



# COSA News

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

NOVEMBER, 2010

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 5

## COSA Volunteer Support Gathering

Saturday, November 13  
10:00-12:00 a.m.  
Fresno Pacific University

## COSA "Thanksmas" Celebration

Saturday, December 4  
5:00 p.m.  
Mennonite Community Church  
Fresno, CA

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### Circles

How many Circles do we have? It depends on what day you ask and how you count. Today we have 12. A person working with COSA in Canada commented that 12 seems like quite a few Circles for a city the size of Fresno! One of our Circles closed in October. The volunteers in that Circle agreed to continue to work together and a new Circle was started in October. We continue to relate to people whose Circles no longer meet formally. In fact, we could say that, to some extent, we have a 13<sup>th</sup> Circle at this point. It just doesn't meet in person. One of our Core Members who is off parole moved out of state several months ago. He has stayed in regular phone contact with the members of his Circle. One afternoon the volunteers met together and talked with the Core Member on a speaker phone. The transition has not been easy for him. It is clear that the support he gets from his Circle in Fresno is important in helping him stay on track. Now it looks like he may move back to Fresno. As we work with people at different stages along their journey a quote by John W. Gardner is helpful: "If you have some respect for people as they are, you can be more effective in helping them become better than they are."

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**Volunteers Needed!** We plan to start several new Circles soon. That means we need new volunteers! Some current volunteers have offered to be another Circle. But we need more! This is an opportunity to give to the community and to an ex-offender who wants to become a responsible member of the community. Volunteers say they benefit from the Circle too! Contact Clare Ann for more information.

### Funding Update

- **The Bad News**—We learned at the end of September that we were *not* awarded a Second Chance Act Mentoring Grant.
- **The Good News**—The Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies will continue to provide a \$1000 monthly subsidy to COSA. This covers ten hours per week for Clare Ann and she will be donating additional time.
- **Donate Online!** We continue to depend on gifts to pay various COSA expenses. Thank you to all of you who have made gifts! We have an increasing number of people who are making a monthly donation which is very helpful. Browse to <https://www.fresno.edu/annualfund/donate.aspx> to donate online. FPU will credit your gift to COSA and send a receipt to you.



[Donate online!](#)

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## News and activities

### *Christianity Today*

The September issue of *Christianity Today* carried an article, "Sex Offenders in the Pew." The piece gave good coverage of the COSA concept and our COSA program. We have been getting calls from people wanting assistance in starting circles as a result of this article. You can read it online at:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/september/21.49.html>

### *Volunteer Training*

- A COSA volunteer training was just held November 5-6 in Fresno. The next training will be scheduled in early 2011.
- Clare Ann led a volunteer training in Solvang, CA in October. A group of community volunteers there are starting a Circle for a local man.

### *Presentations*

Clare Ann has done several presentations in the last few months. One was to the Fresno County S.A.F.E. (Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement) team. This was an opportunity to share the COSA program with local law enforcement personnel.

### *Employment Seminar*

Ron Torres, one of our COSA volunteers, gave a seminar for Core Members who are looking for employment. This is something we plan to repeat from time to time.

### *COSA in Australia?*

Dr. Kelly Richards of the Australian Institute of Criminology visited Fresno in early October as part of a trip researching COSA in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom. The projects she visited in the U.S. were in Fresno and Minnesota. There is interest in starting COSA programs in several locations in Australia.

### *Writing Projects*

*The Promise of Restorative Justice: New Approaches for Criminal Justice and Beyond* was published in August. It has chapters by a number of people from the Center for Peacemaking including a chapter on working with sex offenders by Clare Ann. She is also working on a chapter for a book on COSA. Her chapter is on COSA in the U.S. In working on this she has learned that our COSA program and the Minnesota program (part of Minnesota Department of Corrections) are the only active COSA programs in the U.S. that work exclusively with sex offenders. Other programs are in various stages of development and there are several programs modeled after the Canadian COSA program that work with a wider range of offenders.

### *Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)*

Clare Ann attended ATSA's annual training conference in Phoenix in October. It is always encouraging to see the level of enthusiasm for COSA in the sex offender treatment and management community.

## Remember—[You Can Donate Online!](#)

Or you can give your tax-deductible donation the old fashioned way. 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.

Your contribution can make a difference!