

Voices from Inside

Greetings AVP family,

COVID-19 has brought significant disruption in business as usual, and that has included our work everywhere: inside prisons, in communities and in schools.

So our work has shifted to trying to maintain support and connection within the AVP family—particularly with those of us who are incarcerated and therefore more vulnerable in that they are often in very crowded spaces, sometimes with few supplies to combat the virus and little control over their surroundings.

Our Volunteer Correspondent, Jo Clayson (right), has been our lifeline, establishing e-mail communication with the inside teams—so that we can have news of how they are doing and they can have news of how we, on the outside are doing.



As you will read in the excerpts from some of the emails, this line of communication has been vital in helping people deal with the triple stressors of incarceration, COVID and the lack of programming. And if inside facilitators can have hope, it gives us on the outside hope as well.

We all look forward to the day when we can again be together and continue practicing AVP and strengthening our AVP communities.

In *Transforming Power*,

The AVP NY Leadership Team:

Funny Valentine Doyle, Stellar Steve Bradley, Charismatic Coralie Joseph, Adventurous Alisha Kohn, Jubilant Jo Clayson, Joyful John Sheridan, Jumpin' Jill McLellan

Awesome Angela

Thank you so much for the AVP updates. It's good to know that throughout this pandemic you all are still able to connect with one another.

During this crisis I find myself utilizing transforming power on a daily basis. I am in a house with a couple of busy body women, therefore, I find myself in my room more often so I can stay out of trouble. Think before I react! It's not easy but I refuse to give anyone my power.

I cannot wait for things to go back to normal around here because I really miss my AVP groups! I am not only saying this because I feel like you need to hear it but it is the truth.

AVP has been my outlet and comfort zone. A place where I can share everything, and feel safe to do so. I am pretty sure a lot of women in here feel the same way and that is why they always attend workshops. Around here we have to be careful of the things that we say out of our mouth. However, in group we can talk freely and never get judged or in trouble. Our workshops has brought a lot of people out of their shells. I for one am proof. I never used to talk in groups but now you cannot get me to be quiet (LOL). My AVP groups and outside volunteers are responsible for that and I am forever grateful! I have a voice that matters!

Just wanted to send you a few lines.

Have a good day !

—Awesome Angela, Bedford Hills Prison

Fair Forty

First off I send my love and good vibes in these difficult times. I know that many of my AVP brothers and sisters are the proactive, and caring people who have BEEN protesting and speaking out against the injustices of the world today.

Saying that, I hope everyone is safe and showing what AVP is really about because the world needs AVP right now. Hopefully this program will be able to play a major part in the change being asked for right now. The world is looking for an answer, the crazy thing is we have at least one part of the answer already! This program can be pivotal to not only bringing the outside closer to the inside, but bringing PEOPLE together no matter what walk of life.

I've met people that I've seen more than my "real" family, who I would of NEVER stopped and talked to in the town because we just would have been in different groups of friends, but, now they are my FAMILY, and I would call them nothing less. I would do anything for and with them without a question. Please, stay safe due to this covid-19 and now the protest too. My heart and love is out there with all of y'all. The country needs help, AVP can and will be the answer.

—Fair Forty, Elmira Prison

Our volunteers are amazing!!

AVP facilitators inside and out together **volunteered** more than **25,500 hours in 2019, valued at nearly \$800,000 in NYS!**

That means we multiplied the value of our income sixteen times!

Cool Charlie

During this time, AVP is helping me in many ways.

It is helping me is to remain optimistic. Right now the world is in crisis on two fronts: the COVID-19 pandemic, which has infected more than ten million people worldwide and taken the lives of another six hundred thousand, and the global civil unrest for racial justice sparked by the death of George Floyd. People are restless; they want racial equality; they want equal justice; they want social justice, etc. , and they want it now. Despite the critical times and challenges we are now facing, I strongly believe that, when all is said and done, the world will become a better place for all people.

AVP is helping me to live peacefully with everyone. Some people falsely believe that peacekeeping is running from conflict, pretending it doesn't exist, always giving in or acting like a doormat. That is farther from the truth. I know firsthand that peace always has a price tag. Sometimes it has cost me my pride; other times it has cost me my self-centeredness, and still other times it has cost me relationships. But for the sake of peace I do my best to compromise, show preference to the needs of others and, most of all, listen to them.

A third way AVP is helping is with overcoming temptation. Temptation is simply enticement to do negative things. Negative behaviors require one's attention. To overcome temptation, I discovered that trying to block a negative thought out of my mind doesn't help because it is driven deeper into my memory. By resisting it, I only reinforce. So to quickly disarm it's charm, I refocus my attention to something different. I become interested in another idea, a positive one.

—Cool Charlie, Cayuga Prison

Instrumental Ivi'e

"Black Lives Matter" (B) (L) (M)

(B)e forgiving of our ancient bondage
(L)et go and embrace: "Victory Comes To The One That Endures" (author unknown), and
(M)ake a proud statement of: Survival Homage,"
for life today is yours.

(B)lack Lives do Matter - So,
(L)et go of killing each other & end this shameful chatter - It
(M)akes more sense to gather.

(B)lack is Deliciously Beautiful.
(L)ove one another as your sister & brother,
(M)oving mountains together is more suitable.

—Instrumental Ivi'e, Bedford Hills Prison

"Stop! Don't Shoot! I Wanna Grow Up!"

In Little Stroller
A Tad Over A Year Old
Little Baby Boy.

—Instrumental Ivi'e, Bedford Hills Prison

"Bubble Ballyhoo"

NBA Bubble Ballyhoo -
Of A Strong Twenty - Two.
Listen To What Nobleness
Has To Say To You, And Follow Suit:

Use Your Voice
Kneel Down
Get Up!

"If It's Not Fair, Not Right, Not Just, Speak Up" (John Lewis; 1940 - 2020).

We Stand Stronger Together.
Become Leaders Of Change
To Make Our World Better.
NBA Bubble Ballyhoo
Of A Strong Twenty - Two
Forever.

Bubble Ballyhoo, hoop, hoop, hoop :)

—Instrumental Ivi'e, Bedford Hills Prison

"Listen"

I'm on a Black Lives Matter kick.
Gee! I wonder why?
Must be the news making me sick,
Could be the deadly pandemic of selfishness or ignorance.
Been there and done that -
Now look where I'm at.

I wish I was out to spin you my lines,
In hopes of putting some love on your minds
So you can cut it out & save some lives.

I was 26 when my life changed right before my very own eyes.
I've been in now for 26,
And I'm still trying to save the rest -
Of whatever I have left.

I'm not here to preach,
I'm here to teach -
So hear me clear
Before your life too disappears,
'Cause I've been gone now for one too many years.

So listen, and take heed,
Because our children need to breathe,
And ask yourself now - before it's too late:

"How did I get here"? "What am I doing"? "Why am I here"?
Listen, One Voice Is All It Takes
To Make Some Change Today.

—Instrumental Ivi'e, Bedford Hills Prison

Joyful Jef'e

This letter is to let you know that I carry you all in my heart everyday.

Being around people like Carolyn (Contagious CC) and (Easy) Eddie helped me keep my life balance and together with God's help, I still continue to transform powers everyday.

It's tough but my family, AVP and my future is depending on me to continue to do right so I trust my inner sense of what's needed and seek to resolve conflicts by reaching for common ground everyday.

—Joyful Jef'e, Green Haven Prison

Ambitious Ant

I've been an AVP facilitator for the past 20 plus years. To say that AVP has changed my life would be an understatement.

AVP has become my new way of life and I've been carrying and spreading its culture along my journey.

It is good to hear that the AVP community is finding new ways to cope in these trying times. It saddens me to watch the news as of late because now more than ever, I know that it is important to *'Seek to resolve conflicts by reaching for common ground'* and *'Risk being creative rather than violent.'*

Trust me, I didn't derive at the point in my life overnight. AVP has shown me ways to deal with my previous urges to fight violence with violence and instead, *'Reach for that which is good in others'*.

Lately I've find myself wondering what if anything could be done to spread the concept of AVP and the notion of Transforming Power to the populous at large. Maybe conduct Basic AVP workshops with government officials and newly hired public servants and or implement AVP as part of our public schools curriculum.

A man can only wish.

Until we get our regular workshops back, I would like to conduct mini workshops in my dorm area while adhering to social distancing of course.

Once again it was really great to hear from you. Please send my regards to the rest of my AVP family.

—Ambitious Ant, Woodbourne Prison



At AVP New York Board Council meetings we add an empty chair with "bars" to our circle. The chair is a reminder to those of us outside the walls that the majority of AVP facilitators are inside the walls and are essential parts of the AVP-NY circle.

Forever Building Builder Bruce

Tensions are high with everyone worried about loved ones and friends, so using our A.V.P. skills daily we are able to help all around us as much as possible.

Along with all the bad things going on there are also positive outcomes in our lives that happen. For 27 years I have been hoping and trying to communicate with my daughter. We now talk on the phone regularly, which brings my heart so much joy.

I hope everyone has good things happen during our times of troubles. I'm thankful for the skills that A.V.P. has given me in coping with this crisis.

Thank you all for thinking about us during this time. May you all stay safe and healthy.

—Forever Building Builder Bruce, Cayuga Prison

June June

I'm happy to hear that my AVP-family members are doing well and staying unified during such trying and scary times. Nonetheless, I pray that you all (and your family and friends) remain safe.

As for myself, I'm doing my best to maintain a level head in here at all times. Exercise (even though I've gained a significant amount of weight), studying, and reading is my everyday routine. Especially avoiding negativity. Transforming Power has been helping me get through this. On many occasions I worry for my family and everyone else out there; after I contact them I'm more at ease.

Hearing from my AVP-family members is a breath of fresh air!

Stay focused, Stay safe, and Stay unified.

We will make it through this.

—June June, Auburn Prison

Blessed Buddha

Two of our own are in quarantine right now, but we continue to try and do our best even though we are on "Covid-19" segregation, meaning only two blocks in the messhall at one time and even honor blocks have separate rec times per deck. Never think that a virus will conquer our spirit. We are bigger than this bug and will come out stronger and more together because of this thing.

—Blessed Buddha, Green Haven Prison

Blazing Bob

Given the circumstances, a lot of us believe the administration has done a good job to this point. The hardest time is being alone and thinking about my future and propensity to catch covid. (My father died from pneumonia, and in my head I believe I am at risk for respiratory illnesses.) We don't talk about getting sick in the same way we don't talk about length of years left on our sentence. Neither one has a storybook ending.

—Blazing Bob, Clinton Prison Annex

Prestigious Prince

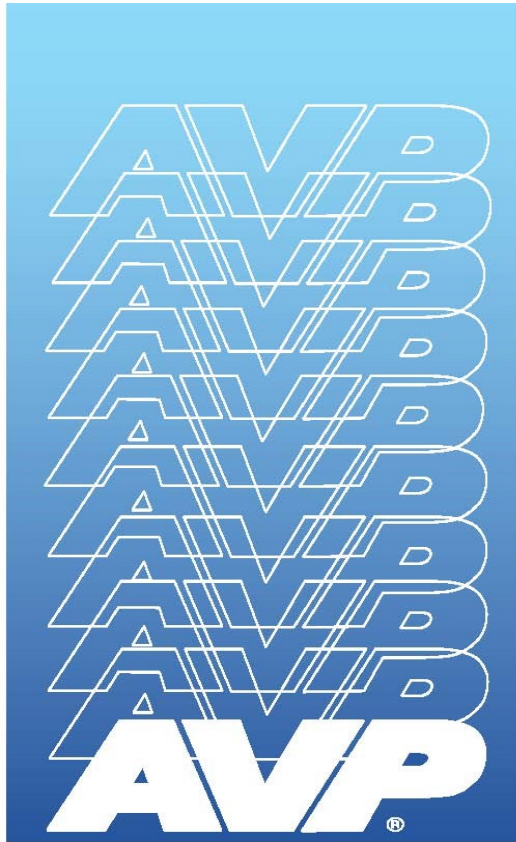
I want to take the time and appreciate the love and support you guys give us. I have received the *AVP Transformer* [the AVP/USA newsletter]. I also would like to honor and give so much respect as well as gratitude to the civilian facilitators and their time, care and sacrifice. Lucky Lili, Jump-in' Jill, Mellow Mike, Moxie Marie and Joyful John. Everything is with openness, love, respect, commitment and growth.

Even at a time like this, I'm still thinking about AVP and the development it brings on a regular and continues to do.

Make sure to keep everyone clean, wear your mask and wash yours and the hands around you :)

Thank you and take care,

—Prestigious Prince, Auburn Prison



ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

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

**Virtual AVP New York
Annual Gathering
September 4-6, 2020**

At a computer near you.

See www.avpny.org for details and upcoming on-line workshops!



Our 2020 budget calls for **\$28,150** in public support.

To date we have received **\$11,071**.

Please do what you can.

Thank you very much!!

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT / NEW YORK

2019 Workshop Summary Report

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

ALBION Prison (Women's) Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 43 Apprentices trained: 11	FISHKILL Prison Workshop count: 1 Participant count: 16	WESTCHESTER COUNTY JAIL Workshop count: 6 Participant count: 55	NIAGARA FRONTIER AC Teen + young adt wksp count: 1 Teen + young adt part't count: 8
ATTICA Prison Workshop count: 6 Participant count: 66 Apprentices: 8	GREEN HAVEN Prison English lang. workshop count: 18 Spanish lang. workshop count: 2 Participant count: 275 Mini workshop count: 2 Mini participant count: 38 Apprentices trained: 56	WOODBOURNE Prison Workshop count: 7 Participant count: 124 Apprentices trained: 14	WESTCHESTER Area Council Adult workshop count: 6 Adult participant count: 72 Youth workshop count: 1 Youth participant count: 6 Facilitator Days: 2 Facilitator Day participants: 26 Apprentices trained: 22
AUBURN Prison Workshop count: 17 Participant count: 179 Facilitator Day count: 1 Facilitator Day participants: 15 Apprentices trained: 12	GREENE Prison Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 44 Apprentices trained: 6	BRONX Area Council Teen + young adult wksp ct: 5 Teen + young adult part't ct: 43 Teen + adult apprentices tr'd: 15	AVP/NY PRISON WKSs: Prisons served: 20 Workshop count: 150 Participant count: 1,786 Apprentices trained: 193 Mini workshop count: 3 Mini participant count: 46 Facilitator Day (mini): 1 Facilitator Day part't count: 15 Inside facilitators: 258 Outside adult facilitators: 101
BEDFORD HILLS Prison (Women's) Workshop count: 11 Participant count: 122 Apprentices trained: 9	GROVELAND Prison Workshop count: 6 Participant count: 68 Apprentices trained: 7	CATSKILL Area Council Youth short workshop count: 3 Youth short participant count: 67 Youth mini workshop count: 3 Youth mini part't count: 123	AVP/NY COMMUNITY WKSs: Community workshops: 18 Participant count: 202 Adult part't count: 127 Teen + yg adult ct: 64 Youth part't count: 11
CAYUGA Prison Workshop count: 6 Participant count: 54 Apprentices trained: 7	OTISVILLE Prison Workshop count: 7 Participant count: 101 Apprentices trained: 6	CENTRAL NEW YORK AC Teen + young adt wksp count: 1 Teen + young adt part't count: 14 Multigen workshop count: 2 Multigen participant count: 27 Adult workshop count: 2 Adult participant count: 25 Youth mini workshop count: 1 Youth mini part't count: 6 Adult apprentices trained: 10	Apprentices trained: 47 Adult apprentices: 32 Teen + yg adt apps: 15
CLINTON ANNEX Prison Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 34 Apprentices trained: 7	SING SING Prison English lang. wksp count: 21 Spanish + biligual. wksp ct: 4 Participant count: 280 Apprentices trained: 9	ELMIRA Area Council Adult workshop count: 1 Adult participant count: 7 Adult mini workshop count: 1 Adult mini participant count: 11	Short workshops: 5 Adult part't count: 9 Youth part't count: 76
CLINTON MAIN Prison Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 35	TACONIC Prison (Women's) Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 41 Mini workshop count: 1 Mini participant count: 8 Apprentices trained: 9	GENESEE VALLEY Area Council Multigen workshop count: 1 Multigen participant count: 12	Mini workshops: 6 Multigen part't ct: 18 Youth part't count: 56
EASTERN Prison Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 39	WENDE Prison Workshop count: 6 Participant count: 40 Apprentices trained: 9	MID-HUDSON Area Council Adult mini workshop count: 1 Adult mini participant count: 7	Outside adult facilitators: 101 Teen facilitators (under 18): 16
ELMIRA Prison Workshop count: 9 Participant count: 119 Apprentices trained: 11			
FCI RAY BROOK (Federal Prison) Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 120 Apprentices trained: 9			