

The

# TRANSFORMER

Supporting and Celebrating the Facilitators of AVP Workshops

## AVP Works

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This issue by facilitators in Jessup Correctional Institution, Maryland.

### The Process Works for JCI Facilitators

by Larry "Bodacious" Bratt

Playful Pat wrote, asking if the Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI) AVP facilitators would like to write an issue of *The Transformer* after publishing a piece I wrote for the Winter 2010 issue. I took the proposal to my colleagues at our monthly Facilitators' Retreat. At this workshop, any AVP business is discussed openly and decided by consensus. The proposal to accept Playful Pat's offer was endorsed.

It was decided that Emancipated Ebb, Dedicated Davis-Bey and I would organize and guide the facilitators to write articles relating to our monthly facilitators' workshops. Our artists created artwork for inclusion. Input was forthcoming from most facilitators.

From this dynamic, our cadre of facilitators grew stronger in community, and our honest approach to successful completion of the project was reinforced by a renewed respect and caring for one another within our brotherhood. More importantly, instinctively we knew this work could provide a touchstone for other AVP cadres to learn and benefit from how JCI facilitators practice the standard AVP philosophy of empowering people to lead nonviolent lives by affirming, showing respect to all and demonstrating the need for community building, mutual cooperation and trust.

By constantly training worthy candidates who exhibit leadership potential in Basic and Advanced Workshops, our facilitators' roots grow stronger and the program remains vibrant and as durable as a bolt on the Golden Gate Bridge. Enjoy this issue and recognize it is presented with the vision to help your facilitators' cadre become even more deeply rooted in the AVP community.

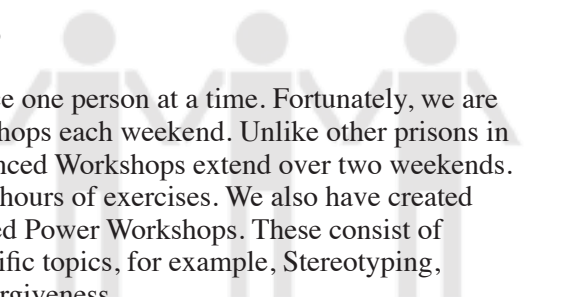
*Bio: Larry "Bodacious" Bratt--AVP participant and facilitator since 1995. Devotee of Sai Baba who taught me to "Love all; serve all."*

### Organizing Workshops

by "Dedicated Dwight" Davis-Bey

AVP at JCI is making a difference one person at a time. Fortunately, we are able to conduct multiple workshops each weekend. Unlike other prisons in Maryland, our Basic and Advanced Workshops extend over two weekends. This provides the participants with 24 hours of exercises. We also have created a one-day mini workshop format, called Power Workshops. These consist of five hours of intense exercises on specific topics, for example, Stereotyping, Communication, Relationships and Forgiveness.

Without the blessings of Warden John Wolfe, a progressive penologist, the exceptional work of the Volunteer Activities Coordinator (VAC), Sgt. Sonji Lynn, and our dedicated facilitators, inhouse and outside, our effectiveness in spreading the AVP philosophy of TP and community would not be productive. AVP at JCI is a



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## Taking It to the Next Level

By "Radiant Ronald" Ellis

What is more important than saving a human life? Essentially, AVP does just what it's designed to do, which is to introduce participants to non-violent ways of responding to various situations. Ultimately, *AVP helps to save lives* by providing people with tools to produce non violent, win-win outcomes to conflict.

At JCI, the AVP group has dared to *take AVP to the 'Next Level.'* They have identified and reached out to meet the needs of prisoners within their facility in an effort to have an immediate impact to help stem the violence here as well as in the community at-large.

Initially, the AVP group elected to redesign the standard one-session (2-hours) mini-workshop into a one-day, highly intensive workshop experience, which is called a "Power Workshop." The one-day Power Workshop provides participants with a high-impact learning experience, which allows them to become familiarized with information regarding specific topics, including Stereotyping, Forgiveness, Relationships, Anger, Communication and numerous other topics that directly relate to the participants' specific needs. Often, these suggestions come from workshop evaluations and conversations among participants and facilitators. Ultimately, AVP, along with work by other groups, has successfully helped to reduce the level of violence within the JCI facility.

In addition to creating the Power Workshop, the JCI AVP Group has elected to *Step-Up & Link Up* with the Extra Legalese Group, Inc. (ELG) in an effort to take AVP to the 'Next Level' by expanding the outreach of the AVP philosophy to directly impact and address the violence within the community in general.

ELG is the first Crime Prevention Policy Think Tank, which consists of six incarcerated American citizens with a combined total of 180 years of experience in the Maryland and federal criminal justice and penal systems. ELG's primary focus is the prevention of crime through its various initiatives such as the Peace Initiative, which helps to prevent victimization. Nothing can be more pressing than addressing the random acts of violence now plaguing all Maryland communities by numerous gangs and their thousands of members.

JCI's AVP Group will, within the *Peace Initiative*, teach, educate and reinforce positive character, positive choices, empowerment and negative consequences of groups engaged in violence. This effort will allow the AVP Group to work directly with high school students and at-risk youth. Way to go, JCI AVP!

*Bio: "Radiant Ron" Ellis — "When I took my Basic workshop in 1991, the Transforming Power concept was something different and powerful for me. Since then, AVP has been a constant force that empowers me with the "tools" to seek win/win solutions to challenges I encounter. As a seasoned facilitator, I am excited every time I have the opportunity to share AVP with others. Trust the process."*

## Alternatives to Violence Project Facilitator Contract

by JCI Facilitators

I agree that upon accepting the responsibility of an AVP facilitator, I will be a team player who is reliable, prepared, committed, respectful, supportive and loyal. In addition, I will be available for the workshops/exercises that I volunteer to facilitate.

I further agree that the qualities of dignity, integrity, honor and trustworthiness will always be demonstrated and that I will demonstrate good character in my actions throughout my associations with the AVP program because I understand my actions are a reflection of the quality of the program. I will demonstrate support and confidence in the abilities of my team by being open, objective and positive.

I agree to be open-minded and practice I- Messages communication skills in the groups. I will not be afraid or closed to constructive criticism.

I understand leadership qualities of initiative and creativity are necessary and acceptable skills to improve myself, the AVP program and those around me.

I agree to participate fully in all of the AVP processes, including but not limited to the protocol training as part of becoming a facilitator at JCI.

By placing my signature on this document, I completely agree to the above terms of accepting the responsibility as an AVP facilitator at JCI. I understand that if I don't meet and maintain these standards, thus failing in my duties, commitment and responsibility to uphold the principles and philosophy of the AVP program, I will be given an opportunity to get myself together; but if my negative behavior persists, I will remove myself from the program.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Continued from page 1*

## Organizing ...

collaborative effort; our success proves this.

During our monthly Facilitators' Retreat, instructional exercises sharpen our saws and hone our wits as each facilitator must demonstrate a TP rap, give an I-Message presentation, conduct and debrief a role play or present a new exercise. Every fourth month is for planning. We discuss ideas and suggestions offered by participants and facilitators taken from previous workshops' evaluations. We also craft the next cycle's schedule of workshops. This is where facilitators sign up for a particular workshop. I then make copies of the schedule and forward it to all facilitators.

For the past four years, I have been the AVP facilitator clerk. It is a challenging and exciting experience. Currently, our active facilitators number 23 inside and 4 outside facilitators. All do at least one full workshop and one mini each three-month cycle.

The Scriptures states, "A good name is better than silver and gold." My job responsibility is to maintain the integrity and character of AVP with the administration. I interact with the VAC for scheduling AVP weekends. In addition, I perform the following:

1. Coordinate participants with the workshops they signed up to attend.
2. Forward memos to participants and facilitators, telling them when to attend workshops.
3. Develop a list with the VAC that consists of five participants from each of the five housing units to participate in workshops in order to strengthen community building throughout the prison. This accounts for further inclusiveness of the population.
4. Copy all handouts for each workshop and make sure all necessary supplies are available.
5. Create a database for all who complete a workshop and place them in future workshops.
6. Create certificates for all graduates.

The success of AVP at JCI can be attributed to the Facilitator's Contract (see sidebar). During one monthly retreat, through brainstorming and consensus, we created this contract, which all facilitators sign. This insures that everyone will be held accountable for their behavior and actions during workshops and within the community. The purpose is to let everyone know what is expected of him or her. It is due to this that JCI AVP is making a difference, one person at a time.

## Recruitment Rap

by "Analyzing Antwon" Limberry

A young man with a fresh life sentence and no prior penal experience looks from afar. It is a look of bewilderment as a seemingly seasoned old con quietly separates from the general population each weekend. Where is he going, and what's all that stuff in the bag? It looks like posters, balls and cool fun stuff. He tells himself to shake it off--it's prison. The old con probably is doing some scam or other racket.

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Listen, learn, feel, transform and experience it. The AVP experience--"trust the process."

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The young man thinks: that old con never gets in trouble, though; he's quiet, yet confident. He's never confrontational, never loud. The young man doesn't want to ask him anything as he recalls the unwritten prison rule: "Mind your own business."

Flash forward several years later...

There's the same bag, same routine, different building, different con; yet he exhibits the same demeanor. The young man wonders, "What in the heck is that stuff?" Yet, he still doesn't ask as he recalls, "This is prison; mind your own business."

A good friend walks up to this young man. "Why you keep staring at the man with the bag?" The young man stays silent. "That's your problem," says his friend. "Ask and you will learn." The young man asks, "What's the stuff in the bag used for?"

"That's stuff for AVP. You have to go to a workshop to

experience it; I can't tell you about it."

The young man thinks for a second and says, "Where do I sign up?"

The rest is history. Wonderful Wood does a gathering. Tenacious Thomas injects energy with a light & lively. Divine David enralls with a TP rap. The young man is lovin' it. It ends all too soon. He wants more. "Sign me up!" he hollers.

Round two, Spiritual Sino engages the participants in role plays. The young man is hooked. He hollers, "I can to this!" in a gathering. "I want to become a facilitator; I will become a facilitator!"

The young man experiences the Training for Facilitators and graduates with honors. He has learned from his experience. Now he places posters throughout the prison, championing the AVP experience. Listen, learn, feel, transform and experience it. The AVP experience--trust the process."

To his first workshop, the young man tells of his experience with AVP: "I've been trained; now I will help train others. Trust the process and experience AVP--"it works."



## The Training of an AVP Facilitator at JCI

by "Sincere Shakkir" Talib Mujahid

I was ecstatic when selected for a Training for Facilitators Workshop. I wanted to be part of this philosophy that builds relationships and community. I looked forward to the upcoming workshop.

Our trainers were excellent. We got to see and experience the work ethic and style of various senior facilitators. I learned that understanding the fundamental principles of AVP was most important and each group created its own energy. Facilitators must never stray away from the fundamental principles of a workshop. We can be creative in our approach, but we must be open, flexible and able to adjust, based on the needs and flow of the participants.

One of the most important lessons I learned was the group does not belong to you. It is *their* workshop. My responsibility is to manage and bring life to it and to listen to and build upon each group's needs.

I work in the school as the Literacy Lab Supervising and Lead Tutor. Through Transforming Power guidelines, I have incorporated a strategy of "Win-Win" to help overcome the ego and pride-driven conflicts that occur in this environment. The lessons taught me by AVP facilitators have helped me, on a daily basis, to verbalize and mentally maneuver students and tutors into accepting TP principles.

However, another exciting aspect of JCI's AVP experience is our Facilitators' Retreat. In these retreats, specific skills are focused upon, such as doing the Opening and Transforming Power Raps, I-Messages and other exercises. Though these retreats sometimes can be ego driven and filled with unnecessary verbal rhetoric and one-upmanship, our excellent trainers for the retreat have the ability to put out all fires tactfully and refocus the facilitators on the current topic.

When a few men create a new Power Workshop agenda, we are given the opportunity to facilitate that agenda in a session that is only for facilitators. There is honest and respectful critique of our skills. Sometimes egos are bruised, but I have discovered these men have honor and integrity. They let their bruises motivate them towards excellence. They see and understand the bigger picture and look beyond themselves for the betterment of our participants and the AVP mission. It has been a genuine pleasure and honor to work with these men and our outside facilitators and participants. As we say in AVP, "We grow as we go." I look forward to the future, with smiling eyes.



AVP CHANGES  
HOW WE LOOK  
AT THINGS!!  
SOME SEE A ROSE AND ARE  
SAD BECAUSE IT HAS THORNS.  
OTHERS SEE THORNS AND ARE  
OVERJOYED BECAUSE IT HAS A ROSE..

## The Innovative Empowerment of Teamwork

by Jeffrey "Emancipated" Ebb

As a seasoned facilitator since 1994 at JCI--an extremely violent environment--I have witnessed transformation in the level of violence. The committed AVP facilitators are playing a significant role in reducing the incidence of violence at JCI.

One of the proactive things we do is train on a regular basis, which strengthens the bonds of community among the facilitators. At one of our regular facilitators' retreats, I took the initiative to garner the support of my fellow seasoned facilitators, and we reached consensus on the need to develop and implement a training curriculum for the improvement and progress of our AVP family. I made it a priority to speak with each facilitator about what this training should entail. Once I had everyone's contributions, it was my responsibility to implement the process. Justice Jahan and I constituted the team that initially facilitated these training sessions.

Each training session is on a specific topic; we remain on course until everyone has the opportunity to practice the exercise. The sessions provide excellent team building and enhance facilitation skills. The curriculum consists of Opening Raps, Transforming Power, Enthusiasm, P.E.P. (Present/Experience/Process), The Art of Processing, Role Plays, I-Messages, etc. Through consensus, we determined these were the key areas needing our focus. Currently, we are working on TP. Each facilitator has the opportunity to prepare and present a TP rap in a fishbowl setting.

The contributions (i.e., determination, commitment, availability to ensure the trainees' success) made by Justice



Continued on page 6

# HIPPY

by "Awesome Abdul" Mateen

A great thing about being a JCI facilitator is the support given for well thought out programs any facilitator can present at our monthly workshop and then get approval to pilot the program. Four facilitators: Warren "Wise Serpent" Hynson, Bobby "Legendary Bear- Wolf" Coleman, Jeffrey "Legal Eagle" Ebb and I, Robert "Electrifying Wolverine" Pittman, crafted a HIPPY (Help Increase the Peace Project for Youth) workshop, specifically for participants 30 years of age and under.

At these workshops, we conduct exercises that help participants see the world and their place within it. We speak about the consequences of long-term thinking versus short-term thinking.

This is the time when personal anecdotes surface about the ill affects that short-term thinking had on their lives. Without a doubt, all of the participants recognize that short-term thinking is nothing but problematic and has caused decades of lost years due to faulty choices.

The start of any workshop begins with the history of AVP and the HIPPY concept. On March 30, 2008, at a JCI AVP facilitators' workshop, I suggested AVP needed a youth program where men 30 years old and under would attend. The facilitators created a viable workshop, utilizing exercises from various AVP manuals, that illustrates the message these young men are seeking. The idea of such a program resonated within the facilitators group, who worked to ensure the success of this project. Together we fashioned an agenda that focused on the advantages of long-term thinking and found exercises to strengthen this objective.

At the start of the workshop we chant, "You down with AVP, yeah, you know me," to the rhythm of the singing group Naughty By Nature's hit song, "O.P.P." Starting this way gets the group energized. The standard AVP format continues with the Agenda Review, Ground Rules and



then the HIPPY *Adjective Name Game*. The participants choose an adjective that best describes them and their connection with an animal that relates to their perceived personality, such as mine, Electrifying Wolverine.

We incorporate exercises such as *Three Questions Interview*, *Life Auction* and *Choices and Consequences*. These help to support day one's theme of Affirmation and Self-Esteem. On day two, Communication/Community Building is the theme. The participants enjoy the Transforming Power mandala, *Lost at Sea*, *Who Am I Becoming* and *Clique Clash*, taken from the AVP HIPP Manual. Before the end of this session, the participants are introduced to "Soul Plays," which are role plays where we incorporate everything they learned from the workshop and see how they creatively apply it to a mock situation.

Day three focuses on Conflict Resolution. The gathering supports this with the incomplete statement, "What I learned in this workshop that will enable me to make a difference is..." The participants then prep for the "Soul Plays" and put them on. After these plays are finished and processed as all our exercises are, we conduct a group rap titled "Your future is in your hands." This is followed by the graduation and closing, using the HIPPY chant.

It is a wonderful workshop. Hopefully the HIPPY program can be given in other facilities as young men need to be able to identify with their peers in order to better survive within the prison environment. "You down with AVP, yeah, you know me!"

*Bio: Robert "Awesome Abdul-Mateen" Pittman--Co-creator of "HIPPY--Help Increase the Peace Project for Youth" and "Hip-Hop" a one-day workshop and follow-up to HIPPY. "I believe the children are our future; it's time to pass on peace instead of violence."*

*Continued from page 1*

## Innovative Empowerment ...

Jahan were constructive. The current team responsible for the training of facilitators (Awesome Abdul Mateen, Bodacious Bratt and Emancipated Ebb) is handling their business professionally. Mateen, a youth facilitator who created the "H.I.P.P.Y. Program" (Help Increase the Peace Project for Youth) workshops, is an inspirational and creative young man. (See "HIPPY" article.)

One of the things the team learned during the unique training we provided for the new Latino facilitators (Easy E and Blessed Bruman) is to encourage creativity. Now, their presentations incorporate the use of visual aids to create a workshop of active participation through Q&A during raps.

As you can see we have a diverse group of facilitators; yet we have bridged the gap of differences (ethnicity, language barriers and cultural bias) to build a stronger community. The process works exceptionally well. The key to its success has been persistent flexibility.

*Bio: Jeffrey "Emancipated" Ebb — Active in AVP since 1994. Instrumental in creating "HIPPY" (Youth Workshop) and "Apprenticeship In-Service Training" for facilitators; mentor, certified mediator, Assistant Editor for the Outback Observer Newsletter. Still trusting the process--after all these years!*





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## A Latino's Vision Comes to Pass

By Severino "Spiritual Sino" Alcantara

At 20 years of age I came to prison, angry and scared, but I couldn't express myself other than through violence and destruction. One day in the weight room, I was destroying a metal paper towel dispenser box. I wanted to make a shank and didn't care about the other men watching my actions. Thankfully, an old dude confronted me in a calm voice and asked, "Shorty, what you scared of?" I didn't know how to answer.

Later, this man spoke to me about AVP and how it helped him overcome his violent nature and fear. He convinced me to sign up for a Basic Workshop. At the conclusion of the workshop, I was overcome with emotions based on the community I found myself immersed in. I decided I wanted to become a facilitator and, thus, continued with AVP. Now, 15 years later, I facilitate workshops with my English-speaking counterparts. Yet, my dream has always been to conduct a workshop for Hispanic brothers. I shared this vision with the other facilitators who, to their credit, have always supported this vision.

Unfortunately, we were unable to do a workshop with all Spanish-speaking participants because I was the only bilingual facilitator. We did include Hispanic brothers in numerous workshops but discovered the strong language barrier did not allow them to receive the full experience of the workshop. In time, we recruited two fluent English/Spanish facilitators who are training to become the keystone of an Hispanic team of facilitators. It's an exciting milestone for me because I see my vision materializing. More importantly, the JCI facilitation corps will be

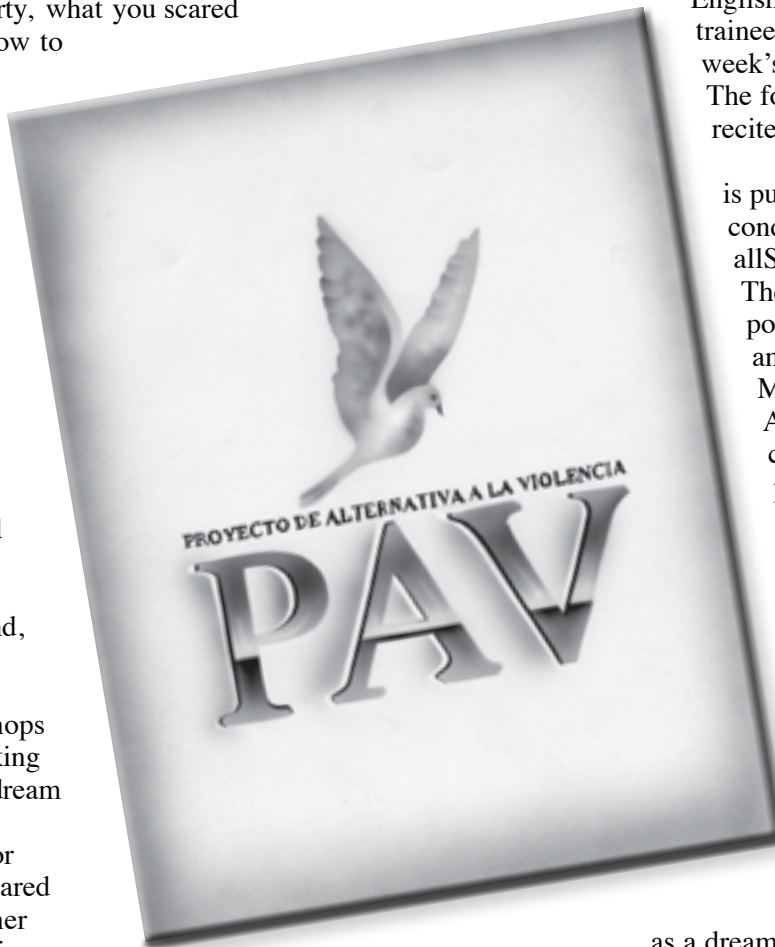
broadening the AVP community and sow more facilitators that are Spanish speakers.

Presently, the training of these two facilitators is drawing from limited Spanish AVP materials. Yet, there are still more materials that need translation by us. Currently, we are going through this apprenticeship training in English, but I assign the trainees the task to translate the week's lesson into Spanish. The following week, they recite the lesson in Spanish.

By the time this article is published, we will have conducted at least one allSpanish workshop. The prison's Hispanic population is growing at an alarmingly high rate. My hope is, with my AVP experience, that I can help affect as many people in English and Spanish in order to broaden the JCI AVP family.

My release is close at hand. It gives me great pleasure to know that when I am gone from JCI there will be a bilingual AVP facilitators' group carrying on this legacy.

A legacy begun as a dream 14 years ago when a courageous older dude asked me, "Shorty, what you scared of?" I am truly grateful to this man, whose name ironically was Grateful Greg!



*Bio: Severino "Spiritual Sino" Alcantara--First Hispanic facilitator in MHC-X/JCI since 1997. Trailblazer of the first Hispanic workshop in JCI, who dreams of introducing AVP and this unique workshop to my home in the Dominican Republic upon my release.*



## A Poem

by Warren "Renaissance Ren" Hynson

My soul's windows were once closed, enveloped in darkness. I was looking for an alternative to violence--a better choice than force--instead of reacting violently. AVP gave me tools to trust my inner voice, to solve possible conflicts quietly. In turbulent situations, I mentally go over Transforming Power guides to pilot me. Inside of me were answers to questions I thought were only outside in society. Now, I'm at peace. Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." I agree... So, I sharpened my tools and started digging; eventually, I was reborn as 'Renaissance Ren.' No more dying. Everyday is trying... I'm trying to be better than yesterday. No more lying in my cell, lying to myself. I'm eyeing a better future; I'm surviving. No longer lost on an island, I'm alive. I trust the process that started in Greenhaven Prison in 1975. Eyes opened to realize the light within them shine--in time--a facilitator gave me the tools to pry mine open. I started growing from within me; translucent lights started glowing. I found myself following a gold brick road. There really is no place like home. Now, behold--what I hold close, I bequeath thee. I give these keys to those still with souls whose windows are closed, with the hope to learn and in turn instill what they've been taught to others so we can all do our part to uplift humanity that fell apart.

*Bio: Warren "Renaissance Ren" Hynson--A creative, spiritual being having a human experience.... Airbrush artist and a poet. "AVP is instrumental in opening my eyes to the power we all have within that can bring good energy to the world. We grow as we go!"*

## Dance Parade L&L

(Variation of the Animal Parade)  
Advanced Book by Warren  
"Renaissance Ren" Hynson

Everyone sits in a circle on chairs except for one person (the leader) who is standing outside of the circle.

With music playing, the leader begins by creating a dance (any kind of dance) and then begins to dance around the outside of the circle.

As the leader dances around the circle, he randomly taps the shoulders of a few people. The people he taps then have to get up and follow the leader by joining the parade and doing the same dance.

Whenever the leader decides, he yells, "Go!" Then, everyone must find an empty seat.

Whoever is left standing is the new leader and must come up with a new dance and repeat the process. It can be quite hilarious; everyone has fun!

## An Honor to be an AVP Facilitator

by "Excellent Ed" Sabin

I'm honored to contribute to this issue of *The Transformer*. I've been an outside facilitator at JCI since the mid-90s when JCI was a new prison with few volunteer programs. Since then, AVP at JCI has had its ups and downs. For some years, there was no program to speak of. At other times, lockdowns or other factors like personnel transfers interfered. But thanks to the determination of inside facilitators, the program never died completely. For the past several years, the program has been in an "up" phase.

AVP makes an important contribution by providing group process training for those who go through the workshops and become apprentices and then facilitators. AVP workshops at JCI generally have waiting lists of men ready to take any and all workshops. Individuals benefit from the program even if they don't become facilitators because the program, along with other self-help programs, contributes to a more peaceful environment for the prison as a whole. For that reason, the program has the support of the prison administration.

Personally, AVP helps keep me alive and kicking. As an older white retired man, it would be easy to curl up in a ball and give up on this screwed-up world, which is going to hell in a handcart. Charles Dickens' said in the opening of *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." AVP helps me stay optimistic and believe in the power of human beings to endure, overcome and create a better person and a better community.

*Bio: "Excellent Ed" Sabin--retired teacher, sociologist, newsletter editor and state employee. I learned of AVP when I first came into JCI for Catholic Services as an outside volunteer.*

## AVP Learning at JCI--a Life-Giving Tree

by "Powerful Phyllis" Turner Lawrence

As an AVP outside volunteer facilitator, I would not have had much opportunity to practice exercises with my inside co-facilitators, post-training for trainers, if "the guys" at JCI had not been willing to dedicate time each month to our facilitator training sessions.

Everyone at JCI is great about giving constructive criticism and empowering feedback during and following workshops, but it is with the monthly practice sessions that we are able to receive detailed feedback and delve into needed improvement.

For example, we spent four hours one Sunday focusing on our TP rap. Facilitators split up into two rooms, and we each took turns presenting and then debriefing each other's efforts. This was a great chance for new facilitators to gain confidence and for vets to try out new ways of describing TP-- knowing that, basically, you couldn't go wrong because others would point out what worked or was missing and

would offer suggestions.

We are able to do more adventurous things with our agendas. Fortunately, we have a place to practice. In fact, for some sessions, that's the process and the goal. At an earlier planning session, we lay out a schedule for these ongoing trainings and encourage those who sign up to present a chunk of a Basic or Advanced Workshop to try out less-used exercises. Great way to get out of a rut!

It is thrilling to see the guys come up with new one-day, topic-specific Advanced agendas. The two newest are *Multicultural Disparity* and *Fear*. They have the time to develop these and, before offering such workshops, are required to present them to facilitation team members acting as participants as a rehearsal and feedback opportunity. This way, outside volunteers attending the "practice" workshop can jump in confidently to become part of the facilitation team for the "real" workshop.

Lastly, I happen to be a survivor of

a violent crime; and while I don't set out to find a place within a workshop to talk about it, pieces of my journey occasionally fit into the context of various exercises and processing. I never had asked the guys about it before, but our monthly trainings gave me that opportunity, allowing me to hear a variety of folks' perspectives on the best timing and means of sharing my experience.

What a wonderful, safe place we have created at JCI for us all!

**Bio:** "Powerful Phyllis" Turner Lawrence is a dedicated 5-year AVP-er. She lives in Alexandria, VA but commutes to Maryland to participate in the beloved community of JCI-AVP. A "recovered" attorney, Phyllis now provides services as a sentencing advocate and is a professional editor and substitute teacher. Her AVP family is a constant source of love, comradeship and care.

## Transformer Survey

The Communications Committee of AVP-USA is interested in your experience with the quarterly newsletter, The Transformer. Please help us deliver a better product by answering a few questions. You can fill this out on line, go to [www.AVPUSA.org](http://www.AVPUSA.org)

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Name of my local group \_\_\_\_\_ My Country of residence \_\_\_\_\_

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 Continued on page 11

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