

Victim Services and VOM Programs: Can They Work Together

A Careful Consideration of Strategies to Understand Each Other

by Mary Achilles and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz

This article was developed for a workshop titled "Collaborating with Victim Service Programs" at the 1998 Annual Victim Offender Mediation Association Conference (VOMA) in Tucson, Arizona.

Four issues became clear to both of us as we sat down to prepare for our workshop at the VOMA Conference:

- There is conflict between victim service programs and victim offender mediation programs;
- The conflict seems to arise from misperceptions that each have of the other;
- Victim service agencies and victim offender mediation programs have many goals;
- It seemed to us that from our experience in our respective fields we might be able to identify at least some of those misperceptions and craft some strategies for bringing these two entities together.

After laying out the misperceptions and strategies in the following sections, the bottom line

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can be viewed as a need for both victim service programs and victim offender mediation programs to learn about each other, to respect each other, and to promote the services that each provides within the community.

For Victim Services Programs:

We need to recognize that acknowledging the humanness of the offender and working with programs that view the offender as a client is a new and challenging task for many of our colleagues. We need to recognize that the movement that started and developed these opportunities for victims was someone else's movement. We also need to acknowledge that victims are asking to meet with the person who caused the harm and that a mechanism for this dialogue to happen should be available in the community. Also, shall we dare say that this should be considered as an element of basic services available in a community for victims? Therefore, we need to work closely with victim

offender mediation programs. We need to spend time understanding the work they do and continue to ask questions even if we do not like the answers so that we can build mutual respect.

For Victim Offender Mediation Programs:

The perceptions that are listed in this article are not necessarily true of all victim service programs but are issues that we have come across in our work.

As mediation programs we need to recognize that we are viewed by victim services as being offender-driven rather than by our own perception of being an

advocate for both victim and offender needs. We need to recognize that victim service providers have worked closely with victims in our cases from the initial trauma and bring a broader understanding of the victims' needs of which we are unaware. We need to recognize that to begin a victim offender program without victim service providers at the table is not only insensitive to victim issues but is antithetical to the practice of restorative justice within our communities. We need to continue building bridges to cross the information gap between victim offender programs and victim service programs in order to provide those services which best meet the needs of victims, offenders and communities.

See Working Together on page 11

"The bottom line can be viewed as a need for both victim service programs and victim offender mediation programs to learn about each other, to respect each other, and to promote the services that each provides."

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New to VOMA Connections!
The Research & Resource Review
 from
**The Center for Restorative Justice
 and Peacemaking**
**University of Minnesota
 School of Social Work**

See Pullout Insert Between
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VOMA Connections

VOMA Connections is published by the International Victim Offender Mediation Association. VOMA's mission is to provide inspiration, leadership and information-sharing in the development and support of various models of justice which create opportunities for dialogue between victims, offenders and their communities for the purpose of healing and restoration.

VOMA welcomes contributions, including short articles, literature reviews, case studies, program news and other interesting info. Photos and graphics are also needed. Views expressed within the VOMA Connections are those of the authors and not necessarily those of VOMA.

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Send submissions to either co-editor:

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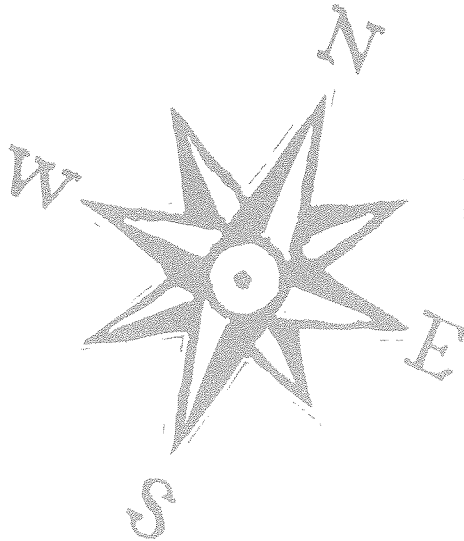
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VOMA by Region

VOMA has developed regional networks to better serve its members. Following is the United States, Canada and the world divided into seven Regions. After each Board member's name in the Directory on the preceding page, the assigned Region is listed. For information on issues of interest to VOMA members, please contact the Regional Board Representative.

Region I

Saskatchewan, Manitoba, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Minnesota

Region II

Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee

Region III

Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

Region IV

Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida

Region V

Arkansas, Louisiana, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona

Region VI

California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, Alberta, and British Columbia

Region VII

International Members



Welcome to New Members

AGENCY MEMBERSHIPS

- ◇ Community Violence Prevention Network, PA
- ◇ Department of Corrections, NH
- ◇ Conflict Mediation Services of Downsview, Ont., CA
- ◇ Johnson County Community Mediation Center, KS
- ◇ Deschutes County Department of Community Corrections, OR

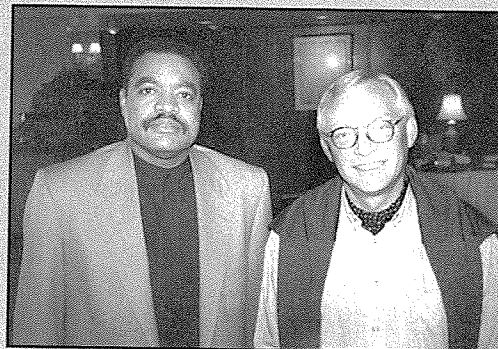
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- ◇ Jim Jacks, Community Mediation Services, WA
- ◇ Leanne Buell, IA
- ◇ Claire Tinkerhess, PeaceTalks, MI
- ◇ Rose Belille, Mediation Services for Anoka Co., MN
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- ◇ Meg Bates, Department of Juvenile Justice, FL
- ◇ Therese Lajeunesse, Manitoba, CA
- ◇ Winnie Backlund, Montgomery County Mediation Center, PA
- ◇ Alice Price, San Luis Valley Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, CO

See New Members page 10

VOMA Welcomes Three New Board Members



Walter "Drew" Smith is the Statewide Restorative Justice Coordinator for New Jersey's Juvenile Justice Commission. He has served in the area of juvenile corrections since 1978 and has held a variety of positions including Regional Program Supervisor for the NJ Department of Corrections. Drew was listed in "Who's Who in the World of Corrections" in 1987-88 for his professional work and is also active in his community.

Hans Boserup, from Denmark, is an attorney at law (admitted to the supreme court). He is a founding member of World Mediation Forum, Danish Mediation, and Chairman of the Nordic Forum of Mediation (Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland). Hans is a frequent lecturer throughout Europe and has published several books on mediation. He has formed a European e-mail network of more than 250 mediators.



Bobbie Boland is a Registered Social Worker in Newfoundland. She is in private practice in clinical work, consulting and training. Bobbie has been involved in conflict resolution work for the past six years. As a contractual trainer with Community Mediation Services, Bobbie is involved in various restorative justice initiatives, and is particularly interested in nurturing processes through which the philosophy of restorative justice is informed by the voices that ensure it remains committed to supporting communities, women and children.

VOMA Board Thanks Past Leadership... And Looks Forward To The New Millennium

*by Kathy Elton and David Doerfler
Board Co-Chairs*

At the Annual VOMA Board Meeting in September 1999, new Board Co-Chairs were elected: David Doerfler from Austin, Texas and Kathy Elton from Salt Lake City, Utah.

To begin this new phase in VOMA leadership it is important to first acknowledge the foundation which has been laid to bring VOMA to its present status of strength and stability. The Co-Chairs wish to extend our deepest appreciation for all the time, energy, and dedication that has been given by the past Co-Chairs, Lorraine Stutzman-Amstutz and Bruce Kittle. Lorraine and Bruce's leadership was truly visionary, modeling for the Board and all VOMA members an inspiring commitment to our mission of healing, restoration, and justice.

We also want to recognize the wonderful contributions of outgoing Board members Kim Fink-Adams, Mike Llado, Dorothy Barg-Neufeld, Sandy Snyder, and Marty Price. All of these people have demonstrated the sharing, collaboration, cooperation, and mutuality that is at the heart of the VOMA family.

In this spirit, additional recognition should go to the 1999 Pennsylvania Conference site committee. A lot of hard work happened behind the scenes before and during the Training Institute and Conference to make our gathering the epitome of what VOMA is about. We thank Jane Riese, Lorraine Stutzman-Amstutz, Winne Backlund, Trish Charo, Marcia Drew, Mandy Yoder, Julie Tice, Beth Gardner, Kelly Walters, Susan Blackburn, and all the others who gave of themselves so that our experience together could be successful and growth-producing.

The Board of Directors would also like to welcome three new Board Members: Hans Boserup from Sonderborg, Denmark; Walter "Drew" Smith from Trenton, New Jersey; and Bobbie Boland from Torbay, Newfoundland. We look forward to the new ideas and energy these three will bring to the VOMA

Board! We encourage you to contact them and/or your regional Board representatives so that we can continue strengthening our connections to each other.

As VOMA moves into the next millennium we look forward to continued growth in the field of victim-offender mediation/conferencing and the restorative justice movement. VOMA's mission is "to provide inspiration, leadership, and information-sharing in the development and support of various models of justice." The VOMA Board of Directors are committed to this vision and the future success of VOMA.

The Executive Committee

Co-Chairs: Kathy Elton and David Doerfler
Secretary - Kathy Hall
Treasurer - Sue Wiese
Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz

Conference Program Committee

Co-Chairs: Bruce Kittle, Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz
Sue Wiese
Doris Luther

Conference Site Committee

Co-Chairs: Carolyn McLeod, Ann Warner Roberts

Electronics Committee

Co-chairs: Beverly Moore, Ann Warner Roberts
Marty Price

Ethics and Standards of Training

Co-Chairs: Doris Luther, Hans Boserup, Sue Wiese

Fundraising Committee

Chair: Kathy Hall
Ann Warner Roberts, Carolyn McLeod

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Co-chairs: Drew Smith, Barbara Schmidt

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Chair: Jan Bellard

Publications Committee

Co-chairs: Beverly Moore, Ann Warner Roberts

Scholarship Committee

Chair: Doris Luther

VOMA On-Line

VOMA has three different ways members can electronically communicate and acquire information using e-mail and the internet:

1. VOMA maintains a web site at www.voma.org. The web site contains information on the Association, upcoming training and conferences, current and past issues of VOMA newsletters, and links to related sites. If you join VOMA as an agency, you are entitled to a free web page on the VOMA web page. To take advantage of this benefit send your agency information to duanerh@fresno.edu.
2. VOMA provides a list-serve, intended to provide a medium for networking and sharing of relevant information, resources, and diverse ideas between VOMA members. The list-serve is an e-mail-based discussion group in which list-serve subscribers receive messages sent to all subscribers. This forum allows VOMA members to discuss issues related to victim offender mediation/conferencing, restorative justice, and activities of VOMA. The VOMA list-serve is a benefit for members only. To subscribe to the VOMA list-serve, send an e-mail to duanerh@fresno.edu with the message: subscribe vomalist.
3. VOMA offers members with e-mail addresses the opportunity to receive announcements and information from the Association and Board of Directors via e-mail. To subscribe to the e-mail announcement list send e-mail to duanerh@fresno.edu with the message: subscribe VOMA e-mail announcement list.

