

VORP NEWS

A Monthly Newsletter of the Victim Offender
Reconciliation Program

Board Members

Jay Griffith-Exec. Director
Michael Blue-Inter. President
Carol Fransen-Sec./Treasurer
Leah Ann Alcazar
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VORP ... BY THE NUMBERS

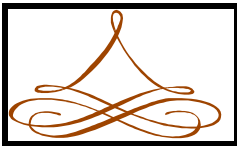
From 1983-1999 by Jay Griffith

The Faith and Community Based Program of VORP

For 17 years VORP has been a ministry/service to Victims and Offenders of juvenile crime in Fresno County. We've provided a non-fee mediation service to these parties and their families. We've trained church and other interested community members in conflict resolution and peacemaking skills.

Our mediators have helped victims and offenders address specific needs and concerns they have, both for what happened and for the future. When further Probation accountability, or if criminal or civil action is requested, cases are returned to the Probation Department and/or Court.

Our services are available to offenders, generally between the ages of 12-17. We service mostly first and second time offenders, and mostly property related offenses. We predominantly work with felony offenses, and some misdemeanors. And we provide all this, on a non-discriminatory basis, to any interested victim and offender of juvenile crime.



1983-1999 PROGRAM STATISTICS

Since 1983 VORP has received 6,319 cases from the Juvenile Probation Department. This is roughly 371 youths, and their victims, being given an opportunity to mediate each year.

Over this same time period, we've seen 3,475 agreements come out of these mediations (55%). This is almost 7,000 families being served through mediation over the last 17 years (a little over 200 victims and 200 offenders a year).

We have also trained over 1,700 volunteer community mediators (about 100 a year) from 1983-99.

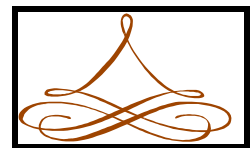
And all this on a shoestring budget!

So, what have we learned?

- ◇ We find that 70-75% of Victims, and 75-80% of Offenders, want this kind of justice option.
- ◇ 98% of those who meet, make agreements.
- ◇ 60% of the Offenders complete these agreements in full.
- ◇ Additionally, 15-20% partially complete their agreements.
- ◇ Thus, 75-80% of all Victim-Offender agreements are being fully or partially satisfied. This reveals both our community's receptivity to Restorative Justice mediation services, and needed areas for improvement in VORP staffing (i.e. more staffing, less partially kept agreements.)
- ◇ In our experience, the remaining 20-25% of the cases we receive require the added accountability of the Juvenile Court, Probation, Mental Health services and/or some form of Incarceration.
- ◇ We find that 94% of the victims and 91% of the offenders are "highly satisfied" with the agreements they make.
- ◇ We also find that the Victim's thoughts and feelings towards their Offender(s) improved (on a 1 to 10 scale; 10 being the highest) from a "3" before the meeting to an "8" after the meeting. For Offender's, the change was from a "6" to an "8".
- ◇ Regarding recidivism (repeat offenses by minors), VORP has not conducted a formal study. Although, a survey of its 1998 Community Justice Conference (CJC) mediations revealed that 14% (6 juveniles) recidivated among the 52 cases mediated. 5 of the 6 juveniles committed less serious offenses.
- ◇ Curiously, recidivism among those who have been incarcerated is reported to be somewhere between 50 and 70%.
- ◇ Locally, the Elkhorn Correctional Facility, or Boot Camp, reported an 18% recidivism rate among

youth Offenders, 18 months after being released. It's interesting to note that these particular youth benefit from both church and community program referrals. VORP also refers parties to similar programs as part of a victim and offender agreement. VORP's preference is to give these parties an upfront opportunity to work cooperatively, before incarceration is needed.

- ◇ In 1998-1999, VORP invited 28 Boot Camp youth and their victims to mediate. We found less cooperation among these youth and their parents when referred to us after incarceration rather than before. Parents were saying they had already incurred too many costs, and the possibility of victim restitution was just one cost too many. Likewise, offenders who had "done their time" were less motivated to participate. For administrative reasons, VORP decided to postpone these referrals until a future date.



1999

SPENDING IN REVIEW

VORP's 1999 income was \$68,800 and spending was \$67,500. Of our total income, \$21,000 came from the County to do "pre-court" mediation, or CJs. The balance of our monies went towards supporting our traditional referrals: "informal" (non-court) and "formal" (post-court) case referrals.

Please see "Spending," back page.

EDITORS NOTE:

At the February and March Board Meetings, Jay Griffith was named VORP's new Executive Director.

Training Update

****May 12 & 13**

Friday: 6:30-9:30PM
Saturday: 8:30-3:30PM

June 13, 16, & 17

Tuesday & Friday
6:30-9:30PM

Saturday: 8:30-11:30AM

****PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!!** The training schedule has been changed due to a VORP strategic planning meeting.

“Spending,” cont’d from front page.

We received \$17,700 in contributions from churches, \$22,400 in contributions from private community members, and \$7,700 in additional donations from Board Members, Trainings, and Corporate gifts.

Our approved budget for 2000 is \$70,000.

A donation of your time or money will help to give: victims a more significant voice in justice decisions related to them; encourage offenders to take responsibility for their offenses and make changes for their future; and hold up a restorative model of justice for our community, which cares for both victims and offenders, with equal value & concern.

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NEW Mediator e-mail.....
.....vorpmediators@hotmail.com.
Program information and current & past newsletters.....www.vorp.org.

Area Churches Give Over \$17,000 in 1999

A total of 28 churches gave a combined amount of \$17,691.72 in the fiscal 1999 year.

These donations went towards healing and restoring victims and offenders of juvenile crime through the ministry/service of mediation.

We celebrate with our community these churches who have both a vision and heart for helping those hurt by crime in our community.

Donating churches are divided into two categories: Sustaining Friends and Contributing Churches. Sustaining Friends have agreed to include VORP on their prayer agenda, recognize volunteers, and/or restorative justice work in the community, announce training sessions, be open to victims and offenders who inquire about their churches, permit VORP to use their facilities for mediation, and seek to provide some annual financial contribution.

Contributing Churches are those who decide to donate periodically and make their facilities available for victim/offender meetings.

VORP would like to thank its 42 Sustaining Churches in Fresno: College Community Church, Downtown Church, Fresno Christian Reformed Church, Easton Southern Baptist Church, Bethel Temple Church, First Congregational Church,



Campus Baptist Church, Iglesia de Dios, Memorial United Methodist, Fresno Christian Fellowship, Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church, New Life Fellowship, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, Northpark Community Church, Sanger First Presbyterian, Valley Christian Center Church, Northwest Church, Second Baptist Church, Our Lady of Victory Church, Harmony Free Will Baptist Church, New Hope Community Church, St. Luke’s Methodist Church, Baptist Temple Church, Butler MB Church, Northwest Baptist Church, People’s Church, United Japanese Christian Church, College Church of Christ, First Presbyterian Church, God’s Family Church, Mennonite Community Church, College Community Congregational Church, Bethany MB Church, Friends Community Church, St. Paul Newman Center, New Covenant Community Church, Wesley United Methodist Church, St. Columba’s Church, Faith United Fellowship Church, and North Fresno MB Church. Also, in Reedley, VORP would like to thank First Mennonite Church for it’s help as a Sustaining Church.

In addition, VORP would also thank it’s Contributing Churches: First Armenian Church, Fresno Friends Meeting Church, Women’s Fellowship Presbyterian Church, and University Presbyterian Church. And in Sonora, we would like to thank West Clinton Mennonite Church.

Would you like to see your church’s name on this list? Call

Volunteers, Staff Support & Staff

- * Our VORP Volunteer Community Mediators
- * Oasis (Older Adult Social Services) — Newsletter Preparation
- * Carol Pryor & Karen Giese — Newsletter Publishing/Editing
- * John Wiens — Finance/Reparations Manager
- * Corine Ross, Karen Giese, Emily Foss, and Theresa Lovelace, Chad Pinther, Pearl Nadeau and Kimberly Stauble — Case & Reparations Management, Staff & Office Support

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