

TRANSFORMER

Supporting and Celebrating the Facilitators of AVP Workshops

FEATURE STORY

FOCUS ON: OUTREACH

AVP-USA Brochure **9-10**

REGULARS

Poetry for Peace **2, 7, 11**

Editor's Note:**Outreach – How do we stay connected?**

Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives. – Martin Luther King, Jr.

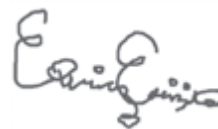
The Transformer strives to ask bold and meaningful questions about AVP. Our Winter 2015 edition featured perspectives on AVP and diversity from facilitators around the country – those working in schools, communities and prisons. We also asked our readers to respond to the following questions: Does your regional group provide a stipend to low- or no-income, community-based facilitators? Why, when the ratio of people doing AVP in this country is hugely weighted toward people of color, are our conferences, retreats and governing bodies heavily weighted toward white people? Facilitators on the email list-serve have discussed AVP's usage of the term "mandala," which has deep spiritual and religious meaning for many cultures but means "command her" in Spanish. Can we use a more neutral term, such as "circle"? How can we recruit new people to AVP?

This Spring 2016 issue focuses on outreach. Many of us facilitate and support AVP work on the local level. Some have leadership positions in AVP – whether in local councils or on the national or international level. Besides support for everyone's work, The Transformer seeks to look toward the future: what is our vision for AVP in 5 years? 10 years? How can national and international AVP support these visions?

Inside, you will find reflections on diversity from the Franklin School and the Graterford Prison communities. You can evaluate submissions for AVP-International's logo – write and tell us which one you like best. We also are pleased to debut AVP-USA's new brochure. AVP-USA's Outreach Coordinators created this brochure to support local and national outreach work to help spread the

word. Also in this issue is information about the upcoming AVP-USA National Gathering. We hope you can attend! If you cannot, please contact us with any thoughts or questions you would like to be shared at the event. Finally, we are proud to announce AVP-USA's first ever Peace Fellowship to support the work of diverse and young facilitators around the country!

Peace,



EQUALIZE-IT ELŻBIETA



The TRANSFORMER

THE TRANSFORMER is a quarterly publication of the Alternatives to Violence Project of the United States of America.

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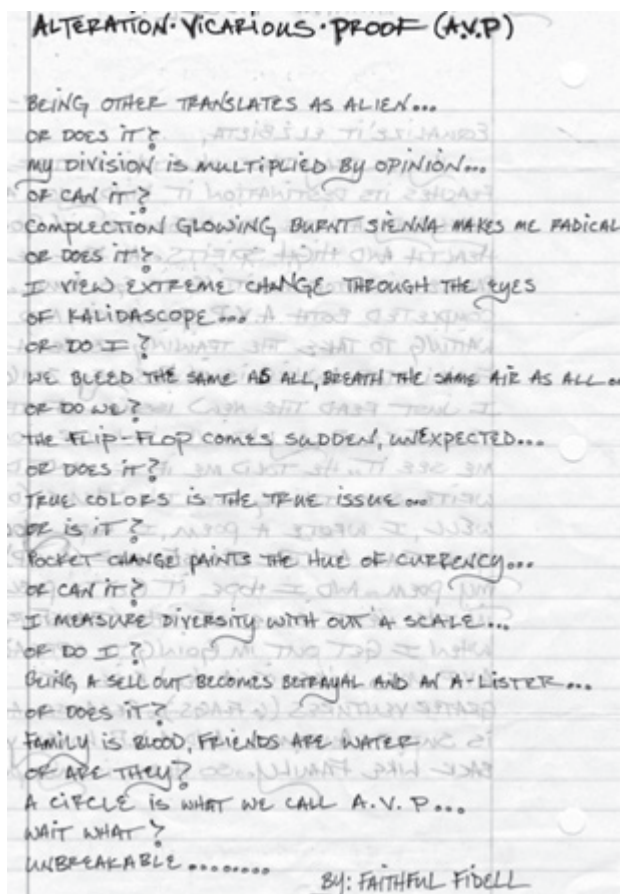
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Back issues may be found at
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How would you define AVP in a sentence?

By GRATERFORD AVP COMMUNITY

A community that is safe and positive and transforms conflicts by taking risks in building trust and confidence.

A sense of community and fellowship.

An opportunity for a second chance.

A piece of affirmation and dignity.

A mechanism for the breaking of barriers.

A rude awakening to violence.

A way of being human.

An old/new approach to building community and addressing harm.

A constructive way to living without violence.

A cheaper way than imprisonment.

A global, community-based volunteer movement committed to ending violence, harm to self, others and the planet through mutual respect, understanding and transformative living.

A community approach to peacefully addressing conflict.

Brings togetherness.

Creates a feeling of safety and trust.

Builds love and respect.

Builds community.

Builds character.

Means working together.

Celebrates diversity. *Thanks to Jovial Jon for facilitating this "What is AVP" brainstorm at the Graterford Prison monthly meeting!*



Reflections on Diversity

By SURPRISING SUSAN

"Why, when the ratio of people doing AVP in this country is hugely weighted toward people of color, are our conferences, retreats and governing bodies hugely weighted toward white people?"

I am writing to answer the above question posed in the last issue of the Transformer and to assert that we need to do more than to just celebrate diversity.

The social system in the United States is based on principles and assumptions steeped in a heritage of colonization and racism. Without thinking, we white people can (and often do) assume that the way we do things is the best way. Until we recognize this unconscious orientation of privilege and educate ourselves about institutionalized racism, we are bound to repeat the mistakes we have been making. We are going to continue to operate within the status quo. The status quo is an obstacle to being the diverse group of AVP people we want to be.



Continued on page 6



Auburn Prison, 1975. Second AVP workshop ever.

Left to right: Ellen Lindop, Janet Lugo, Bernard

Lafayette, Helen Stabler, Gary Eikenberry, Larry Apsey.

AVP-INTERNATIONAL LOGO CONTEST



WHO IS THE YOUNGEST AVP-USA FACILITATOR? CLAUDIA MEJIA SYDENSTRICKER!

"My parents would facilitate workshops since I was little, and I would participate in different activities during the weekend. I did my first AVP mini workshop when I was 8 for my birthday party, and went through the T4F when I was 10. I facilitated my first workshop as a facilitator on my 11th birthday. It was fun and I liked doing it. My favorite activities: Big Wind Blows and Concentric Circles."

-Claudia Mejia Sydenstricker, daughter of Diana Mejia and Stuart Sydenstricker of AVP-NJ and Wind of the Spirit, an immigrant resource center in New Jersey.



How would you define AVP in a sentence?

By FRANKLIN AVP COMMUNITY

AVP is Awesome!!!!

A group that not only helps us solve our own problems but helps us understand how to help other people solve their problems.

A life-changing experience that will train people how to act and deal with situations without using violent or mean methods.

AVP is an incredible group of all different people coming together to create a beautiful world.

A Very Powerful Program (AVPP) – close enough, right? :p

An amazing life experience that everyone should go through because it's so amazing!

AVP is a program that helps make you have a whole new positive way of looking at life and the world.

A project that teaches alternatives to violence.

A place where everyday people can learn positive responses to issues in the future.

A diverse group that comes together to seek the common good in others.

A cathartic experience that promotes the importance of positivity, fairness, acceptance and lucid, strong communication; pushes positive leadership and honest equality amongst youth and adults and simultaneously encourages both youth and adults to implement the guidelines and principles bestowed unto them and gives them each the responsibility to pass on these teachings to others and continue the cycle so that over time a happier, less violent and more loving society will emerge. (is this one sentence good enough. ;-)

A circle of empathy, compassion, hope, healing and love.

Always Very helpful in making any situation Positive!

Thanks to Nurturing Noelle for facilitating this "What is AVP" brainstorm on the youth facilitator Facebook page!

AVP-International Logo Contest

AVP-International seeks a logo that "reflects who we are to the world." Which of these 7 logos best reflects AVP-I? Write and tell us what you think! Please write to *The Transformer* at PO Box 295 Franklin NY 13775 by **May 15**.





REGISTER NOW!

The 2016 AVP-USA National Gathering, May 27 – May 30, 2016
Regis University, Denver, CO

www.avpusaconference.org

Don't miss this exciting event. Here is just a preview of the conference offerings:



Featured Speaker, **Lisa Calderón**, is the Director of the Community Re-Entry Project, an initiative of the City of Denver's Crime Prevention and Control Commission, where she works on behalf of formerly incarcerated persons for their successful reintegration back into the community. She holds a Master's degree and a law degree and is currently working on her doctorate in education. Lisa has over 20 years of facilitation experience in the areas of inclusiveness, gender equity and ethical communication.

Lisa will join Christie Donner, State Representative Pete Lee and Lynn Lee in a panel discussion on their visions for criminal justice reform in America, moderated by Jeff London, Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Metropolitan State University in Denver.



Christie Donner is Colorado Justice Reform Coalition's (CJRC) Executive Director and founder. She has over 15 years of experience working in criminal justice reform advocacy, community organizing, policy research and lobbying. Christie co-authored *Parenting from Prison: A Resource Guide for Incarcerated Parents in Colorado*. She is also the co-author of CCJRC's publication, *Getting On After Getting Out: A Re-Entry Guide for Colorado*.



Pete Lee is the State Representative for Colorado House District 18. He has been a lawyer, a small business owner and an executive at an NYSE listed corporation. He has sponsored legislation to transform our criminal justice system from one of retribution to one of restoration and rehabilitation. Lynn Lee's passion for restorative justice has led her to the Chair position of the Pikes Peak Restorative Justice Council where she received the John Gallagher Restorative Justice Volunteer of the Year Award because of her work as a trained facilitator of victim offender conferences for the Manitou Springs Restorative Justice Council and the Youth Transformation Center.

Don't Miss the Monday Morning Session on "The Next Generation in AVP: Changing Faces of AVP"

Experience how 4 paid individuals and 7 volunteers working in separate communities recruited **100 facilitators** in 1 year and started **4 new councils**, leaving behind the records of their contacts to support the future of these councils while fostering a dedicated team. Learn the nuts and bolts of building a council.

Enhance Your Skills as a Facilitator

- Learn more about the art of facilitation
- Learn new techniques of relaxation, imagery and meditation
- Get more out of role-plays
- Build a Better Basic AVP Workshop
- Add more reflection into workshops
- Learn about Compassionate Listening
- What are some strategies for dealing with difficult workshop participants?

Building Cultural Competency in AVP Work

Increase your understanding of micro-aggression and implicit bias. Become more comfortable dealing with race and diversity.

Enjoy Evenings Filled with Art, Music and Poetry

Join us each evening for a showcase of the work of imprisoned artists from around the nation. Celebrate the release of *Captured Words/Free Thoughts* and a presentation by *Lyrical Vagabonds* on Friday evening. Enjoy a series of performances and *Dances for Solidarity* on Saturday evening. Sunday evening's focus will be on juvenile justice with a hands-on art exhibition.

Come Early for Pre-Conference Workshops

1. **AVP/USA Planning Session – Thursday, May 26** Join us in a discussion about how to move our organization forward to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of local groups. Dawn Addy, President of AVP/USA, will lead a discussion on AVP's involvement in prisons, communities and schools and will explore what the greatest barriers are for each.
2. **AVP Inside Out – Friday, May 27** The AVP facilitators inside Denver Women's Correctional Facility will present an all-day workshop. To register for this workshop, submit a Guest Clearance Request by April 22, 2016. Email registrar@avpusa.org for help registering.

When we are not called mad dogs, animals, predators, offenders or other derogatory terms, we are referred to as inmates, convicts, prisoners and felons—all terms which identify us as the “other.” The latter terms are accepted as the official language of the media, law enforcement, prison industrial complex and public policy agencies; however, they are no longer acceptable to us, and we ask people to stop using them.

We underestimate the power of language. The Old Testament says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue...” All faith traditions recognize the power of words and, in particular, names we are given or give ourselves. Ancient traditions consider the naming ceremony an important rite of passage. Your name indicates not only who you are and where you belong but also who you can become.

The worst part of repeatedly hearing your negative definition of me is that I begin to believe it myself. Calling me inmate, convict, prisoner, felon, or offender indicates a lack of understanding of who I am, but more importantly of who I can become. I am much more than an ex-con, an ex-offender, or an ex-felon. We have the right to be called by a name we choose, rather than a name someone else decides to use.

-- Excerpted from *The Language Letter Campaign: An Open Letter to Our Friends on the Question of Language*. Read more at www.centerfornuleadership.org.

Edwin Ellis, aka Easy Eddie, was President and Founder of the Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions, an independent research, training and advocacy Human Justice think tank based in New York City. A former Black Panther Party leader, Easy Eddie served 25 years in prison (1969-1994) based on COINTELPRO targeting for a crime he did not commit. Easy Eddie was part of the Think Tank at Green Haven Prison, NY and took part in the first AVP workshop in 1975. He helped design the Advanced and Training for Facilitators (T4F) level workshops.



Edwin (Eddie) Ellis, 1941-2014



The Changing Hands

*Down the road go we
Through twists and turnings,
Pushed or pushing there,
All from a wheelchair.*

-Ron Schneider “Ready Ron”
Stillwater Prison AVP Group
supported by St. Paul, Minnesota

Reach Out!

How to help sustain and spread AVP

AVP-USA's First Peace Fellowship

AVP-USA created the Peace Fellowship to affirm and uplift the work of youth facilitators and establish opportunities for youth to take on leadership roles within AVP-USA.

Meet the 2016 Peace Fellows:



Gracious Grace

- Atlanta, GA
- has facilitated workshops with various communities, including refugee youth, incarcerated women and the Non-Violent Communication group



Quality Quan

- California
- was recently paroled from Solano State Prison, where he began his AVP journey of transformation



Mosaic Meg

- Baltimore, MD
- AVP is her favorite weekend activity



Journeying Justin

- California
- outreach coordinator with AVP-CA



Mischievous Mahal

- Memphis, TN
- piloted Incarcerated Youth Speaking Out for Change, a youth leadership program within the jails aimed at preventing future youth incarceration



Kinesthetic Kelsey

- Atlanta, GA
- lives in intentional community as a part of Quaker Voluntary Service

Our 2016 Peace Fellows will host a panel and interactive workshop on Sunday of the National Gathering in Denver! Contact AVP-USA Outreach Coordinators Martin or Monica at outreach@cxr.wuc.edu for more information about the Peace Fellowship or the new AVP-USA Brochure.

Diversity Reflections

One thing I have noticed: Our manuals are presented in a writing style that is geared toward those coming from a well-educated, mainstream (white) culture. This writing style may not be comfortable to those from other cultures and can be challenging to those who do not have the benefit of a more extensive education. This has nothing to do with intelligence. Rather, it has to do with the expectation that all those using these manuals will be “like us” when this is not the case.

Our AVP gatherings are largely organized by white people, who choose the format and locations for

those gatherings. Have we (usually white) organizers sought input from people of color or from other cultures about how our gatherings are organized? About how and where they are presented? Have we asked people of color, people of other cultures, and people of varying abilities (including disabilities) how we might make our gatherings more inclusive? Have we explored a variety of gathering options that could embrace everyone more readily?

Many writers on the subject of the pervasive racism in our country have explained that “diversity” is too often

a stumbling block to dismantling this racism. We often assume that creating a school, workplace, or other institution/organization that “welcomes diversity” is the right, and only, thing we need to do. The task before us is far greater and far more challenging. Until AVP joins in the work of actively confronting and dismantling racism, we will fall short of being the welcoming community we want to be.

Surprising Susan Wolf is the Outside Coordinator at Elmira Correctional Facility.

TRANSFORM EVERYTHING

Since 1975, Alternatives to Violence Project has conducted over 15,000 AVP workshops in the United States, directly impacting the lives of nearly 250,000 people. AVP-USA has over 2,000 facilitators ready to serve their communities.



"AS A PEACEBUILDER, AVP HAS NOT ONLY EXPANDED MY TOOLBOX FOR FACILITATION AND DELIVERING TRAININGS, IT HAS BEEN A RESOURCE AND SWEET REPOSE FOR SELF CARE. AVP BELIEVES THAT TRANSFORMATION BEGINS INSIDE EACH ONE OF US AND CONTINUES INTO THE WORLD."

MONICA AVP-CALIFORNIA

CONTACT US



AVP USA



OUTREACH@AVPUSA.ORG



WWW.AVPUSA.ORG



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ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

CREATIVE CONFLICT
RESOLUTION WORKSHOPS
TO TRANSFORM LIVES



TRANSFORM CONFLICT

ABOUT AVP

Founded in 1975, Alternatives to Violence Project has grown into a global movement. AVP-USA serves as an umbrella organization for regional and state chapters. We support community, prison and school-based groups across the nation.

Our mission is to build a movement of creative conflict resolution by empowering communities through individual and collective transformation. As a grassroots organization, AVP-USA belongs to everyone who has taken an AVP workshop.



NEW JERSEY-AVP YOUTH WORKSHOP

“AVP IS ABOUT PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS COMING TOGETHER. BY OPENING UP TO EACH OTHER, WE ARE TRANSFORMED AND THAT TRANSFORMATION RIPPLES OUTWARD THROUGHOUT OUR COMMUNITIES.”
MARTIN, AVP-MARYLAND

WHAT IS AN AVP WORKSHOP?

AVP workshops use experiential learning. We draw on the shared experiences of participants and facilitators to explore how anger, frustration, prejudice and injustice cause violence in our lives.

AVP workshops activate leadership potential and empower participants to manage conflict effectively and become agents of peace in their communities.



SEATTLE-AVP WITH INCARCERATED VETERANS

“AT THE ROOT OF AVP IS THE BELIEF THAT EVERYONE HAS VALUABLE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE AND EVERYONE CAN LEAD CHANGE. I AM NOW WORKING TO CREATE A LEADERSHIP PROGRAM WITHIN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM THAT VALUES THE YOUNG MEN'S KNOWLEDGE AS NECESSARY FOR CHANGE AND AIMS TO AMPLIFY THEIR VOICE IN THE CONVERSATION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM.”
MAHAL, AVP-TENNESSEE

GET INVOLVED

Join us for a workshop!
AVP-USA offers three standard workshop levels: Basic, Advanced, and Training for Facilitators.

DURING AN AVP WORKSHOP YOU WILL:

- DEVELOP A COMMON LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE
- ADDRESS YOUR OWN CONNECTION TO CONFLICT
- UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION
- LEARN CREATIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES
- ACTIVATE TEAM BUILDING AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS
- PRACTICE PERSONAL AND GROUP TRANSFORMATION
- DEVELOP GROUP FACILITATION SKILLS

“AVP HAS ALLOWED ME TO BE MORE OPEN WITH MYSELF AND SHARE MY STRUGGLES WITH SELF-WORTH AND DOUBT BEING PART OF AVP HAS ENABLED ME TO GROW IN A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY AND CHALLENGE MYSELF TO LOVE DEEPER, LISTEN HARDER, AND BE MOVED BY THE STORES AND EXPERIENCES THAT OTHERS SHARE.”
GRACE, AVP-GEORGIA

Poetry for Peace

El Mensaje de Reflección

♫
Yo no se, que pretende, esa gente...
Que se cree, superior a otra...
No respetan a sus, semejantes...
Pues los ven, como muy, poca cosa...
Están mal, y no saben si quiera...
Que vamos a ir, a la misma fosa...
♪
La igualdad, es bonita, en la vida...
Ser amable no, nos cuesta nada...
El orgullo hay, que dejarlo fuera...
Es muy malo, pues nos come, el alma...
Hay que amarnos, unos a los otros...
Y ayudarnos, también camaradas...
♪
Voy a pedirles, de buena fe...
No se ofendad, por lo, que les canto...
Este mensaje, es para evitar...
Los rencores también, los agravios...

Si alguien, tiene por hay, un sentir...
Nunca es tarde, para perdonarlo...
Un amigo es, como un gran te bueno
La amistad es, de los mas hermoso...
Aunque, no somos, monedas de oro...
Es muy cierto, pues lo reconosco...
Hay que hacer, a un ladito, este dicho...
Y tartar, ser parejos, con todos...
♪
Se muy bien, que la estancia, en la
tierra...
Es muy corta pues, es pasajera...
Vamos hacer, una reflexión...
Y esforzarnos, lo mas que, se pueda...
Ser paciente, es una, gran virtud...
La humildad, es su fiel companera...
♪
Los disgustos no, traen nada Bueno...
Y la envidia no, es buen element...

Son, nosivos, para la salud...
Pueden roernos, todos los huesos...
Vamos a obter, por amor y paz...
Y por Dios, que, el esta, al cien
por ciento...
♪

Mi mensaje, de gran reflexión...
Va dirijido, pa' todo el mundo...
Esperando, que les, sea util...
Hay que trabajarlo, todos juntos...
Nunca hay que, subajar a un
Cristiano...
Al contrario, hay que amarlo, con
gustoooo...
~FIN~

Escrito Por:

♫ ♪ Jorge el indomable Ruelas ♪ ♫

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CA Advanced	17.75	_____
CT Facilitator Training Manual (2013)	11.50	_____
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New AVP-USA Logo: What do you think?



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