

# Doing Justice



**PEOPLE**  
Volunteer Newsletter

**POSSIBILITIES**

**PEACE**  
May 2009



Front row (5): Rachel Williams (coach), Leslie Pope, Katie Pinkerton, Jodie Richardson, Warner Strube (coach). Second row (4): Pamela Hoak, Ashley Diggs, Jay Schrock, Trudi Doubleday. Third row (4): Galen Wine, Mike Weaver, Richard Landis, Jon Singer, exec. dir. (co-trainer). Not pictured: Audrey Geissen, Theresa Robinson, Mark Whitacre, Ken Nissley (co-trainer)

## Thoughts from the Executive Director

**"The quickest way to develop self-confidence is to do exactly what you are afraid to do."**  
Anonymous

While no one has told us this, we think that some of the delays in following through with cases may occur because volunteer facilitators are intimidated by the prospect of calling victims and offenders. Perhaps it is not comfortable to get on the phone and call someone you have never met, and you may feel inadequate to overcome their objections. Or, you may fear being rejected.

Whatever the cause for hesitation, you can develop self-confidence by doing that which you fear doing. The more calls you make, the more comfortable you will become in making calls. If you feel you that you don't know how to respond to certain statements made or questions asked, make sure that you take some time to review the "Overcoming Objections" section in the LAVORP Training Manual. And, if you fear rejection, just remember that it is not you personally that they are rejecting, just the LAVORP process.

And, keep in mind, the phone and email lines of communication are always open if you need any type of assistance. Thank you for all that you do for LAVORP and the community.  
— Jon Singer

## Newest Volunteers

On May 2, thirteen volunteer facilitators graduated from LAVORP's Spring Training class. Individually each brings unique interests and experiences to restorative justice. A glimpse at some of the things on their résumés just might intrigue you: college student, social worker, staff member at Millersville University, participant in Christian Peacemakers, veterinarian, youth worker, volunteer at fire company, probation officer with juveniles and adults, prison warden, and domestic violence advocate and educator. One student took the class to prepare herself for establishing a victim-offender conferencing program in York County. Her employer, Manito, Inc., has been contracted by the county for this work. Welcome to each of you!

## How are we doing?

Avg Monthly Referrals	2008	2009
Incidents . . . . .	22.6	15.8
Cases (1 offender-1 victim)	37.1	37.3

Current Unassigned / Backlog	
Incidents . . . . .	16
Backlog in months . . . . .	1.02

Cases Returned/Completed†	
Total . . . . .	145
Joint meetings/contracts . . . . .	33
Offender Prep Meetings . . . . .	79
Victim Prep Meetings . . . . .	35

Restitution	2008	2009†
New Agreements		
Monetary	\$41,014	\$ 5,236
Comm Svc/Work	322 hrs	195 hr
Completed		
Monetary	\$40,597	\$7,011
Comm Svc/Work	671 hrs	70 hrs

†Indicates year-to-date

**~Making Things Right~**

**“The healthy need to touch the ill in order for the healthy to be whole.”**

### **Tips for Completing a Meeting Agreement**

- Use black or blue ink.
- Write boldly and clearly.
- If more than one offender, complete the boxed area as follows:
  - \* The *total claim for monetary losses* is the total for all offenders.
  - \* *This offender's share* is the portion of the total that the offender is responsible to pay.
  - \* The *last line in the boxed area* should reflect the remaining balance of the total claim that the other offenders are responsible to pay.
- If offender is on informal probation and the restitution extends beyond the probation end-date, review and complete section C.1.
- If there is work to be done, clearly indicate who will contact whom to arrange a schedule.
- Have everyone present at the meeting sign the agreement, including yourself!
- Promptly return everything related to the case to the case manager.
- Congratulate yourself!

## **From the Case Manager**

Some time ago I heard a true story about an AIDS clinic in South Africa. One day a visitor was brought to the clinic. He noticed a group of persons dancing outside and was told that the patients and staff did this every morning. When the visitor commented that he could not tell the difference between patients and staff, he was told, “Oh, that is the way this clinic is operated. Our motto is ‘The healthy need to touch the ill in order for the healthy to be whole.’”

Our volunteer facilitators sometimes tell me, “I get more out of this than I give.” There is no question in my mind that something profound happens to us as facilitators when we observe the transformation that can occur when the parties in the victim-offender conference meet each other with openness and truthfulness. The process makes all of us healthier. —Ken Nissley

## **Stories to Encourage You**

### **Reflections from mothers of two offenders:**

In a post-agreement evaluation, the mother of an offender said, “This was beautiful and redemptive. We were so thankful as a family to have an opportunity to show our remorse and express our hearts.” (Tim Martin case)

In another evaluation from an offender's mother, “Although we were very apprehensive and a bit uncomfortable before the meetings, we all were very happy that we participated in the program. ...I believe we all left understanding the concerns and feelings of everyone involved. It was a very meaningful and maturing experience for the boys who committed the offense.” (John Wagonner case)

### **Reflections from a victim:**

Thank you for the vital role you played in reimbursing our company for the losses we incurred. Please extend our congratulations and gratitude to C. (offender) and to his mother. I applaud your efforts in restorative justice and wish you well as you help other young people and their victims come to terms with the offense that have been committed. (Jon Singer case)

### **Who can predict the outcome of a LAVORP conference?**

Rachel Williams, a LAVORP facilitator, provided an interesting report on a female offender who had just turned 18 years old. The offender's parents were unable to bring her to the offender prep meeting, so she walked two miles through the rain to meet Rachel at the designated meeting place. This case involved two girls who got into a “mutual” fight. Both were charged with Simple Assault. When the referral was made, one of the probation officers noted on the referral form, “THESE GIRLS DO NOT LIKE EACH OTHER.” However, both girls responded positively to the visits by the LAVORP facilitator and decided they wanted to find a way to end the animosity between them. The joint meeting had a very positive outcome. The girls were able to discuss together at the meeting some of the root causes of the conflict (racial differences), and they accepted each other's apology.

**“Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.”**

## Working Outside the Box

**Here is a creative way one facilitator worked on a case.**

Three 16–17 year old boys were arrested for throwing objects from a bridge onto cars traveling on Route 283. Two cars were hit with resulting damages. One of the victims was a truck driver who lived in Highspire, not in the local area. The LAVORP facilitator, Mary Haldeman, met with all three youth and found them to be very remorseful for their foolish actions and agreed to meet with the victims. However, when the victim from Highspire was contacted, he said he would like to participate but that he was unable to do so because he works long hours and has almost no spare time. He was not available to travel to Manheim for meetings. He did say that he really wanted to get restitution, and if he can be paid within 6 months, he would accept \$900 instead of \$1487, which was the body shop estimate.

Mary suggested to him that she might be able to arrange for a “surrogate” victim to represent his interests, if he was open to that, and he agreed. In consultation with the LAVORP office, it was agreed that Mary’s brother-in-law, a truck driver himself, would participate in the victim’s place at the meeting.

The end of the story is that a victim-offender conference was held with three offenders and their parents, and two victims, one of them being the surrogate victim. Since he was a truck driver, the surrogate was able to reflect to the offenders some of the feelings a driver experiences when faced with this kind of unexpected action. It was a very good meeting and all parties seemed satisfied with the outcome. All three youth paid their restitution in a timely manner, and when the “absent” truck driver received his \$900, he called the LAVORP office to express his thanks for our efforts.

## Volunteer Questions and Answers

**My case does not involve any restitution, monetary or work-related. How should I complete the Meeting Agreement?**

All agreements, including those with no restitutions, should have something written in section A.3. to reflect the overall meeting experience. Here are some ideas:

- We agree that the apology offered by (the offender) was appreciated and accepted by (the victim.)”
- “We agree that the conflict that resulted in the fight was a result of misunderstandings between us that have now been clarified.”
- “(The victim) agrees to forgive \$500 of the \$1,000 restitution that “the offender” owes (i.e., in those cases where the victim is willing to accept less than the offender’s share of restitution.)

**My offender wants to pay restitution directly to the victim. Is this okay with LAVORP?**

Unless the offender pays the victim directly at the time of the victim-offender conference, restitution payments should ALWAYS be made through LAVORP.

An exception can be made if there is a clear and strong request from the victim for the offender to pay him/her directly. In this case, a clear procedure must be established for proper acknowledging and receipting of the payments and the victim needs to report the payments to the LAVORP office. All arrangements should be noted on the Meeting Agreement in section A.3.

**What should I do if the offender or the victim is not returning my phone calls?**

Promptly contact the LAVORP office. We have access to probation officers who can help with offender phone numbers and work with you in connecting with victims.

**I just had an exciting victim-offender conference. Does LAVORP want to know what happened?**

Yes! We welcome stories of your work as a facilitator. Send an e-mail to Ken Nissley describing what happened and how it met the needs of the offender and victim. Include how the experience encouraged you in your facilitator role.

### What does a good apology look like?

An apology is a measure of accountability. It is one way that offenders can help restore the harm that they have created.

An appropriate, victim-sensitive apology should include:

- A declaration of personal responsibility for the offense
- An acknowledgement of the harm done to the victim.
- A statement that the offender understands the harm done to the community.
- A commitment not to repeat the offending behavior.
- A commitment to be a productive citizen.

These guidelines may assist you in helping an offender prepare to deliver and/or write an apology to the victim.

(from the Victim Services office of the Lancaster County Court)

## LAVORP Annual Dinner—A Success

On April 16, LAVORP's held its Fifth Annual Dinner at Willow Valley Resort and Conference Center. One guest commented, "This was the best dinner yet!" Ron Martin from WGAL served as Master of Ceremonies and kept the program moving along. Dave Mueller, director of Juvenile Probation, accepted the Restorative Justice Achievement Award for 2009 for the Office of Juvenile Probation in recognition their efforts in advancing restorative justice in Lancaster County. Jon Singer honored four volunteer facilitators who have completed five or ten years of service with LAVORP. Chris Bridwell and his mother, Johnetta McGown, told a wonderful story of how participating in LAVORP's restorative justice program years ago transformed Chris's life. Not only did Chris make amends for the harm he caused his victims, but now he and his mother enjoy a good relationship with Jerry and Kim Bandy, the people he harmed by his actions as a juvenile offender. The Bandys also talked about how they experienced and benefited from the process. (see photos at right)

Our keynote speaker, Howard Zehr, noted the growth in restorative justice around the world since its beginning in the 1970s. Howard highlighted the three foundational values of restorative justice—**respect, responsibility, and relationship**—that are inherent in addressing the central questions of restorative justice: who has been harmed; what are their needs; and who has the obligation to address the needs, put right the harms, and restore relationships.

For more of Howard Zehr's current thoughts on restorative justice and peacemaking, visit his blog at <http://emu.edu/blog/restorative-justice/>.



Volunteers recognized for their years of service. Front to back, L-R: Melinda Nowak, Lisa Krieg, Linda Van Til, Don Sensenig and Jon Singer



Ron Martin, Jerry and Kim Bandy (victims), Howard Zehr, Johnetta McGown, and Chris Bridwell (offender)

## You Can Be A Winner

Thank you to the trained volunteers who facilitate LAVORP's *You Can Be A Winner* program. Special thanks to Melanie Snyder, who coordinates the volunteers, oversees the curriculum, and takes the curriculum "on location" for schools and youth organizations.

Since July 2007 when LAVORP assumed responsibility for this program, we have held 16 Saturday classes involving 99 students and 93 parents. Melanie has provided six "on location" classes involving 78 student, staff, and parent participants.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer facilitator for students or parents, please contact the LAVORP office.

### The ABCs of Peaceful Resolution

**A = Be Aware** of assumptions, feelings, conflict styles, anger triggers, and warning signs.

**B = Break** away from the situation and give yourself a **break** so you have time to think before acting.

**C = Choose** your actions carefully—consider the consequences.

**"Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer."**

## Training DVD

We've done it! Thanks to Jim Nicholson, who generously donated his time, equipment, and video skills, LAVORP now has a DVD of the restorative justice process from the initial phone call to the offender to the victim-offender conference. By providing this DVD to new trainees, we were able to shorten the in-class training hours. Trainees viewed the role plays from home and had them available for multiple review.

If you are interested in having a copy of the DVD for your use, please contact the office. The DVD includes a number of bloopers, just in case you need a laugh.

Do you know someone who might be interested in becoming a volunteer facilitator? Refer them to the website for 2009 Fall Training Dates and application.

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