

# AVP CALIFORNIA NEWS

Spring 2020



## AVP USA 2020 Virtual Conference May 23 and May 24

The annual AVP USA conference is on-line this year, condensed into four, two-hour sessions. Breakout sessions include: *Elements of a Trauma-Informed Basic Workshop*; *Embodied Transforming Power*; *AVP and Gangs*; *AVP after COVID-19*; *Spiritual Journey 2020 – Meaning in a Time of Crisis*; and *AVPping your Passion – Online!*

For more information and to register, click on [AVP USA Conference](#). The conference will be recorded and available later to those who cannot participate in real-time.

## Who Am I?

By Lucky Lou

A question for so long I failed to ask myself living in a state of perpetual bliss called IGNORANCE! Afraid of looking what lay deep within me, for fear of what I may find. The countless years of disappointment, rejection, coupled with the abuse, suffered at the hands of those who were to be my comfort, my strength, my shield, my refuge.

In the midst of the madness in wake of my chaos I lost me. Hiding behind an illusion, a smoke screen of phony images, cascaded by a barrage of fake facades, smiling faces, hidden agendas, ulterior motives, and for what, to hide me. Scared, lost, and confused, I accepted them as me, because we, became us.

My fear became my fuel, to fight in order to hide me I can't let you see, I can't let you see, my inner child pleaded within me. Echoed cries falling on deaf ears, dying inside, knowing this is not me thirty years, paralyzed by this fear, blind and

bound desperately to claw my way out from beneath the suffocating quicksand, of a waisted and unexamined existence.

Light at the end of the tunnel...Oh wait! Yes, it just might be, hope of a future, no longer foreign to me. Rising above my circumstances, one step at a time, finally realizing the depth of who I am. No longer scared, alone, and by myself. No longer shallow nor afraid to walk by myself. Yes, the path may be long, and the journey quite far, distance irrelevant when you know who you are!

More than a program, oh yes indeed! AVP and Jesus unleashed healing and set me free. No longer shackled or bound by my wounds, no longer

living for the bottle or the spoon.

Life passed me by, oh yes indeed, freedom no longer a place, but a mindset for me. You can get it how you live; I get it from AVP, one life to live, I chose to fight that good fight! You can call it how you want; I call it what I see, life no longer meaningless cause I finally found ME!



## From the AVP CA Steering Committee

Our thoughts are with those affected by the ongoing spread of the coronavirus. Our hope is that everyone is safe and taking whatever action is possible to support the global efforts to slow down the spread of the virus. We wish good health for you, your families, and friends. We would like to share how some members of the Steering Committee have been spending their time during lockdown:

**Bountiful Betty:** For my personal and spiritual strength and stamina, I continue to exercise daily with walking, yoga, and NIA dance—all on Zoom and I participate in a Bible study group (on Zoom), and meditate with my favorite Religious Science leader (on Facebook). My AVP work is even more extensive; in addition to my work with AVP/CA Steering Committee and Bay Bridge Council, I am continuing to serve as co-chair of AVP USA Education Committee (too many projects to enumerate here), collaborating with AVP-International on rewriting manuals to meet global and USA workshop training needs, reading and editing chapters submitted for a book on AVP worldwide, writing two chapters for a second book on AVP philosophy and practices, preparing for the National Gathering to be held via Zoom this month, and serving on the AVP USA Board. Trying to take care of myself and fulfill my commitments to AVP-USA and AVP-International.

**Grateful Guari:** Staying home and close to home working on projects that have been put off for far too long. Working with activist friends and groups via Zoom. Taking walks in the woods. Working in the garden and yard. Appreciating how responsive Mother Earth is to humanity putting the brakes on full tilt economic development and staying home. Blessing all the living growing creatures on the planet.

**Groovy Gary:** I have time to work in the garden, pull weeds, and plant vegetables. Catch up on some of my many volunteer assignments. Enjoy watching the rose buds from day-to-day as they form and then magically open.

**Joyful Joyce:** I spend a lot of time with the trees and birds in my yard, read, walk with a neighbor, and I am still selling coffee (now from my porch) to church members from a co-op in Mexico where all the money stays with the growers and workers.

**Numinous Nancy:** I've been doing yoga with my teacher via Zoom, meditation, and taking walks in the beautiful area I live in. And continued online volunteering with AVP/CA, AVP International.

**Luminous Lydia:** I've been working weekly with my church on-line, with AVP Palestine because I am a Board member of that group, and ongoing connection

with AVP Jordan. I also work with Returned Peace Corps Volunteers since I am one. We are currently supporting the 7200 current Peace Corps volunteers who were evacuated to home from their assignments across the world due to COVID. Finally, I am new to my role as CDCR contact and as Prison Coordinator for CCWF, Chowchilla; I am part of the AVP Prison Coordinators team and the PC Council. I put on my mask and walk 5000 steps every day as a vow I made on my 74th birthday, April 20, 2020.

**Radiant Rabia:** I've been working long hours from home but have been appreciating little pockets of time during the day allowing me to take a walk and marvel at the deep joy nature can provide, or enjoy the luxury of a little nap. The weekends have made me into a baker who eats all the pies and cookies she makes, and I am enjoying my Zoom book club meetings. Prayer and meditation have helped to increase my sense of gratitude and calm my anxiety.

**Searching Stacy:** I've enjoyed realizing how much of my previous driving, spending, and general business was not as necessary as I thought. And enjoying the idea of the earth getting a small breather due to the economic slowdown and wondering what we will learn from studying that.

**Tremendous Tondria:** I'm still working, and after work my daughters and I volunteer to pass out free food to our community.

**Passing the Torch - Finance Committee:** AVP/CA would like to recognize Stephen Matchett who worked tirelessly as the treasurer of AVP CA for many years providing a superior set of financial skills, a solid sense of integrity and an unwavering commitment to AVP. We are beyond grateful for his 15 years of guidance and contribution which helped AVP/CA immensely. Stephen was the first treasurer for AVP/CA and started in 2004. He resigned from his position last year and Gary Wolff graciously stepped up to volunteer his time and efforts to become the new AVP/CA Treasurer. After training with Stephen over a period of several months, Gary has established a strong proficiency for this role, and we thank him for filling what is an essential position on the Steering Committee.

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Steering Committee...



As many of you know Stephen was recently diagnosed with a brain tumor and is currently undergoing radiation and chemotherapy. We want Stephen to know that he has the support of his AVP/CA family. We are keeping him in our thoughts and wish him enduring mental, emotional, physical and spiritual fortitude on his journey towards healing. Please send some love, prayers, positive thoughts and wishes his way. Stephen has established an on-line journal in which he shares his current journey. You may read his entries at [Caring Bridge](#)

**Calling all California AVP-ers** The Steering Committee kindly requests support and help from the California AVP community. Whether you are a facilitator, community member or supporter of AVP, we welcome your participation in the following areas:

**Finance committee:** Additional members required to support existing committee members. If you would like to know more, please email [Take-A-Breath Toby](#)

**Fundraising committee:** Do you have fundraising ideas? Or maybe you know someone that has fundraising expertise? Would you like to join an awesome group of people to raise money for AVP CA? Say yes! And email [Luminous Lydia](#).

**Systems, Technology & Database:** Are you a whiz with computers and IT related things? Or maybe you have a friend that does website design? We are looking for help from someone with technical know-how. If you can help please email [Searching Stacy](#)

Committee work is usually accomplished via phone or Zoom conversations (monthly or quarterly), facilitated by one or more Steering Committee members.

### **AVP CA Fall Gathering**

The AVP CA Fall gathering for 2020 is scheduled for Wonder Valley, near Fresno, November 6 to 8. Due to the pandemic, the Steering Committee is assessing the situation as it evolves to decide what is best for the AVP/CA community. Don't worry, we will keep you posted!

### **Trauma Informed Workshop Postponed**

The Special Training Committee has cancelled the Trauma Informed workshop scheduled for this August 28 to 30. It will be rescheduled once it is safe to do.

### **Your Change Can Make a Change**

We understand that these uncertain times are difficult for all and although prison and community workshops are currently on hold due to COVID-19, we're working on online approaches and planning how we can provide AVP to our communities when everything starts to open up. If you are able to contribute, please consider supporting AVP/CA by making a donation. You can send a check to AVP/CA at: AVP California, PO Box 78033, Stockton, CA 95267-1333, or make a donation online at **AVP California** (the donation option is at the bottom of our home page as well as in the 'About AVP CA' tab).

### **Hear Ye, Hear Ye.....Sign Up Sign up**

If you know someone that is interested in receiving the AVP/CA Newsletter, especially returned citizens who may not be receiving it, please have them go to our website and subscribe by clicking in the yellow box on our [Home Page](#).



## Fear of COVID 19 in Prison

By Just Jimmy

I am 58 years old and have spent the last 30 years in prison. I am currently incarcerated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in a desert prison. I'm afraid the coronavirus pandemic will be a death sentence for many of us prisoners.

The society that prisoners have created for themselves is a world unto itself. Over the years you get numb to the violence and cruelty that is so much a part of the prison culture, but the coronavirus pandemic appears to be a different beast altogether. This is an unseen enemy that you don't know how to avoid or fight. Even the most callous of us can't help but be concerned about what is to come.

As the battle against the coronavirus rages on around the country, we have so far been fortunate to avoid the virus. Nevertheless, everyone here knows that it is coming and when it does arrive it will be like a massive train wreck and death may follow.

Prisoners out of necessity are housed in very close quarters, most often double-celled in a small closet-sized room. We share the same showers, phones, tables and other common areas with the rest of the prison community.

Strict social distancing simply isn't possible in a prison setting. Because of this, when flu season rolls around, nearly every prisoner will eventually come down with the flu. When the coronavirus does hit this prison, it could spread through the population like a wildfire.

Currently, the administration has us on a modified program, a kind of loose quarantine where social distancing is encouraged but in

practice is unworkable because we all share common areas. Visits, school and religious services have all been suspended.

Right now it's just a waiting game for us. Everyone knows it's coming. When it arrives, we will be completely locked down, but prisoners and prison officials alike know that this will not stop the virus because quarantines in a prison setting don't work.

A few months ago this prison was placed on quarantine as everyone was getting sick, and they didn't know why. The quarantine meant there was no one to clean the units regularly. We were only given showers every three days or so, but those who had cellmates were forced to shower together in the confines of a shower built for one, and the showers went weeks without being cleaned.

And, of course, hand sanitizer and disinfectant were unheard of. Eventually it was discovered to be salmonella poisoning, and the quarantine was lifted.

The prison system just isn't designed to handle a pandemic like the coronavirus. When we need to make an appointment with medical staff for whatever reason, we must submit a request in writing. It is then 24 to 48 hours before we are seen by a health care provider.

Reports show that due to the severity of symptoms, patients can be placed on ventilators within hours. Here, just being seen will take too long, and even if the process is shortened, there will be no ventilators for us.

It's just hard to imagine how devastating death rates might be in prisons. Most prisoners here have

resigned themselves to what will come and just hope that they will be among those who survive. We all see the concern in the eyes of the prison guards, knowing that when it does hit their lives, their families will be at risk.

You may ask why the general public should be concerned about the lives of men who have taken so much from society. Because everyday there are people from prisons being released back into your community.

Because this prison is an incubator for the virus with optimal conditions for it to last long after it has been eradicated in your communities. Because workers and visitors who come and go from here each day can continue to carry the virus out to your communities. And because the sheer cost associated with caring for the sick — prisoners as well as prison officials — will be overwhelming if the virus is allowed to wreak havoc within the prison.

And finally because we are paying our debt to society — some for minor offenses and others for major offenses — but none of us were sentenced to death. And I would like to think that even with all that is going on in the world right now that still matters to most of you.



## AVP California Annual Report; 2019

In 2019, AVP California volunteers and outreach coordinators facilitated a total of 574 workshops, just down from the record 600 that was reported the year before. The workshops were led by 1306 facilitators, 1096 insiders, and 210 from the outside. George Ramos compiled the data and Betty Eady wrote the section *Joys and Concerns*.

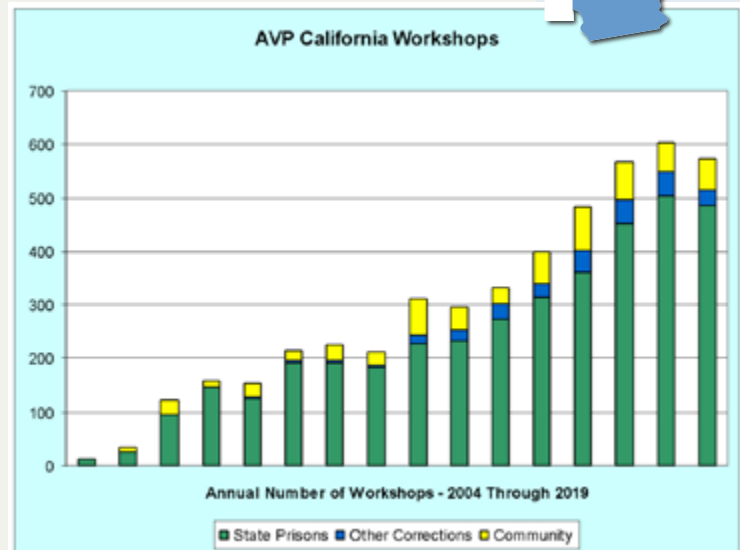
### FEDERAL PRISON (LOMPOC) WORKSHOP SUMMARY

10 Basic workshops, 157 participants; 3 Advanced workshops, 39 participants;  
3 T4F workshops, 46 participants; 1 workshop was in Spanish

### CDCR STATE PRISON WORKSHOP SUMMARY

231 Basic workshops, 3691 participants; 196 Advanced workshops, 3106 participants;  
36 T4F workshops, 517 participants; 43 of 463 workshops were in Spanish.

- California City Correctional Facility, California City (men) [2]
- California Correctional Center, Susanville (men) [25]
- California Correctional Institution, Tehachapi (men) [23]
- California Institution for Men, Chino (men) [21]
- California Institution for Women, Corona (women) [2]
- California Medical Facility, Vacaville (men) [7]
- California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo (men) [44]
- California State Prison - Los Angeles County, Lancaster (men) [13]
- California State Prison Corcoran, Corcoran (men) [11]
- California State Prison Sacramento, Folsom (men) [10]
- Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria (men) [33]
- Centinela State Prison, Imperial (men) [33]
- Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla (women) [13]
- Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, Blythe (men) [20]
- Correctional Training Facility, Soledad (men) [19]
- Folsom State Prison, Folsom (men) [10]
- High Desert State Prison, Susanville (men) [18]
- Ironwood State Prison, Blythe (men) [30]
- Mule Creek State Prison, Lone (men) [16]
- North Kern State Prison, Delano (men) [6]
- R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility, San Diego (men) [24]
- Salinas Valley State Prison, Soledad (men) [31]
- Sierra Conservation Center, Jamestown (men) [6]
- Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, Corcoran (men) [33]
- Wasco State Prison, Wasco (men) [13]



### FIRE CAMP WORKSHOP SUMMARY

10 Basic workshops, 196 participants; 11 Advanced workshops, 191 participants;  
1 T4F workshop, 17 participants; There were no workshops in Spanish.  
Ben Lomond Conservation Camp, Santa Cruz (men) [7]  
Camp Antelope, Chico (men) [5]  
Camp Delta, Suisun City (men) [8]  
Camp Konocti, Lower Lake (men) [2]

### COUNTY JAIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

9 Basic workshops, 129 participants; 5 Advanced workshops, 70 participants;  
There were no T4F, or workshops in Spanish.  
Marin County Jail, San Rafael (men) [1]  
Placer County Jail, Roseville (men) [6]  
San Francisco Jail, San Francisco (men) [1]  
San Luis Obispo Jail, San Luis Obispo (men/women) [6]

...continued from Page 5,  
Annual Report; 2019...

### COMMUNITY (ADULT) WORKSHOP SUMMARY

23 Basic workshops, 169 participants; 13 Advanced workshops, 98 participants; 10 T4F workshops, 49 participants; 1 workshop was in Spanish Coachella [1]; Fresno [2]; Lancaster [1]; Nevada City [6]; Oakland [4]; Sacramento [4]; Santa Monica/Los Angeles [2]; Santa Rosa [3]; Stockton [12]; Ventura [1]

### COMMUNITY (YOUTH) WORKSHOP SUMMARY

8 Basic Workshops, 64 participants; 2 Advanced Workshops 23 participants; 3 T4F Workshops, 18 participants. No workshops in Spanish, but bilingual facilitators participated. Santa Barbara [13]

**Joys and Concerns:** Given the substantial growth in prisons and programs since 2018, we are developing a Prison Coordinators Council to handle issues such as opening a new prison, opening new yards in prisons we already serve, and supporting local prison coordinators.

The Outreach Coordinator Program, funded by CDCR grants led to the creation of new local Councils of outside facilitators and AVP programs in four previously unserved prisons. We learned a great deal about how to manage and sustain funded outreach programs in the future.

The number of inside facilitators has grown but the number of outside facilitators hasn't kept pace. As a result we are not able to hold all the workshops that more outside facilitators would allow. The Outreach Coordinator Program is just one of our efforts to increase the number of outside facilitators.

Last year we handled a potentially disastrous incident when an AVP facilitator was caught smuggling cell phones into a prison. We were stunned and saddened by this betrayal of AVP and those we serve. We learned valuable lessons about screening facilitators to avoid future problems and are grateful that the AVP/CA program has not been affected. While the perpetrator is no longer part of AVP, the AVP prison coordinator where the violation occurred was not involved and is still active there.

We are pleased with the growth and continuous improvement of AVP in Santa Barbara schools. Although there was a decrease in the number of community youth workshops over the academic year 2018-2019, AVP is gaining recognition in the Santa Barbara schools. Workshops involve at-risk youth, primarily Latinx, and are conducted on weekends in collaboration with

the Santa Barbara School District. The Assistant Superintendent of Santa Barbara Schools and two Assistant Principals say they have seen positive changes—even dramatic transformations—in AVP teen graduates. As a result Assistant Superintendent will propose funding for AVP in the next school district budget. Since 2018, 124 teens graduated from Basic Workshops, 43 from Advanced, and 31 from the T4F.

We are appreciative of the Santa Barbara Quaker Meeting House and the Valle Verde Retirement Community for providing space and food for a small fee. Facilitators have learned much about dealing with students who are truant and/or being suspended for violent behavior. The development of supportive community agencies has been crucial in keeping graduates on track and working with family challenges.

