



Victim Offender Reconciliation Program

VORP News - Fresno County - June 1985

We had a new experience this month. We received more cases than we could handle. This year, January through May, we received 171 case referrals. In 1984 we received 209 in the entire year. As a result we had to call and have the Police Probation Team hold up on sending cases for a period of two weeks to allow us to catch up. This is both good and bad news. It is good news in that our credibility and track record make us an attractive referral. It is bad news in that we lack sufficient volunteers and support staff to support the increased referrals.

The bad news could easily be turned into good news with more volunteer mediators and more financial contributors.

We are planning a VORP Volunteer Training Session for July 11 and 18. The sessions will be held at the College Community Mennonite Brethren Church from 6:00 to 10:00 PM each evening. It is necessary to attend both sessions. If you are interested in a job description for a volunteer mediator we would be glad to send one to you. There is no charge for the training. Please pre-register by completing the form below and returning it to us or call and leave a message of your intent to participate.

To support the increased case load, we need more financial contributions. VORP depends entirely on contributions from private sources like individuals, churches, businesses, etc. Thanks again to those of you who are contributing. If you would like more information than you are receiving please feel free to call and ask. If you haven't contributed please consider giving \$10.00 per month (or more if appropriate) to help mediate victim/offender conflicts.

Gail Boldt, our case manager, who came to us through the Mennonite Voluntary Service Program, has been accepted to Harvard Divinity School where she will begin a masters program this fall. We are glad for her and while we knew the time would come for her to leave, we are aware of the sadness we are feeling and the loss VORP will experience in her leaving. We are extremely grateful to her for her contribution to VORP. I have asked her to share another of the cases she has helped to mediate.

I recently completed a case which involved two young boys who broke windows out at a neighbor's house. The neighbors were Hmong and the reason for the vandalism was clearly prejudice and cultural misunderstanding. While the Hmong family did not wish to participate in a VORP meeting their landlord did. He felt a close tie to his tenants, and perhaps because he knew their personal history of war persecution, and flight he felt very angry with the prejudice that went into the offense. He also knew how frightened they were and knew that they were afraid for their lives when the windows broke out. At the meeting, he spoke of the concerns of the Hmong family. He also told about his feelings as the owner of the property which had been damaged. Several misunderstandings were cleared up to the

satisfaction of all. Finally, the boys agreed that the Hmong family needn't fear attack from them again. The mother of one of the boys expressed regret that the family wasn't there to receive their apologies and assurances. When it came time to discuss restitution, the landlord stated that he wanted nothing but the boys protested that they wanted to pay. The landlord agreed to accept money from each of them but then stated that he would put it in bank accounts and if the boys have given the Hmong family no further trouble for the next year, he will return the money to them. He felt that learning to live in peace was the most important outcome of all that had happened and he wished to facilitate that.

Thank you for your continued support.

Shalom,
Ron Claassen

Volunteer Training Registration Form

Yes, I Am planning to attend the two part training session to be held at the College Community Mennonite Brethren Church Fireside Room on July 11 and July 18, 1985 from 6:00 to 10:00 PM.

Name _____

Telephone _____

Please send me a Volunteer Mediator Job Description.

Address _____
