

Alternatives to Violence Project
www.avpusa.org

September 10th, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to verify that Panna Krom is a volunteer facilitator with the Alternatives to Violence Project at York Correctional Institution, but more than that, she is a phenomenal woman with the intellect, compassion and energy to make any community she is part of, a better place.

My name is Kris Wraight and I have been volunteering as a lead outside facilitator for AVP since 2007. I became the program coordinator in 2009. In my professional career, I am a Violence Prevention Educator for the Women's Center of SECT located in New London, CT.

The Alternatives to Violence Project is a program designed to impart the skills of nonviolence while narrowing the divide between participants by building community. An intensive three-day workshop, AVP uses a variety of exercises to explore the issue of violence, unpack its roots and explore alternatives to its use. Participants are asked to dig deep within themselves, examining choices they have made in the past and voicing goals they hope to achieve in the future. While the weekend pushes each participant to be accountable for their decisions, it also asks each of them to seek a new level of self-respect, self-love and appreciation, as a core philosophy of AVP is that, "everyone is important, everyone is valuable".¹

I met Panna Krom a few years back when she was a participant in *Thresholds*, a 10-week decision making program I also volunteer for. What is most striking is the transformation I have seen in Ms. Krom over the last few years. As a participant in *Thresholds*, I never would have guessed she would go on to become one of our AVP facilitators, because despite her obviously intelligent, kind and cooperative demeanor, for the great majority of the 10-week course, Panna, essentially didn't say a word.

Some time later I would meet Ms. Krom again, this time when her name was prematurely added to the Advanced AVP list, though she had yet to complete the Basic level. Due to a variety of circumstances, she was allowed to stay and participate for the weekend. Over the course of the next three days it was as if I was meeting Panna for the first time. She spoke passionately, sharing with an openness and insight that moved and inspired all of the participants. Her excitement to be a part of the weekend was contagious. By the end she was beaming and couldn't wait to come back.

And so Ms. Krom went on to participate in the AVP Basic level, where she shined again. Often in an AVP weekend there will be one individual in the group who takes the workshop to another level; Panna is one of these individuals. She asks questions that deepen the conversation and invite each participant to expose a little more of themselves. Panna Krom, while she can initially seem quiet and reserved, is a powerful leader.

¹ Education Committee, AVP /USA, *Alternatives to Violence Manual, Basic Course*, (St. Paul: AVP/USA Inc. 2002), A-11.

In April 2010, she was chosen to join our team of facilitators. The selection process is highly competitive. In order for one to even be considered for the team, one must first participate in the Basic Level Workshop and then the Advanced Level Workshop. Ms. Krom not only completed both workshops, but as I stated above, she surpassed every expectation.

On the weekend of May 14th, 15th, and 16th, 2010, Panna officially joined our AVP Facilitation Team by completing the Training for Trainers Workshop. Along with the 11 other women selected, she spent three days learning and practicing the skills of facilitation. Since then Panna has been an exemplary member of our AVP team. She is always shows up prepared, focused and genuinely excited to be a part of the program. Ms. Krom really believes in AVP.

The Alternatives to Violence Project exists not only in prisons, but also in many communities. Workshops are held for youth in schools and after-school programs, as well as community centers and churches for broader community participation.

I can't totally explain the transformation I have been witness to in her, but ever since that first AVP weekend, she has possessed a powerfully vibrant, endlessly brilliant spirit, that our program in continually blessed with. I personally have learned a tremendous amount from Panna and I hold her in the highest esteem. It is an honor to have her as a member of our AVP team, just as it will be an honor for those teams/communities she is a member of in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kris Wraight', written in a cursive style.

Kris Wraight
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