



# The TRANSFORMER

Supporting and celebrating facilitators of AVP workshops

## AVP Workshops in New Places

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Seminarians preparing for the Catholic priesthood at Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, NY

### AVP in the community

## Reaching Out to New Places

*By Nancy Shippen*

**I**n the last year the reputation of AVP and the desire for workshops have been expanding in Massachusetts. Much of this expansion is due to individual facilitators taking the program to new venues. Some growth is due to our new progressive Commissioner of Corrections, Harold Clarke, who is very supportive of programs for inmates. He also has been active in developing cooperation among Parole, Probation and Corrections to stem the tide of people entering the system and to provide support for those leaving it. Interest is spreading AVP to these departments. Another aspect fueling our new initiatives is the desire to find ways for our formerly incarcerated facilitators to continue to facilitate after release.

A development described in Jo-Ann Della Giustina’s article “AVP as Experiential Learning for College Students” is the cooperation between the Criminal Justice Department of Bridgewater State University and the Old Colony Correctional Center’s AVP program.

An ironic boost was provided by an effort to discredit the program. A prisoner stole a certificate signed by a very notorious prisoner in the protective housing unit. He threatened to send it to Fox News if the DOC didn’t meet his demands. The DOC refused, and Fox did a piece asking if this man should be teaching others about alternatives to violence. After years of trying to increase the DOC’s awareness of AVP, they found themselves held accountable for the program. Fortunately, there was a Basic Workshop happening that weekend. With the permission of the inmates, Peaceful Pat Parker–Roach and an experienced team of inside facilitators hosted the Director of Programs and the Director of Publicity at a Saturday morning session. The directors initially wanted to sit in the corner and observe. However, Pat invited them into the circle and let them know they had the right to pass—the same as any other participant. By the end of the Trees of Violence and Non-Violence and A Problem I Solved Non-Violently, both were enthusiastic participants. Sometime later, the Director of Programs was interviewed by Fox and made a strong statement in support of this nationally recognized program.

For several years we have been trying to interest the DOC training academy in having a workshop for officers and staff. This effort went

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nowhere until we chanced to mention the possibility to an assistant commissioner. He thought it sounded like a fine idea and arranged for the man—who had not called us—to be in touch the next day. As a result, they hired John Shuford to run his three-day workshop for officers. Their reactions included saying that it was the best in-service training they have had and thanking him for saving them from "death by power-point." Unfortunately, the fiscal situation seems to have ended this activity for the time being.

Recently, two of our long-term inside lead facilitators were released to a reentry/rehab program. A wonderful experience resulted in being able to do a Basic Workshop with them on the outside. The program participants were very excited about AVP and, again, the experiential aspect of AVP was a welcome relief to the psycho-educational nature of the rehab program.

Currently, we are in the position of having more requests than we can possibly handle, and it is not clear just where these new initiatives will lead. With the increased publicity, we have had many inquiries about becoming a facilitator. We have trained several new facilitators who are very enthusiastic. The requirement that they take three weekend workshops to become an apprentice facilitator hasn't curbed their enthusiasm at all. Our problem is not lack of enough experienced lead facilitators. At present, there are three prisons hoping to start programs, and our two minimum facilities are underserved.

The age-old problem of spreading ourselves too thin arises, but we know these are wonderful, enriching workshops that are powerful in many contexts. With new groups becoming aware of AVP, we hope that increased exposure will help us expand our facilitator base. We are very interested in the current AVP/USA dialogue about finding ways to support facilitators.

*Nancy Shippen, AVP/Massachusetts*

**AVP in the classroom**

**Experiential Learning Gives Insight to Criminal Justice College Students**

*By Jo-Ann Della Giustina*

**T**he active learning approach to teaching promotes critical thinking, critical listening, collaborative learning, effective interpersonal communication and empathic understanding. Instead of passively listening to a teacher's lecture, active learning engages students in the learning process by doing, talking, writing and reflecting on the course content. One active learning strategy is experiential learning, where students participate in community activities and then relate those experiences to their academic education.

Starting fall of 2007, 28 Bridgewater State College students and five faculty members have been participating in AVP weekends at Old Colony Correctional Center in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Some participate as part of a restorative justice class. Others participate without any connection to a class. Most have been criminal justice majors although

there have been students who are majoring in history, social work and other disciplines. Six of the students have completed the three weekends and have been trained as facilitators.

As a criminal justice professor, my motivation is to expose my students to life behind the walls of a prison. Many, if not most, of the criminal justice students will be employed as police officers, probation and parole officers, correctional officers, victim advocates or lawyers. The stereotypes about prisoners can be extreme among these students.

Without failure, students are transformed during the weekend. The transformation seems to occur very quickly and consistently. It may be because most of these students are in their early 20s—a time of intense experiences and changes. It may be because the stereotypes, while strong, are quickly dissolved. Or, it may be that the human interaction taps into the students' empathy.

The following narratives give some insight into the importance of AVP participation for these students:

### **Energetic Erin:**

Wow, what an experience. I didn't think going to the prison would have this much of an effect on me. . . . Doing this program confirmed . . . why I wanted to be a [criminal justice] major. It taught me I can fit into the system and do good for people. Thank you for making me aware of AVP; it will stay with me for the rest of my life . . ."

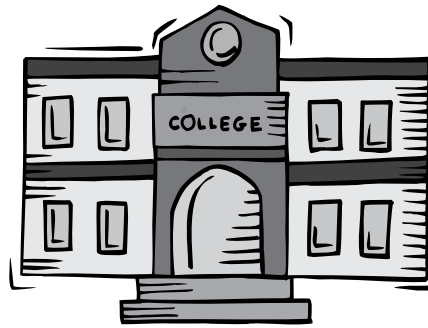
### **Kind Katelyn:**

"Before completing the AVP Basic Workshop, I doubted its true impact. For me, this was an eye-opening experience that was highly

beneficial for both my future career and my personal growth. I see the Alternatives to Violence Program as an open window to my lifelong goal of wanting to make a difference [in the world]. I plan to continue my education with AVP and complete both the Advanced and Training for Trainers Workshops. . . . The Alternatives to Violence Project truly is a life-changing experience that I would urge everyone to participate in."

### **Awesome Amy:**

"While attending AVP for the first time in 2008, I was very anxious. I was concerned that, being an outsider, I might not be accepted by them. . . . During the Basic Workshop, I learned a lot



about the Correctional Facility and about myself. An inmate participant, Nighttime Nick, had a positive and compassionate attitude. While having multiple conversations with him, I learned a lot about him and myself. We came from similar backgrounds and both value our families. He shared with me why he was serving time and, for the first time, I actually felt bad for an inmate. . . . A lot of positive things happened during that weekend: great communication, positive attitudes and humorous interactions. . . . I loved participating in AVP, and I plan to donate more of my time to the Old Colony Correctional Facility. . . .

AVP opened my eyes and made me realize there are people incarcerated who are just like me. I could easily be in the prison system, just like they are—given that I grew up in a very violent neighborhood—but I chose a different lifestyle for myself."

### **Magnificent Misty:**

"When I first heard about the Alternatives to Violence Project from my professor, I did not know what to think. I had been struggling with how to experience the criminal justice aspect of my education. At first, I felt that going into Old Colony Prison to participate in the AVP workshops might give me an idea of the people and the system I had been studying for so long. I knew it would be quite an experience for me to witness the system first-hand, and I was curious as to what kinds of people I would encounter. What I didn't realize was how moved I would feel after my weekend was completed and how compassionate I would feel toward the prisoners.

On the first day of the AVP Basic weekend, I felt rather intimidated. I looked at all the faces in the room and could not help but label them by what I figured their offense might be. . . . I felt shifty eyes upon me and thought the prisoners felt I was violating their space or were questioning why I was there. What I realized later was that the prisoners were more concerned with what I thought of them. . . . By the second day, I was more comfortable with everyone. What was most noticeable was that the labels that had separated the outsiders from the prisoners had been completely nullified. No longer were these prisoners I was participating with but, rather, kind-hearted friends. I was so

moved by the gratitude, wisdom and overall generosity that was extended to me by the men on the second day of the weekend. . . . I did not expect to share such an inner connectedness with all of the men at Old Colony. I am so grateful for an incredible experience I will never forget.”

These are a few of the reflections students have expressed. As a professor, I am inspired by these students. They have taken the life-changing events of AVP and incorporated them into their lives. At least one student is now working in a county jail as a substance abuse program facilitator.

*Jo-Ann Della Giustina (Joyful Jo-Ann) teaches at Bridgewater State College, MA, and facilitates at Old Colony Correctional Center in Bridgewater, MA.*

## **AVP and Americorps** **One Link Leads to Another**

*By Gail Fuller and Fran Howard*

**T**he first contact with Americorps and our local Hands of Peace/AVP group occurred in 1998 when three of us went to the Bayside Settlement House in San Diego to inquire about doing a workshop we had done the previous year for their immigrant community. The director of the Settlement House suggested we might help the Americorps team of 12 members who had been assigned there to assist local immigrants in setting up a barter system. We offered to lead a small workshop for them. After the session, the team said, “We got to know one another better this afternoon than we have in the previous five months together! We think every Americorps member ought to have this program at the beginning of every year!”

After they reported their experience to the Americorps staff, we presented an overview of our workshops, goals and methods, emphasizing we are an all-volunteer organization. Some of the administration were both resistant and doubtful; others who had heard the feedback were very interested. As a result, we presented a modified one-day mini-workshop to some 200–300 teenagers and team leaders!

The program has continued as every year we are called upon to provide our one-day community-building workshop to a brand new crop of Americorps team leaders. Although the Western Region main campus has moved from San Diego to Sacramento, we are glad to make the trek! The number of team leaders varies each year, based on government funding; but the norm is 20–25 leaders (who in turn will each lead a

team of 12). We now train only the leaders, who then replicate the training with their team members in the weeks to follow. Upon attaining our 501(C) status, we could be compensated for our travel expenses to Sacramento Americorps.

It is a wonderful experience meeting these intelligent and eager young adults who are so dedicated to service and willing to commit a year of their lives to helping their country through involvement in projects all over the U.S. Every time we are with them, we get younger!

*Gail Fuller and Fran Howard are long-time facilitators with Hands of Peace/AVP San Diego. For more information about Americorps, visit their website at [www.americorps.gov/nccc](http://www.americorps.gov/nccc). For more information about their one-day workshop, contact [fullers@sans.rr.com](mailto:fullers@sans.rr.com) or [fjhoward@att.net](mailto:fjhoward@att.net).*

### **Another Different Group for AVP**

Level I and Level II workshops for teachers who are field-testing lesson plans based on PEACE-PRINTS: Sister Karen's Paths to Nonviolence

*SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence, Buffalo, NY*

## **Partnering Re-entry with AVP** **Parolee Day Center Success**

*By Pat Hardy*

**H**ere's a way that one group figured out how to offer monthly workshops and not fill them up, while still being part of successful re-entry.

Fresno, California, with 500,000 people and one of the highest poverty rates in the country plus eight prisons within two hours' drive, seemed like an important place to offer AVP workshops. Interest was strong, but people are busy. So, offering workshops on a monthly basis seemed to be an answer, but how?

Behavioral Interventions, Inc. (BI), a contractor with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, offers training and monitoring of parolees in their day center. They were responsive when approached about their clients taking the workshop. The bad news was they believed the parolees would be more likely to come if it were offered at their site and they wanted to have 30 people, not 20, in a workshop (though they offered to pay \$25 per person). My initial reaction was, “that won't work”—



not only would the group be too large, but we want to train community people, too. So, we left it that we would both think about it. Then a little transformation occurred for me. Why not offer monthly workshops with BI having 15 spots and AVP 5? When I went back a month later offering this idea to the regional director and requesting that they arrange for lunches and snacks as well at their site, it was a deal.

And it works! One of BI's employees is an exoneree who had taken AVP in prison, so he coordinates what happens. All food arrives on time and is appropriate for the group. We are whittling away at our list of

### Another Different Group for AVP

"Taste of AVP" (mini) workshop for Trinity United Methodist Church, Grand Island, NY, and Wellsprings (a women's spirituality group)

*Audrey Mang, Buffalo, NY*

community people who want to attend and adding more from the group. This is a great place to involve AVP facilitator parolees as well as introduce community people to what a "prisoner" is like, in order to debunk their fears. BI tracks the success of their clients, so our workshops will be factored into this.

This is a new place, so we will be observing it. Recently, San Diego facilitators' Hands of Peace group met with BI and will be starting a program soon.

If your group would be interested in such a program and is located in Colorado (Denver, Greeley, Lakewood or Northglenn), Illinois (Aurora, Chicago Heights, Chicago, Decatur, East St. Louis or Rockford), Kansas (Wichita), New Jersey (Atlantic City, Elizabeth, Perth Amboy, Neptune City), New York (Poughkeepsie), or Pennsylvania (Chambersburg), email [avppat@earthlink.net](mailto:avppat@earthlink.net) so you can be directed to the person who can open the doors for you. Partnering makes life easier as long as it is win-win for all.

*Pat Hardy, AVP/California Clerk*

## Reaching out to a new community

# Finding People to Take a Community Workshop

*By Katherine Youngmeister and Pat Hardy*

**T**here was a time when community workshops were the bane of our existence. Either we could not recruit enough people to take them or they lacked the depth and excitement of a prison workshop.

Three changes of attitude—followed by some new organizational approaches—have made this task much more satisfying, which is exactly what we believe AVP is about.

- Always give and invite, rarely ask or recruit.
- One-on-one works best, not publicity.
- Consciously and constantly seek racial, economic, age, educational and cultural variety in participants.
- Every facilitator in a council has the ability to help fill a workshop.
- Keep records of your efforts as a reference for future workshops.

## Always Give; Rarely Recruit

With this first attitude shift, we offer opportunities for growth rather than trying to recruit people. And we offer scholarships generously.

Here are some introductory lines for first contacts—often a phone call:

"I'm a volunteer with the Alternatives to Violence Project. Maria recommended that I call you. Do you know about our conflict resolution workshops? (No, tell me about them.) May I make an appointment to come and talk with you in more detail?"

If they ask for more information: "May I email you some information? You can also check out our website."

## Getting ready for the one-on-one meeting

Take a flyer for an upcoming Basic Workshop and a business card. It is helpful to have your standard information about the activities of your local area council and a printout of research studies, or abstracts of studies, and any stories about your successes.

Always put a workshop fee donation on the flyer as it gives value to the workshop. Feel generous; be

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### Another Different Group for AVP

Refugee middle schoolers working for peace, Hope Refugee Services, Buffalo, NY

generous. Invite the person to try a workshop as our guest.

An agency head legitimately may want to see a manual before sending their clients. Carry one with you to give away. Of course, it is better if they come or send a staff person or discerning client or volunteer to a workshop to check it out.

### *The one-on-one meeting is all about connection*

*Recruitment* occurs when one AVP volunteer connects with one prospective participant or, less frequently, with one supportive agency staff person. We have done very little publicity or name recognition work. Newspaper articles are rarely successful. We sit down one-on-one and connect with people. We learn about their program and issues and share what AVP means to us. If we do not get anyone interested in the workshop from this contact, we ask what organizations they know that might be interested, whom to contact and whether we might use their name. We also ask whether we may put them on our e-mail contact list for upcoming workshops. Developing a good list of e-mail contacts helps us publicize our workshops without having to start at the beginning every time.

Try doing this visitation in teams. You model AVP's team method and have someone to celebrate with, get to know better and bounce ideas around with on what worked and what did not.

Early on, bigger presentations that we did netted zero. Recently, we have had good success presenting hour-long mini-workshops to church groups, community college classes and other community groups. We found the community college classes gave us an opportunity to reach people with a wider range of life

experience, including parolees, people of color and younger and older people with financial limits.

### *Do one-on-one follow-up*

Before each workshop, make a phone call to everyone who has indicated an interest in a workshop. If you find that calling everyone seems overwhelming, look at the list, ask Transforming Power for help and call as you are led.

About a week before the workshop, call everyone who is scheduled to attend. This time it is worth calling everyone. Your call tells everyone they matter and handles the wavering, and people let you know if they will not be attending rather than just not showing up. If the workshop needs more participants, invite people who have enrolled to bring a friend or colleague.

### **Diversity in workshops is key**

AVP offers an opportunity for people to experience a different kind of "being with each other." Those of us who have been privileged to work in the prisons already know the power and the beauty of, as well as the desperate need for, these experiences inside prison walls as well as outside.

The difference in community workshops is dramatic when we expand beyond the faces and lives that look like ours. Beginning to understand a parolee's challenges and successes, listening to how the mother of six school-age children who just divorced her alcoholic husband copes and acknowledging the racism within us all offers us an opportunity to develop empathy for others and a better understanding of our own lives.

To round out your understanding of reaching out to people who do not look like you in color, dress, hairstyle and lurid colors, check out Recruitment for Diversity on the Facilitators' Only page at [www.AVPCalifornia.org](http://www.AVPCalifornia.org).

### **Each one, find one**

At the beginning of outreach for a recent workshop, Katherine said to her group of 12 facilitators, "If each of us enrolls one person, we will have a workshop. Some of us may enroll more than one, and we'll have a big workshop—maybe even a waiting list to start filling up the next one."

Most of us do not thrive on this "task"; however, this is where the attitude change becomes the miracle. When we see this as a gift to others and know that

*Continued on page 8*

### **Some hints for easier outreach**

- Don't be daunted by the all-important outreach required for community workshops.
- Don't do it alone; find a partner or at least someone who can go with you from time to time.
- Be referred by someone else when calling a new person.
- Call people to make appointments to meet, don't just tell them about the program on the phone.
- Schedule appointments one day a month to prevent being overwhelmed.
- Keep good, but easy records of whom you contact.



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anyone can give away a scholarship, something shifts; but it is every facilitator's responsibility.

And one person doesn't have to do it all.

### **Working in a new community**

While opening up a new community, we spent one day a month for six months, visiting the town and meeting with people. After eight months, we offered three Basic Workshops of 12 or more participants, two Advanced and one full Training for Facilitators.

### **Keep records of your contacts**

For ease in setting up future workshops, keep track of those you contacted and share this information generously. In advertising circles, the rule is you have to contact someone seven times before they "buy." Track every person who inquires; e-mail them about upcoming workshops. This recordkeeping locally can be quite simple. Create the following lists in Excel with complete contact information on each person (e-mail, name, address, phone):

1. Potential Workshop Participants: A list of anyone who is interested in taking a workshop. Jot a brief contact note, including why they could not (for future reference). "How is your grandchild, well, now, I hope?" Go to this list a month or two before each workshop and send out e-mails or flyers as lead time is important for people. Work the list—call the people a month beforehand to see if they got the flyer and if they are interested.
2. Organizational contacts: People to whom you have spoken and who have agreed to receive an e-mail on

upcoming workshops to pass on to their various lists (staff, client, church, etc). Keep track of the phone calls you have made to them.

3. Registrants: If you have their money and/or their registration form, they are added to the list. People who have sworn that they are going to be there are included. Remember to contact them if their registration form does not show up.
4. Track who has taken the workshops so you know who is eligible for Advanced and T4F workshops.

Outreach may not be your favorite part of AVP, but you will learn more about the community and about yourself as you begin a concentrated plan to increase your community presence and workshop participants. Celebrate your contacts and your efforts and have fun!

*Katherine Youngmeister, a facilitator for five years, coordinates the San Francisco Bay Area Council of 85 facilitators, offering community workshops six times a year and populating workshops throughout the state. She thrives on discovering new ways to increase workshop diversity. Pat Hardy, a 15-year facilitator, has developed local groups in three locations, using the above methods. She finds outreach challenging, yet satisfying. They teamed up in Fresno to develop a council, whose facilitators are now serving two prisons (with another in the offing) in California's prison alley with eight prisons!*

*For more information and copies of information mentioned above, go to [www.avpcalifornia.org](http://www.avpcalifornia.org) Facilitators Only page.*

### **Meeting with new organizations**

## **Develop Your Own Conflict Resolution Program—Easily!**

*Spreading AVP means finding ways to get others to take hold of it and own it. Try this copy with local groups.*

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is committed to helping local organizations develop their own in-house conflict resolution workshop program with as few costs as possible. These successful workshops integrate life skills with leadership training, changing lives and communities in the process. They work because teams of local people facilitate them.

### **How does it work?**

From among your staff and clients, select a group of volunteers to attend a local workshop series. (AVP

offers three, 18-hour workshops on a sliding scale, or with full scholarships, and provides all trainers and materials at no separate charge.) Your volunteers take the workshops along with other community members, in groups no larger than 20.

Once members of your group have taken the Basic, Advanced and Training for Facilitators workshops, they apprentice-facilitate on a team under the supervision of an AVP Lead Facilitator. After being on a team three times, apprentices become certified facilitators.

To launch your program toward independence, AVP works with your trained facilitators to develop Lead Facilitators within your organization. AVP



provides opportunities for these apprentice Lead Facilitators to gain experience in other settings, increasing their skill and perspective and readying them to take responsibility for your new program.

### **What kind of support does AVP offer to your team?**

A local council of trained facilitators meets regularly to improve skills and maintain a high quality of facilitation. Your facilitators are encouraged to participate. The council may have individuals who are interested in volunteering, sometimes with your group as team members, providing a healthy cross fertilization of experiences. The council can also assist in resolving issues when disagreements or problems arise within your group.

AVP/ CA also has highly experienced facilitators around the state who are available for further assistance

and special trainings. In addition, your facilitators have access to a national network of facilitators via an e-mail list-serve.

### **How does a local group benefit from being involved with AVP?**

You step right into a proven, 35-year-old, national and local program that has been used in many different settings and has manuals and other materials already developed—no need to reinvent the wheel! The AVP agenda is flexible and readily adapts to your group's issues. With minimal administrative involvement, your organization develops leadership skills and concrete facilitation skills among staff and clients.

It can be free. While we appreciate expenses being paid, such as manuals and other materials costs, site rental, workshop snacks and meals and trainer travel and lodging, we can work with you to make it work for both our organizations.

### **AVP case study**

## **Planting Transforming Power in a New State Prison**

By "Karing" Kathy Rubenstein

**E**very year AVP/MA throws a big facilitator training day at one of the state prisons, welcoming all state facilitators to come for a day of fun, community building and learning. AVP/MA honored us by deciding to hold it at Old Colony Correctional Center (OCCC) in Bridgewater, MA, this year. The event was special for the facilitators at OCCC because it marked the second anniversary of our first AVP Basic Workshop at that facility. Here it was, only two years later, with 50 inside facilitators greeting us.

### **Training Day**

We heard the buzz as we approached, then noticed 60 chairs in one huge circle. The men, wearing their

### **Another Different Group for AVP**

Families—We gave a one-day workshop for families (parents and children of all ages) in Ithaca at the request of the families in Ithaca Monthly Meeting. This sort of workshop (shorter and inter-generational) had never been done before and was an experiment. A request for a follow-up and longer workshop in the future has been received.

*-Simply Susan Wolf*

biggest smiles and their best duds, escorted us to our seats, brought us cups of coffee; carnival atmosphere prevailed. A few officials from the prison were present, along with Recreation and Control Officers. AVP signs and slogans were all over the walls.

Here it is two years later, and they are still telling us that AVP is the "talk of the town," with a perpetual waiting list for workshops at all three levels.

Wouldn't it be amazing to have AVP in every one of our state prisons? Where do we begin, and what are the steps for getting there?

The answer is in the mystery of Transforming Power: *When you are clear about your position, expect to experience great inward power to act on it.*

In September of 2006, AVP/MA Co-chair Nancy Shippen and AVP National President Dick Nethercutt arranged a meeting with the Massachusetts DOC, hoping to gain support for expanding AVP to other state prisons in Massachusetts.

The same month, the men in the SHU (Secure Housing Unit) at MCI-Concord were transferred to OCCC. At the time, OCCC did not have AVP, but the men in the SHU were already involved with a monthly AVP support/study group, which we were able to continue at OCCC. Soon, the OCCC admin-

*Continued on page 10*

istration asked if we could run AVP for the general population. A third helpful factor was a newly created Volunteer Coordinator position within the Massachusetts Department of Corrections (DOC). Bill Milhomme, a former prison volunteer of 15 years, had just become the new Volunteer Coordinator. The stars were starting to align, and *we were experiencing great inner power to act*.

## Reach for That Something Good in Others

Having established an excellent relationship with all the state prisons, Bill became a tremendous advocate and support for volunteer programs seeking to expand to other state prisons.

## Where to Start

*Base your position on truth.*

AVP, with a solid 35-year foundation in 38 states and 42 countries, offers something that all prisons are seeking. The next step was to *seek common ground*. Prisons are interested in lowering recidivism rates. AVP helps transform attitudes and reestablishes connection with oneself and others within a community and reduces recidivism. Prisons are seeking what AVP has to offer.

## Setting Up a New AVP Prison Program

In November, 2006, Dick Nethercutt arranged a meeting with Deputy Superintendent Mark Powers, OCCC Volunteer Coordinator and Acting Director of Treatment Bruce Pires, and Bill to discuss the possibility of bringing AVP to OCCC. We had submitted our proposal two weeks prior to the meeting at OCCC and met to discuss the areas where we as negotiators for AVP could be flexible versus the areas on which we needed to stand firm to ensure the sustained integrity of the program.

Most important in this meeting was *to build community based on honesty, respect and caring* and establish a positive working relationship with the prison and DOC upon which we could build, even if it meant waiting.

## The First Meeting

We went into the meeting with OCCC administrators prepared to *listen to their interests, needs and concern*. We talked about AVP's history, purpose, philosophy, goals and track record as well as our experience running programs. The prison discussed

background checks and orientation procedures for new volunteers and costs involved and asked what workshops we thought we could run the first year and when we might start.

The only issue we could not resolve was how to handle lunch. We were used to eating lunch with the men at other prisons, but OCCC required an 11:10 a.m. cell count each day. Eating with the men might not be an option, jeopardizing the number of workshop hours.

This issue presented a challenge, but *our inner instincts told us* this was not a deal breaker—not yet anyway. Enough *common ground* to move forward was available, something *creative* might prevail to accommodate us all.

## Recruiting New Volunteers

Dick identified two people from the area who had facilitated AVP years ago and were looking to get back into it and who found students and professors from local Bridgewater State and Stonehill College to participate. Two Stonehill College professors got together to host a play about prison life, which they saw at an AVP conference, and advertised in various local newspapers and bulletins on campus and in the area. Bill Milhomme's office at the DOC and AVP/MA provided a few referrals, and we put notices in the community church bulletins, inviting any interested persons to a coffee at the college two weeks after the college-sponsored play.

## The Program

*Patience and persistence* paid off. Bruce Pires at OCCC came up with a creative plan for lunch—a *win-win* for everyone.

We trained enough people that first round of workshops to add two more facilitators to the team. We collaborated to create a permanent box of supplies, which was held in a designated place in the prison between workshops. Four inside men had their T4F certificates from other prisons; they became our first inside facilitators. Thanks to a grant from CLARG in 2007, which was renewed in 2009, facilitators traveling a distance were reimbursed for their motel stays. Thanks to everyone's active observance of the Guides

*Continued on page 12*

## Another Different Group for AVP

Jail ministry volunteers, Broome County Council of Churches for their Jail Ministry volunteers

*Jammin' Joan Bobier, Albany Area Council, NY*

# Moral Compass Exercise

## Brief Introduction

“How would you define a moral compass?” (Summarize offerings of group. Many people would say that a moral compass guides us on how we make decisions in life.)

## Pass Out Moral Compass Handout

“Put your three highest values as numbers 1, 2, and 3—then fill in behind with the next highest values. Note that you will not use all the values or qualities, and you may think of one value or quality important to you that is not there, which you may add.”

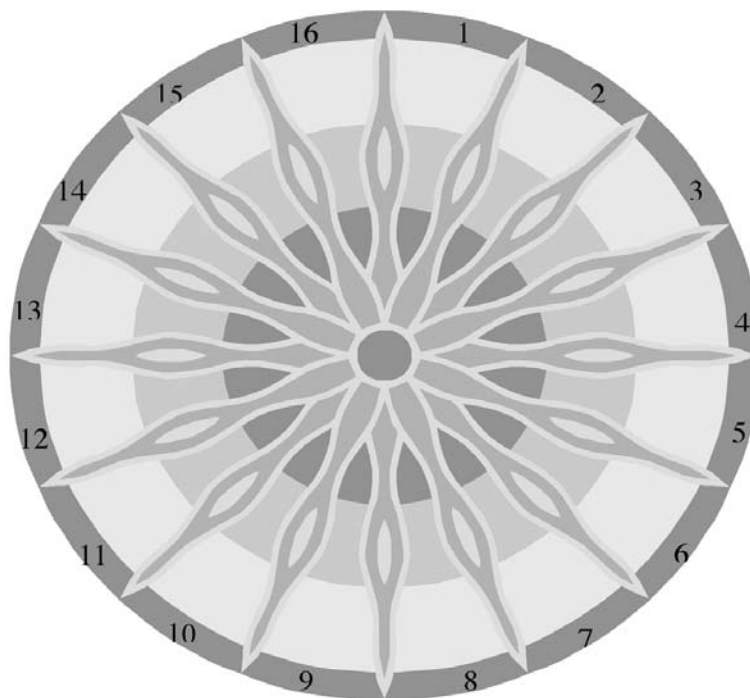
Allow up to 10 minutes for this individual work.

If the group is large (more than 15), divide into groups for processing. Process questions:

1. What were your three highest values?
2. How did you decide your highest three values?
3. How does your Moral Compass affect your decision making?
4. Has your Moral Compass changed since you came to prison? Do you feel it needs to change further?
5. What did you like about this exercise?

If anyone wishes, pass out blank Moral Compass handouts so they can do it again on their own time.

## MORAL COMPASS



Balance  
Communication  
Compassion  
Connection  
Cooperation  
Empathy  
Other?

Fairness  
Faith  
Forgiveness  
Flexibility  
Generosity  
Golden Rule

Inner voice  
Interdependence  
Kindness  
Love  
Nonviolence  
Patience

Perseverance  
Respect  
Responsibility  
Self-respect  
Truth  
Upbringing

to Transforming Power, the first workshop went off without a hitch; the rest is history.

Here it is, just two years later, and OCCC has over 175 men who have completed at least a Basic Workshop, with a waiting list of over 50 men for each workshop level. The cooperation and support of the men have been so positive that the OCCC administration granted them permission to run mini-workshops. *Reach for that something in others:* New facilitators get a chance to practice their skills while engaging new candidates who cannot wait to sign up.

*When you are clear about your position, you can expect to experience great inward power to act.* Continue to *seek ways to build “community” based on honesty, respect and caring,* and Transforming power will find its ways into the yards, the corridors and the gymnasiums of all our state prisons.

*Kathy Rubenstein, an eight-year facilitator at several locations, including Old Colony Correctional Center in Bridgewater, MA, where she serves as outside prison co-coordinator, thanks Dick Nethercutt for his review of this article and his part in opening Old Colony.*

*For more information on “Introducing a workshop to a new prison,” including a “checklist for prison readiness”: [www.avpcalifornia.org](http://www.avpcalifornia.org) <Facilitators Only page> click on Materials for Lead Facilitators.*

### Another Different Group for AVP

**Indigenous women**—I do a lot of AVP in Latin America. An unusual group was a 2007 group of 12 women, most of whom were indigenous and the youngest of whom was 13. I thought they didn't get TP very well, and they said things like, “We really enjoy workshops; please bring us more,” which made me wonder if they had noticed the special aspects of AVP. But a month or so later, they took part in a women's march for equality and against domestic violence in their very traditional Indian town.

*Val Liveoak, Friends Peace Teams, Peacebuilding en las Americas, El Salvador*



Another Different AVP Group: Indigenous Women

### AVP

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