



AVP Returns to Elmira Prison
The Inside Story

*by Gregory Webb,
 a.k.a. Meaningful Magnificent,
 AVP Inside Co-Coordinator*

Peace to the AVP family:

I was first introduced to AVP about ten years ago while I was at Green Haven prison, where I did my Basic, Advanced and Training for Facilitators workshops. When I arrived here at Elmira Correctional Facility in May, 2013, there was no AVP here. For the first month or so I didn't notice as I was consumed with a legal issue and was preparing for a parole board appearance. However I did come to learn that other men saw the same void and the need to fill it with such a positive force. It was not until July or August that another brother (Facilitator) mentioned to me, you know that there is no AVP program here at Elmira. It was at that moment that me and my fellow AVP Facilitator and [at that time] Inside Co-Coordinator R. Singleton (Tenacious Tupac) decided that we would get AVP reopened here at Elmira, and boy did we mean it.

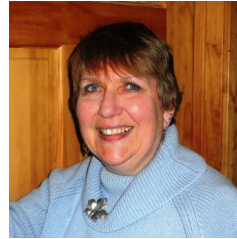
Every week we wrote the Deputy Superintendent of Programs about getting us a meeting with an AVP Representative. Every week we would stop him every time he came in the guidance unit where we worked. This went on for about six months. Then one day around February or March he told us that we would be with an AVP Representative. At this time we were like, okay, the ball is in our court, because right on cue, up jumped Jumpin' Jill McLellan.

—continued p. 2.



The Elmira AVP Team!

Front row l to r: William Hernandez, Corey Jackson, Moshe Canty, Alan Fick. Middle: Kwamé Jackson, Victor Pulecio, Randy Jamison. Back: Gina Varrichio, Warren Bass, Susan Wolf, Dan Monko, Kathleen Gale, Gregory Webb, Kha'Sun Allah, Scott Morrison.



AVP Returns to Elmira Prison
The Outside Story

*by Susan Wolf,
 a.k.a. Surprising Susan,
 AVP Outside Coordinator*

More than three years ago, the outside facilitators at Elmira Correctional Facility were informed that AVP was being "suspended" for an indefinite time. The reason given was staffing. Our facility staff liaison had taken a new job outside the DOCCS system, and the administration was not able to select a new staff liaison due to the closing of several prisons and the resulting transfers of staff.

We were devastated. After working hard for three years to build up the program from its previous low, we were closed down just as a new group of facilitators had been trained and the program was taking off.

As the outside coordinator, I continued to reach out to the Elmira Prison administration on a regular basis, calling and writing the Deputy of Programs even as several people stepped forward to occupy that position. At last, in 2014, the Deputy of Programs agreed that AVP could be reinstated. He knew AVP well, and knew the positive benefits it would bring both to the men and to the prison. His arrival at Elmira coincided with the efforts of a small but strong and active group of facilitators inside the prison who were petitioning for AVP to be reinstated.

These inside facilitators were Reginald Singleton (Tenacious Tupac), Gregory Webb (Meaningful Magnificent) and David Moore (Real-I-Real). They drew up a plan for reinstatement from the inside and I did the same from the outside. Two outside facilitators, Courageous Kathleen Gale and Jumpin' Jill McLellan, met with the Deputy of Programs and Gregory Webb in February of 2014. (Jill McLellan was, at that time, also the president of AVP/NY.) After working out the details, we received the administration's approval and support for re-creating an AVP program at Elmira. We were on our way!

Together with the administration we worked out a program of four workshop weekends a year (one every three months) with 3 workshops to be held each weekend. We initiated a weekly Support Group that meets on Tuesday nights, and we try to have at least one outside facilitator present at each Support Group. With the cooperation of the administration and the inside and outside facilitators we have established a strong, positive, and viable AVP program at Elmira Prison. We want to thank everyone whose hard work made this possible.



After 20 years of incarceration I had the opportunity to participate in AVP. Not knowing what to expect I walked into a room of outside volunteers and inmates that through the use of skills learned in AVP showed me that it was okay for me to be myself.

Over the next three days I started to have a better understanding of who I was and what I wanted for myself. Learning my TP skills and understanding what “Transforming Power” is empowered me to have more control over situations that I encountered which in turn gave me more control over my life and the situations I find myself in.

Today I am a facilitator because I want to share my fortune with others. The outside volunteers remind me that people care about me and what happens to me by continually sacrificing their time to come into these places to help us better ourselves. They also give confirmation to my decision to facilitate and think positively when they tell me that they come because of the strength and confirmation they get from us.

It’s not where you are but who you are that matters the most and we all have the ability to change our thinking if we open up to ourselves. AVP will always be part of my foundation and I will help it grow as best I can. Much love to my AVP family, keep up the good work.

—Kwamé Jackson, a.k.a. Karagious Kwamé



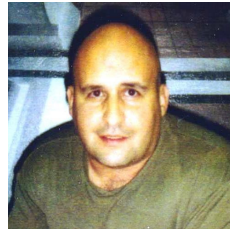
AVP was validation for me. I realized AVP isn’t limited to conflict resolution. The principles (Transforming Power) of AVP relate to everyday life and that’s living righteously. So AVP isn’t something I do it’s something I live.

—Kah 'Sun Allah a.k.a. King Kha 'Sun

AVP Returns to Elmira Prison, *continued from p. 1*

To all of our surprise, the Dep presented us with the names of two other facilitators who were still housed at Elmira and we planned and set a date to do our first Basic workshop in May, 2014. Unfortunately this date was rescheduled due to the facility being locked down. The blessing was that none of our small team of inside facilitators got in trouble and our outside team accepted the new date for the workshop, re-scheduled for June 13, 2014. It was now time to Show and Prove.

We now have approximately twenty facilitators—five outside and fifteen inside, and as of this writing we have conducted eight workshops, totaling 109 participants and have trained 27 apprentices. I would be remiss if I did not thank all the facilitators here at Elmira who gave of themselves to help others. Thank you!



Complain is Not in the AVP Vocabulary

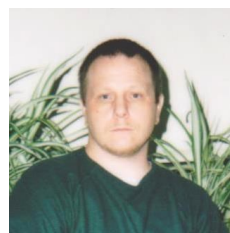
Every one of us complains about the courts not addressing the legal arguments and evidence. We complain about groups not being willing to help us or only seeking money. We complain about the injustice, the racism, the inequality and the fact that we are in prison. While all these complaints are probably true to some extent, complaining is not doing anything! Complaining lets us express our anger, rage, and pain of being locked up. It does not get us out of prison. It does not gain us support. It does not make society realize there is a problem that has effects on everyone...Violence.

Don’t complain unless you have a solution to offer. Don’t complain unless you are doing something about the problem. Don’t complain about others not doing enough unless you can truthfully say you are doing more. Complaining solves nothing without action to fix the problem.

Although I have been an AVP facilitator for the past 22 years, living in a prison environment is stressful and causes one to lose his AVP balance and become a Complainer. It was my AVP tools as a facilitator that made me a better listener. AVP helped me to hold thoughtful conversations with complainers. In turn, they became thinkers and made plans to be in workshops to find solutions with the Tools of Transforming Power—that positive energy we all feel during an AVP workshop, that you want to carry with you for days after the workshops are done.

AVP works all the time, you just have to be willing to take risks. I have persevered and there have been solutions and resolutions of wonderful growth. We accept anyone and everyone. AVP has made me realize that I have a purpose in life and that purpose is to show others that we can all get along. Thank you AVP Family for being there.

—Victor Pulecio a.k.a. Victorious Vic



First and foremost I would like to thank you all for your time, kindness and caring enough to help individuals such as myself. Thank you for allowing me to join the A.V.P. family in a non-pressuring way. I will continue to be a positive A.V.P. family member. I will pass everything that the A.V.P. family experience has taught me onto future A.V.P. members and non-members who are willing to accept the A.V.P. ways. My experience in A.V.P. has been nothing but positive and exciting. One of the best parts is that A.V.P. is voluntary!

—Alan Fick a.k.a. Brave Bishop



To my AVP Family:

For most of my life I can readily admit that like a proverbial chicken with its head cut off, I wandered aimlessly, completely oblivious to both the short and long-term effects that my violent behavior would have on myself and

others. I am no longer that confused young man who, in his blind rage, caused untold harm to countless individuals who dared step in the path of my wrath. Today I can honestly say that because I took a risk in changing who I thought I was, I now have come to recognize and fully appreciate the person that I know I am; the person Allah (God) intended for me to be.

To say this journey was/is arduous would be an understatement; yet, in spite of this fact, there is no way I would be the man I am without having traversed the rough terrain of the concrete jungle. With that said, I am forever grateful to Allah (God) for helping me along the way in innumerable ways such as placing altruistic souls in my life who are committed to transforming power for our benefit and not for our detriment.

To Susan, Kathleen, Gina, and the rest of the AVP Family, I love you all. May Allah (God) continue to protect and guide you on your journeys.

—Moshe Canty a.k.a. Merciful Moshe



I appreciate A.V.P. because it changed a lot of how I interact with others doing positive self-control. After nineteen years of hardship behind these walls, I decided to focus on some positive grounds to straighten out my violent behavior. My first step was to

participate in A.R.T. (Aggression Replacement Therapy—[a mandatory program of NYS Department of Corrections]) to receive family reunion programs to bond with my family. In 2007 I did A.R.T. with flying colors but the superintendent at Green Haven C.F. wasn't satisfied and wanted more out of me so he recommended I complete the A.V.P. basic, advanced and yes I must say that it was the best thing the superintendent could have done for me, because once I enrolled in the A.V.P. program and saw how the workshop was organized, I really started enjoying it. Like for instance with the concentric circles, community building, light and livelies and role plays, transforming power. So I went to higher steps for the training for facilitators [workshop] at Auburn C.F. Right now I'm at Elmira C.F. doing what I love best to facilitate in all workshops and I can't get enough of A.V.P.

—Randy Jamison a.k.a. Loyalty Love



Make Friends Who Will Support You; Support the Best in Them

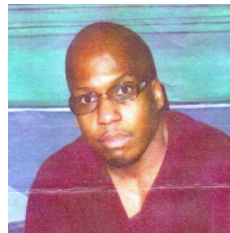
Our AVP program here at Elmira Prison has been a revitalization that proves AVP is a source of community that endures. When I arrived at Elmira,

AVP had been shut down for almost three years, and was just getting started up again. One of the inside facilitators involved in that process invited me into the effort. I joined the re-forming facilitator community and we all continued to reach out to other AVPeople within the facility. We built from there, with our returning outside volunteers and a few new ones.

So we met, we talked, we planned; and we sorted things out with the support of the facility's administration. All of that led to our first workshop, which went well. From there, the AVProcess continued. More workshops, more facilitators joining us, and we had a training for facilitators where we trained some newly-minted apprentices to take AVP with them wherever they went. Like always, people came and left on the state bus, but our community grew. The AVP magic now spreads through Elmira taking root. People who spent a workshop together smile as they pass each other or stop to chat and remember. And maybe, just maybe, the Think Tank's original plan, finding a way to reduce the violence in the world where we live, will take root here again.

I'm glad to be a part of it, and a part of the great community of facilitators that is growing and strengthening. And our Journey continues...

—Warren Bass a.k.a. Warm Warren



Peace and blessings to the AVP family. AVP has truly been a positive force in my life. Prior to my AVP experience I was convinced that I can only rely on weapons, drugs, or alcohol to solve my problems; however, it only made matters worse.

AVP helped me to get acquainted with the strength that lies within. Therefore, I no longer have to depend on drugs, weapons or alcohol to solve my problems.

I am not yet where I intend to be, nor am I where I was, but I am a work in progress, and I thank AVP for putting me on the right path.

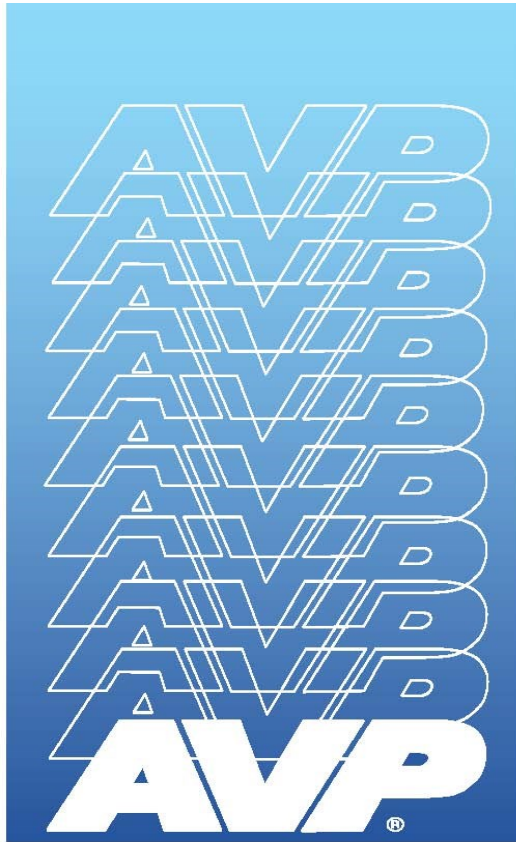
—Corey Jackson a.k.a. Calm Corey

More articles from The Elmira Team can be found on our website.

Please visit: www.avpny.org

Thank You!!





Please help us Grow AVP!

We are starting programs in TWO prisons and are talking with TWO more!

Please give what you can and please consider including us in your will. Thank You!!



Please support AVP!! Thank you very much !

Return Service Requested

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

Note: Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT / NEW YORK

2015 Year-to-Date Workshop Summary Report

Note: These statistics represent the workshops reported to the AVP/NY office.

<p>ALBION Prison (Women's) Workshop count: 5 Participant count: 51</p> <p>ATTICA Prison Workshop count: 10 Participant count: 150</p> <p>AUBURN Prison Workshop count: 8 Participant count: 116</p> <p>BEDFORD HILLS Prison (Women's) Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 40 Apprentices trained: 9</p> <p>CAYUGA Prison Workshop count: 8 Participant count: 79 Mini workshop count: 1 Mini participant count: 20</p> <p>EASTERN Prison Workshop count: 7 Participant count: 96 Apprentices trained: 15</p> <p>ELMIRA Prison Workshop count: 9 Participant count: 125 Apprentices trained: 14</p> <p>GREEN HAVEN Prison Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 51</p>	<p>GREENE Prison Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 12 Apprentices trained: 5</p> <p>GROVELAND Prison Workshop count: 10 Participant count: 114 Mini workshop w/ staff: 1 Mini staff participant count: 24 Apprentices trained: 10</p> <p>OTISVILLE Prison English lang. wksp count: 7 Spanish lang. wksp count: 1 Participant count: 133 Apprentices trained: 14</p> <p>SING SING Prison English lang. wksp count: 22 Spanish lang. wksp count: 2 Participant count: 362 Apprentices trained: 13</p> <p>SULLIVAN Prison Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 51 Mini workshop count: 2 Mini participant count: 12 Apprentices trained: 3</p> <p>WENDE Prison Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 86</p>	<p>WOODBOURNE Prison Workshop count: 5 Participant count: 69 AVP/NY's Forum Day: 28</p> <p>ALBANY Area Council Mini workshop count: 1 Mini participant count: 7</p> <p>CATSKILL Area Council Youth workshop count: 1 Youth participant count: 21</p> <p>GENESEE VALLEY AC Workshop count: 1 Participant count: 13</p> <p>NIAGARA FRONTIER AC Workshop count: 1 Participant count: 6 Youth workshop count: 2 Youth participant count: 19</p> <p>WESTCHESTER Area Council English lang. wksp count: 5 Bilingual/Spanish wksp count: 2 Adult participant count: 71 Youth workshop count: 1 Youth participant count: 10 Mini workshop count: 4 Mini participant count: 67 Mini Youth intro count: 23 Mini Youth intro part't count: 460 Apprentices trained: 7</p>	<p>AVP/NY PRISON WKSPs: Prisons served: 15 Workshops in English: 110 Workshops in Spanish: 3 YTD workshop count: 113 YTD Participant count: 1,535 YTD Mini workshops: 5 YTD Mini participant count: 84 YTD Apprentices trained: 83</p> <p>AVP/NY COMMUNITY WKSPs: Community workshops: 12 YTD Adult part't count: 90 YTD Youth part't count: 50 YTD Mini workshops: 5 YTD Mini Adult part't ct: 74 YTD apprentices trained: 7</p>
--	--	---	---