



COSA News

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

MAY-JUNE 2011

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 3

In this issue . . .

- Circle update*
- News and Activities*
- Funding update*

Circles

In the last month or so there has been significant new activity with our Circles. One Circle closed but one new one has started and another has been reestablished after the core member returned from a couple of months in prison for a parole violation. Two new circles are in the process of being formed and we are processing three new referrals. Another core member is due to return from a violation this summer. This could mean that we would have 17 Circles meeting by the end of the summer! That would be the record number of Circles we've had meeting at one time. Several other individuals have expressed interest in COSA as well which could raise the number even higher. We continue to receive referrals from California State Parole and we are now receiving referrals from Federal Probation as well. It is exciting to see all this activity! But it also means that we **need volunteers!** Our next volunteer trainings are scheduled for fall. We are prepared to do some informal training to allow people to become Circle members before the fall trainings if necessary.

**New Circles
forming**

**Volunteers
Needed!**

Contact Clare Ann if you would like more information about being a volunteer. Talk to someone who is a COSA volunteer to hear about their experience. We would love to have you join the COSA family!

News and Activities

New COSA Intern

We welcome **Jaclyn Walker** who will be working as an intern with COSA as part of her work in the MA program at the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies. In the time that she has been with COSA she has already made significant contributions.

Here is her introduction:

"My name is Jaclyn Walker and I started my COSA internship this past May. I was born and raised in the Central Valley and graduated from Buchanan High School in 1999. I went on to Fresno State and after being there two years, I was married and have two children. We then moved to the Central Coast for a great job opportunity and a slower pace of life. After five years at the coast, my kids and I moved back and I enrolled back into Fresno State. I graduated May 2010, with a degree in Chicano



COSA Volunteer Trainings

September 9-10
Friday, Sept. 9
6:30-9:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 10
8:30-3:30 p.m.
Fresno Pacific University

November 18-19
Friday, Nov. 18
6:30-9:00 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 19
8:30-3:30 p.m.
Fresno Pacific University

COSA Barbecue

Saturday, June 25
4:00-7:00 p.m.
Mennonite Community Church
Fresno
Plan to join us for an evening of fun, food, and sharing!
Call 559-453-3448 for more information



[Donate online!](#)

Circles of Support and Accountability

Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies,
Fresno Pacific University

1717 S. Chestnut Ave.
Fresno, CA 93702

559-453-3448

cosa@fresno.edu

peace.fresno.edu/cosa

Clare Ann Ruth-
Heffelbower
Program Director

Latino American Studies. Then I tried to figure out what I could do with my degree. I loved every class that I took and just wanted to go out and change the world, but I felt like something was still missing with my education.

"My life mantra is to help people that truly need help and are excluded from society for one reason or another. I was told about the Peacemaking and Conflict Studies Masters program at FPU and felt like it was a great fit. After my first semester I learned about COSA and asked to have this as my internship. I have learned a great deal about myself and felt like I understood many of the Core Members lives because of my ex-husband's addictions. I have found COSA to be very healing for me and see the benefits it brings to the Core Member and the friends that sit on the circles. I look forward to attending each of the circles and meeting each and every one of you."

Presentations/Opportunities to Share the COSA Story

We continue to receive inquiries and invitations to tell others about COSA.

- Colorado Department of Corrections sponsored a symposium on COSA with the hope of sparking interest in COSA in Colorado on May 13. Around 150 people attended the event. Clare Ann was one of four presenters.
- Clare Ann co-led a workshop on "Unique Reentry Challenges for Sex Offenders" at the California *Out4Life* conference in San Diego sponsored by Prison Fellowship May 23-25.
- A free-lance journalist visited two circles and is putting together a proposal for a book on treatment for sex offenders.
- Another journalist is working on a proposal for a television documentary about COSA.
- One of our core members told his story to a class of Ph.D. students at Alliant University.

Local News

The City of Fresno plans to dismantle all homeless encampments by September. While none of our core members are currently homeless, this will affect many sex offenders and put the community at greater risk. Parole reports that out of 30 homeless sex offenders in Fresno, 22 could live with family or friends if the Jessica's Law residency restrictions were not in place.

Funding Update

Nothing is new on the funding scene. We continue to look for grant possibilities, but none have appeared. We appreciate the support of those you who are able to make financial gifts. Your gift makes a difference! It continues to be ironic that there is so much interest in COSA but no money available to fund it!

Thank you to all of you who have made gifts!

Remember—You Can Donate Online!

Browse to: <https://www.fresno.edu/annualfund/donate.aspx>

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.

Consider making a monthly donation.
Your contribution can make a difference!