their concerns, their goals, and their experience with what happened. The next day as the family went out shopping, the two parties involved in the conflict and I met Saturday morning. Three and a half hours later the family had resolved the conflict, developed a plan of implementation to set up guidelines of conduct, and all parties agreed. I wish I could tell you more specifically about the issues and resolution, but I can't. I share this story in general terms because this Thanksgiving I am thankful that I was able to help my family be at peace. I am thankful this Thanksgiving that my family cares enough about one another to go through this process and resolve the conflict because they love one another.

-JMC

<u>Upcoming VORP Trainings in 2009</u>

January 30 & 31

February 20 & 21

March 20 & 21

Please call the VORP office to make a reservation 455-9803

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Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage PAID
Clovis, CA 93612
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