



COSA News

Building safer communities by providing circles of support and accountability for released sex offenders

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COSA Volunteer Training

June 11-12
Fri. June 11
6:30-9:00 p.m.
Sat., June 12
8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Fresno Pacific University

COSA Barbecue and Farewell for Jordan

Saturday, June 19
5:00 p.m.
Mennonite Community Church
Olive & Willow

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- *Funding update and more . . .*

Circles

It is a little difficult to say exactly how many circles we have at this point. A couple of circles have been meeting infrequently and we are deciding which circles are at a point where they are ready to close and which will continue to meet less frequently on a "maintenance" level. Some circles which were slow getting started are now meeting regularly. We are also talking with new potential core members and will be forming at least one new circle in the next few weeks.

We are in the process of identifying and preparing volunteer facilitators for our circles. This will free up COSA staff to work at things necessary to continue to develop and sustain COSA. Jordan and Clare Ann are reluctant to move out of circles—strong relationships have been established.

One of our circles took an outing to Yosemite this month. Everyone had a wonderful time. You can imagine what a great experience that was for the core member who had been incarcerated for many years and had never been to Yosemite!



News and activities

COSA Expansion

We continue to receive inquiries from various places about COSA. A significant amount of Clare Ann's time has been spent responding to these inquiries.

- **Nebraska** Clare Ann traveled to Omaha, Nebraska in April to lead two informational meetings about COSA. Around 50 people attended the meetings and there is now follow-up work being done to get a COSA program started there.
- **Bakersfield and Upland** Clare Ann also met with pastors in Bakersfield and Upland to explore the possibility of finding volunteers to start circles in those cities. She will return to Upland in June to lead an informational meeting for potential volunteers.

Volunteer Support Gathering

Some of our volunteers met to watch *The Woodsman* starring Kevin Bacon. The movie tells the story of a sex offender reentering the community and the challenges he faces. The discussion following led by Casandra Lindell, MFT, was stimulating.



Circles of Support and Accountability

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California Coalition on Sexual Offending (CCOSO)

Clare Ann attended the CCOSO 13th Annual Training Conference in San Diego May 12-14. Presentations by Dr. Daniel Siegel, MD, on Interpersonal Neurobiology were a highlight. It is amazing how our brains work and how personal transformation can take place! The networking that occurs at such conferences is an important part of the event. It is exciting to have an increasing number of people who work with sex offenders recognize COSA and the role it plays in sex offender reentry into the community. CCOSO just released "Guidelines and Best Practices: Adult Male Sexual Offender Treatment 2010." This document includes a paragraph on COSA. You can check it out on the CCOSO website: <http://ccoso.org/papers/adultguidelines.pdf>. The paragraph on COSA is on page 23.

Staff Transition

Jordan Zickafoose has worked with COSA since August, 2008, as a Mennonite Voluntary Service volunteer. Jordan's service term ends this summer. He will enter the master's program in Marriage and Family Therapy at California State University, Fresno this fall. We will miss Jordan. He has made a valuable contribution to COSA and its development in Fresno. If we have funding in the future we hope to hire him part-time while he's in school. In the meantime, we will celebrate Jordan's time with COSA at our summer barbecue on June 19. Watch for more information. Jordan was featured in *The Mennonite* recently. Click the photo to visit the article.



MYSer, program walks with sex offenders - The Mennonite

www.themennonite.org

A monthly magazine for the members of Mennonite Church USA.

Other points of interest . . .

- The COSA documentary, *In Circles*, produced by students from Stanford University last year was shown at the **Newport Beach Film Festival** and was well-received. It's exciting to have the COSA vision shared in that context!
- One of our COSA circles—including the core member—gave a presentation about COSA to clinicians at **Coalinga State Hospital** in April. The clinicians were enthusiastic about COSA and Clare Ann will be having further conversations with them about incorporating COSA into discharge planning.
- We have had conversations with **Committed to Freedom**, an organization that provides people with spiritual tools to heal from abuse they have experienced. We continue to reflect on how their work with victims can complement our work with sex offenders.

Funding

Funding continues to be our big issue. We expect to hear about our Second Chance Act Mentoring Grant application late summer or early fall. In the meantime we continue to invite donations to COSA and explore other funding options. To meet our current year fund raising goal we need \$12,000. We will continue to have office space and Clare Ann will continue to volunteer a significant portion of her time. We are committed to seeing COSA established as a sustainable organization.

You can help by making a tax-deductible donation. Checks should be made out to the *Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies* and sent to the Center at 1717 S. Chestnut Ave. #2202, Fresno, CA 93702. Consider making a monthly donation. Your contribution can make a difference!