

Our Annual Gathering

The AVP New York Annual Gathering was held in early September at Powell House in Old Chatham, NY.

It was a weekend full of laughter and song, good work and good food that nourished our bodies and souls.

Anointed Anika and Jazzy John helped us explore what boundaries meant to us and we talked about a time our boundaries were violated (or not). We noticed the role privilege plays in experiencing violations of boundaries and we looked at some examples of unhealthy boundaries

In breakout groups we tried out a new exercise from Cai Quirk that helps us explore moving beyond binaries in our thinking—about gender and the many other ways we divide ourselves into what we name as polar opposites, but which are really shades of color rather than starkly contrasted.

Journeying Jonathon led us in exploring the difference between non-violence and nonviolence, the former being a state of being, the latter being an action. Jonathon also led us in thinking about how we handle conflict in a workshop setting.

Really Rosey led us in a closing on Saturday of sharing gifts with one another that speak to our AVP life / work.

In our annual meeting we reviewed where we are with the goals set for last year and affirmed them for this year, adding concrete action steps where there were none.



AVP New York's Annual Gathering

September 9-11, 2022 at Powell House, Old Chatham, NY

Front row (L to R): Angelic Aran, Secure Shirley, Kourageous Kim.

Middle row (L to R): Joyful John, Jazzy John, Anointed Anika, Journeying Jonathon, Questing Karen, Stellar Steve.

Back row (L to R): Dreaming Deborah, Willing Will, Friendly Fred, Iridescent Ingrid, Fortunate Frederica, Really Rosey and Numinous Nadine.

A committee formed to develop a diversity equity and inclusion workshop to be offered to all AVP NY facilitators with all active facilitators strongly encouraged to participate.

Required reading for all white AVP facilitators: *The Sum of Us: What Racisms Costs Us and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee

We considered how we can work to regain some of the ground lost

with the pandemic—the loss of programs inside prisons and in communities, the loss of facilitators, both in communities and in prisons (due to release or transfer)—and how we might revitalize our area councils.

It was really good to be together once more.

We continue to be grateful for your work and your support.

—Secure Shirley Way

AVP Returns to Green Haven Prison



When we were allowed back in, I was able to get things moving quickly setting up a meeting with the Dep of Programs

on March 17 where I met our new staff advisor.

Our initial facilitator meetings took a little time to really get going; many of our long-time facilitators are now in college programs (yay!) which kept them from joining us on Thursday nights. And our plans to do a facilitator refresher workshop in April got postponed several times for different reasons until we were able to have it in July.

That weekend was such a blessing; we have several apprentice facilitators who had just done the T4F shortly before the shut down and the men in the college programs were able to come for the weekend. Such a time of building and rebuilding community and redefining our values.

There's been a lot of bumps along the way - kind of like a creaky machine that needs movement to get oiled again - but it feels like we are on a positive path to come back stronger and better than ever.

—Contagious CC, Carolyn Polikarpus

Solid Start with SNUG—Newburgh

The Mid-Hudson Area Council has worked with SNUG of Newburgh (Guns spelled backwards; a state-funded program of violence interrupters) to offer a Basic and an Advanced workshop for their outreach workers. The workshops were small and the hours shorter than typical: the SNUG staff need to be out on the street keeping the peace.

Everyone was very receptive and will find ways to incorporate TP into their work.

There were four of us on the team; Jose Pineda who has done the legwork to make this a reality, Jose Perez who brings real facilitation gifts, and Jazzmin (Math) Williams in his first community workshop after coming home in July. Carolyn Polikarpus took on the role of Tyrannical Timekeeper to be sure we made the best of our time.

Orenzo Charles is the Director of Newburgh SNUG and has been a solid partner in this undertaking. He hopes to have his staff trained as facilitators so they can do workshops with the kids they work with.

—Carolyn Polikarpus

AVP Rochester is Expecting the Best!

Coming into the sunshine after COVID, I recognize that our facilitator circle is smaller. We are challenged by wanting to meet the needs of facilitating in the prisons and planning expansion to help address the violence in Rochester and in our schools. The need is great across the board, but how do you not "rob Peter to pay Paul"...so to speak? With so many people already stretched to the limit by the burdens of regular everyday life, how do we confront such a huge mountain? I guess like Kris Kringle when he tells the Winter Warlock in Santa Claus is Comin' to Town, "Put one foot in front of the other!" LOL, I love those old Christmas specials and the memories they bring back; I can't wait for them to come one! Shoot, what am I talking about?!?! I have the DVD's, I can watch them any-time!!!

I remember a quote on an office wall I saw years ago "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get



what you've always gotten. Is that what you want?" It's important to ask the question of ourselves and of our relationship with AVP. The Rochester crew is meeting this week. We will discuss the current status of AVP Rochester, growth plans, and determine who is able to donate their time, talents and treasures to help the chapter grow! I plan to step back some and ask others to step up, so we may need to reorganize priorities.

The upcoming meeting is our first step to renewal, and we'll be working with a Community Organizer (Thanks Alley AI and Peaceful Brown) as an additional step to help establish AVP Rochester as a viable, active resource in the community!

As the Landing Strip Coordinator, I understand the importance of effective leadership. We may need to do things differently as others take on a larger role. I am committed to AVP and believe we need to ask ourselves the question quoted above. What do we want? Helping to shift thought and behavior patterns can be challenging, but I think Michael Jackson was onto something: "I'm starting with the man in the mirror, I'm asking him to change his ways. And no message could've been any clearer, If you wanna make the world a better place, Take a look at yourself, and then make a change".

As we do in AVP, I/we will be expecting the best!

—Kourageous Kim Scott

AVP needs YOU!!

AVP New York is looking for facilitators and coordinators for both our community and prison programs. We would love to start programs in schools too!

If you think you might be called to this work, please call Shirley at 315-604-7940.

You might just thank yourself!

A Leap of Faith

My journey with AVP began as a leap of faith, you might say, in December of 2018, at Cayuga Correctional Facility. I had heard through friends and seen AVP flyers posted in the dorm. I was very apprehensive about attending a workshop. My God, I thought, three days I have to go there, UGH! Well, I decided to just go and give it a try.

The first workshop that I attended was the Basic. What did I expect? I expected the workshop to be like a lecture with some group involvement. Boy oh boy was I in for a shock. We started off with learning everyone's name. Not too difficult of a task that gets the brain warmed up. The next activity became my nemesis for the day.

Concentric Circles. Brief description—two people face each other seated in chairs. Taking turns speaking about a subject given by the facilitators. This activity is designed to develop listening and communication skills. I laugh now but back then I wasn't laughing. I was never a social butterfly. Communicating with others was difficult so I avoided it.

When it was my turn to speak I was like a deer caught in the headlights. I froze up. Couldn't speak. My mind was racing but I didn't know what to say. I stammered and stuttered so much I felt like a dunce. My activity partner was compassionate and coached me a little. One facilitator, Muggs, told me that he himself felt the same way his first time. Of all activities this one by far taught me the most. The more I did it the better I became.

Manly Awareness was my next workshop. This workshop is to develop positive attributes men should have. What is it to be a man? Was I really a man? Did I have what it

takes to be a man? This workshop was very thought provoking and eliminated any gray area. I couldn't be a man when I was not behaving like one. This was a game changer for me. I decided to make changes and man up.

Trauma and Resilience. This workshop uncovered much pain that I had been suppressing for decades. Traumatic events and experiences that developed how I conducted myself. Little did I know how much impact these things had on my life. A silent rage had been created in me that was like a cancer in my soul. I was hurting inside but didn't know what to do. Lost, hurting, and emotionally exhausted is the best way that I could explain myself back then. Learning forgiveness and compassion for others and myself.

Being able to let go of many negative feelings and moving on. Move on to a productive and meaningful life.

Silent rage being transformed into healing takes time. It also takes the help of others. Knowing that you are not alone and having people who truly care are the best assets one can have. For those who are suffering from shame, guilt, depression, anxiety, or the silent rage please reach out for help. Reach out to AVP facilitators, mental health clinics, family, or friends. Don't be afraid to ask for help. There are good people out there who truly care.

The Facilitators workshop was a definitely hands on experience. Getting up in front of everyone and orchestrating an activity takes skill. The more you do something, the better you will become. It is a great confidence builder when you are supported so strongly by experienced facilitators and peers. This workshop I highly recommend. Even if you don't plan on becoming a facilitator the skills learned will help you in your daily life.

Transforming Power. We all have the power within us to change a potentially violent or destructive situation into a nonviolent one. AVP's basis is to appreciate one's own self worth and a caring attitude.

I wish you all the very best.

STAY AWESOME AND GO AVP!

—*Daring Dana Gilmore*

AVP Returns to Clinton Main Prison

Thanks to the AVP staff advisor, the volunteer coordinator, and the new Deputy Superintendent of Programs (all NYS Department of Corrections staff), the return

of AVP to Clinton has been smooth and promising. The brightest spot is arguably the arrival, during COVID, of seven men who honed their facilitator chops elsewhere, but to counterbalance that, the two remaining facilitators are currently not ready to return to the AVP fold. Overall, though, AVP is well-staffed on the inside to carry the weight of the revived program. On the outside, aside from me there are four facilitators, so that too is a positive.

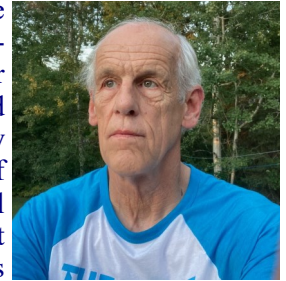
We had our first Basic in mid-July, and will have a second Basic at the end of August; next up after that will be an Advanced. There were no COVID protocols in place for the first workshop, so communication across the blessed Circle was effortless, and small groups were able to pretty much huddle comfortably; it almost all seemed perfectly normal!

The first workshop had a beyond-normal amount of "emotion", suggesting that a huge pressure valve had been released after a very difficult twenty-eight months in a very tough institution. As well, even the officers seemed pleased to see us there, and never before have the check-in processes been so seamless. May it continue like this indefinitely!

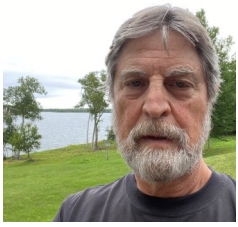
—*Stellar Steve Bradley*



Daring Dana (left) and friends



AVP Returns to Otisville Prison



On May 13, the Otisville team restarted our first AVP gathering after a long hiatus. The original proposal by the inside coordinators was to do a special topic workshop. After much discussion, it was decided that we should alter plans and have a two-day facilitators-only workshop so that we could reconnect as human beings, and get our bearings before proceeding with the general population. This was a good decision.

The facilitators-only workshop had nine participants, many of which didn't know each other given the high turnover in the population and lack of inside practice sessions. The men were extremely appreciative of the opportunity to meet the rest of the team and were very welcoming of the three of us who came in from the outside.

The format of the workshop was to spend the first day doing various group-building and 'Covid debriefing' exercises that the outside facilitators brought to the table, some of which mimicked the kinds of activities we would do in a Basic. We also reviewed some of the policy details, like those concerning attendance and the prohibition of bringing in certificates for the graduation, that some of the men had forgotten.

The next day was devoted to having everyone pick an exercise from the basic manual that they subsequently presented to the rest of us, followed by constructive feedback from the group. This served as both a 'spring-training' warm-up for a July Basic workshop and also to build trust that re-opened the door to seeing each other as partners in a self-improvement process that captures the spirit of what it is to be an AVP facilitator.

As a practical matter, the enthusiasm that was generated spilled over to a

renewed commitment to meet twice a month (first and third Thursdays) for practice sessions. It was also helpful to find out who needed manuals, which was most of the men.

The Covid protocols had most of the participants wearing masks, but not all. Some wore them properly, but not all. All participants, however, were very gracious about accommodating the request to wear them when those of us from the outside asked. The condition of the masks worn by the men was less than stellar, and the generally loose application of protocols among the general population and some of the guards themselves (particularly regarding covering the nose) messaged a word of caution for those outside facilitators who might be concerned about catching Covid or spreading it to a compromised loved one. One of us left concerned; two of us felt it was manageable.

In July, we had a very successful Basic workshop involving less than a dozen participants. This will be followed by an Advanced workshop in September, and presumably a Training for Facilitators in October. This will allow a cohesive cohort group to do the sequence together.

All in all, we are off to a great start. Enthusiasm is high. The commitment to rebuild a strong and resilient program is in place.

The need for outside facilitators at Otisville is the weak spot, with only two of us (operating from a distance) covering the 8-9 workshops that we manage to cover in a year. I admit that I'd forgotten how much fun and fulfilling it is to be an active facilitator. We need help, and if anyone is inclined, please reach out.

—*Enthusiastic Eugene Lebowhl*

AVP Returns to Cayuga, Attica and Elmira Prisons

Outside facilitators come from miles around for Attica workshops: Sturdy Stuart is just an hour away, Secure Shirley, three

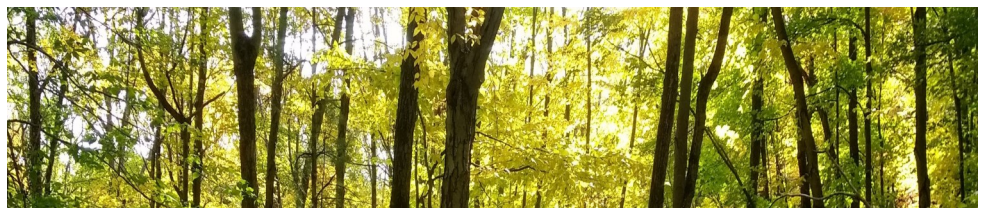


hours, Questing Karen and Funny Valentine are from New Hampshire and Connecticut respectively. Together with Jus Ant, Cool Colvin, Free Fred and Appreciative A.J. we facilitated two Basic Workshops in August. We have learned to add Friday to the Tuesday to Thursday schedule as there is often a disruption that necessitates missing a day. This round did not disappoint—a miscount sent us home on Wednesday. Daily room changes added complexity. Nonetheless, the workshops were meaningful and satisfying. We are super-excited that Dreaming Deborah (only an hour away) is now an approved program provider at Attica. We look forward to Deborah and Mystic Margaret, from Indiana, joining the team in December for two Advanceds.

At Cayuga Prison, Artistic Armond, Prestigious Prince and King Keith together with Secure Shirley and Friendly Phyllis held one Basic workshop in July with Authentic Aubrie joining in as a participant. We held a second Basic in October. We will hold a an Advanced in December and hope to have several new facilitators in the new year.

Authentic Aubrie and Secure Shirley have met with the inside team at Elmira Prison twice. We expect to hold two Basic Workshops in November.

—*Secure Shirley Way*



AVP Returns to Auburn Prison



As soon as we heard that AVP was being allowed back inside NYS prisons, the six regular volunteers were ready:

forms filled out, TB tests done, reorientation, new badges.

We first entered on March 22, 2022 and walking down the hall of the school building, we could hear some cheering and yelling, "AVP is back". Sadly, the hallway was rather empty except for a few college classes and an organization or two. It had been a LONG two years with almost no programming. We were fortunate that pre-COVID, AVP met every Tuesday evening so that was immediately reinstated. We wore masks but were not asked to do COVID self tests before entering.

Meeting together at long last had the feel of a family reunion, catching up on everyone's news and happy to see each other again. The check-in took the whole two hours. We were happy to see six of our pre-pandemic inside facilitators, and a few facilitators had transferred in too. Our lockers and materials were intact!

Two basic workshops happened in June. In August we held a one day facilitator workshop as well as two Basic workshops and one Advanced. We held a Training for Facilitators Workshop in October which included a number of men who speak Spanish. It is our dream to hold some workshops in Spanish. We anticipate 3-4 workshops in December utilizing our new apprentices.

With some bumps along the way, our overall feeling is that it is great to be back with the AVP family, practicing our skills and training new facilitators.

—*Jumpin' Jill McLellan*

Everything is pretty much back [for AVP at Auburn Prison]. We had our first workshop in June and it went great! Jill, is a true treasure and we are so blessed to have her as well as all of you. If severely lucky we may have another workshop in August. I almost forgot how much I missed being apart of these groups and learning something new about myself.

—*Kind King*



AVP Returns to Albion Prison



Two and a half years had passed since I had been to Albion as an outside facilitator for an AVP workshop. Back then we had a large group and several inside facilitators who did most of the leading. I was still fairly new with AVP and glad to support and participate and fill in as needed. Now we were bringing a larger outside team of five, as most of the usual folks were no longer at Albion, due to transfer or release, and we hadn't been able to replenish the ranks of inside facilitators. It felt like we were starting over.

We were limited in how many people could be in each of the two rooms and weren't comfortable that this limitation meant some women who had signed up couldn't attend. At the first Basic in June, masks were required and we adapted some things to keep physical distance. (No Texas Hug.) We were glad to return for another Basic in July, and then an Advanced workshop for the end of September.

It's good to be back!

—*Really Rosey Oaks-Lee*

AVP with New York Harm Reduction Educators in East Harlem

New York Harm Reduction Educators is an agency in East Harlem, New York that provides healthcare and counseling to people who use drugs or engage in sex work.

See onpointnyc.org

In March, 2022, Yucef Colley, an employee at NYHRE, together with Jose Velez and Bob Schwab, facilitated an AVP Basic workshop with eleven Educators as participants. In May, they held a second Basic with six participants. An Advanced and a Training for Facilitators workshop are anticipated.

The intention of those who founded AVP was to bring the program back to the community, particularly those in danger of being caught up in the injustice system. NYHRE workshops are doing just that.

—*Bemused Bob Schwab*



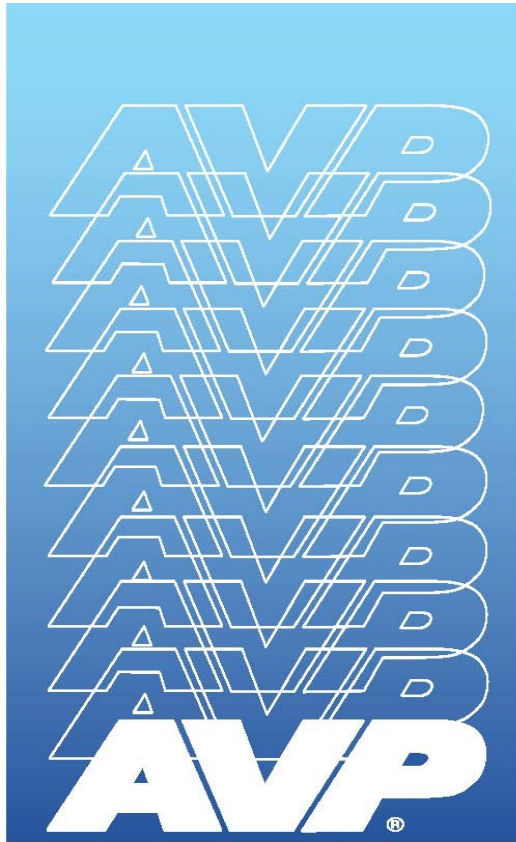
Please support this work !

Our budget for 2022 calls for **\$29,100** in direct public support. Our income to date from those sources is **\$15,248**.

We need your support!

To donate on-line go to www.avpny.org or send a check to: AVP NY, PO Box 6851, Ithaca, NY 14851-6851

Thank you very much!!!



AVP Basic Workshop
 Rochester, NY (location TBD)
 November 18 –20, 2022
Because the quality of our lives depends on the quality of our relationships.
 For more information: www.avpny.org
 and avprocny@gmail.com



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ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

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ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT / NEW YORK
 2022 Year-to-date Workshop Summary Report

<p>ALBION Prison (Women's) Workshop count: 4 Participant count: 30</p> <p>ATTICA Prison Workshop count: 2 Participant count: 28</p> <p>AUBURN Prison Workshop count: 6 Participant count: 50 Apprentices trained: 7</p> <p>CAYUGA Prison Workshop count: 2 Participant count: 15</p> <p>CLINTON MAIN Prison Workshop count: 2 Participant count: 24</p> <p>FISHKILL Prison Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 16 All-Facilitator wksp ct: 1 All-Facilitator part't ct: 8</p>	<p>GREEN HAVEN Prison Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 54 All-Facilitator wksp ct: 1 All-Facilitator part't ct: 15</p> <p>OTISVILLE Prison Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 36 All-Facilitator wksp ct: 1 All-Facilitator part't ct: 8</p> <p>SING SING Prison Workshop count: 5 Participant count: 60</p> <p>TACONIC Prison (Wmn's) Workshop count: 1 Participant count: 6</p> <p>WOODBOURNE Prison Workshop count: 3 Participant count: 51</p> <p>In-process of restarting: Bedford Hills Prison Elmira Prison FCI Ray Brook Groveland Prison Wende Prison</p>	<p>BRONX Area Council Workshop count: 2 Participant count: 17</p> <p>GENESEE VALLEY AC Workshop count: 1 Participant count: 7 Mini workshop count: 1 Mini wksp part't count: 3</p> <p>MID-HUDSON AC Workshop count: 2 Participant count: 11 Mini workshop count: 3 Mini wksp part't count: 26</p> <p>NIAGARA FRONTIER AC Workshop count: 2 Participant count: 15</p> <p>WESTCHESTER AC Online workshop count: 2 Online participant ct: 10 Facilitator Days: 2 Facilitator Day part'ts: 15 Apprentices trained: 5</p>	<p><u>AVP/NY PRISON WORKSHOPS:</u> Prisons served: 11 Workshop count: 36 Participant count: 394 Inside facilitators: 65 Outside facilitators: 27</p> <p><u>AVP/NY COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS:</u> Community wksp: 8 In-Person: 6 Online: 2 Participant count: 55 Apprentices trained: 5 Mini workshops: 4 Mini wksp part't ct: 29 Outside facilitators: 24</p>
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