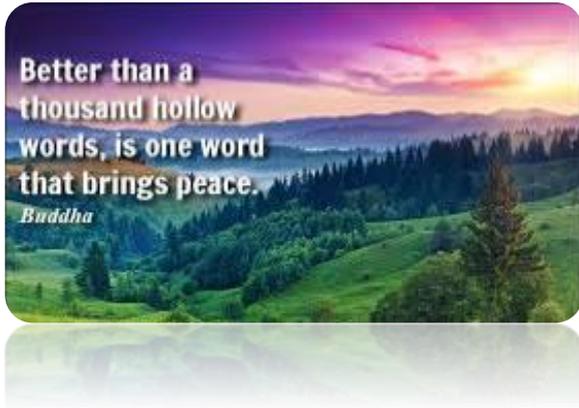


AVP WA NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2016

<http://avpwa.org>



Upcoming workshops

- April 29 – May 1: Acacia (protection) – T4F
- May 10, 12, 13: Wooroloo – Advanced
- May 14 – 15: Community Vic Park – Basic
- May 21 – 23: Acacia (mainstream) – Basic
- June 10 – 12: Acacia (protection) – Basic
- June 13 – 17: WKRP Derby – Advanced (men & women)
- June 18 – 19: Community Vic Park – Advanced
- July 16 – 17: Community Vic Park – T4F
- July 30 – August 1: Acacia (mainstream) – Basic
- Aug 5 – 7: Acacia (protection) – Advanced
- Aug 13 – 14: ASeTTS – Basic (Volunteers needed)
- Aug 20 – 21: Community Subiaco – Basic (Volunteers needed)

Outgoing Chairperson's report for 2015

Amy Thom

2015 has been another fantastic year for AVP WA. We continue to have a strong and diverse network of facilitators and members, growing with new facilitators and new ideas. We delivered 37 workshops this year, in prisons, schools, and the community, involving 32 facilitators.

Prison Workshops

Acacia prison (SERCO managed) remains our strongest prison programme, and in fact one of the strongest in the country. AVP is well regarded within the prison and there is always a high demand for workshops. The number of experienced prison facilitators declined in 2015, largely due to the release of several key facilitators. However, others have stepped up to fill their shoes, and we successfully trained a number of strong inmate facilitators who are enthusiastic and have started joining facilitation teams.



Community and School Workshops

We have run workshops this year at two Perth schools including a Muslim school, with ASeTTs (Association for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma), with a homeless group, and with the wider community.

We have had a number of firsts in 2015: our first time training street people to be facilitators, and our first time training year four students to be facilitators. It's fantastic to continue to increase the diversity of perspectives and experiences in the AVP family.

We have also continued to support AVP both interstate and internationally with Perth facilitators joining less experienced facilitation teams. Sally Herzfeld joined a local facilitation group in Darwin to run two workshops, and we ran a basic workshop in Melbourne after the National Gathering. Sally Herzfeld also travelled to the Philippines and joined a team to run five workshops in three weeks. This workshop series trained teachers, university staff and young people as facilitators, who have now delivered workshops themselves, and AVP Philippines continues to grow.

AVP Kimberley

AVP Kimberley had a quiet year, due to ongoing challenges with the transient population, as facilitators and participants have left the Kimberley. However, we had a number of successes – three workshops were held in the West Kimberley Regional Prison (Derby) women's section, and we trained some inmate facilitators there. We now have Indigenous women inmate facilitators in Derby. We ran a workshop in a school we had not worked in before in Broome, working with a group of young people with highly challenging behaviours, which stretched us to think on our feet and adapt our programme.

Training

We continued our monthly training nights, with pizza and catch up time before a training session. Training nights play an important role in the AVP community, offering a place for connection and support, as well as ensuring that we continue to expand and develop our skills as facilitators. Training nights are generally well attended by a diverse group of facilitators, including those who facilitate regularly and those whose only contact with AVP is through attending training.

In 2015 we covered a range of topics, including: new exercises, learnings from AVP around the world, reinvigorating old exercises, the power of processing exercises, and exploring the core elements of workshops. We held one training day in Acacia in May, focusing on dealing with challenging workshop situations.

Evaluation

The evaluation project was completed in December 2015. A report entitled 'Evaluation of Peaceful Pathways – AVP Youth in Western Australia' was presented to the committee. The evaluation focused on a metropolitan high school which ran AVP workshops intensively between 2007 and 2013. It involved interviews with teachers, school staff, and current and previous school students, in an attempt to determine the impact the AVP workshops had made both on individuals and on the culture of the school.

The feedback we received about the quality of the workshops was highly positive. Processes and activities in the workshop were judged to be meaningful and enjoyable, with comments made about all aspects of an AVP workshop.

Positive impacts as a result of the workshops were reported by both students and staff. Most importantly, it was identified that there were increased communication and leadership skills as a result of the workshops, and that the relationships between students and staff were more trusting and equal.

Due to organisational difficulties the evaluation involved a small sample size, however the report identified significant and positive impacts on those involved in AVP in the school, both teachers and students.

On a personal note

2015 has been a great year for me in AVP. This has been my last year as chair and I have enjoyed learning from challenges and growing into the role over the last three years. It is a privilege to be part of this community, and to work closely with a group of people that is so diverse but committed to working together well on such a great project.

A personal highlight this year, that I suspect is shared by many, was that a couple of experienced AVP facilitators were released from prison and have joined the AVP community on the outside. While this left big shoes to fill for the prison programme, this has been fantastic for us on the outside. We enjoyed welcoming them to their first training night with cake, and this contributes to our feeling of being a community together. They attend training nights regularly, along with a number of other ex-inmates, and have given us a sense of optimism and positivity as we continue to grow in AVP together.

Looking forward to 2016

We are excited about the newly formed publicity committee, who are developing ideas to further publicise our community workshops. We have decided we would like to offer AVP in regional prisons, and negotiations are now underway with Bunbury, Albany and Greenough prisons. We have some inmate facilitators in these prisons, and often receive requests from participants who are being transferred.

The ongoing, generous support of our anonymous donor has continued to make our growing work possible, and we are greatly appreciative of this.



Editor's note: Deep gratitude to Amy who has been our tireless Chairperson for the past three years. Her warm, efficient and dedicated nature has been a huge asset to AVP WA, and we are very pleased that she will still be a member of the committee for 2016.

A very warm welcome to Murray as our new Chairperson for 2016. I personally look forward to all you bring to our meetings, training nights, workshops and personal friendships.

HIPP training night Thursday 3rd March 2016

Super Sally

During 2015 Mr Cumming's Year 4 class did the two levels of Help Increase the Peace Project (HIPP). 8 of those students were then chosen to do the third level which is a Training for Facilitators. HIPP is the primary school version of the Alternatives to Violence Project.

On Thursday 3rd March, 6 of these HIPP facilitators led a training night for their parents, Mr C. and about 20 of our adult Perth facilitators. All participants took part in discussions, exercises and energisers while being encouraged by these young people. A brainstorm had us calling out the good influences in society today and then the bad influences. We were then invited to draw a line from a good one to a bad one which it could counteract.



Trying to nut out Broken Cubes

Comments about the evening from our experienced facilitators included:

“Their enthusiasm was infectious and they obviously had a good understanding of the deeper messages behind the exercises.”

“A fantastic evening! Quite inspiring and heart-warming to see young people facilitating and taking charge. I was impressed by how confident and enthusiastic they were, how they took responsibility for their own exercises and how well they worked together as a team and supported each other.”

“As an old hand facilitator, I was amazed to see these wonderful young students handle what was to us, familiar situations, with dexterity and skill. Their confidence before a sizeable crowd of adults was impressive. They presented as inspiring future leaders. I congratulate their parents on

producing such talented and team-work savvy students. – And it was fun, as all AVP workshops are, with lots of challenges and laughs.”

“It would be great if we could have more people of this age as part of the programme.”

“A highlight for me was the crazy ‘High Five’ closing, being in such a big group and getting to say, “Well done!” to everyone.



High Fives all round!

“Letters to my teenage self”

Magic Mike

Dear Michael

I know your only 13 years old, but I want you to really know and understand what life will have in store for you if you don't get your act together now. The reason I am writing you this now is because I know that in 2 days the 12 of April something really bad will happen to your cousin Hector and you will do something to get payback. I also now know that because of that event you started to craft yourself into a very violent person. I am in prison now in Australia and I am looking at 10 years jail and I am only 23. You will be let down by friends, family, girlfriend, and mostly yourself. You will feel hurt and upset. So if you don't want to go to this path then get your act together.

Marti

Dear Marti

I am writing to you in regards to reflecting on your past for you to grow in the future. As you are now very aware, that if you could change certain things and decisions made in the past, it would certainly have altered the beatings, twists and turns and resulted in alternative outcomes. So here we are! My advice now for you is for you to continue along the line of self-awareness and create the reality you want your life to be. Remember all this is only temporary and inevitably will all change. Maybe you could give something back and stop being so selfish. Love yourself.

“My Goals for the Future”

Jamie

My main goals are for starters to get out of prison and to remain a good citizen to the community. Once released I'm going to strive to get my brickies ticket then follow on to achieve my builders ticket, then while doing that I am determined to be there for every one of my family members as they so rightly deserve.

Other than that I would love to gain a position amongst a cricket team to have that feeling of belonging.

Jai

My goals for the future are to get parole, and make my family proud of me again.

I feel I have let down my son and Dad and brother and I want to regain the respect I once had.

- Gainfully employed
- No Meth
- Be there for them
- No excuses – Just Gains

Simple Scott

My goal for the future is to never let my anger fester to a point where I hit out and cause damage to a person physically or mentally it is not my real nature so with the help I have had from AVP I will succeed.

I also want in the long run to have my own garden clean-up business and on a small scale landscaping. I do get a lot of satisfaction in helping people in need no matter how big or small their problem.

Manuel

NOT – smoke

GET – rich

LOOK – after my self

Participant comments from evaluations

What did you learn? (Acacia T4F)

- I learned that it is actually a lot harder and more involved than I first thought.
- The difference between a facilitator and a participant.
- The underlying points and meanings of some of the concepts.
- Too much to write at the moment. Still processing it all.
- How to be a good team member.
- Learnt social skills and communication.

What did you gain from the workshop? (Wooroloo Basic)

- Better understanding on how to control my anger.
- I gained hope, understanding of feelings, self-worth of myself and others but most of all to listen before I act and remember to keep calm.
- A better understanding of myself.
- There are a lot of tools, I can work with (Mandala).
- A greater understanding of others.
- Knowledge, communication, respect for the men that you are doing it with.
- Patience and different ways of learning and how the small things relate to real life.
- A more positive outlook to conflict situations and how they can be handled. Also a little extra confidence.
- Listen and see a different way.
- Tools to deal with anger, controlling anger and coming in between people with differences.
- Many ways of thinking and outcomes.
- New skills to avoid violent results/outcomes. The mandala. New friends.
- Life skills and how to become better, positive and solve problems a lot better.
- How to resolve day to day issues without using violence

What did you gain from the workshop? (Acacia Advanced)

- A better understanding on how to use the Mandala and guides to enable myself to transform power to receive the best outcome.
- Learnt more about myself and learnt more about others.
- A better picture on coping with my anger in certain situations and to make sure not to take things so seriously.
- I really liked the discussions we had.
- A lot about Power and self-control.
- To make better choices and think before acting – not to but in.
- Overall, alternate ways to deal with anger/violence.
- A way to handle situations from a different point of view.
- More tools and things for the future to keep me out of jail.
- Heaps.
- A lot of new strategies and tools for future use.
- Positive ways of thinking.
- I gained new perspectives and I thought by giving us the power to choose what we focused on helped us to have a more effective workshop.
- The course taught me how to transform power from aggressive people.
- Understanding what anger actually is and comprehending power – my power.



Our facilitators in Nepal are currently organizing an ambitious set of AVP workshops for later this year. They have also announced the exciting news that the 2017 AVP-International World Gathering will be held in Nepal! We also affirmed Subhash and John Michaelis' recommendation to fund Ram to translate the Youth Manual into Nepali.

Peace Place in Pati, Indonesia is going strong. We have Friends visiting throughout the year, including Felicitas Zschoche, a young adult Quaker from Germany, who will be sojourning at Peace Place this Spring. The visiting Friends will be working with the Preschool and visiting with people in and around Pati, Indonesia.

We are also in the midst of gathering funds to purchase the land adjacent to Peace Place to protect the green space and gardens around the current facilities for the children, training participants, and sojourning Friends, and to provide adequate room for limited expansion.

AVP National Gathering
Silver Wattle Quaker Centre
21-25 April 2016

Four delegates from AVP WA will attend the National Gathering in Canberra. There will be a full report in the next newsletter and monthly training night.



The birth of AVP

Cynthia MacBain

Non-violence training came into Green Haven Correctional Facility at the request of an inmate. Roger Namu Whitfield was trying desperately to make something meaningful of a long term in prison. He had a programme (called the Think Tank concept) in which inmates work with members of street gangs and other youth in custody in an effort to steer them away from a life of crime. But getting the young people to break out of their psychology of total violence was a formidable task for inmates who speak the language, but who lack training in specific techniques.

When Whitfield heard about the Quaker nonviolence training programme, it seem natural to ask for their help. In response to his request, the Quaker Project on Community Conflict took an experienced inter-racial team of trainers into Green Haven for an intensive, three-day nine session programme in March, 1975. Less than two years later, 7 inmates were graduating from a programme that had gone beyond non-violence training and prepared them to train other inmates.

Bernard Lafayette, formerly with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, long active in peace and civil rights struggles, and a mediator at the Wounded Knee confrontation, was one of the trainers. Lafayette laid down three requirements for living non-violently:

A tough mind

A tender heart

A together philosophy.

He told them "If one dares to develop in himself the inner resources and qualities that all men have, he can become the powerful being he seeks to become."

AVP during Political Violence

Report from Kenya – December 11, 2015

African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams



THARS Diffuses Political Violence in Burundi &
Transforms Hostile Relationships

AVP Report during time of Protests May 25 – 30
2015

By David Niyonzima, Executive Director,
Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services
(THARS)

All started with the beginning of the protests. During the protests, some youths related to the opposition parties decided to search the

houses that belonged to the families of *Imbonerakure* [militia group aligned with the government] in an effort to find arms that might have been distributed to them. As a result 3 grenades were found and were given to the police. Because of these arms, the youth of the opposition angrily destroyed some houses belonging to the *Imbonerakure's* families as well as the ruling party's centres in almost the whole area of Nyabiraba, a commune in rural Bujumbura. Also 870 t-shirts belonging to the ruling party as electoral campaign's uniforms were burned by the youth of the opposition.

The operation was considered by the *Imbonerakure* as an unacceptable aggression and they immediately prepared a punitive attack against the youth of the opposition who were in the protests. *Imbonerakure* got reinforcements from 70 other members of the ruling party from a neighbouring

commune, known as Mutambu, and they attacked the youth of the opposition parties with sticks and stones. Many people were injured including one death on the side of the *Imbonerakure*. So many youth on both sides were taken to hospitals and many others had fled their homes.

THARS intervened during the phase when another attack was being prepared between the two fiercely opposing groups. THARS got the news about this planned attack and decided to go there with the objective of defusing the tension and preventing the attack.

After two consecutive AVP workshops in with a total of 40 participants from the two opposing groups who had participated in the violence against each other, both the *Imbonerakure* and the youth of the opposition political parties confirmed that the workshops had caused them to totally abandon the plan. They confirmed that they had resolved to seek dialogue on the questions that divided them instead of fighting.

The representatives of the protesters said that even if the protests would continue to put pressure on the president to give up his candidacy for a third term, they will not use violence because they have now understood that it does not solve problems but that it aggravates things instead. Even the *Imbonerakure* representatives expressed their regret of launching the attack first and confirmed that they will not do it again. THARS thinks that even those who had fled might be able to return.

As participants wait for lunch, they talk and discuss the conflicts that oppose them as well as the last violence most of them participated in. The *Imbonerakure* and other youth of the opposition exchange ideas with no incident. THARS AVP facilitators observed them with great interest to find out what solution they agreed upon. One of the great achievements of the workshop was that each participant had an opportunity to express her/himself and allow the others to do the same.



During the self-esteem exercise, the participants found an opportunity to talk face to face, two by two. They had never got such an opportunity to speak to each other like this!

After the workshop and the certificates were awarded, the two opposing groups were represented by their leaders to give speeches of appreciation for the AVP approach. They were amazed that the programme could make them speak to each other easily!

The information that came to the THARS office prior to sending this report is that youth from the two opposed parties are no longer sleeping outside in an effort to maintain security for fear of killings at night. AVP has enabled them to speak to each other more after the workshops and they are no longer suspicious of each other, according to one member of *Imbonerakure* who called our staff member.



News from other countries

- 🌐 AVP Germany held its annual national gathering in November.
- 🌐 AVP groups in South America are working on a caravan project to travel through several South American countries together facilitating workshops.
- 🌐 AVP facilitators from Georgia and Russia travelled to Armenia in December to hold a workshop there.
- 🌐 AVP is thriving with a surge of activity in the Middle East.
- 🌐 AVP Rwanda is gearing up to host the next Africa Regional Gathering in March.

AVP is peacebuilding

Joyful Joe

There is a need for social activism, political activism, judicial activism, policy initiatives, peacebuilding, and also a need for developing alternative systems such as restorative justice. When we do AVP in prisons or in other settings where violence is endemic, among people for whom violence may be normative, we are helping to create a culture of peace. Personally, that is the type of working for peace to which I am led. Others are led to other types of action. It's important to remember that there is immense momentum driving the system that now exists. We may have a vision of a better future system, but we must remember that we don't get there instantly. We get there one step at a time. If we're at Point A and we need to get to Point Z, the next step is Point B.

In my view, AVP doesn't put a "patina of good will" on an oppressive system. It promotes wellness in places that are ill. It allows the people within them to see the possibilities of transformed lives and it helps to build a culture of peace. That builds peace both inside and outside prisons.

Editor's note

Any contributions to and/or feedback on the newsletter would be very much appreciated. I intend to publish a newsletter every quarter, so if you have any news or photos you would like to share for future publications, please send them to selene15@dodo.com.au.

Contact details

For details of upcoming workshops or training nights, to volunteer to help facilitate a workshop, or just to find out more about AVP, please contact Mark Newhouse (administrator) 0400 231 151 or marknewh@iinet.net.au.

