



The

TRANSFORMER

Supporting and Celebrating the Facilitators of AVP Workshops

AVP Works

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This Edition complied by?????

A look at the 2012 AVP/USA conference

During the past several days, Ed Sabin and I have been trying to figure out what you might want to hear about the national conference. We have cut and tweaked and talked about what to include in such an article. Starting out with the minutes of the meeting, vague descriptions of the general program and a four-page travelogue, we hope we have whittled this down to something you might be interested in.



Powerful things happen at a national event like this, including the impromptu facing of the issues of white privilege and racism in real time. See “Maryland Experience” on page 5 and an introduction of a film we can be proud to use widely to promote AVP work. See “Film: When you hear the word violence...” page 6.

The Saturday morning session about trauma-informed care was presented by Joan Gillece, with a well-crafted introduction to the topic by John Shuford. Many inmates have been traumatized and are re-traumatized while in prison. Gillece and Shuford maintain that AVP helps to heal unresolved trauma and have “sold” this to Department of Corrections staff. The fact that AVP is already functioning from a sensitive, trauma-informed place became clear.

Personal things happen when putting a face with an adjective name. Silly Sheila could not have been perceived as silly when she brought forth her concerns about racism in AVP and yet wrote the sweet article, “A First for Me,” page 6 When participants attended the pre-conference workshops

around Shame, Trauma and Diversifying Community Workshops, their own lives were changed. Just seeing an old friend and catching up is a delightful part of any conference of long-time volunteers.

The **organizational** things that happened were nothing short of amazing.

The national conferences are hosted by local groups, which are encouraged to consider the opportunity to hold it in their state. Over a year prior to the conference, Maryland’s Nancy and Dave Hutchins began yeoman’s work on the myriad details involved in selecting and working with the meeting site, assigning sleeping rooms, creating and copying materials for registration packets, staffing the registration table and coordinating airport shuttles. Before the conference, you also could find them working with returning citizen Professional Patrick on registration, website and pre-conference information for *The Transformer*.

The exchange of information during workshops was astounding. Phyllis Lawrence created the educational aspect of the conference by making the decisions on program, including finding speakers and teams to facilitate workshops and function as keynote speakers. Once people were found, Phyllis created a multi-page list of speakers and their workshop descriptions for the registration packet. A wide range of topics covered AVP workshop facilitation, local group organization and AVP USA organization. For more information about the range of topics covered, visit the <http://www.avpusaconference.org/> program website.

The TRANSFORMER

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conference ...

This is the annual meeting of AVP where, beyond the traditional nominations, committee reports (find these on the AVPUSA.org website) and financial report approving, a visioning evening happened. See AVP Dreamin,' page 3.

Playful Pat, Editorial Coordinator



Three questions to ask throughout the year

Committee of Committees (as close as AVPUSA gets to a Board) made a commitment that during the next year to always ask three questions when actions are being considered:

1. How are we involving prisoners in AVP?
2. How does it increase diversity of AVP?
Including involvement of former prisoners.
Where might it reflect/entrench white privilege?
3. How does it grow local AVP organizations?

* The Committee of Committees is the "board of trustees" and shall be composed of the clerks of all the committees and the officers of the corporation... The Committee of Committees has the responsibility to share information and to coordinate the committees in regards to the budget and other matters. Decision making remains at the committee level. But, in the event of disagreement among committees, the Committee of Committees shall facilitate a resolution.

** Committees of the Committees include: Committee of Local and Regional Groups, Education Committee, Finance and Fundraising Committee, Communications Committee, Conference Committee, PR Committee, Youth Committee, Re-Entry Committee.

AVP Dreamin'



Saturday night at the conference (ice cream sundaes included!) everyone shared ideas on how to meet the previously surveyed needs by moving from table to table, offering ideas focusing on the following topics. The Committee of Committees* reviewed the Dreamin' selected priorities at their post-conference meeting:

BOLD, Underline means it is already a Committee on the CofC*

PR Committee: Cheryl Sutton, Chair

Table priorities:

- Use social media (Face book, Twitter) – Recommend having a volunteer to post, but still need someone active in AVP to send information for posting:
- Update web site: Rick is working on this with PR
- Presentation of “evidence-based data” to persuade viewer of effectiveness
- Facilitator recognition program, PR template.
- Needs of the committee: work on wiki, data base

Cheryl's work this year has been extensive, focused and reflects her commitment to AVP and her capabilities. See “When you hear the word violence...” film page 6.

CLARG:. Many thanks to Marge Schlitt for five years of producing a thorough Annual Report for AVPUSA. Valentine Doyle, new chair is welcomed eagerly as she comes with high praise for her previous work with AVP.

Fundraising Committee (now a sub committee of Finance):

Priorities:

- Establish a planned giving program, for AVP/USA
- Walk of Peace as national/local shared fundraising event to raise awareness (maybe combine with Peace Day).


Convener: Jessica McCoy,

Education Committee: Katherine Smith, Chair.

Current focus is on manual writing right now. However Katherine did warm to the possibility of webinars to introduce new *T4F Manual*. Education committee of AVP International will address needs for translation, wiki, etc.

International Committee: Nancy Shippen and John Shuford co-chairs

- Collect models and be a clearing house for information about international travel as facilitator with AVP.
- Develop a suggested protocol for a discernment process for those who hope to travel and facilitate in other areas)

 Continued on page 4

 Continued from page 3

Dreamin' ...

Youth: The committee said its priorities are:

- Listen to youth and train them to be facilitators
- ID powerful kids (connect through existing youth organizations)
- Answer the crisis (e.g. bullying buddying)
- Conveners— Now or Never Nurideen and Tim Eakins.



Re-Entry: Table priorities:

- Community conversation, connected via on line, TV, mass media
- Offer AVP to families, probation, parole and returning populations
- Landing strip in every community
- Conveners: Erin Whitman and Dawn Hoffman

Prison: Table priorities:

- How to include inside facilitators in AVP conferences, committees (e.g. review of manuals)
- Re-entry mediation
- Younger facilitators
- More information to DOC, including research
- Bring AVPUSA National Gathering to the insiders
- Officers participating in AVP; inside support groups

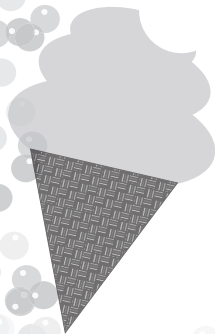
Conveners – Sharon Brown, Eugene Holman, Martin Ford

Diversity: Table priorities:

- Collect success stories from AVP programs worldwide who have created diverse international teams and workshops *Transformer* publish and look for stories
- Develop an advanced workshop (agenda, materials exercises) focused on the issues of white privilege, prejudice and the array of oppressions and diversity.

Conveners: Just Jaki, Silly Sheila

To find conveners of above groups, subscribe to the AVP-L and ask about the group's progress.



Maryland Experience: AVP Racism? White Privilege?

By Now Noelle

There were many, many “high points” at the conference... “aha” things, moving things, healing things, humorous things... (The talent show, for example, was EPIC magnificence!!!)

What sticks with me months later, however, was the one impromptu thing that happened at the very end. A segment of the conference attendees, a group of “people of color,” asked for the community’s attention and led some exercises as a starting point for helping to uncover community “blind spots” around race interaction.

The mother of all pertinent questions... The question that *might* convince those of us with blind spots that we *may* have them is: Why, when the ratio of people doing AVP in this country is **hugely** weighted toward people of color, are the conferences, retreats, governing bodies, etc., hugely weighted toward people **without** color?

In a very gentle way--which was particularly meaningful to me because I had stumbled into one of the planning meetings and perceived that frustration levels were high--the entire conference community was invited to explore that question and participate in some experiential activities to bring greater awareness.

I don’t know that we got very far, but I sure did value the effort. I valued the grace of the facilitators-- their willingness to take a risk by holding up a mirror and the patience with which they did it. I valued the openness of the community to go for it. I valued myself for asking a lot of questions and going home and asking even more... and I want more! I’m still feeling pretty blind and hindered by a level of race-related guilt and

insecurity. Ask yourself honestly, whatever your color: Do I struggle with

some brand of interracial challenges, too?

Some more questions:

When finding a seat for a meal at an event (like the conference), does color come to mind?

Are you consistently “you” when relating to people of different cultures? Generally, none of the people on the committees to improve cultural competence is white. What do you make of that? What do you feel about signing up? Why?

When you think about or make an attempt to tell your truth to the “other” culture, what do you perceive are the challenges?

How do you perceive you are perceived by the “other” culture?

Please help me come up with more!

I suggest (until Utopia kicks in-- perhaps by next week) we incorporate exercises to face and heal our race challenges at AVP events. These could be anonymous exercises where we write about what’s most difficult (e.g., index cards with volunteers to read them, react and then get input from the rest of the group), speak outs, small groups on tough questions and anything else we can come up with. This area (as well as issues between males and females) is too important to be ignored yet will be without a conscious decision to do otherwise.

Here were two answers to the question: “Why so few people of color...?”

Some of the answers we came up with were purely practical:

For example, location--if a majority of returning citizens (many of whom may have parole obligations) are in and around cities

and/or have financial constraints, shouldn’t conferences be located within reach?

And some answers were more subtle: (This is my take-- disregard what doesn’t work for you!) I’m a swell, well-meaning sort; and I’m very proud of myself for the good I do. I’m also learning a lot from AVP and my own life experiences, so when I hear YOU struggling, I chime in and offer advice. I mean well and feel I can help you with your problems because my advice makes all kinds of sense (in my own cultural context).

To a person in a very different culture, my advice may be dead wrong and, furthermore, may come off as ignorant, patronizing and arrogant. (Come to think of it, my own kid finds my advice ignorant, patronizing and arrogant!)

Now Noelle, an AVP facilitator for 20 years, founded “Heart Circle Consulting” to share AVP-based processes with the mental health & other systems.

A First for Me

I came across an email about the National Gathering just two weeks before the registration due date. I contacted national AVP who told me to contact regional AVP, which I did. I am not computer savvy, so I couldn't submit my information to be registered and official. Time was moving fast, and I was at the due date and still unable to register by computer. (I type six words per minute...) My regional AVP representative solved the problem easily by registering me over the phone so I was able to attend my first AVP conference ever. I have been doing AVP at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women for over eight years. Maryland hosted the conference; we had a good time from beginning to end. I encourage you to go to an AVP conference if you can. The people, the workshops, the bonding and the fun make it all worthwhile. Expect the Best!

Silly Sheila, Maryland AVP

Film : "When you hear the word violence" available free

Every national conference attendee received a DVD in their packet and you can receive one too. This vibrant, well-filmed and well-edited 12 minute film on AVP done in a prison during a real workshop captures the work we have such difficulty describing. The Committee of Committees and the P.R. Committee are making it available. Filmmaker Blaze Nowara gave us this gift.

You can request a copy from the AVPUSA Distribution Center (see page 2) or you can go on line and view it or download it immediately at <http://vimeo.com/37108812#> Share it widely with wardens, Rotary Clubs, churches, family and whomever. Let us know how you have used it.

Trends in AVP Workshops and Participants

Each year the AVP Committee on Local and Regional Groups (CLARG) collects information on workshops conducted by local groups and publishes the results in an annual report accessible on the AVP website. The information is based on reports received from 28 US states/territories in 2011, down from 32 or 33 states/territories in previous years. The following trends can be seen in this year's report:

The number of AVP prison workshops has remained remarkably stable over the last 5 years at about 850 workshops per year.

The number of participants in these workshops has increased slightly to about 12,500 people, which includes some double counting if people participate in more than one workshop during a given year. An encouraging trend is that the number of participants in T for F prison workshops has grown to 1,092 people--an increase of one third over 5 years.

In contrast, the number of community AVP workshops reported by CLARG has declined by about one third from 2008 to just 85 workshops in 2011. The number of participants declined more sharply by more than one third (47%) to 872 in 2011. An increase in the number of participants in youth workshops helps make up for some of the decrease in community workshop participants in that youth participants have grown by three quarters to 365 people over the last 3 years.

The most marked and encouraging trend in this year's CLARG report is the two-thirds increase in the number of inside facilitators reported in 2011, to 1364 facilitators. The number of outside facilitators also has grown over this time period but at a slower rate (12% increase) to 595.



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L&Ls from workshop session

These two exercises were added to the list of L&Ls afterwards, but we didn't act them out during the session:

Count to 20

Participants in the circle try, one at a time, to count to 20 without speaking at the same time as another person. If two or more people do speak together, the group has to resume counting from the very beginning. This often takes many tries, but the group often can figure it out if they pay attention and cooperate instead of compete. This is a good one to use when all group members aren't in the circle yet and you want to build community with those who are.

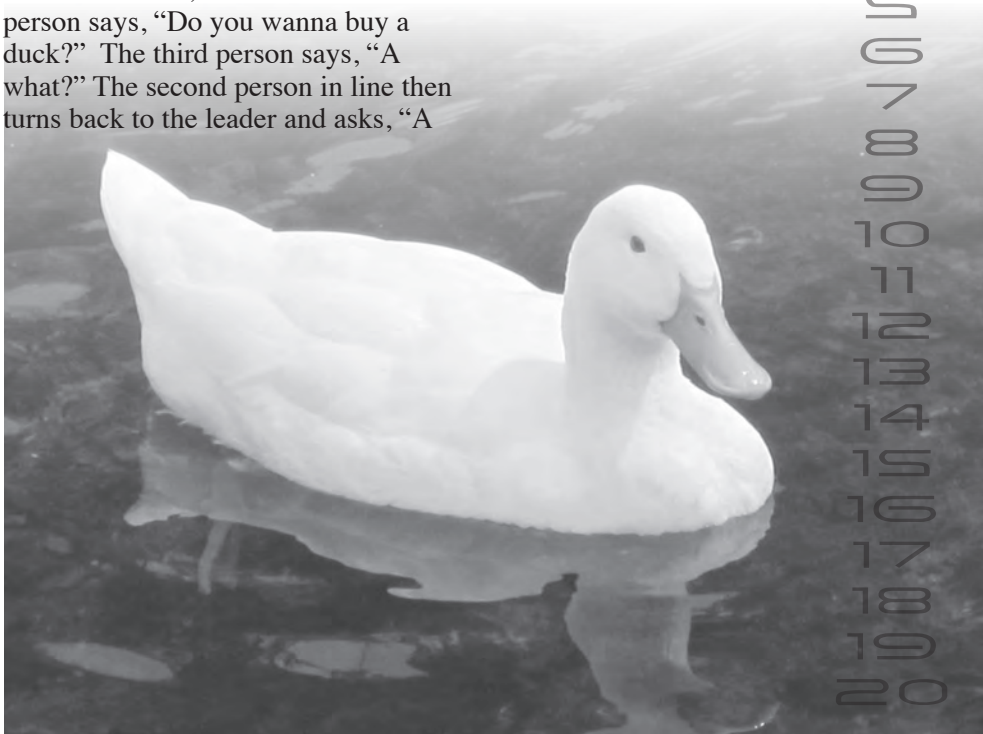
Wanna Buy a Duck?

Participants sit in a circle. (Demonstrate with two facilitators to begin with.) The leader starts by turning to the person on his/her right and saying, "Do you wanna buy a duck?" That person says, "A what?" The leader says, "A duck." The second person asks, "Does it quack?" The leader answers, "Of course!" The second person says, "Then I wanna buy a duck!" The leader says out loud, "Then he wants to buy a duck!" Then the second person starts the conversation over with the person on his/her right. There is a catch, however! The second person says, "Do you wanna buy a duck?" The third person says, "A what?" The second person in line then turns back to the leader and asks, "A

what?" The leader responds by saying, "A duck." The second person then says, "A duck" to the third person. The third person then says, "Does it quack?" The second person turns and repeats the same question to the leader. The leader answers and the second person passes the answer on; the game continues in the same way until the entire group is involved in the conversation. Speed it up once participants get the hang of it.

On another note, the most profound memory I have of the conference was the willingness of AVP'ers of color to confront the exclusion they felt and the rest of the group's willingness to hear and respond to their pain. We reported this to our inside facilitator team, and they were very interested to hear about it. Perhaps you can ask one of the people deeply involved in those discussions--like Silly Sheila from the Baltimore area--to write a piece about her/his experience.

Elevating Eleanor Novak



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Question Corner (these are excerpts from the AVP online discussion group)

I'd like to ask my fellow AVP'ers for suggestions on lightening the mood after heavy exercises like Injunctions from Childhood in the Second Level Manual. I've noticed that sometimes participants are left feeling raw, and a regular Light and Lively doesn't seem to acknowledge their mood.

Thanks in advance,
Elevating Eleanor
AVP-NJ

Answers:

After a heavy exercise, I have found that a guided meditation will bring the group back into a peaceful state. Use positive images that will touch on the vulnerable places that have been exposed. Last year we did a workshop on Father's Day, which the men say is the hardest day of the year for them. The gathering was, "A positive image of father I have is..." It was a large group, and the stories were mostly sad and in some cases tragic. There were many tears, and there was some choking up.

When it came back to me, it occurred to me to tell a story of one of the men who had been released from the facility who had lost complete contact with his son while inside. A few months after he went home, his son found him on Facebook; and they rebuilt their relationship. The story seemed to pull together into a positive place the feelings and hurt that were present in the room.

Contagious CC

Sometimes "silly" physical exercises such as Bumper Cars or Whatcha' Doing? do the trick.

Adventurous Ana

After the gathering: "A time I experienced violence..." in a community workshop, a formerly incarcerated facilitator asked everyone to put our hands on our thighs, close our eyes and breathe in and out three times, then open our eyes when we were ready.

Playful Pat

Participants can do a movement exercise. When I took a Help Restore Our Communities workshop at the National Gathering, we were led in some movements like Rag Doll or Washing Machine. It's like saying, "I'm shifting my energy and dispersing the low that may otherwise capture me."

Affectionate Anne

I think the first thing is to affirm people. How about a gathering: "I want to thank everyone for sharing themselves with me, and a wish I want to give you all is"

If you have tables, a super L&L to follow is "Rabbit Warning." You sit around a table. Each person puts his right hand over the left hand of the person to his right, so that all hands are lying flat on the table. You explain that when rabbits give a warning, they thump. So you do a practice round of thumping, which is harder than you think because your left hand and right hand are not next to each other. After doing a couple practice rounds, explain that if someone thumps twice, then the order is reversed (like zip, zap, boing). When you play the game for real, if someone thumps at the wrong time, then his hand goes to his lap. You do NOT regroup by putting hands over the next person. It is a great mood changer because people have to concentrate to get their hands to move at the right time, and it's nice to see everyone's hands out there more or less joined.

Caring Cynthia

Are you a member of AVP/USA Email discussion groups?

There are two: AVP-L, our long-standing group that explores the 'nuts and bolts' of education and facilitation of AVP workshops. And, there's the new FFF (Facilitator's Free Forum) that ranges more widely and freely to areas of non-violence philosophy and other topics of interest to AVP'ers.

For more about the groups and to subscribe, look for "Subscribe to AVP discussion groups" on avpusa.org.

For the electronic version, the link underlying "Subscribe to..." would be: <http://www.avpusa.org/listserve.html>.

Here I sit

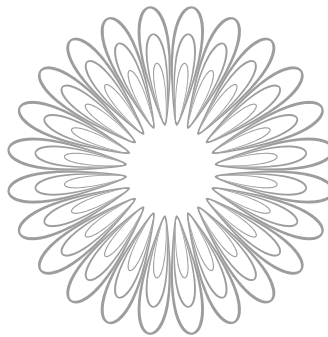
watching the sun set
behind the blooming apple tree
in my back yard,
hearing the sounds of children playing
in a nearby yard
and passing cars on the next street
and a radio blaring far away....
Bees still buzz around the apple
blossoms,
and the dandelions' fuzzy flowers glow
in the light
of the setting sun.....

while my new friends,
that I met over the weekend,
live in their concrete world,
embracing freedom of mind and spirit,
yet yearning, and eagerly learning
tools for life on the outside
when someday,
SOME DAY,
they too will watch the sunset
and walk in FREEDOM.

I am honored to know you;
you are a blessing in my life.
Dancing Debbie
4/23/2012 Advanced Workshop,
Sheridan FCI, Oregon

Start contributing to the next AVP manual

The Education committee presented information on an AVP Education Network under development. Manual editors can use and add to this database of exercises and content from AVP manuals. It is located on <http://avpmanuals.wikispaces.com>. AVP facilitators are welcome to visit this website using the standard AVP username and password. A system has been developed to enable incarcerated AVP facilitators to have their contributions posted to the AVP USA Distribution Service.



Do you provide a stipend to your low or NO income community-based facilitators?

Encouraging people to take or facilitate a workshop when their lives are not stable financially is a tender challenge.

While we want people to come who are facing giant issues in their lives, do we take that extra step and ask if they need transportation assistance? And if so, can they afford to put up the money to take the train before they show up or do we need to make that happen?

How do you approach this question without insulting or making a wrong assumption?

How much do you offer to pay the community facilitator?

Do you offer to pay in cash because the individual doesn't have a checking account?

Do you pay for all meals while they are on a team?

IF we want to cultivate and include parolees as well as others in the community on our teams, don't we need to broach this subject?

Send us your answers: avppat@gmail.com or P.O. Box 3294, Santa Barbara, CA 93130
WATCH December issue...



We come here in peace, with humor and acceptance, to listen to each other, to be accountable and to create community filled with harmony. We choose to understand others' actions with empathy, share our wisdom and develop tools of community, honesty, forgiveness, compassion and non-violence in order to transform situations of anger into opportunities for healthy conflict resolution. We intend to share this with the world.

Advanced AVP, Sheridan Correctional Institute, Sheridan, Oregon (Workshop topic: Communication)
April 21, 2012

I can no longer do this...

Putting together *The Transformer* quarterly has been a pleasure and delight. It is time someone else took this opportunity of putting together AVP/USA's national newsletter. Let me know if you are interested. 805 886 9773

Playful Pat, Editorial Coordinator, *The Transformer* newsletter



Summary of Results of *The Transformer* Reader Survey

A reader survey appeared in the Summer 2012 issue of the *The Transformer*, which was also passed out at the annual AVP meeting in Maryland. Seventy-seven people responded (three were not from the U.S.); only one inmate subscriber mailed in the questionnaire. Here is what we learned...

Who subscribes... or not?

Ten respondents had never seen a copy of *The Transformer* or had seen a copy but had never subscribed or read it. Fifty people indicated they subscribe to *The Transformer*, and five people said they would like to subscribe but don't know how. (*We are working on remedying this.*)

Do they share?

Of the people who subscribe, most (32 people) share their *Transformer* with others; in some cases, with numerous other people--especially with inside facilitators. Nineteen people share their *Transformer* with outside facilitators--about equally via email or with a paper copy.

Most popular topics:

The most popular topics for readers of *The Transformer* are:

- new exercises (62 people)
- light & livelies (57 people)
- in-depth topics (54 people)
- success stories (48 people)

The annual conference and local news are topics; they received fewer votes. Topics not covered but that should be covered according to respondents include: recruiting new facilitators from the community, AVP ListServ topics, a series on AVP history and articles solicited from prison officials.

How involved are they?

Sixteen out of 77 respondents have written an article, poem or other piece for *The Transformer*. Thirty-two respondents have used the order form in the newsletter to order materials from the AVP distribution center.

How often and how long?

A majority of the respondents (52) think that *The Transformer* is about the right format and length (12 pages). Most (66) wanted to keep it as it is, quarterly.

When asked about number of pages in a separate place, this varied (the *Committee is recommending going to a varying length between 8 and 12 pages, depending on content available.*)

Recommendations by the Communications Committee:

- Continue to publish quarterly but vary the length, depending on available copy
- Encourage sharing of the newsletter
- Create a regular section for paper subscriptions to be mailed in
- Include a "donate to an inmate subscription" on the website order and other materials
- Seek more input on the survey and articles from incarcerated facilitators
- Develop an annual calendar of themes for each newsletter
- Establish a regular column including AVP-L email discussion topic responses

Thanks to Rick Krouskop who tabulated the results of *The Transformer* reader survey and Ed Sabin who summarized them.

Outside Prison Coordinators:
Consider creating a notebook of past issues of the newsletter to include in your prison workshop kit. Go to www.TheTransformer.us for back issues.





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Address Service Requested

*Hold the date
Next AVP/USA National
Gathering/Conference, Miami,
Florida, May 24-27, 2013*



*Time to get your group together to reserve an upcoming
issue of the Transformer as yours?*

Summer 2013 is taken by Jessup Correctional Institution in Maryland, their second issue! But the rest of the year is just waiting for your commitment. Contact AVPUSA Transformer, P.O. Box 3294, Santa Barbara, CA 93130

**Winter 2012 Transformer Theme:
Beyond the Organizing Kit: Share
your new ideas that worked for
recruiting workshop participants or
setting up a workshop program in
your community.**

