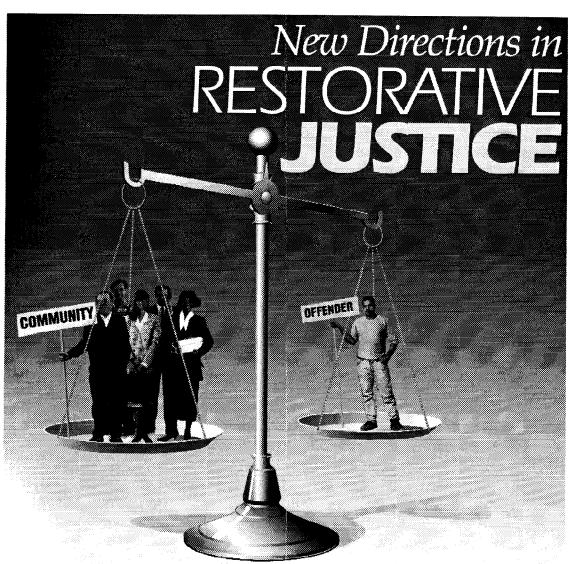
Alternatives to Violence Project Newsletter for Facilitators

## theTRANSFORMER





# REINVENTING CORRECTIONS

from John Perry, Director of Planning for

ohn Perry, Director of Planning for the Vermont Department of Corrections, raised many questions about the current criminal justice system when he spoke at the AVP-USA Annual National Gathering in May. He asked how our personal values were related to the criminal justice system. Some of his comments were:

#### How can we Reinvent Corrections?

- What business are we in?
- What service do we provide?
- What is our product?
- How do we measure results?

#### Who is our customer?

- At one time corrections thought they served the courts who sentenced the offender.
- Then they thought they served the offender whom we were seeking to rehabilitate.
- Now, corrections tends to think it serves the public whom they are seeking to protect.

What is sentencing about: Treatment, Incapacitation, Deterrence or Punishment?

#### What does the public think?

The State of Vermont really did something radical. They conducted a public opinion survey on public acceptance of the prison system. According to the survey, in Vermont only 37 percent of the public approves of the prison system.

tem, which means that 63 percent hate it!

If jails are designed to protect the public from dangerous individuals, then only those at risk of reoffending need to be in jail. But studies have shown that the severity and the type of crime is not related to rates of reoffence.

The present criminal justice system is a loselose-lose proposition. The victim loses since the offender is not allowed to repay the victim (or, in most cases, even contact the victim). Any fines go to the court. The offender loses since she or he goes to jail and can no longer support the family. And the public loses since they have to pay the cost of incarcerating people for long periods of time.

#### How did we get into this mess?

In Anglo Saxon England, people were ruled by the Dane Law. Offenders owed a debt to the victim. If my ox gored your ox, I owed you my ox. The present criminal justice system had its origins in William the Conqueror who invaded England in 1066. In order to pay off his debts for ships for the invasion and to reward his nobles and his army, he instituted a system where those who committed crimes and other offenses were required to pay the king (and later the state) rather than the victim of their offense. As we know from the Robin Hood stories, his sheriffs were instructed to enforce the law as harshly as possible and reap as much money as possible for the king. England was treated as a conquered colony and William instituted colonial law.

The present prison system had its origins in the early 19th century. Before this, prisons and jails were only used as places to hold the accused before trial. Sentences were generally fines or physical punishments (up to hanging). Then, in the early 19th century, the Quakers had the idea that criminals should be confined (mostly in solitary) to meditate on their mistakes and change their ways. The first penetentiaries were built on this approach but they failed to rehabilitate criminals and often left prisoners with severe emotional problems. Then the cell block model was introduced at Auburn and it continues to this day.

#### **Design Principles for Human Beings**

(This is the way the human operating system works).

- We tend to work in small groups
- We tend to act in social networks
- We like to reciprocate favors
- We tend to restore equlibrium
- We are anxious in the presence of strangers
- We strive for competence in our field of endeavor
- We like to feel productive
- We tend to invest the unknown with meaning
- We tend to categorize information in a binary fashion
- We tend to obey authority

since we prevent people from forming small groups, prevent them from acting in social networks, do not allow them to compensate victims and restore equilibrium, throw them together with a bunch of strangers and do not allow them to be productive.

#### Should my personal values be related to the criminal justice system?

Should my treatment of my children when they make a mistake be any different from the treatment of other members of the society when they make a mistake?

Things I expect from my children when they make a mistake:

- That they admit that they made a mistake
- That they feel sorry for what they have done
- That they reparir the damage if this is possible
- That this is a learning experience for them
- · That there is some assurance that they will change their behavior

Is there any reason that the same principles should not apply to to individuals who have made a mistake and committed an offense against the community? These are the principles of restorative justice. These are also the principles of the Restorative Probation Program in Vermont and the goals of the Community Boards when they work with offenders.

(See article on the next page.)

It's no wonder the prison system doesn't work

# in Vermont accidents, the young man was sent

from John Perry, Director of Planning for the Vermont Department of Corrections

Are there some new solutions to criminal justice problems? Can the needs of the community, the victim, and the offender be met? Can Transforming Power work in our criminal justice system? Some examples of restorative justice solutions in Vermont are:

A woman who pled guilty to passing two bad checks came before a community board for sentencing. The board met with her and decided that she needed to write a letter of apology to each of the people she had written bad checks to. She said, "That's not too bad, I only pled guilty to passing two bad checks." But then the community board said "You actually passed 33 bad checks and you will need to write a letter to each of then, deliver it in person and report back to us in one month."

A young man who sped through a small town at night going 110 miles per hour came before a community board. At first the board had difficulty identifying the victim, but then realized the police officer who had to chase the speeder put his life at risk to catch the young man. The young man then met with the community board and the police officer. Since head injuries are the most devastating result of auto

accidents, the young man was sentenced to do 30 days of community service in a rehabilitation center for people with head injuries.

Several high school students were brought before a community board for defacing tombstones in a local cemetery. The granite industry has a long tradition in Vermont. The students were asked to write a research paper on the granite industry and also to investigate the family histories for each of the tombstones they had defaced. They discovered that one of the tombstones belonged to an Italian immigrant who had come to Vermont to work in the granite industry. He started out as a common laborer and over the years rose to become a master carver. He had carved his own tombstone. As a result, one of the students became interested in the granite industry as a career opportunity.

These are a few examples of the "Reparative Probation" system in Vermont. The system brings together the offender, the community and the victim where possible. This is in response to a survey showing that the community wants more involvement in the system and that the needs of victims need greater consideration. The community boards focus on minor crimes and misdemeanors rather than violent felonies. However, by making meaningful interventions in the first and second offenses, it is expected that individuals are much less likely to become major offenders.

By involving citizens directly in decision making about individual cases, they are forced to look at offenders not as strangers, not as numbers, not as monsters. The offenders are forced to confront the reality of their offense and its impact on the community and their victims. This confrontation with a restorative outcome, shifts the paradigm from punishment to reintegration. The offender is held accountable, the victim is restored, the community is repaired. Perhaps even more important, the dispute is resolved by the community, and the community is empowered.

This program has been in operation for five years and community boards have been established in every county in Vermont. The community boards give judges an effective option short of time in jail. The community boards now handle more than 25 percent of all probation cases. Another option of intermediate sanctions has been established for nonviolent offenders. With both the minor and intermediate offenses, Vermont has found that the rate of repeat offenses and recidivism is approximately 50 percent less than jail time, depending on the type of offense.

As part of the program, Vermont has redefined

the purpose of its correctional system so that there are now two tiers:

- 1. Community sanctions are now used for most nonviolent offenses including drug use and small time drug; dealers, property crimes such as car theft, shoplifting and unarmed burglaries. The purposes of this level are to resolving the conflict, to repair the community, to restore the victim and to leave the community better off than before the crime.
- 2. The second purpose of corrections is protection of the community. Incarceration is reserved only for those who are a threat to the community. In Vermont, jail time is limited only to violent offenders. As the result, admissions to the prison system are now 65 percent of what they were before the restorative justice program was instituted. Vermont has been able to avoid building any new prisons, eliminate prison overcrowding, and use funds saved to provide more effective rehabilitation programs for inmates.

The new restorative justice program seems to be a win-win for everyone. Perhaps AVP members can help to make public officials in other states more aware of the Vermont Model.

#### ransforming

#### urselves:

Finding Creative Responses to Conflict.

Tap into your Transforming Power. Spend a long weekend with master facilitators Steve Angell, Deborah Wood and Robert Martin. On the Martin Luther King weekend, Friday, January 12 to Monday, January 15, there will a special AVP residential workshop at Pendle Hill Conference Center in Wallingford, Penn-

sylvania, just west of Philkadelphia.

The cost of the four-day conference including all meals and lodging will be: \$195 for triples, \$255 for doubles and \$295 for singles.

To register or for more information call 800-742-3150 or e-mail registrar@pendle hill.org.

# RESTORATIVE at Work in NY

by Sandy Oxford, AVP-New York he town of Monticello, New York, lies on the fringes of the Catskill Mountains. At one time it was the harness racing capital of America with the famed Hamiltonian Race. But the big race moved out of town and most of the Catskill resorts have closed. All that is left is a broken down racetrack, a high unemployment rate and faded glory.

In recent years, the village has become the home of a significant Hispanic and Black community. Over a year ago the community was shocked with a very serious incident of racial conflict and teen violence. The Hispanic Brothers felt threatened by the Black Rappers. One evening eight of the Hispanic high school students came to attack eight of the Black Rappers armed with chains and baseball bats. In the course of the fight, the Black Rappers disarmed the Hispanic group and the Hispanics fled for their lives. All except one young man who was caught and beaten to within an inch of his life with his own weapons. He ended up in the hospital. Eight teenagers were arrested and charged with "Gang related Assault." Four of the of the young men sat in the county jail facing the prospect of spending three to seven years wearing green courtesy of the New York Prison System. Four were facing time in a youth detention facility.

At this point, Yolanda Blassi, an AVP facilitator and volunteer mediator, thought that there must be some way to keep these 16 young men from from becoming further criminalized

She got the Ulster and Sullivan County Mediation Ser-

vices involved. With the leadership of Sandy Oxford and Clare Danielsson and with the support of the police department, a series of family mediations were held with each of the young men. This led up to a Family Group Conference involving a total of 35 people including the offenders, mothers, stepfathers, grandfathers, local representatives from the Million Man March and the detective from the local police department. The group struggled, overcame deep distrust and at the end of a difficult five-hour session, came to the following agreements:

- 1. There was an admission of responsibility by all involved.
- 2. Everyone wanted peace.
- 3. Orders of protection would be dropped
- 4. All would participate in a community AVP workshop with their families.

The workshop was led by Sandy Oxford, Henry Rivera and Dwayne Walker. Henry and Dwayne were ex-prisoners and members of Landing Strip in New York City. The police detective was also a key participant and helped the offenders to face the consequences of their actions. In one of the key exercises, participants were given a white plate and told to "put everything they were willing to

die for on the plate." Then they were asked if any if the issues involved in the conflict were things they were willing to die for. As a second step, Dwayne Walker gave them a black plate and asked them to "put everything they were willing to go to jail for on the plate." The plates remained empty.

The weekend brought respect and understanding among the young men and several of the key offenders found community support. In addition, the workshop helped to mobilize continued community involvement with the kids.

At the end of the workshop, the police detective wrote to Sandy Oxford and said, ""It is my intention to pass along my positive feelings toward this process to the rest of the police community. I believe that this process has had a more positive and accepted outcome by all than any court could have accomplished. I have personally seen the involved individuals show real concern and exchange heart-felt apologies to one another. I have never seen such results accomplished by any other process in my 20 years of police involvement. I commend all involved...."

Since the weekend there has been no further friction between the Black Rappers and the Hispanic Brothers. Most of the group has had no further trouble with the law although the Community Mediation Services has continued to work with four individuals who have



#### indness by Andrew M. Oxman,

AVP-Massachusetts

Kindness, the voice of life, reaches across our divides and bridges our hearts.

There is no substitute for kindness. It cannot be bought or sold. It cannot be tricked out of us. Or pleaded or martyred from us.

Yet it lives in all of us, and loves being expressed:

through a word, an act, a hug, or just listening and understanding.

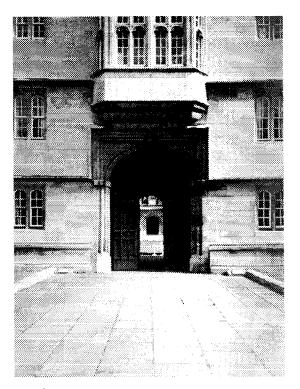
Sharing our humanity

Our kindness arises
out of our humanity,
from our experiences of pain:
our own makes it easier to see
someone else's,
and theirs makes it easier to accept ours.

Kindness is the truth
of our inner being
the connective tissue of our souls,
the unabashed expression of love
which knows no age, no time, no fear.

Only the longed for reminder and comforting remembrance, that we are not alone.

# CONFERNECE in Oxford



With a cold rain falling on cobblestone streets, three AVP Pilgrims from AVP Westchester, Debby Wood, Katie and Fred Feucht, arrived at Oxford around midnight. It seemed that Oxford had closed down for the night. They headed down a narrow, deserted zig-zag street which seemed to be

more of an alley, dragging their luggage behind them. No signs identified the college buildings behind the worn stone walls but they hoped the street would lead them to Wadham College. Finally, they ask for directions from a small group of students leaving a pub. "Wadham is right up the street" they said. The pilgrims found a small wooden door in a blank stone wall and they wondered is anyone would be inside to welcome them and give them a place to sleep.

As they entered the door they stepped into an ornate archway framing a brightly light quadrangle flanked by stately Tudor Gothic buildings. They felt like they were stepping back into the 18th Century. The brilliant green grass in the quadrangle looked so perfect it seemed like Astroturf. Next to the arch was the lodge (office) where a cheerful clerk greeted them, gave them their keys and showed them to their rooms. Soon they were able to sink into comfortable beds in neat and cozy rooms.

The purpose of the conference was to bring together AVP leaders from around the world to share experiences, information, skills and exercises. It was a time for personal growth and networking to spread the message of peace and nonviolence around the world.

On the morning of September 15, AVPers found their way to the great hall where meals

were served. More than 130 delegates were seated on benches at long oaken tables, surrounded by stained glass windows. stern portraits of every warden (dean) of Wadham College for the last 300 years stared down from the walls. A staff of waiters and waitresses served a hearty breakfast of eggs, sausage, toast, fruit and coffee.

The program began in the ivy covered Holywell Auditorium with a keynote talk by Steve Angell. He recalled the modest beginnings of AVP at Green Haven and Auburn Prison in New York State. In the last 25 years, AVP has grown from a local program in New York Yearly Meeting to a worldwide program in 25 countries. AVP is no longer just a prison program; it has grown to provide conflict resolution skills to community members in some of the most difficult trouble spots in the world such as Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Russia, Georgia, Uganda, Nigeria and others. In the next year, the AVP program will be coming to Chechna and Rwanda. Steve Angell then spoke of the worldwide challenges AVP faces to reduce violence in the 21st Century. The conference also gave a special tribute to Ellen Flanders and Janet Lugo, two of the leaders from the from the first workshops in 1975.

A roll call of the delegates from 22 countries attending the conference brought the group together. Each group brought a welcome to the conference beginning with the Maoris from Aotearoa (New Zealand). With a unifying and symbolic spiritual ritual using their native language, the Maoris gave thanks to the earth... the sky... the masculine... the feminine... the ancestors... the generations to come... the place... the communities... and the AVP family. With dances and symbolic gifts,



Piripi and Narongo of Aotearoa (New Zealand)

this was a dramatic and powerful welcome to all.

The afternoon brought

a variety of mini-workshops including Conflict Mapping by AVP-UK; Sociodrama by AVP-London, Trust the Process by AVP-USA, Women and Families, a Latin American Experience by AVP-Costa Rica and Working with NGOs to Spread AVP by AVP-Nigeria. In the evening, many were privileged to meet with the inmates and inmate facilitators at Grendon Prison near Oxford.

On Saturday AVPers focused on the theme of the conference "Cultures and Conflict" with a workshop led by Elaine Dyer of Aotearoa and Eldred de Klerk of South Africa. Based on their experiences in South Africa, participants looked at and shared their personal cultures in small groups and learned to respect the cultural viewpoints of others. It was powerful to hear the diverse voices from Nigeria, India, Macedonia, Uganda, Hungary, Russia, Brazil, Costa Rica and other parts of the world speak as part of the AVP family.

Certainly, one of the most dramatic events of the conference was the performance of the Bristol Playback Theater from Southwestern England. Using themes suggested by the audience, they played back feelings from the

**Purpose:** To provide a lively, thought provoking activity towards the end of a Basic (see Note); to experience challenges that some people face every day.

Time: 30 minutes

**Materials:** Lunch (school lunches, bag lunches or pizza and soda ordered specially – anything will do).

7 or 8 sets of symbols (each contains 3 pieces of paper, one with an eye, one with a hand, and one with a mouth; each paper is folded so its symbol does not show; the 3 papers in each set are clipped together).

7 or 8 blindfolds.

#### Procedure:

#### Set Up:

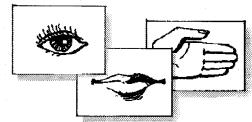
- 1. Before people get their lunches explain that "Rainbow Lunch" is a cooperative meal. People will eat in trios. Each trio will sit at the end of a table.
- 2. Each person in the trio will take one of the 3 pieces of paper. The person who gets an "eye" will eat blindfolded. The one who gets a "hand" will eat sitting on his/her hands. The one who gets a "mouth" will eat without talking. The task of each trio is to cooperate and have a nice lunch.

- Say that although it may sound "weird" people usually have fun and it's worth trying. (Naturally people do have the right to pass.)
- 4. If there are no questions, divide the group into trios. Facilitators may have to participate to fill a trio or two.
- 5. After trios have been arranged at the end of tables, give each trio a set of symbols and a blindfold. After they pick their symbols they may begin, first going and getting their lunches. They may end when they wish.
- 6. Processing might be done as the gathering for the next session, e.g. "I found the "Rainbow Lunch" was .... because.... Or it could be processed with questions as listed below:

#### Processing:

- What was it like to eat like that?
- What was it like to be a helper or the helped?
- Why do you suppose we did this as part of an AVP workshop?
- What connection does it have to life outside the workshop?

Note: It's good to explain the day before, that everybody will be eating a special lunch together the next day. Naturally the meal could be a "dinner" instead of a lunch.



# All about the new AVP Youth Manual

Every AVP facilitator will benefit from having/owning the brand new AVP Youth Manual.

Its varied Transforming Power materials; its new "Feeling Statement" materials {AKA "T" Statements) and its uniquely clear instructions for presenting each exercise are, in themselves, enough reason for owning the manual. And there's more. There's old and new information; for example, other specific youth program models like AVP/HIP, AVIS, and the Portland and Walton experiences.

There are many new exercises, some simplified ones and some revised ones, all youth-tested. As I read through it (editing, proof-reading and appreciating) the new manuals

value was apparent again and again, and its usefulness for adult groups as well as for youth was clear.

A quotation from the introduction is heartening and prophetic:

#### "OUR HOPES-OUR VISION"

"Working with young people has strengthened our faith in them and our commitment to their well being. We are honored by the trust and respect they have shown us and we marvel at their energy, spontaneity and intelligence, all amidst a society that does too little to provide them with a safe and secure passage to adulthood."

What the Youth Manual contains:

- 264 pages of material including elementary and middle school program agendas.
- 97 Exercises, the majority of which are new.
- 34 Light and Livelies

So find it, buy it,read it, use it--our new AVP Youth Manual.

Order your manual now from Alan Taplow at the AVP Distribution Service. The cost is \$10.00 plus shipping. See page 15



A new Light & Lively

Here is a new light and lively that focuses on cooperation and trust.

- 1. Ask participants to count off and form pairs.
- 2. The ones will be the cars and the twos will be the drivers.
- 3. Ask the cars to extend one arm out in front of them and then cover their eyes with the other hand.

- 4. Ask the drivers to stand behind the cars and place their hands on their shoulders.
- 5. The object of the exercise is for the drivers to guide their cars around the room without any fender benders or collisions.
- 6. This is to be a silent exercise.
- After a minute or two, ask the cars and drivers to exchange places.

Debrief the exercise afterwards:

- How did it feel to be a car?
- How did it feel to be a driver?
- What does this have to do with alternatives to violence?

#### AVP-USA to meet in Colorado Sprins

ake up to a view of Pike's Peak and the snow covered Rocky Mountains. Walk among the Ponderosa Pines of Colorado's Black Forest. Enjoy the nature trails on the 400 acre grounds of the of the center. The LaForet center is a short drive from the Gar-

den of the Gods, Royal Gorge, Cripple Creek, Pikes Peak and many other natural wonders.

> The 2001 AVP-USA Annual National Gathering will be held at the LaForet Conference

Center, Colorado Springs, CO. The Meeting starts on Friday evening, May 25, and ends on Monday, May 28, (Memorial Day) after lunch. All facilitators are invited to attend.

#### What's going on at the conference?

- · Working with corrections: led by a senior corrections official from the Rockies.
- Getting out and staying out: led by Tee Haywood, Susan and Charles Orapallo.
- New exercises from the Youth Manual: led by the Ed Committee.
- Mini-workshops and discussion groups.
- LaForet Conference Center, is 15 miles north of Colorado Springs and 50 miles south of Denver. The conference fee will be \$155 per person not including a travel pool.

#### 2001 AVP-USA Annual National Gathering Registration Form I would like to register for the Annual National Gathering in Colorado Springs, CO, May 25-28, 2000

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Adjective name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Sex\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_ City\_\_\_\_\_\_ State/Country\_\_\_\_ Postal code Phone: Home Work e-mail I am interested in leading a miniworkshop on: For credit cards: MC VISA Deposit enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_ \$40.00 each Early registration \$155.00 (Before April 1) Card # Valid thru Late registration \$170.00 (After April 1) Name as on the card\_ Make checks payable to: AVP/USA

Send registration form and deposit to: Tom Truitt, 2 Reed Court, Chestertown, MD 21620



by Matt Bader, Gander Hill Prison, AVP-Delaware

AVP-Delaware and Southeast Pennsylvania have lost a shining light in the passing of Anne Richan on September 13, 2000. For the last five years Anne has been the primary outside facilitator at Gander Hill prison in Wilmington, Delaware and has been instrumental in getting the AVP program up and running at the Pennsylvania State Prison in Chester, Pennsylvania.

"Agile" Anne's quiet wisdom, dedication, and commitment was an inspiration to all who

worked with her. She helped AVP at Gander hill weather some tough times and assisted in the development and fine tuning of numerous AVP exercises. In Chester, PA, Anne's hard work helped to make AVP a permanent part of the rehabilitation opportunities at the facility.

I have personally worked with Agile Anne and have admired the way that she was willing to overcome stereotypes, set aside personal fear, and really reach out and connect with incarcerated men. She had a compassionate way about her that made everyone feel special, important and deserving of respect. Ann was instrumental in helping me recover my own self-esteem after the traumatic shock of facing a lengthy period of incarceration.

All of us, friends, colleagues, and AVP participants will miss Anne dearly. But our sadness and grief are certainly softened by the gratitude of having been able to cross paths with such a wonderful human being.

### Take a trip to the AVP Web Sites

The best way to find out what's happening in AVP is to log onto the AVP-USA website.

There you will find links to local AVP websites in the USA including Delaware Valley, New Hampshire, Miami, Tallahassee, Minnesota, Bay Area and Washington State.

There are also links to the AVP International website and connections to more than a dozen countries around the world.

#### AVP/USA Web Site

http://avpusa.org

The AVP/USA Website has a new Members only Area. To enter the Members Page, you need:

User Name = member

Password = texashug

(NOTE: The above are case-sensitive).

This page is for AVP Facilitators only. Please maintain the confidentiality of the Password.

**AVP-International New Web Site Address** 

http://www.avpi.freeserve.co.uk

**AVP-New Hampshire Web Site** 

http://www.avpnh.org

**AVP-Miami Web Site** 

http://www.homestead.com/avpmiami

**AVP-Minnesota Web Site** 

http://www.fnvw.org (new address)

AVP-Bay Area California Web Site

www.webcom.com/~peace/PEACTREE/avp/homepage.html

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Manuals may be ordere	d from the AVP Distribu-
tion Service in Vermont	

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# ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT- USA

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#### Reinventing Corrections

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#### **AVP** and **Restorative Justice**

#### **AVP International** Conference in Oxford

#### **New Exercies Rainbow Lunch**

#### **AVP-USA to Meet** In Colorado Springs

#### **AVP Poetry**

The Transformer is the AVP-USA newsletter for facilitators. Articles are welcome.

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Please send any articles or letters to:

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Facilitator Mailing List: Janet Lugo

Please send any address changes to:

Janet Lugo, 46 Main Street, Apt. 9 Mechanicsville, NY 12118

Subscription Manager; Diana Couch

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