



Newsletter of the

Alternatives to Violence Project / New York

Fall 2008

## From AVP/NY's Board Council President:



Each week, my son River watches a show called "The Future is Now."

This is a very exciting time for AVP on both a state and national level. So I hope you catch the fever!!

Let's all make it to our AVP/NY regional family

gathering at Long Point Camp on Seneca Lake which is set for Columbus Day weekend. We need your attendance more now than ever. Old and young, new and experienced—We need you.

In the past few months, there has been so much work going on in our AVP family that I just want to take a few words to thank all of you. So many of you have risen to the challenge of the numerous tasks at hand and it is beginning to all come together.

2008 has been a magical year, and it is not over yet. With the new memo from New York State Department of Correctional Services encouraging each facility to develop an AVP program, we find ourselves expanding in new directions. As the 2009 AVP/USA National Conference comes to New York, homecoming is the word that comes to mind. Over 35 years ago, a prison in New York State became the birthplace of a worldwide peace movement. Let us all draw our strength from this one simple fact.

Remember we still have a lot of work to do. Our new web-site still needs a little more development; our new newsletter needs pictures and articles, and new and established programs in our state prisons need volunteers. What are we waiting for.... "The Future is Now"

— Ray Rios, AVP/NY Board Council President

### Save the date!

## 2009 AVP/USA National Conference

to be hosted by AVP/NY

when: **May 22-24, 2009** (Memorial Day weekend)

where: **Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY**

To help plan the conference and make it happen, contact Jackie Labatt-Simon at 203-323-6796 or [ijls@expoguide.com](mailto:ijls@expoguide.com)



Anne Wright

This summer, a one-day 10 hour workshop was held with American Friends Service Committee New York Metropolitan Regional Office's 2008 Summer Interns. Nurideen Islam, Mark Graham and Anna Crumley-Effinger facilitated.

Photos: Participants in the Light and Lively "Crocodile and Frogs" and from the "What is Violence" brainstorm. (No certificates were awarded as it was not a full-length workshop.)

## AVP/NY's Volunteer Handbook

is now available!!

Essential reading for outside (civilian) volunteers.

Copies available (no charge) through all workshop coordinators or the AVP/NY office.

800-909-8920 or 315-364-8210  
AVPNYSO@aol.com



# Cycles of Hope on a Journey to Non-violent Peace

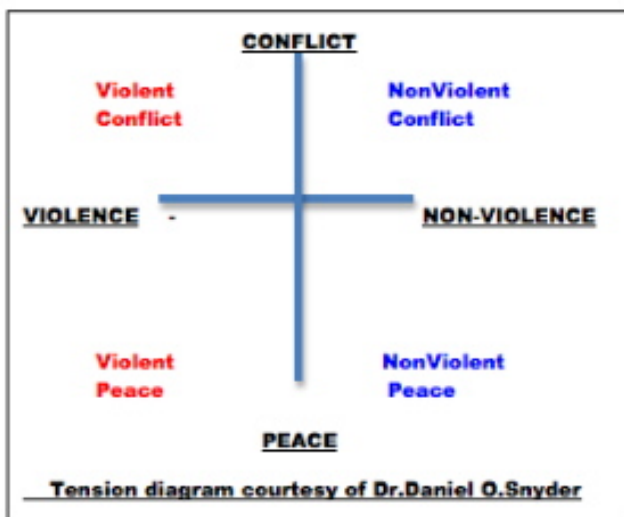
by Judy Meikle



We live in a culture of violence. Violence can seem to get quick results but the apparent “peace” is often fragile and unstable. This “violent peace” imposed by oppressive force easily erupts again into cycles of violence spinning out of control. We declare war on terror and the terrorists respond with hate.

We declare war on drugs and the prisons fill to overflowing while violence on the streets is as bad as ever. In the words of Dr. King “The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy.”

The process of an AVP workshop is a powerful mechanism, which creates very different cycles. Cycles of connection and hope. In the community of an AVP workshop we develop our abilities to exist in a world of conflict using the skills and tools of non-violence. This isn’t passive, pacifist in nature – it’s empowering, healing and transformative. The peace that we create is of a different quality.



I am called to this work under a particular weight of concern for youth. The Center for Disease Control considers youth violence a public health issue and quotes homicide as the leading cause of death for African American males between the ages of 10 and 24\*. And the journey for many of our youth is from school to prison to the streets and back to prison again – a cycle of despair.

It is my leading to connect youth with a valuable resource – AVP facilitators who have done their training while incarcerated and are now home. In churches, community groups, detention centers, after school programs and working with not-for-profit partners, these highly qualified and motivated peacemakers can be connected with youth groups to offer the AVP model as a path to “non-violent peace”; a lasting, stable peace that is established through the active work of engaging in conflict non-violently. These facilitators are motivated to give back in service and have real credibility with young people. Their testimony and involvement with youth work is also very positive and helpful in their own transition process. We truly have a win-win situation for all concerned.

This cycle of connection brings together two groups that typically do not have a voice in society. It affirms that they are better than the worst thing they’ve ever done and offers a renewed cycle of hope. Those of us that facilitate AVP workshops don’t do it to change others – we do it first and foremost to continue on our own paths of practice. Along the way we get to share the gift of AVP as we create safe spaces to tell our stories and be heard.

For more information on how to support this re-entry / youth initiative in NY and CT contact [jubilantjudy@mac.com](mailto:jubilantjudy@mac.com)

\*[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/yvfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/yvfacts.htm)

“Returning violence for violence multiplies violence adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that.” —Martin Luther King, Jr.

Judy Meikle, aka Jubilant Judy, serves as clerk of New York Yearly Meeting’s Alternatives to Violence, Inc. Committee, as clerk of AVP/USA’s Youth Committee and on AVP/NY’s Board Council.

## Come to AVP/NY’s Annual Gathering!

at Long Point Camp  
on beautiful Seneca Lake in western NYS

October 10-12, Columbus Day weekend.  
(Friday to Sunday)

See details and registration materials on the enclosed flyer

See you there!!



## From AVP/NY's Board Council Treasurer:



AVP/NY is experiencing an exciting time. We are active in prisons throughout the state, hold numerous community workshops, are fulfilling our longtime commitment to provide support for AVPers recently released as they transition to their home communities, and provide support and resources to the many volunteers who make everything happen. All of

this requires that we be good stewards of our financial resources and planful of the future. The Finance Committee has been re-vitalized to provide increased direction and focus and we have also established a fundraising committee.

At our most recent meeting in July, the AVP/NY Board Council made some concrete decisions regarding our finances which we would like to share with you. The goal of the Board Council is to be able to meet current operating expenses with annual income, plan for our long-term viability, and provide support to projects which further the mission of AVP/NY. To that end, the following decisions were made:

- AVP NY will meet annual operating expenses through current receipts which include donations from individuals and other organizations, along with income generated from programming.
- AVP-NY will retain a portion (equal to two-year's operating expenses) of the monies which have been received through previous bequests in long-term, financially responsible, investments, the interest from which will be reinvested.
- The balance of the monies received from bequests will be retained in long-term, financially responsible, investments, the interest from which will be utilized for special projects that further fulfill the mission of AVP/NY.

In order to meet our commitment to an annual income that will be equal to our operating expenses, we will be launching a fund-raising campaign this fall. Individual Board Council members and Area Councils have been asked already to pledge the amount that they feel they will be able to take responsibility for raising through their own efforts. **This year's fundraising campaign goal has been set for \$24,000.00.** Fundraising packets will soon be available with information on the various ways that you can help to support our efforts in meeting our annual budget goal. Any contribution, no matter how small or

large will be gratefully appreciated. Please consider asking the AVP/NY office for a packet so that you can contact people who may not be part of the AVP circle but who may be interested in supporting our work, asking friends/family to give to AVP in lieu of a birthday or other holiday present, setting up monthly payments to AVP to be withdrawn directly from your account. If you have come up with an original and successful approach that you'd like to share with others – we'd love to hear from you!

The all-volunteer Board Council is aware that AVP is made of many generous and dedicated people who already donate freely of their time and resources – and we greatly appreciate this high level of commitment. Without this, AVP wouldn't be able to continue in its work. So, a big, **THANK YOU** to all of you who make AVP possible.

—*Kathryn Slining Haynes, aka Quintessential Kathryn, AVP/NY Board Council Treasurer*

### **Call for Facilitators!!**

*We need facilitators for these programs:*

- **Arthur Kill Prison** (NYC Area Council)  
Outside Coordinator: Carla Jo Wagenstein-Vega
- **Eastern Prison** (Catskill Area Council)  
monthly workshops  
Outside Coordinator: Betsy Rothstein
- **Woodbourne Prison** (Catskill Area Council)  
workshops the third weekend of every month  
Outside Coordinator: Mary Ann Burke
- **Otisville and Sullivan Prisons** (Catskill Area Council)  
Outside Coordinator: Mary Ann Burke
- **Green Haven Prison** (Mid-Hudson AC)  
workshops the third weekend of every month  
Outside Coordinator: Carolyn Polikarpus
- **Mid-Orange Prison** (Westchester AC)  
Outside Coordinator: Jackie Labatt-Simon
- **Taconic Prison** (Westchester AC)  
Outside Coordinator: Margaret Lechner
- **Flight Path to Freedom / Redemption Center**  
Community Workshops (NYC Area Council)  
Outside Coordinator: Mark Graham
- **Landing Strip**, our weekly support group for AVP/NYers recently released (NYC AC)  
Coordinators: Ray Rios and Mark Graham

***We've been invited to begin programs in several NYS prisons.***

*Please contact the AVP/NY office to begin a program in a prison near you!  
800-909-8920 or AVPNYSO@aol.com*



