

The

TRANSFORMER

Supporting and Celebrating the Facilitators of AVP Workshops

AVP: A Youth Leadership Program

By REVOLUTIONARY RENATA, PERPETUAL PAULO, NAMASTE NATHALIE, AMIGO ANDY, AWESOME ABBY, POTENTIAL PATRICIA, JUST JOSE, SMILEY STUART AND EQUALIZE-IT ELŻBIETA

AVP Summer Camp 2015

A five-year dream became a reality in the summer of 2015 when 22 young people participated in a 2-week leadership camp at the Quaker meeting house in Chatham, New Jersey. Camp participants were bilingual (Spanish- and English-speaking), ranged from 11 to 16 years old and represented 5 different local schools. Facilitators for the workshops were predominantly young themselves, between 17 and 25 years old. Resources made the camp more inclusive



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and created the conditions to make youth participation real and effective: 5 young facilitators got paid a stipend. The winds beneath the sails of this ambitious project were Wind of the Spirit, an immigrant advocacy group in Morristown, NJ, AVP-NJ and AVP-USA, Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting and New York Yearly Meeting.

Camp mornings were devoted to Basic and Advanced AVP Workshops. In the afternoons, participants enjoyed swimming, crafts, film making, yoga, active games and a trip to The Newark Museum. At the end of the two weeks, participants enthusiastically signed on for monthly reunions and a winter Training for Facilitators (T4F) weekend workshop. We hope next year's camp will be facilitated by graduates of this first-in-the-nation AVP youth leadership camp.


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Contextualizing AVP

By PERFECT PETERX

The Alternatives to Violence Programme (Not Project as it is now more than a project) has developed and grown beyond the dreams of those who started it. From a lowly space in Greenhaven Prison in New York to almost every continent on earth, in 60 countries and still counting, I can bet they didn't see it

coming. AVP's growth came with a lot of diversities, beliefs, perspectives and opinions; and it is still a struggle between the generations. Incidentally, our ideas, ideals, standards and principles as it concerns the programme have not changed much in 40 years.

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The TRANSFORMER

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Editor's Note: "AVP for Hire?" Leads to Further Questions

The question, "Should AVP facilitators get paid for facilitating workshops?" was meant to invite a deep interrogation of our priorities, values and visions. Some might say it is simple: our priority as AVP facilitators is to facilitate workshops – to guide whatever happens inside the workshop, and leave it to the participants carry that magic outside the workshop. Yet, AVP does not happen in a vacuum. Our work happens in real places and affects real communities of people. We all have stakes in the work we do, and let's face it; we don't all come to this work from equal levels of privilege, power, wealth or financial stability. Our needs in life shape our values.

The TRANSFORMER Autumn 2015 presents a diverse discussion of values. Facilitators such as Joyous Joseph and Novel Nadine ask us to uphold the value of volunteering. As Joyous Joseph writes, nonviolence is the work. Likable Lisa and Discerning Diane offer visions of affordable, accessible and culturally relevant AVP workshops that serve communities from African American South Carolina to Indigenous Alaska. Dizzy Dave speaks from East and Central Africa where stipends for facilitators have increased workshop availability for nearly 15 years. He highlights the relationship between money and power and asks us to think about "cultural imperialism" in the U.S. context. What context(s) do you work in, and how does this shape your values?

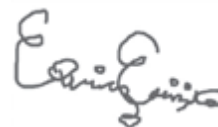
I hope the questions provoked here catalyze dialogues about our values as an organization. I hope we build our visions not based on our individual circumstances but from the dreams and desires of our communities. Our

communities are diverse and hold many different dreams. *The TRANSFORMER Winter 2015* will focus on diversity.

What does diversity mean in your community? How do differences of race, ethnicity, language, gender, class, ability, or nationality affect you and AVP? AVP chapters across the country have asked for facilitator trainings around issues of racism and privilege. On the email list-serve, facilitators have discussed behavioral and learning differences within a workshop and how to address these with care. As Chris Tinson discusses in this issue's *Carceral Continuum*, the Black Lives Matter movement has helped bring the issue of anti-black violence and racism to the forefront. BLM along with other movements, organizations and communities are working to raise awareness around intersecting issues such as mass incarceration, sexual assault and violence against transgender communities, particularly trans people of color. AVP groups have identified target issues such as mental illness and across the world people continue to seek out innovative ways of supporting mental health in their communities. How do we address these different issues with AVP? How do we build community based on honesty, respect and caring when we ourselves often hold judgments, biases, grudges and misunderstandings?

We should not celebrate diversity without confronting privilege and oppression. We cannot claim to be anti-racist without resisting white supremacy in our daily lives. We will not help save the lives of transgender people without first becoming aware of the issues ourselves. These are not easy things to talk about. So let's start talking.

Peace,



EQUALIZE-IT ELŻBIETA



Check out our new column *Carceral Continuum!*

We have initiated the practice of publishing first and affirmation names only – no surnames unless requested.

What do you think of *The TRANSFORMER*? Write to us!

Winter 2015 Submissions Deadline:
November 15th

Way of Life, not Career of Life

By JOYOUS JOSEPH

"Peace...it does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart." (Anonymous)

Peace and blessings! My name is Joseph Aiken. DOC # 74 B 1052. My AVP training began in 1976 after having met Dr. Apsey in 1975 to discuss AVP and its implementation at Wallkill Correctional Facility. I was awestruck when I went to Tacoma, Washington to facilitate Recovery To Practice (birth child of AVP) this May, and found myself in the midst of the 40th year Gathering! I discovered that AVP was being presented in 60 countries in public schools, police departments, correctional facilities and community agencies.

First, I want to relate my personal experience. What impressed me most, beyond the context of AVP, was the willingness of the facilitators to travel long distances to relay the message of Transforming Power for peace. These pioneers relied on assistance from Quakers and others to aid them with housing, transportation, food, etc. The work was in the spirit, given freely. These men and women believed in what they were do-

ing, had purpose and challenged us to blaze trails.

Second, I want to share my thoughts. AVP has been successful over a 40-year period in spreading the word and planting the seeds of nonviolence throughout the world. We have done some amazing things! We have stayed away from the



traditional "job-related" issues such as wages, vacations, time clocks, etc. Dr. Apsey's philosophy was the "work" of nonviolence!

I am not opposed to some level of compensation/stipend in some areas of AVP such as travel, training events, gatherings (in/out of state) and some specific levels of administration. Let us

not forget that AVP is a "way of life" not a "career of life."

In retrospect, we have gained so much by applying our values and moral insights through the trials, tribulations, consistency and longevity without the "dollar" hanging over our heads. For citizens returning, I can relate to the need to be employed, especially doing what you love to do! As with the pioneers, I had employment opportunities that afforded me the opportunity to do AVP work.

Finally, this is how I see things. As in all things, our decisions are consensus based! We view all aspects. We make choices. We focus on AVP and what works. In the end, our spirits will reveal what is necessary and how we can achieve a growth worthy result.

The Freedom Riders, Civil Rights activists, and citizens from all walks of life have kept the struggle going, relying on our unity and determination to Transform Power for peace.

Joyous Joseph is an AVP facilitator in New York.

AVP for Hire...

There has been much discussion in AVP circles as to the validity of creating some form of permanent stipend for facilitators doing workshops. The main focus of this discussion has been those who were formerly incarcerated and functioning in AVP in society. It also encompasses young people who are attracted to AVP and are being encouraged to become facilitators. This should be looked on as compensation for the time and energy of persons willing to sacrifice their weekends to do this vital work. For returning citizens to do AVP is major. For teens to do it is awesome. Poor, struggling people and young people have not only needs but time constraints that are important. Currently, AVP is the work

of mostly older retired white volunteers. This is not a sustainable model. If AVP is to continue into future generations, we must lose the attitude that unless AVP is all-volunteer it has no value. All over Africa AVP people are paid, and the work flourishes. This is because the needs of the workers are set above philosophy as it should be.

Until we apply this attitude here in America, AVP will continue to be mostly white, elderly and affluent or other people who can afford to volunteer. If we open our eyes to who should be representing AVP (the people who learned it in prison), we will meet their needs and structure AVP to become the force it should be: a dynamic, transformative



tidal wave that flows over the prison walls and cascades into communities across the country.

JUSTICE SEEKING J, AVP-USA

Continued from page 1

Contextualizing AVP...

We have three schools of thought in the AVP family:

1. AVP is a volunteer programme, and everybody and everything must be volunteer and volunteering.
2. AVP is a volunteer-driven programme. You volunteer your time, but you don't have to volunteer your pocket; thus, it is OK for the programme to pay travel, accommodation and meals but no stipend is provided for facilitators.
3. AVP is a volunteer programme, but it is okay to pay a stipend for facilitators, especially when the volunteers are unemployed or cannot afford to give their time to the programme.

All these schools of thought involve volunteers. There exist three classifications of volunteers in our present day: Passion Volunteer, Service Volunteer and Profession Volunteer. Passion Volunteers are facilitators who can afford to work for free – they might be retired and have pension, savings, investment, etc. To them, AVP is a full-time and 100% volunteer programme. Service volunteers can volunteer to facilitate workshops, but cannot afford to pay for travel, accommodation and meals. Profession volunteers are those who give their knowledge and expertise at a stipend. The fee paid to these facilitators is far less than what they normally would charge or accept to do the job. A trained facilitator goes to facilitate a workshop, puts in 16–22 hours and is given \$20–\$100 as payment. Is that what the commitment, preparation, time are worth?

CHALLENGE

Unless AVP is allowed to operate as it suits the context, we will have problems. You have an inside facilitator, a very fantastic facilitator. The person is always willing to facilitate, is a lead facilitator and willing to facilitate every workshop and then gets out and does not come to facilitate workshops again. We then complain that our good inside facilitators stay away from workshops when they get out. Their context has changed, but we have refused to notice or change to meet their present context.

While on the inside: no worries about bills (medical, gas, rent, meals, accommodation, etc.) – all paid for by the state; thus, you need activities. AVP is one you enjoy so well. Your love for the programme and your interest in facilitating have not diminished; rather, they are contending with basic needs in your present context. Thus, you would rather spend the time hustling for the means to meet your needs than volunteer.

AVP needs to look at the context within which it is operating and what works for the good of all – the programme, the community, participants and facilitators. No matter where you stand, you can't take away the fact that AVP works on principles that work.

Expect the best!!!!

Perfect Peterx is an AVP facilitator in Northern Nigeria and travels throughout Africa for his work with AVP.

AVP for Hire?

It is clear that voluntarism is a big thing in this country and in other parts of the world as well. In my view, that is good. I've been taught to give back and be a volunteer all my life. I've been blessed by caring adults around my life that have brought me to the understanding of my privileges and my duties. This is fundamental for the movement of progressive, peaceful change. What is missing, in my view, in this discussion is that voluntarism is a privilege in itself. The movement can be a lot stronger if it is inclusive; and in order to be inclusive, it needs to break the barrier of privilege.

As my dear partner Diana reminds us in every email: "It is absolutely essential that the oppressed participate in the revolutionary process with an increasingly critical awareness of their role as

subjects of the transformation." We need to create the conditions to make the participation real and effective. Having youth facilitate is one part; but having resources – yes, CASH, available is another important part. We should be able to say that Peace Pays. We should be able to "hire" more and better than the army, than McDonald's.

A better world is possible if we look at privilege straight in the eye, every day, recognize it and ask ourselves: What are we doing to bring it down? We have in AVP a revolutionary tool of transformation but we need to let it transform ourselves first.

SMILEY STUART, AVP-USA

AVP for Hire?

I am so pleased to see this conversation happening. I think it is important for AVP facilitators to be paid because – especially here in South Africa where unemployment has reached a dangerous level – AVP facilitation can be a rewarding career for many. AVP's extensive international network offers exciting opportunities for travel and intercultural sharing, which is especially attractive and beneficial for young people. I vote YES, let's pay AVP facilitators! Those who can afford to volunteer their time can still do so, or they can donate their stipends to AVP.

SHINING SHENA, AVP-SOUTH AFRICA

Five Minutes with... Free Flo

Interviewed by Equalize-it Elżbieta

Adjective Name: Free Flo

Hometown: Arizona, Nebraska, Texas... We got out of Texas like our tails were on fire!

Favorite AVP activities: Crossover. Concentric Circles. Facts and Feelings. Empathy Exercise. Empathy was a chance to observe peoples' challenges and not be too vague...just talk about the stuff and find out what happens.

How did you and AVP happen? I met someone through a Catholic gathering who came in and said, "I know that since you're here, you're interested in this kind of thing." She talked about AVP and just knocked my socks off. At that point there were no outside workshops, so I just jumped into a car with someone who had already been going into the prisons. Eastern was one of the ones I spent a lot of time in.

What connected your AVP work inside with your work outside of prison? Well, the guys just kept after me until I was blown out of the water: "Do work with the kids...We should not have to wait until we're in prison to hear about this stuff." And I had to agree with that.

Finally what happened was, in our school here in town, a kid shot a teacher in the face in the classroom. I wrote a note to the principal and just said, "Can I be of help? What do you think?" I took a whole year of relating to the staff and all the people in the high school...and it started.

Advice for Youth Workshop facilitators: Keep it light. The kids will stay with you if you do. It doesn't mean you have to be inconsequential or focus on the silly. Be there, be real.



Free Flo and Star (left) with AVP-NY school coordinators and youth facilitators

Our Values and Visions

By LIKEABLE LISA

When I think of the Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) workshop model, I think in terms of value. Specifically, I consider how those of us who facilitate AVP workshops find great worth in the way the workshop is constructed and often customized to meet the group where they are at, which increases the value of the workshop experience for each participant. I consider how effectively AVP helps us find alternatives to the *violences* we daily face. The AVP model is worth its weight in gold.

So, how do we honor the *value* of the AVP workshop model and *value* the investment in providing AVP? I am concerned about the terribly high and tragic suicide rate in Alaska and how to empower those living in rural native villages to address violence and bring more peace to their communities and families – in honor of elders and using the tools of AVP. As Alaska's

policy makers consider Criminal Justice Reform (CJR) and how to reduce recidivism rates during the first three months as former inmates return into their communities, I think about our returning citizens and ask: How can the value of AVP be put to practice here?

I have a vision that is also a question: How can the AVP model be utilized to help transform and heal those interested in and in need of peace, nonviolent ways of living and conflict resolution skills and sustain those of us interested in employment or financial support?

I see possibility all around us. It is this heartbeat that keeps me moving forward and motivated to visualize the value of the AVP model, challenge my thinking and consider out-of-the-box ideas.

Likeable Lisa is an AVP facilitator in Alaska.

Fighting the Epidemic of Violence

After 27 years as an AVP facilitator and 15 years coordinating the landing strip support group, I know we need to change our approach to peace.

Would I pay for peace? If the violence in my community dropped by paying an army of AVP peace makers to do workshops would this be the price I'm willing to pay? The simple answer is yes. Yes to peace in our communities!

RAD RAY, AVP-USA

AVP for Hire?

I received a stipend for facilitating AVP in schools in Buffalo, NY through the Alternatives to Violence in Schools (AviS) program through the Western New York Peace Center (WNYPC). The contact at the school explained to us that if we offered the program for free, the Board of Education and the higher-ups would question the validity of the program. They place value on programs that price themselves high.

By charging the schools for the workshops, the WNYPC was able to pay the facilitators a stipend, reinvest in the AviS program and implement AVP in that school. Having facilitators get paid in no way diminished the impact of the program and, by doing so, we gained access to the school.

MOTIVATED MARY KAY, AVP-USA



Continued from page 1

AVP: A Youth Leadership Program...

Reflections from Facilitators, Coordinators and Support Staff

Over 30 people got together for over 3 months, not counting years of dreaming, to plan and facilitate a unique experience. AVP was the center the whole time or at least most of the time, where we learned and relearned how to listen to each other, affirm each other, cry and laugh with each other.

I enjoyed providing the journal-making materials and watching them play. They came up with a variety of artistic possibilities. Each person created something unique that was an expression of their personality.

The film course gave participants a little training in film itself, but the more important aspect was to give the students an opportunity to reflect on what they had learned in this different medium. I thought they did an amazing job in a short amount of time and produced interesting work.

It was eye-opening to know that so many young kids don't actually have people and a space in their lives where they can freely share how they feel. I saw the power of AVP when people started sharing more. This camp was a learning experience. We need more of these camps, and we need to create more of these spaces because kids just barely know how to communicate anymore, especially with the increase of technology.

The possibilities for transformation are really there, and it was just humbling to be able to facilitate that.

AVP with Youth Matters

Building community and allies is difficult work. It takes courage, and sometimes that courage needs support. This is how AVP camp differs from another regular summer camp. It's more than a community—it's a support system. It is kind of painful to say that you have to build allies to survive, but if you are building allies for a positive cause, that is a great idea. This camp was an opportunity for

youth to get together and discuss issues generally not discussed in schools and at home, in an in-depth, personal and safe way. They got to develop communication and listening skills they can apply to their lives, with a whole new support system they did not have before. One of our youngest participants (age 12) went home and taught her family members, including her 8-year-old cousin, I-messages. If youth have an experience of nonviolent community, for the rest of their life they will entertain the possibility that people can earn each other's trust and build community.

Young people are the future. We are building the world together and, at the end of the day, our decisions matter collectively, even if we don't think they matter. In order for youth to participate in AVP workshops, communities have to recognize our needs: we need mentors,

twenty-two kids were given the chance to see that we are all a community and that we are better and stronger to change the world when we learn how to listen and affirm each other. We hope AVP Camps continue to develop across the country!



Playing Machines in AVP Youth Camp



peer support, safe spaces to express ourselves and opportunities to develop as leaders. When youth can participate in and facilitate AVP workshops, we affirm the value of our life experiences, abilities and potential. When youth facilitate workshops, our leadership roles help to shape and sustain AVP for generations to come. This summer in New Jersey,

Contributors to this article are youth and adult AVP facilitators, volunteer coordinators and support staff from the AVP Youth Summer Camp 2015 in Chatham, New Jersey, USA. To learn more about NJ's AVP Camp, visit avpnjyouth.weebly.com and to get involved with AVP and Youth, email editor@avpusa.org.

Carceral Continuum

New column focusing on political analysis of the (in)justice system

State Violence and the Black Lives Matter Movement

In a recent conversation published in the *New York Times*, social theorist Joy James and philosopher George Yancy contextualized the current moment as one locked between “grief and action.” It is this sense of both intense worry and activist energy that helps us measure the role of imprisonment and state violence in spurring the Black Lives Matter movement.

Joy James puts the matter squarely, stating:

“We need to publicly debate whether it is just, moral, appropriate, or even safe and sane, to believe in modern policing, given the fallibility, corruption and danger present in the institution. Police agencies have a history of racial bias and violence that has been investigated and condemned by governments as well as civil and human rights organizations. Citizens are supposed to flee or fight criminals, not the police. But reality teaches you that in black life you need to be ever vigilant for both.”

No amount of “black successes” can discount the hard, bloody deaths too many Black lives have suffered within and outside of prison walls. Each killing of an unarmed Black and Brown life at the hands of a policing agency (742 this year alone) or carceral institution or the conditions of existence that lead to so-called Black-on-Black violence represents what scholar Frank Wilderson calls the “carceral continuum,” wherein

some form.

This continuum links 14-year-old George Stinney to Oscar Grant, Troy Anthony Davis to Assata Shakur, Mumia Abu-Jamal to Vonderrit Myers, Tookie Williams to Tamir Rice, Renisha



McBride to Claude Neal, Yvette Henderson to Antonio Zambrano-Montes and Hugo Pinell to Mansur Ball-Bey. America’s prisons are key to this continuity. For the destitute, deviant or dissident individuals housed in these institutions, the prison epitomizes the loss of autonomy. With that comes a loss of self, identity, sense of home.

The Black Lives Matter movement has put the issues of police brutality, over-sentencing and carceral violence on the national agenda. Of course, these activists are merely first-responders to the trauma brought on by law enforcement agencies. Discussion of deep reforms to carceral policies and practices will be central to our national conversations on racism and anti-black policing.

Organizations such as Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) have shown how disastrous prison spending has been on the economic and political wellbeing of that state. Activists in many states are pushing for drastic reforms to parole and probation, and

some, as in Massachusetts, are calling for the end of cash bail. If imprisonment truly becomes a national concern, activists will have to focus on struggles of formerly and currently incarcerated women, one of the fastest growing prison populations. It was only last year that Massachusetts got a law passed banning shackling of pregnant women during delivery. Organizations such as the Prison Birth Project, Families for Justice as Healing and Women on the Rise Telling Herstory (WORTH) are part of broad, women-led coalitions aimed at highlighting the stories of women’s encounters with carceral policy. Moreover, these organizations support women during and long after their sentences.

These are just some of the examples of how communities are organizing for deep reforms while imagining a world without prisons. Unfortunately, more will be needed if we truly are going to put humanity over profits and love over extinguishing human life.

Guest contributor Chris Tinson is a Professor of Africana Studies at Hampshire College.

Editor’s Note: Since this article was written, the number of black people killed by police this year has raised to 787.



the ability of living, breathing or being while black is measured by ones proximity and exposure to state aggression in



Reach Out!

How to help sustain and spread AVP

Join our #1500 for 40 Campaign—in honor of AVP's 40th anniversary! Since May 2015, **179** people across the country have graduated from T4F Workshops. Our goal is 1,500 new facilitators by May 2016. Here is one success story:

A T4F at York CI in Niantic, CT graduated 10 new inside facilitators. Some notes about York CI: after the program was shut down in 2013, facilitators have been working tirelessly to get back inside. This summer, they hosted a Basic, Advanced, and T4F within the span of just one month.

Send information about your T4F Workshops to outreach@avpusa.org or post on AVP-USA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/alternativestoviolenceprojectusa.

Support our winter fundraiser. Help us raise money for youth facilitators to participate in the May 2016 Annual Gathering! This will be only the second year that people under age 18 can attend AVP-USA's Annual Conference. Let's work together to help young people get to Denver! Look for more information on AVP-USA's Facebook and in *The TRANSFORMER Winter 2015*.

AVP-USA's Public Relations Committee is looking for committed individuals to get involved. If you have experience with marketing, graphic design, fundraising or outreach, we'd love to have your support. Please write to outreach@avpusa.org

Meditative Martin serves as AVP-USA National Outreach Coordinator and Vice President of the AVP-USA Board of Directors.

Donate 5% of your Amazon.com purchases to AVP! Look for the Amazon tab at the bottom of www.avpusa.org ...and tell your friends!

AVP for Hire

By *DISCERNING DIANE*



First, I need to share a few things about me, which affect my perspective on "AVP for hire." I am an older African-American Christian Quaker woman. My background is in conflict resolution and community organizing. My present mission is to become a licensed Chaplain with the intentions of developing a spiritual retreat and advocacy center for low-income people.

I have a few priorities in AVP—six, in fact:

1. AVP workshops remain no cost or low cost; they must be affordable and available to everyone.
2. AVP material and workshops maintain a uniform standard of integrity and professionalism in its workshops and facilitators.
3. All qualified facilitators who would like to participate in workshops are able to do so.
4. I see a need for and have a desire for more diversity in facilitators.
5. AVP workshops continue to spread, especially in African-American and people of color communities.
6. Prison workshops focus equally on staff as well as those incarcerated.

I understand that financial responsibilities can be an impediment to facilitator availability and diversity. I see a need for financial assistance for facilitators who may require assistance in order to be available to facilitate.

Presently, I haven't an immediate solution to this problem. I understand that some facilitators conduct workshops for hire, using AVP materials, while not using the AVP name. This is a good start. I believe finding creative ways to share AVP information while developing income is a necessity. Becoming independent consultants and utilizing AVP materials and other marketable skills is an avenue worth considering. Perhaps groups of people could work together (forming various types of corporations) to secure funds.

In conclusion – NO, I don't think AVP should be for hire at this time. Personally, I think AVP has a lot of potential but presently is still in its developmental stage and is not ready to be marketed for hire.

As a firm believer in Transforming Power in all of our lives, in all types of situations, I think there are answers to all of our challenges. Financial assistance for those needing it, I believe, is one of our challenges in AVP that can become an opportunity.

Discerning Diane is an AVP facilitator in South Carolina.

Alternatives to Violence Project and the Experience of Volunteering

By NOVEL NADINE

The practice of nonviolence relies on volunteering as a formative experience. Life's transforming power moves within direct, unmediated relationships among people and the natural world. We experience transforming power within relationships of equal power and respect for dignity and worth of each person and of all life. Paid facilitation cannot authentically replicate this direct, genuine sense of love, caring and compassion.

We should note that AVP's historic commitment to volunteering applied to participants and facilitators, not to administration. AVP has paid for routine, repetitive, administrative support such as maintaining manuals, Transforming Power cards, communication, news, workshop reports, directory of facilitators, historic archives and so forth.

At the same time, AVP always has encouraged paid facilitators: "Take parts; take the whole workshop... but if you get paid or include participants with institutional power over other participants, just don't call it AVP." The founders expected and encouraged people to use and adapt AVP, which many have done. AVP has had a pronounced influence on a wide variety of social and cultural programs for nearly half a century.

The concern is actually not whether people can or will be paid for facilitating AVP; many people have done so from the beginning. The question is whether AVP wants to take the time to know about it and whether the volunteer core of AVP will be lost in the meantime.

Novel Nadine directs Conscience Studio in New York and coordinates Friends Peace Teams in Asia West Pacific.

Paying AVP Facilitators

By DIZZY DAVE

The African Great Lakes Initiative of the Friends Peace Teams introduced AVP in Rwanda in 2001, Burundi 2002, Kenya 2003, North and South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo 2005 and Tanzania 2006. I would guess that in these countries AVP has done around 2,000 to 3,000 AVP workshops since 2001, mostly community workshops. We always have given AVP facilitators a stipend equivalent to \$10 per day, which is about 60% of what they should receive in East and Central Africa for this kind of facilitation. In essence, they are contributing 40% of their stipend as local support for the workshop. Stipends for the 3 facilitators costs about 30% of workshop expenses. The major cost is food for lunch and tea break.

Our biggest battle here has been not paying the participants for attending the workshops. Believe it or not, almost all non-government organizations in Africa pay "sitting allowances" for people to attend a workshop. We have learned to tell people that they will not be receiving any sitting allowance for the AVP workshop. Sometimes people leave when they realize they will not be paid. My feeling is: "Fine. This is their choice, and they were not the ones who needed to be in the workshop."

Could we in Africa do AVP workshops without paying a stipend? Perhaps, but we would never be able to do the large number of workshops we have been able to do. So the choice is between many workshops, limited only by the funds we have, and fewer workshops, limited only by the number of facilitators who are able to work without a stipend. Most of our facilitators are unemployed in a regular job as are most people in this region. Their ability to volunteer for three days at a time is constricted by the need to earn subsistence. Yes, we have facilitators who seem to want to do this for the income, but we weed them out. We also have those who decline to facilitate at the low stipend we give. We always have more than enough willing facilitators to cover the AVP workshops we do. After the 2008 post-election violence in Kenya, we were doing up to 10 AVP workshops per week for youth involved in the violence.

The situation in the U.S. is different, but I think that returning citizens who have difficulty getting employment should be given a modest stipend for leading an AVP workshop. You can calculate better than I what "modest" means in monetary terms. Demanding that AVP facilitators not be given a stipend in the U.S. is cultural imperialism of the lucky affluent who can afford to facilitate voluntarily to the returning citizens who are economically disadvantaged.

Dizzy Dave coordinates African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams.



DO YOU KNOW . . . WHO IS THE YOUNGEST AVP FACILITATOR?

Submit the name and age of the youngest facilitator in your community by **November 15**. We will announce results in *The TRANSFORMER Winter 2015* and on AVP-USA Facebook!

WINTER FUNDRAISER

Raise money for **YOUTH FACILITATORS** to participate in the **May 2016 Gathering!!** This will be only the second year that people under age 18 can attend AVP-USA's Annual Conference. Let's work together to help young people get to Denver! Look for more information on AVP-USA's Facebook and in *The TRANSFORMER Winter 2015*.

Poetry for Peace



A Journey through Darkness

By Joyous Joseph

Perhaps the only way to relate my story is to view it from the eyes of a child...

Where were you?...

When the Beat God came to reign

Where were you?...

When the pain got so great I wanted to die

Where were you?...

When I tried to die again and again

Where were you?...

When the Teacher taught pain instead of reading

Where were you?...

When the only voices were in my head

Where were you?...

When the ray of Peace finally came

Where were you?...

You were standing near

Where were you?...

Whispering in my ear, "You are coming through"

Where were you?...

I call you PEER...

Light

By ANDREW WHITE

In a world filled with so many people,
We feel twice as much pain.
Sometimes, so much pain we feel as if we're going insane.
A dark world with little light.
Light that causes the darkness to disappear.
That light is the children of our world that we should hold so dear.
That light can never be bright because it doesn't reach its full height.
The full height isn't reached because the situation isn't right.
Because of a fight and their bad sight that night.
Innocent child a pure delight at every sight.
A young child had to fight for his life.
A fight that he lost by the end of the night.
A fight he should have never had to fight.
Once again, because someone didn't care.
The world just got darker because there's one less light here.
From the heavens, we know all of you are there.
Now you may be the light that shines ever so bright...



AVP-USA Annual Gathering 2016

We are pleased to announce Denver has the host of the AVP-USA Annual Gathering on May 27 – May 30, 2016 at Regis University. Come join us!

During the conference you will have a chance to:

- Be inspired as you witness the power of AVP in local communities and throughout the world
- Meet new friends and learn new ways to bring AVP to your community
- Visit the beautiful Mile-High City and the spectacular Rocky Mountains

Colorado's New Foundations-AVP is planning to partner with some incredible local people and organizations that are working to strengthen our communities and move the criminal justice system from retribution towards restoration.

We are looking for proposals for conference sessions that address the following topics:

- Engaging youth in AVP
- Strengthening local AVP groups throughout the United States
- Addressing the challenges of racism in our society
- Taking care of ourselves
- Exploring the role of AVP in Community

We are also looking for proposals for pre-conference sessions. Please submit your ideas to Margaret Browne at margaret@nfn-c-avp.org.

AVP for Hire

By JOVIAL JON

I feel the idea of paying someone a salary to do workshops can lead to career AVPers. Although the skills we learn in AVP are things we will carry with us everywhere, often when it becomes your job it no longer is a passion for you. It becomes another thing that you do, and it goes from a passionate sharing of your love to an official dissemination of information which goes counter to AVP. I do feel, if AVP can afford it, that reimbursement for time lost at work as well as travel and hotel expenses is very acceptable. It would lighten the burden for those that cannot afford to do workshops. This, of course, raises the issue of needing money to

pay the stipends.

One thing that's happened here is a wealthy person donated a building to the outside AVP community, and they have the AVP living room in Philly. It is a place where workshops will be conducted and people can hang out in a positive atmosphere. The AVP "living room" is one way we can support returning citizens who come out of prison with wonderful skills. Returning citizens should be tapped into as we deal with lots of places where we can use Transforming Power and make creative adaptations to be successful in our non-violent pursuit. I've heard of cases where someone threw hot oatmeal on

someone who is extremely violent, and he simply took a deep breath, asked the person to be a little more careful, and walked away and cleaned himself as it burned his skin. This is the power of AVP's Transforming Power.

We pay people for things that hurt the community and society; we certainly should pay those that help.

Jovial Jon is an AVP facilitator at Graterford Prison in Pennsylvania.



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Submit articles about diversity in your community and how it plays a role
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gender, language or learning; poetry and art related to difference/diversity;
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