FOCUS

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The Newsletter of Alcoholics Anonymous Area 86

OUR THREE LEGACIES

A few days ago, I attended a meeting at a local nursing home. A member - a friend of mine - was celebrating his 80th birthday and this was an impromptu gathering of twenty people coming together to share their experience, strength, and hope. Our perfect equilateral triangle that joins Recovery, Unity, and Service was present as we formed a circle that contains these three legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Within this circle was the 80 year old member who celebrated 43 years of sobriety last March. Beside me, on the left, was a woman who is approaching 18 months of sobriety and reminds me of myself at that stage in my sobriety. Two seats over was my friend who followed me into AA a few months after I began my recovery. Present that evening were past DCMs, an Alternate DCM, past GSRs, present GSRS, group treasurers and secretaries past and present, greeters, cake and medallion buyers, sponsors and sponsees, old and young, those struggling and those at ease. Within that circle sat twenty people, *all powerless over alcohol* but empowered by the strength of each other, the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the spirit and miracle of our fellowship. *(continued on pg. 3)*

UNITY, RECOVERY AND SERVICE

I have always felt I was different. As though I was a mismatched puzzle piece. Everyone else seemed to belong to a great big puzzle and I was the lone piece that ended up in the wrong box. I just didn't fit. I drank to quiet the self-doubt, the voice in my head saying I was inadequate.

At my first AA meeting, I was welcomed with open arms. As I began *(continued on pg. 2)*

AREA 86 FOCUS

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These articles deal with current topics of interest within Area 86. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and may not necessarily reflect those of A.A. as a whole, the Editor or the members of the Area Committee.

UNITY, RECOVERY AND SERVICE *(continued from pg. 1)*

to listen to the shares of others, I felt validated and understood. This was one of my first experiences of unity. Recovery began. A fellow AA told me I looked different than when I came into the rooms. I felt seen. They told me I looked happier. There was a light behind my eyes, and for the first time in a long while, I had hope. I had begun to respect myself enough to know that I deserved better than the way I had been treating myself.

My first experience of service, I almost declined. But something in me told me to say yes. I got to give back a little bit of what was freely given to me. I continued to say yes to opportunities that arose. I volunteered to share my story on this newsletter. If my experience can touch even one person's life, that is enough for me.

AA is teaching me how to stay sober, but most importantly, it's teaching me how to live ❦

A grateful alcoholic, Jenn S.

COMING BACK

A year ago, I returned to the program, and it is a whole new ball game. I have learned many important lessons from my failed attempt at the program previously.

I have learned my ego and laziness cannot get in my way. When I was in the program before, I helped a bit with coffee and with the telephone answering service. My biggest mistake was stopping attending meetings and not going as often as needed. I have learned my lesson the hard way. For me, being of service at any level is necessary. Many times, I may feel tired or too comfortable on the couch, not wanting to go to a meeting but helping with coffee, setting up tables and chairs or anything to help is a sure way to ensure I get to my home group.

Service in Alcoholics Anonymous keeps me engaged, accountable and being there to help others. The commitment and being a part of fellowship keeps me at the meetings. I need the meetings and as much as I can be unwilling to go to her is never a meeting that I do not have a good change in mood or overall, all sese of peace. Life is a reset for my whole well being.

I am committed to keeping my service In AA for my future well being. I am sharing my experience, volunteering at the round up and any other areas I can. I need to be accountable; I need to be involved. Without hits, I will not have the same involvement in and will lack in my program. I want to keep my sobriety. If all I must do is get active to help me stay focused, keep on the right path and make beautiful healthy relationships in fel-lowship, then I will not waiver from this promise of service. It also shows new people that it is a good adventure to follow. Without people in service, I would not have had this program to come back to for help and for that, I am grateful.

No matter how big or small of a part I can contribute, service helps me stay here!

Tammy B. District 23

DRY DRUNK

If you have read any of my previous submissions to the Focus you would see a trend. I have a great love of service, as I see it in a lot of ways saved my life in sobriety. In case you have not read them, the short and skinny of it simply put is that at just shy of ten years I was drifting back to my old ways, I hadn't been regularly attending meetings, I wasn't working the steps and I wasn't talking to my sponsor. I was not drinking, but I really couldn't call it sobriety either, I had become a dry drunk.

My sponsor and I got to talking and he suggested I come to an Area meeting which would be in Cambridge, very close to Kitchener. I agreed, and arrived early for this meeting, not knowing what to expect, having never attended an area meeting before. I never attended a district meeting either, but knew a little about them at that point. It was overwhelming, I felt so out of place there, no idea what was going on. It's hard now looking back to remember all the feelings I felt, but the ones that stood out to me and I recall easily now are the feelings of shame and guilt. See not long before I was seriously considering ending my life, that is why I reached out to Jeff, one last hope for something before going through with it. Interesting that wasn't even that long ago, almost eight years ago.

I felt guilt and shame because when I looked around the room at the DCM's Area Subcommittee Chairs and Officers, I knew some of them from my younger years in the program, and I could see with admiration who they were, what they were representing here for all of AA in our area. When I reflected on myself, in comparison, and I know we shouldn't do that but for me it was a needed observation; I realized how little I had contributed to AA in my recent years. I felt shame because I had wasted so much time, and guilt because I had given so little back. When I came into the program I was 19 years old, I had nothing to live for, barely a future and AA gave me direction, it gave me a higher power, it gave me hope. What had I been doing with it, something worthy I thought, but I was acting selfishly, with self interest and self will run riot. Wasted my potential I thought. That ignited in me something I haven't felt since my early days in the program. Back then I was very involved in service, Speaker Seeker for my group for a long time, on the website committee in Hamilton for years and even participated in the Public Information Committee. I was involved in my home-group, and I tried to stay engaged with my AA community, but over the years I fell away from that community and eventually stopped trying to fit into it at all.

The Area Committee Meeting (ACM) wrapped up, I got my sandwich Jeff promised me and it was time to go home, I'm not sure if we grabbed a coffee afterwards or what exactly, but I remembered leaving with a specific goal - Contact my district DCM and join a committee. So I did, it took some time to track Nancy W. down, since I had never attended a district meeting before, I had no idea who the DCM was, but I found her and reached out and asked to join the Website committee, and there was a catch - I had to be the Web chair. Not what I was expecting, but I stood for the nomination, and from there realized if I wanted this to work I had to join a group, get active in it and work on the steps with my sponsor. Which I did, and continued to do. I worked hard, giving back, eventually coming back as Alt GSR, and then GSR, and then Archives, and the Virtual Tech during Covid for Area 86 and my District. Then I stood for Alt-DCM and now I have the privilege and honor to serve as DCM... So I have arrived, right?

Well, maybe not. I have been thinking about this a lot lately, what was the goal? Was it to be DCM, like those at the ACM, because if that is the case I am done, but looking back I pause and consider, what was the goal? Service was the goal, to be of service was my desire. So being DCM although is a

(continued on back cover)

Continued from pg. 1 *One day at a time*, I have healed physically, mentally, and spiritually because of this God given programme and fellowship. A few evenings ago, as I sat in a circle with friends and members at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, the three legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service were honoured. It is as simple as that ❧

– Kathy H.

(continued from pg. 3)

great honor and privilege is just the next step. To me, Unity, Service and Recovery are summed up in how I live today, in AA. Today I focus a lot on my service, which in turn gives me my recovery, but also acts as a reminder that if my recovery falters, so will my service. District meetings are not always roses and butterflies, there are difficulties, there are challenges, but this is a community of people, and people are flawed - I am flawed. Service for me, brings me to my people. Whether it is my home-group which I am active in, or my District meeting which I chair and participate in, or my Area where I represent my district, and everything in between, whether it is speaking opportunities, or workshops, or celebrating my fellow members on their birthdays or taking someone through the steps or sponsoring their growth in service. I am extremely busy with AA, in all aspects of my life, the good and the bad.

My wife, Elizabeth, isn't one of us, but she bends over backwards for our people, she sacrifices for our people and she celebrates AA. To us, AA keeps me who I am and for that, AA is everything to us. I just recently celebrated seventeen years of sobriety, and I am reminded that at age nineteen, I should have died - and AA saved me, it gave me a life worth living and now as a result, I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out, I want the hand of AA always to be there and for that I am responsible. I asked her before I stood for Alt-DCM, if this was something she was committed to, both of us knowing this could lead not just to the next four years of service in our district, but potentially many years at the area level. She asked me if Service would help keep me sober, I said yes, and she said that she is ready for however many years of service comes our way because my sobriety was what was important. Today, I thank my higher power, my wife, my sponsor, my service sponsor and AA as a whole for the life I have. Not perfect, not without difficulties, but in its own way a truly blessed life. I hope I can serve my district well for these two years, and continue with my service at the Area level, but I also know wherever I end up, I will serve ❧

DCM District 2, Area 86, Panel 74

- David N.

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE 2025 A.A. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION!

Make plans to attend the **2025 A.A. International Convention** *scheduled in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.*

Taking place once every five years, the A.A. International Convention marks the anniversary of Bill W.'s first meeting with Dr. Bob and the birth of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935.

A.A. members and their families and friends from around the globe attend the event.

At the International Convention people attend meetings, workshops, dances and events. A highlight of the convention is the traditional flag ceremony to celebrate sobriety worldwide.

Vancouver will welcome A.A. members from around the world for the 2025 International Convention. This will mark the 90th anniversary of the beginning of our Fellowship's founding.

The International Convention will take place from **July 3 – 6, 2025,** at the Vancouver Convention Centre and BC Place Stadium.

For more information go to:
https://www.aa.org/international-convention

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