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◆ BUILDING COMMUNITY...PEACE BY PEACE ◆

November 8, 2010

Dear Friend of LAVORP,

Howard Zehr, a pioneer in the field, and author of *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, defines Restorative Justice as, "a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things *as right as possible*." Note that the definition does not say that prosecution is necessary before addressing the harm. A case in point.

A victim, who previously had a satisfactory Victim-Offender Conference through LAVORP, recently became a victim again (different defendant). When appearing before the Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) along with the defendant and his attorney, **the victim asked that the incident be a teaching moment rather than have the defendant prosecuted.** The victim then proffered the possibility of having the case referred to LAVORP. The attorney, who knew about LAVORP, thought it was a good idea. The defendant also liked the idea and the MDJ agreed. The MDJ said that if the defendant did opt for the LAVORP program (it was voluntary) and restitution made, there would be no charges filed. A Conference was held and the offender heard the victim explain how his actions harmed the company and an exhortation to seek help rather than resort to crime to satisfy his needs. Copies of the Agreement between the victim and defendant were sent to all parties, including the MDJ. Restitution was paid as agreed, and the charges were dropped at the final Hearing. At the Hearing, the defendant mentioned that he had already started seeking counsel from his employer and church and hoped to prevent any future actions like the one that got him into the MDJ Court this time.

Typically, LAVORP receives referrals from Youth Aid Panels, Juvenile Probation and the District Attorney's office after consequences for breaking the law have been set. Thanks to all parties involved, the above scenario is an example of **another avenue for Restorative Justice** which meets the needs of the community and at the same time lessens the burden on the Common Pleas Court (about \$20,000 to prosecute a case). **The defendant was held accountable, learned the impact of his actions and the victim's needs were met. In other words, things were made, "as right as possible."**

And, now you can make it possible for LAVORP to continue to promote Restorative Justice in this and **other venues** throughout Lancaster County and recruit and train volunteers. Donations by LAVORP supporters have been exemplary during these difficult times. And, I am urging you to continue your fine stewardship as you reflect on LAVORP providing opportunities for **People** to have **Possibilities** that lead to **Peace**. Your generosity will be much appreciated.

Peace,

Jon A. Singer  
Executive Director

**Be the living, breathing, Flame of Peace.  
Direct this Peace into everything and everyone around you.**  
Peace Mother Geeta Sacred Song