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# **Victim Offender Reconciliation Program**

PO Box 1775, Alamosa, CO 81101 (719) 589-5255

# SUMMER/FALL

# **NEWSLETTER**

2003

### **Program Philosophy**

SLV Victim-Offender Reconciliation is a community based organization serving offenders and victims of youthful crime in the San Luis Valley. The VORP model brings offenders and victims together for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the personal nature of the offense and to negotiate compensation for the victim. Participation is voluntary. Trained volunteers from the community conduct the mediation after intake sessions with everyone involved. Their role is to facilitate communication, not to impose a settlement. SLV-VORP works with property crimes, as well as assault/harassment cases.

# SLV VORP NEWS

It has been too many months since we last published a VORP newsletter or updated our website. But who's counting? It is not that we haven't had good intentions or things to write about! To the contrary, we've had an incredibly busy and rewarding past year. The scramble to keep our budget afloat in hard times has not dampened our spirits. As public funds & services dry up, we see even more acutely the importance of sustaining volunteer-based community services for youth and families.

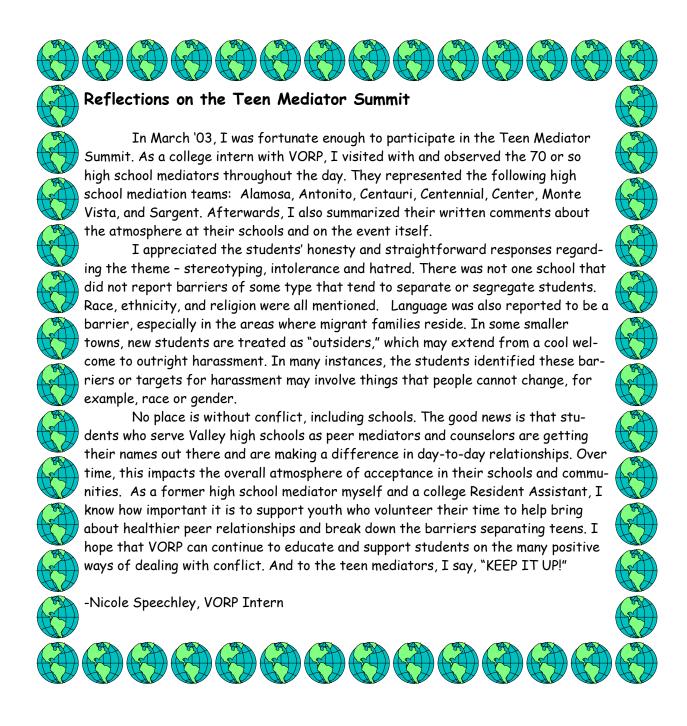
In order to prioritize staff time and save costs, we have decided to cut back our newsletter from four to two issues a year. Smaller special mailings will be used in between, for more timely announcements of upcoming trainings and events. To bridge the communication gap, here are some highlights from recent months:

- March '03 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Teen Mediator Summit at Adams State College. The theme was "Journey to a Hate-Free Millennium." The morning of skillbuilding activities and the afternoon keynote speakers emphasized that this journey begins with each of us, from childhood on, in our everyday settings. (see related reflection by our college intern)
- Spring and Fall refresher trainings for peer mediation programs at area schools. This has included 7 high schools and 3 middle schools since June.
- On-going training and consultation with Alamosa School District on restorative discipline principles and models.

- Over 40 victim-offender mediation referrals from various points in the juvenile justice system, as well as from schools and other community partners. This included our first juvenile parole case, involving re-entry of a young man to the community after serving a two-year felony sentence.
- Assistance with collecting restitution contracts for victims in an amount over \$30,000.
- Sponsorship of three well-attended community workshops: "Gender-Specific Treatment for At-Risk Adolescent Girls" (June); "Circle Processes for Dialogue and Problem-solving" (Sept.); and "Engaging Faith Communities in Restorative Justice Initiatives" (Oct.).

As of September '03, we have also launched our newest program, Parent-Teen Mediation. Initially, this will be a one-year pilot project, with agency-to-agency referrals only. Referral protocol have gone out to community partners such as school counselors, churches, and other family - and youth-serving organizations. We are pleased to have Carrie Heltzel, an experienced Parent-Teen mediator, coordinate and help evaluate the first year of this new endeavor. She will be assisted by a dedicated core of volunteer mediators, who have received advanced training for this new role. Our target goal was to mediate with at least 12 families during the year, to assist with the normal range of "bumps in the road" related to adolescent development. One month out, we already have 5 open referrals!

-Alice Price, Executive Director

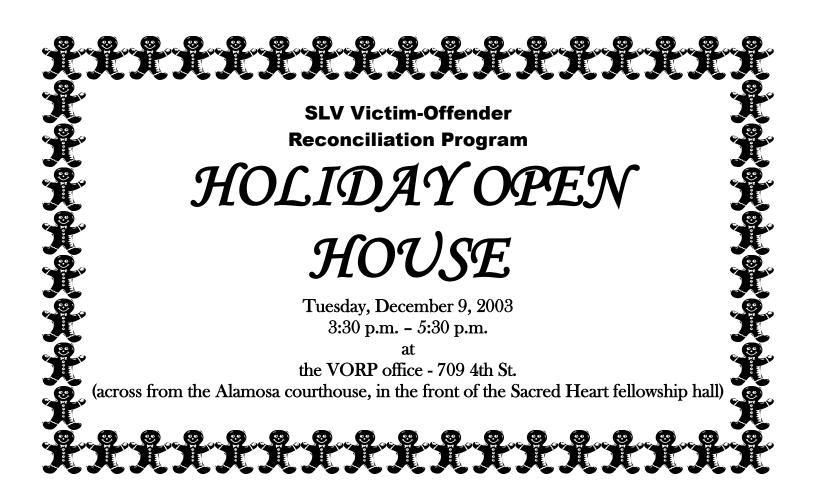


**HOLIDAY ALERT:** If you live or work in the vicinity, please join us for our annual holiday open house in December. (Details on back page)

# HOW YOU CAN HELP \_\_\_\_ I AM ENCLOSING A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION FOR \$\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_ I AM ENCLOSING THE NAME & PHONE # OF A CHURCH OR CIVIC ORGANIZATION THAT MAY BE INTERESTED IN A PRESENTATION ABOUT VORP PROGRAMS. \_\_\_ IF YOU WORK FOR A STATE OFFICE, PARTICIPATE IN THE COLORADO COMBINED CAMPAIGN, FOR WHICH VORP IS A RECOGNIZED CHARITY. \_\_\_ IF YOU HAVE AN ACCOUNT AT SLV FEDERAL, STOP BY AFTER THANKSGIVING AND SELECT "SLV VORP" AS A "CUSTOMER'S CHOICE" CHARITY.

"If in our daily life we can smile, if we can be peaceful and happy—not only we, but all the members of our families will profit from it......The world around us will also benefit from it. That is the most basic kind of peace work."

-Thich Nhat Hanh



## SLV-VORP is a member of Valley Community Fund



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