

## Walton and Franklin Schools AVP

*In this issue we hear from AVPers in middle and high school and their mentors. We hope these stories can be used to duplicate the model around the state and country and beyond.*

## Crazy Christina and Nurturing Noelle



We have been running AVP programs for students in the rural school districts of Walton and Franklin for many years.

Following a school shooting in Walton in 1992, Florence McNeil began offering AVP workshops to students and staff. Noelle Granger participated in AVP as a student at Walton. When Free Flo "retired," Christina Hewitt began running the workshops there. Noelle Granger started teaching at Franklin Central School and began running an AVP program there in 2010.

The schools hold three 12-hour workshops per year: the Basic, Advanced and Training for Facilitators. These workshops are open to high school students from Walton and Franklin schools. Four-hour mini workshops are also held at both schools for students in grades 6, 7, and 8 throughout the school year.

Last year, these workshops had about 180 participants. Each of the three or four classrooms for each grade had one adult facilitator and two high school student facilitators leading the workshop. The older students modeling for the younger students helps encourage them to become active in AVP later in their school careers.

Christina and Noelle have now combined their programs and are working together to spread the message of AVP to as many students as possible.

The impact we have seen has been tremendous. Not only does AVP build up individual students, but it also builds community between the participants, between students and adults, and in the school district as a whole.

AVP gives students a safe place to shed their school identity and allows them to feel comfortable being whoever it is they want to be. During the basic workshop, students often come in unsure and quiet. As the students go through the workshops, they start to open up and express themselves more. They form connections and friendships that lift them up and help them feel a part of something special.

AVP creates an environment where they can reflect upon and discuss experiences they have been through and learn how to transform their lives and their relationships with others in positive ways. Students who at one time felt isolated and lonely have found a sense of belonging and a desire to make their school and the world a better place.

We are so thankful that we have had the opportunity to see how this program can make a difference, not only in our lives but in the lives of so many students who need a safe place in this uncertain world.

—Noelle Granger and Christina Hewitt, teachers at Walton School

## Neighborly Nisha



AVP has influenced many people, including me. I'll be honest at first I joined AVP to get out of class and I had no idea what it was.

I'm glad I did though. I made new friends and I felt so comfortable with them. I've shared things to the group I haven't shared with anyone else. Not only does it give me a break from school, but I also get to let out my feelings without being judged and I'm so glad I joined.

I always look forward to our meetups. I like being able to get out of school once in a while because it's so stressing, and it's not even the school work that stresses me out.

I'm always worried about what people think. I'm scared I'll mess up and I'm so lonely because my friends are in ninth grade, one being home-schooled. I don't like to show it because then people will pity me and talk to me trying to be my friend because they pity me.

I feel comfortable at AVP. I've also noticed how a lot of kids act differently at AVP, more comfortable and relaxed, nicer. This is because at school many kids have to "uphold their image," but really I find them more likable and easy to talk to when they act in a more friendly way. This is like a situation I'm currently in and I wish I could help this person but they won't open up, but I'm still trying.

AVP helps people, and there's others out there who really need it and they need to give it a chance.

## Jason Quinones



*AVP Inside Coordinator at Green Haven Prison, Jason Quinones, a.k.a. Joy Jay, gave this address at the Volunteer Recognition Lunch at Green Haven Prison*

*November 7, 2018*

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. First and foremost, let us thank the administration for recognizing all the volunteers and allowing this special day to happen. I would especially like to thank Father Fernando, the AVP Staff Advisor for over eighteen years and his commitment to the cause of AVP. Also, to Mr. Medbury for always being there when AVP needs him. I, myself, and speaking for all other inmate organizations / religious groups, graciously appreciate all you do to make programs like AVP change people's life. Our special thanks to Ms. Irizarry of Volunteer Services for putting together this celebration of those who come into the prison system to donate their time for our rehabilitation.

My name is Jason Quinones and I am representing the Alternatives to Violence Project.

I have been incarcerated for over seven years and I have been an AVP Facilitator for over five years. I have been the Inside Coordinator for AVP for about ten months. I started facilitating in Wende Correctional Facility. AVP was the first ever volunteer program I took. Since then, I have gone on to facilitate A. R. T. (Aggression Replacement Therapy), Project Build / Exodus,

Transitional Services, HIV Peer Educator, and began my own ministry group for young men in prison.

Working with the AVP outside volunteers allowed me to realize how important these people who volunteer to our programs are.

Five and a half years ago, I walked into my first three-day [AVP] Basic Workshop and I didn't know what to expect. I signed up for the program because of my father's insight. He is currently incarcerated, doing a twenty-five-year sentence in Sing Sing Correctional Facility. He told me there was two ways I could do my bid: in the yard doing the same thing I was doing in the street or educating myself and getting involved in programs like AVP. He spoke from experience: he did AVP and became a facilitator. This advice was given because he wanted the best for me since he was in jail all the time and never really was a father to me. He wanted me to get home to my son and be the father he never was. I wanted something different in my life. I was searching for my true identity and purpose in life. I took his advice and this is where it all began for me.

As I walked into the room where the workshop was being held in Wende, I was greeted with a bunch of frowns from other inmates who looked like they would rather be somewhere else. I sat down and waited for instructions.

As I lingered, two elderly men walked into the room and my first impression was that one of the men looked just like Santa Claus. I didn't know who they were but I thought they were just guests from Albany. They greeted everybody with big smiles, shaking hands, and very excited to be in prison. Their names were Tino and Bill, better known as "Talented Tino" and "Blest Bill." I remember Talented Tino because he would bust a rhyme after we graduated from the workshop. They were both so energetic and enthusiastic.

They didn't know any of us from a hole in the wall, didn't ask us where we were from, what we was in prison for, or what religion we preferred. This was nothing like what I experienced dealing with other prison officials. They showed us love, gave their time and was committed and dedicated to the program while making everybody feel welcome and safe. They left me in awe the whole weekend. They stayed with us all morning, afternoon and left late at night to drive all the way home while spending their own money on gas just to come back the next day and do it all over again. The craziest part of the workshop was that they ate state food with us and liked it. That was a weekend I will never forget.

It was because of those two men, their commitment, the love they showed me, their non-judgmental attitude that made me feel human again. I felt in my heart that I not only needed to make a change but that I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to be part of the solution that AVP offered to the population and was willing to give up my time and commit myself to this project.

I went on to finish the [AVP] Advanced Workshop and took the [AVP] Training for Facilitators Workshop to be a bigger part of AVP. My journey to change had just begun.

To read more, go to <https://avpny.org/avp-new-york-news/>

### AVP Needs Your Support!

AVP facilitators inside and out together volunteered more than **23,400 hours in 2018**, valued at more than **\$700,000** in NYS!

Our 2018 budget is **\$44,500**.  
Our income to date is **\$8,566**.

**Please do what you can.**

## Mindful Matt: *Transformed*



The impact AVP has had on my life is unmeasurable. I have transformed my whole way of thinking and have transitioned from an angry, bitter teenager into an adult with opportunity and a kind heart.

I was once expelled from school because my behavior was so bad. I was heading down the wrong path. I needed a way out bad.

That was when I met Noelle. She taught me that a coin has two sides, and that there are greater meanings to life than what I had seen and done so far. My group was fantastic, and I picked up things right away. I was hooked.

Whilst the implementation wasn't overnight, it was noticed. Since joining AVP I have won scholarships, the respect of people who I used to quarrel with, as well as a newfound respect for myself. AVP has changed my life. I am forever grateful for that.

## Need for Speed Nate: *President of Walton AVP*

Before joining AVP, I wasn't very social, and I didn't have many good friends. Although I was content with not having friends, my life was kind of boring. Something was missing, but I didn't know what. I can't remember how, but one day I joined AVP. I attended my first workshop and at first I didn't really say much, as I had never really talked much to begin with. Fast forward about five years and I'm now President of Walton AVP, I have

many amazing friends that I met from AVP, and my personality has greatly improved.

Growing up, I've had a very privileged life, but what I enjoy most about AVP is being able to connect with others and bring positivity into their life. I met all of my closest friends through AVP, and had I not joined five years ago, I probably would have never met any of them. That is how AVP has impacted my life.



*Diet Dalton (left)  
Need for Speed Nate (right)*

## Diet Dalton:

### *AVP is the Definition of Love.*

I don't think AVP is a place to talk to friends or a normal club. It's home. It's a place where you can feel safe, a place that everyone is equal and no one is left out.

The people in it we are not strangers that are in the same room, we're family. We don't reject people's differences—we accept their differences and make them feel welcome.

It's a place where someone can bring their problems and open up about how they feel without feeling regret. AVP is a place where a person can feel loved and safe like home should be.

It's true we're not solving world hunger or pollution, but we are trying to solve one of the world's problems, Drama—another word for a person's struggle.

AVP is such a great thing that I can't explain it in a paragraph, but if I can describe it in one word I would say it's the Definition of Love.

## Jammin' Jesse:

### *Finding light in a world that may seem dark.*



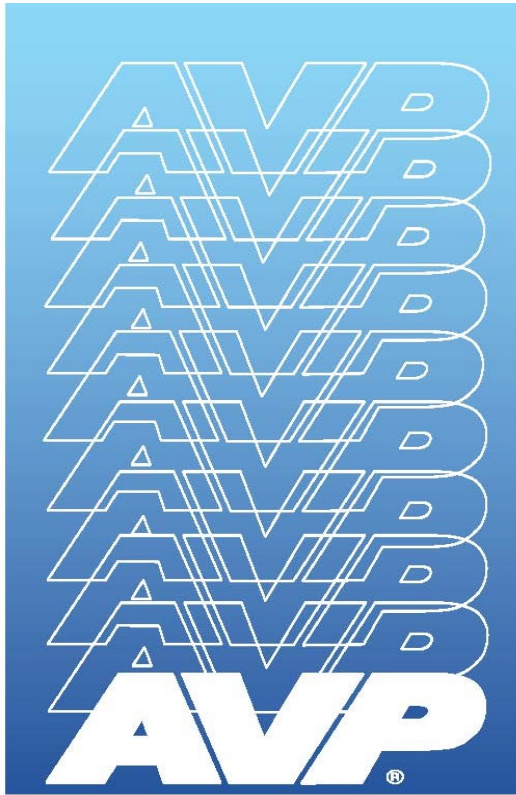
During my time in AVP, I learned to come out of my shell, be a leader, and spread positivity. Without AVP, I would most likely be struggling with ways to deal with emotions and my communication with others about these emotions would have continued to suffer.

AVP has taught me the skills I needed to excel not just in the classroom, but in life. I learned how to change my perspective in order to properly confront others so problems can be solved peacefully and happily. AVP helped me open myself up and get to know myself better so that I can learn to help others as well.

AVP is the reason I found my passion of helping others, and led me toward my path of becoming a psychology major, hoping to put all my energy in the future to help others find the light in a world that may seem dark.



*AVP Advanced Workshop, February, 2019  
Walton and Franklin Schools*



**ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT**

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

**Upcoming AVP Community Workshops**

**AVP Basic (Level 1):**

August 9-11, 2019, Scarsdale, NY

**AVP Trauma Awareness and Resilience (Level 2):**

June 7-9, 2019, Syracuse, NY

**AVP Training for Facilitators (Level 3):**

June 7-9, 2019, Purchase, NY

To register, go to [www.avpny.org](http://www.avpny.org) (see home page)

***We need volunteer facilitators!!***

***Please consider taking all three levels.***

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***Please support AVP!! Thank you very much !***

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**ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT / NEW YORK**

**2018 Workshop Summary Report**

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

<b>ALBION Prison (Women's)</b> Workshop count: 5 Participant count: 72 Apprentices trained: 15	<b>GREENE Prison</b> Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 42 Apprentices trained: 5	<b>BROOKLYN (NYC Area Council)</b> Workshop count: 1 Participant count: 8	<b>WESTCHESTER Area Council</b> Adult workshop count: 6 Adult participant count: 62 Youth workshop count: 1 Youth participant count: 6 Facilitator Days: 2 Facilitator Day participants: 22 Apprentices trained: 4
<b>ATTICA Prison</b> Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 35	<b>GROVELAND Prison</b> Workshop count: 8 Participant count: 90 Apprentices trained: 18	<b>CATSKILL Area Council</b> Youth short workshop count: 1 Youth short participant count: 26 Youth mini workshop count: 11 Youth mini part't count: 180	<b>AVP/NY PRISON WKSPs:</b> <b>Prisons served: 14</b> <b>Workshop count: 134</b> <b>Participant count: 1,766</b> <b>Apprentices trained: 197</b> Facilitator Day (mini): 1 Facilitator Day part't count: 14 <b>Inside facilitators: 212</b> <b>Outside adult facilitators: 106</b>
<b>AUBURN Prison</b> Workshop count: 13 Participant count: 180 Facilitator Day count: 1 Facilitator Day participants: 14 Apprentices trained: 7	<b>OTISVILLE Prison</b> Workshop count: 7 Participant count: 103 Apprentices trained: 12	<b>CENTRAL NEW YORK AC</b> Youth workshop count: 1 Youth participant count: 6 Adult workshop count: 2 Adult participant count: 16 Youth mini workshop count: 6 Youth mini part't count: 59 Adult apprentices trained: 6	<b>AVP/NY COMMUNITY WKSPs:</b> <b>Community workshops: 27</b> <b>Participant count: 246</b> Adult part't count: 150 Teen + yg adult ct: 50 Youth part't count: 46 <b>Apprentices trained: 31</b> Adult apprentices: 20 Teen apprentices: 11
<b>BEDFORD HILLS Prison (Wmn's)</b> Workshop count: 8 All-Facilitator wksp count: 1 Participant count: 82 Apprentices trained: 4	<b>SING SING Prison</b> English lang. wksp count: 23 Spanish + biligual. wksp ct: 4 Participant count: 298 Apprentices trained: 12	<b>ELMIRA Area Council</b> Teen + adult mini wksp count: 1 Teen + adult mini part't count: 10	<b>Mini Adt + multi-gen wksp: 2</b> <b>Mini Adt + multi-gen part't: 19</b> <b>Mini Youth workshops: 17</b> <b>Mini Youth part't count: 239</b> <b>Facilitator Days: 3</b> <b>Facilitator Day part't count: 28</b> <b>Outside adult facilitators: 108</b> <b>Teen facilitators (under 18): 5</b>
<b>CAYUGA Prison</b> Workshop count: 8 Participant count: 96 Apprentices trained: 15	<b>WENDE Prison</b> Short workshop count: 4 Full workshop count: 1 Participant count: 69	<b>GENESEE VALLEY Area Council</b> Workshop count: 1 Participant count: 4 Youth + adult mini wksp ct: 1 Youth + adult mini part't ct: 9 Facilitator Day count: 1 Facilitator Day part't count: 6	
<b>ELMIRA Prison</b> Workshop count: 7 Participant count: 90	<b>WOODBOURNE Prison</b> Workshop count: 8 Participant count: 141 Apprentices trained: 37	<b>MID-HUDSON Area Council</b> Introduction to AVP count: 1 Introduction participant count: 6	
<b>FCI RAY BROOK (Federal Prison)</b> Workshop count: 7 Participant count: 112 Apprentices trained: 16	<b>ALBANY Area Council</b> Workshop count: 1 Participant count: 2	<b>NIAGARA FRONTIER AC</b> Adult short workshop count: 5 Adult short wksp part't count: 43 Youth short workshop count: 2 Youth short wksp part't count: 8	
<b>GREEN HAVEN Prison</b> Workshop count: 24 Participant count: 356 Apprentices trained: 56	<b>BRONX Area Council</b> Teen + young adult wksp ct: 4 Teen + young adult part't ct: 50 Adult workshop count: 1 Adult short wksp count: 1 Adult short wksp part't: 5 Teen + adult apprentices tr'd: 21		