



COSA News

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

JULY-OCTOBER 2011

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 3

COSA Volunteer Training

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 Thanksmas

Saturday, December 10
5:00-7:00 p.m.
Mennonite Community Church
Fresno
*Plan to join us for our holiday celebration!
Call 559-453-3448 for more information*

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*Circle update
News and Activities
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Circles

Usually this newsletter is sent out every other month. This issue should have been the July-August issue. Now it is the July-October issue. The last few months have been so filled with activity that the newsletter had to wait. We have started four new Circles in the last month or so. Two more are in the process of being formed. One Core Member returned from a parole violation and his Circle is meeting again. Meanwhile, another Core Member has returned to prison on a parole violation. One other Circle has closed when the Core Member discharged parole and another has not been meeting due to scheduling and transportation difficulties. This is why it is hard to say how many Circles we have! Today's count is 14 Circles. When the two new ones begin in the next week or so we will have 16. That will bring the total number of Circles we have had to 31!

Core Members continue to express their gratitude for their Circles. One who has struggled with the various issues that come with being a registered sex offender tells his Circle how important the Circle is to him. Recently he commented, "Now I'm strong because I have COSA!"

"Now I'm strong because I have COSA!"

News and Activities

New Volunteers

New Circles mean new volunteers. We have been blessed with an unusual number of people expressing interest in volunteering with COSA. We had 17 people participate in our September training! Many of the new volunteers are students in the forensic psychology program at Alliant University. You may recall that one of our Core Members told his story to a class of students at Alliant last spring. That sparked the interest of the students and it is exciting to see them involved in Circles now!



Just because we have new volunteers does not mean that we do not need more! The need for Circles is tremendous—the more volunteers we have, the more Circles we can form!

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!



[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

Jaclyn Walker
Intern

In the Media

Good magazine recently published a piece about Circles of Support and Accountability. The story refers to our program and includes experiences from one of our Circles. Check it out: <http://www.good.is/post/a-new-way-to-treat-sex-offenders/>

Dr. Robin Wilson who has been involved in Circle programs from the beginning in Canada was interviewed by radio station KPFA last summer. He does a good overview of working with sex offenders, describes COSA, and even mentions our program in Fresno! Here is a link to listen to the program:

<http://www.pushinglimits.i941.net/audio/2011.07.12robinwilson.sex.offender.treatment.wav>

Core Member Employment and Financial Needs

- The last few months have been particularly difficult for a number of our core members. The current economic scene hits them particularly hard. We have had more than the usual number of requests for assistance with rent, transportation, and school expenses. Core Members still have an incredibly difficult time finding work. One lost his job. Several have had delays in receiving grants for school. We are in the process of establishing an emergency assistance fund to which people can contribute so funds are available when needed. Watch for more information and a chance to help out.
- On a more positive note, two former Core Members who stay in contact with us recently got jobs—one at *El Pollo Loco* and one at *PetSmart*. This is cause for celebration!

Coming Events

- The next *Volunteer Training* is November 18-19. This is a chance to learn more about COSA even if you are still in the process of deciding whether or not you want to volunteer.
- Our annual *Thanksmas* celebration is December 10. This is a holiday gathering of Core Members, Volunteers, and other COSA friends. It is always a great time of fellowship.

For more information on either of these events, contact Clare Ann at clareann@fresno.edu or 559-453-3448.

Funding Update

Things continue pretty much as is on the funding scene. We applied for a small grant from the Fresno Regional Foundation and just learned that we did not receive it. We appreciate the support of those who are able to make financial gifts. Your gift makes a difference! Some of you who gave online may not have received a timely acknowledgement of your gift due to changes in the Fresno Pacific website. We apologize for that and think we have dealt with the problem.

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 gift can help keep our community safe and make an incredible difference in someone's life!