

Victim Offender Reconciliation Program of the Central Valley, Inc

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Paradigm Shift

Before VORP training, I had never heard of a program like it and its commitment to reconciliation between victims and offenders. All I have ever heard is how justice is about punishing the offender. The training opened my eyes to a new way of thinking and a reminder that God is good. I was not sure if I was prepared to take on such an important challenge in my life. Having the opportunity to provide healing and a bringing together of an offender and victim was something that definitely scared me. Thankfully I had a supportive partner who decided to do the mediation with me.

After receiving my first case, being nervous would have to be an understatement. I was not sure if I would be able to go through with it or if I was qualified. God was with me and after calling the offender I felt that this was possible. After meeting with the offender and his guardian, I realized that offenders are repentant about the crimes they commit. I also realized that many times the crime has hidden

issues behind it that can only be brought out through mediation. The underlying reason for the crime was something that could only be solved through opening up and sharing the offender's story. I was shocked and humbled that the offender felt that I was worthy enough to hear about his life and to hopefully help him be able to fix what he had done with the victim. God is good!

After meeting with the victim, I also realized that not all victims are seeking punishment. Our society is so conditioned into thinking that the only way to fix this world is to punish the guilty. The victim demonstrated punishing was never on his mind and all he wanted was to support the victim and change his life. This was another surprise and also something I felt privileged to be hearing. The victim was completely open to reconciling with the offender.

(Continued on next page)

VORP Organizing Institute

**Seminar equips you to start
a VORP
April 14-16, 2010**

The Restorative Justice Project in cooperation with the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) of the Central Valley, Inc. in Fresno, has designed a unique seminar for individuals and

communities interested in starting a VORP in their area.

Ron Claassen, founder of the Fresno VORP and Noelle Daoudian, VORP director, along with VORP staff will lead seminar participants through the challenging steps of launching a successful victim offender reconciliation program from

concept to first case.

The 3- day seminar is designed for a 3-member team. Each team will receive a complete, up-to-date package of materials needed to initiate and operate a VORP.

Please contact VORP or the
Center for Peacemaking for
questions or reservation.
(800) 909-8677

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You Spoke and We Listened– Online Donations

VORP Donations can now be made online and can also be set for monthly donations! Go to <http://VORP.org> and click the blue donation button powered through Razoo. The organization Razoo is funded by a foundation which pays for all transaction fees, so ALL of your money comes straight to VORP, whereas other providers charge a service fee. Please consider making a monthly donation. Once you set up your account you can choose to donate monthly automatically and the website will charge your credit card on a specified monthly date. This way you don't have to write a check or pay for postage. The website will automatically produce a donation receipt so you will get confirmation immediately as well as have the receipt on file for your taxes. **If you like simplicity, the internet, and donating to VORP nothing could be better! Check out the website today and sign-up!** If you have any questions please feel free to contact our office.

Shift Continued

The actual mediation was something you really had to be there to experience how great mediation can be. Besides leading the mediation, the victim and offender did all the work. They were both completely committed to working together to make things right.. The victim had some rough patches in his life so he was able to reach out to the offender and meet him where he was. The victim wanted the offender to learn from his poor choice and come from this situation a better person. The solutions brought forward was all there to provide mentoring and guidance for the juvenile. In my opinion, no punishment the justice system would have given will do what mentoring will do for this juvenile. In the end, through the offender opening up to the victim in his apology letter, it was found that

love and guidance were what he truly needed. I will not be surprised that after the agreement deadline has passed, that the victim and offender will remain close throughout their lives. There was a connection that was made through mediation between the two of them that you can only look to God for the understanding. It was one of the best experiences of my life and something I would not trade for the world.

By Kelly Thompson

Kelly is an undergrad student at Fresno Pacific University as well as a member of the Lady Sunbird basketball team.



VORP T-Shirts are Here!



Get the word out about VORP just by wearing the shirt and help support one of your favorite organizations! Check out the color view on our website: <http://vorp.org/support.shtml>

You can purchase them for a donation of \$15 either at the office or online at the VORP website through PayPal with the option for shipping straight to your home. We have pink and blue printing both available on a navy t-shirt and sizes range from Small - 2 XL. Please specify color and size.

VORP on the Air & Online

Air- VORP was invited to speak on the Free Speech Public Radio's show Stir It Up hosted by the Center for Non-Violence. VORP Director, Noelle Daoudian, and the Director for the Community Justice Conference Program, Jason Ekk, were the guests and were able to share about the program and process of VORP. If you are interested in catching the show you can go onto the VORP website and listen online. Click the "VORP on the Radio" link.

Online- VORP is entering into the age of social networking, so you if you Facebook, tweet or read blogs, please check us out at:



Facebook:

www.facebook.com/VORPFresno



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www.vorpfresno.com

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VICTIM OFFENDER RECONCILIATION PROGRAM
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