

## NEWS FROM



430 West 9th Avenue  
Denver, CO 80204

October 2010



## RESTORE Truly Keeps Kids from Re-Offending

### Recidivism Analysis Conducted In June 2010

- A total of 236 youth were referred to RESTORE on or after July 1, 2008 through December 2009. Of these, 164, approximately 70%, completed the program. About 30% who were referred failed to complete the program.
- The six-month recidivism rate for youth who completed RESTORE was 16.5%, while it was 29.2% for youth who did not complete the program, or almost twice as high as that of youth who did complete the program.
- Those youth who fail to complete RESTORE were more than twice as likely to have prior offenses compared to those who did not complete RESTORE.
- The majority of youth served by VORP are people of color, primarily Black/African American and Latino youth. Less than 20% of all youth referred to VORP are White. African American and Latino youth are less likely to complete the program than White youth. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of White youths completed the program compared to 65% of Latinos and 63% of African Americans.
- By and large, younger youth are more likely to complete the program than older youth. At least 80% of those 13 and younger complete the program, while 70% of 14-year-olds and 82% of 15-year-olds complete. The rate drops to 61.5% of 16-year-olds and 57% for those over 16.
- Males and females complete the program at roughly the same rate.

### Pre- and post- program surveys

For the youth who complete the program, RESTORE has had an impact on both their awareness of shoplifting consequences and their connectedness with adults. This is most dramatically shown in the response to two statements:

- *Shoplifting hurt my community:* In the pre-test, 45 % responded that they agree or strongly agree; this increased to 95% in the post-survey.
- *I care what adults in my community think about me:* In the pre-test, 64 % responded that they agree or strongly agree; this increased to 88% in the post-survey.

Over 90% of all participants answering the questions agreed that RESTORE was a positive experience and that it helped them understand why they should not shoplift, helped them talk to their parent/guardian about the shoplifting and build trust with their parent/guardian. They felt they were treated fairly and with respect, it was a safe place for them, and would recommend the RESTORE program to other people their age who shoplift.

## Community Group Conferencing Program Started

Community Group Conferencing is a new program for VORP, ably run by coordinator, Kathryn Pardikes. In community group conferencing, the young offender, his/her parents, and the victim or victims meet with the facilitators to discuss the specific crime— typically vandalism, theft, burglary or graffiti.

The parties describe the circumstances and decisions leading up to the incident, and the resulting impact. With the help of the facilitators, the victim and the offender develop an agreement to repair the harm experienced by the victim and others impacted by the offense. These sessions are scheduled at the convenience of facilitators and participants.

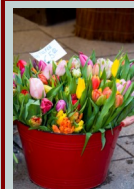


### Special points of interest:

- **Special THANKS to First Mennonite Church for their faithful support of VORP**
- **GIVING FIRST provides opportunity for supporting VORP on-line.**

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**AS ALWAYS... A SPECIAL THANK YOU!** We extend our deepest thanks to First Mennonite Church for generously and faithfully providing us with office and meeting space. They also continue to host a fall concert, which is not only extremely entertaining, but also our major fundraising event. Thank you so much to the congregation, pastoral team, and staff of FMC! We wouldn't be able to do this valuable work with out all of you!



**VORP'S MISSION:  
TO KEEP OUR KIDS OUT OF  
JAIL BY RESTORING  
RELATIONSHIPS WITH SELF,  
FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY**

**[ We're on the web:  
[www.denvervorp.org](http://www.denvervorp.org) ]**

## Vision, Mission, and Values

Recently, the VORP Board agreed upon mission, vision, and values that reflect our history, our current passions, and our hope for the future.

**Mission Statement:** To keep our kids out of jail by restoring relationships with self, family, and community.

**Vision Statement:** We envision a community where all our kids succeed in reaching their highest potential because they've had the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, gain the skills needed to deal with conflict, and never become involved in the Criminal Justice System.

**Values:**

- Social Justice
- Inclusiveness
- Community
- Non-Violent Resolution of Conflict

Through participation in VORP of Denver, kids arrested for "gateway" crimes of shoplifting, theft and vandalism are more likely to stay out of jail. VORP provides a variety of restorative justice services, bringing its young participants face-to-face with those harmed by their actions, or with a representative. The victim has a unique opportunity to be directly involved in how the offender is held accountable, experiencing a sense of empowerment. Youth in VORP's programs accept responsibility as they repair the harm done by their criminal actions in a way that is meaningful to themselves, their family, the victim, and the community.

Concerned that 80% of the youth it serves are people of color, a reflection of the racial disproportion in prisons, VORP recently co-sponsored a community dialogue about racism and the criminal justice system, and hosted a book discussion of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

**VORP Board of Directors:**

- Norm Dewhurst
- David Henninger
- Kate Goodspeed
- Ardell Swartzendruber
- Bruce McCrae

**VORP Staff:**

- Ronnie Rosenbaum, Executive Director
- Rose Romero, Project Manager
- Kathryn Pardikes, Community Group Conferencing Coordinator
- Harold Fields, Bookkeeper

**VORP Volunteers**

- Too numerous to list!!!

## VORP Commits to Inclusiveness

VORP has been concerned that the composition of its board and volunteers is not representative of those it serves and of the larger community. We have seen this as a significant limitation on the ability of the organization to be all that it could be, for itself, those it serves, and for the community.

This concern led to the successful request to The Denver Foundation for technical assistance support through the Inclusiveness Project which funded a consultant to facilitate three evening sessions of inclusiveness training in December 2009 and January 2010. All staff, board members, and volunteers were invited, with a group of 21 individuals participating.

One follow up from this workshop was to convene an affinity group, primarily



composed of people of color, to answer the question: *How can the voices of the community we serve be reflected in the decisions we make?*

This group met in May 2010, to brainstorm ideas for attracting people with diverse skills and backgrounds as potential board members, and the processes needed to recruit, orient and retain them. Common strategies were identified through all of these meetings: to develop relationships and partnerships with people and communities of color.

As a way to achieve these strategies, the Executive Director and the Board President attended a four-part workshop series in August and September, 2010, which provided a forum for organizations to develop readiness for a gathering in October, which will be an opportunity to recruit potential candidates who are diverse and have been prepared for a stepped-up level of board leadership.

A board development workshop was held on March 27, 2010 to plan the nominating process for new board members. We're on our way!!!

### Many thanks to our faithful funders!!

We wish to thank the following for their financial support of VORP in 2009.

- City of Denver Safe City Program
- Office of the District Attorney, Second Judicial District
- Tony Grampsas Youth Services Program
- Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Juvenile Accountability Block Grant.
- The Denver Foundation
- Park Hill Congregational Church, UCC
- First Mennonite Church
- Many community and civic organizations and individuals

Please accept our deepest appreciation for your gifts.

## How YOU can help!!!

### Contribute:



Increase the value of your donation when you support us on Colorado Gives Day, December 8, 2010. If you donate to us through this website anytime during the 24-hour period starting at 12 AM on December 8th, the value of your donation will be matched (proportionate to all donations received on Colorado Gives Day). Give through:

[www.givingfirst.org/](http://www.givingfirst.org/)

[vorpofdenver](http://vorpofdenver.org) or go to our

website and click on the Giving First logo.

### Volunteer:

Click on "volunteer" on the left of our website's main page: [www.denvervorp.org](http://www.denvervorp.org). There's a downloadable volunteer application and a description of all the volunteers RESTORE and VORP need.

### In 2010-11

#### Who will we serve?

Based on recent history, we project that we will serve 240 Metro Denver youth, ages 10-18 years old: 39% African American, 35% Latino, 20% white, and 6% other. 86% will be low income, 59% young men and 41% young women.