



THE MAINLINE

OCTOBER 2016

Greetings,

We write you as representatives of Heroin Anonymous World Services (HAWs). This informational bulletin's purpose is to increase communication between the groups of Heroin Anonymous throughout the world.

A MESSAGE FROM THE HAWs CONVENTION LIAISON

HAWs is now accepting applications for the 2018 World Convention. If your area is interested in submitting a bid, please download the application and guidelines from the Convention section of the HAWs web site. Also, you can e-mail us with any questions or comments at haconvention@gmail.com.

MEETING SPOTLIGHT

"Hope Dealers" Group - Vancouver, WA

Hope Dealer's meeting of HA is held in Vancouver, Washington. We meet every Monday from 7:00 pm – 8:00 p.m. and Thursdays from 8:30 pm - 9:30 p.m. Our first meeting was held on June 2, 2016 and it was very powerful. Around 20 people were in attendance. Portland, Oregon H.A. members came in support of Vancouver's first H.A. meeting. Hearing people speak in gratitude for the fellowship reaching their town is what the 'Big Book' speaks of in 'Working With Others'. From that one meeting, it has grown into two days a week and 30 or more attend weekly. Our Secretary finds a speaker and they share for 10 minutes. Then, a topic is given and discussed by the group. Tim, our G.S.R., says, "I hope that Hope Dealer's will serve as an inspiration to others. Suffering heroin addicts need to know that they are not alone in this fight and that there is a solution that works in the program of Heroin Anonymous!"

- Cecilia T, an H.A. Member in Vancouver, WA.

A MESSAGE FROM THE HAWs ARCHIVES CHAIR

The HAWs Archives committee is responsible for collecting memorabilia from past HA events in order to document and catalogue HA's history. If you have flyers (paper or electronic), t-shirts, pens, or other items you think might be good to be stored by the HA Archives committee, please reply to this e-mail and the bulletin committee will direct you appropriately. Thank you for helping up preserve the history of our fellowship!

Contact HAWs Bulletin:

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CARRYING THE MESSAGE

Hi, my name is Catherine and I am a heroin addict. Although I have been removed from the grips of heroin since 2010, on January 30th of this past year, I came crawling (and crying!) back into the rooms. I had spent years removed from twelve-step fellowships and, after a year of drinking, I was closer to a needle than I was willing to admit. I knew that I needed to return to the spiritual solution that had previously saved and changed my life.

Having recently moved to Dover, New Hampshire, I began looking online for meeting lists and resources. I was shocked to learn of the fellowship of Heroin Anonymous — something I'd never heard of — and that there was a meeting every day of the week in my area. I promptly made it to the Tuesday night "More Than A Score" group (the state's first HA meeting) and made it my home group. I was delighted to find a wonderful fellowship, but most importantly, a really strong message, centered on

the solution and the twelve steps.

Our group has multiple commitments at Hospitals & Institutions (H&I) where we continue to spread the message of HA. It is an honor for groups to be invited into these places and represent HA. I believe that H&I meetings are critical. When I reflect back on my multiple trips to detoxes and psychiatric units, I recall attending a few meetings here and there. At that time, coming from a small town in Indiana, I was one of just a few admitted heroin addicts in the facilities. I was desperate to change my life but struggled to relate to the messages I heard at meetings inside hospitals and institutions.

Since that time, I have had the privilege to share a message of experience, strength, and hope with other addicts at H&I meetings across New England. Before going on my first commitment at a detox, someone said to me, "If you keep doing what you're doing, you never, ever have to step foot in this place as a

patient again. You can leave and live as freely as you wish." Every time I share at a jail, detox, or half-way house, I try and focus on that very freedom that the 12 Steps and HA as provided in my life.

I also think that H&I commitments and meetings are so crucial because they could very well be someone's first exposure to the fellowship of Heroin Anonymous. A lot of times we toss around plenty of jargon, sayings, and acronyms. H&I meetings allow the space to break these things down and really explain the basics around the first few steps, how we live a life without suffering today, and how to practice the principles and traditions. As individuals and as a fellowship, we are told that spreading the message is vital. I cannot think of a more powerful place to be of service and do God's work than with other heroin addicts in hospitals and institutions.

- Cat R, of the "More Than A Score" Group in Dover, NH.

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RUN AND DONE: ONE HEROIN ADDICT'S STORY

Let's face it: we all know how to do heroin. I want to take the time to talk about how I was able to stop. I grew up in a model household with my father, my stay-at-home mother, and my little sister. To most, it would seem that this environment, combined with my capabilities in school, would yield a productive member of society. Unfortunately, no one saw that I had an affliction deep inside which would keep me chasing suicide one dose at a time. I began using heroin around the age of twenty through my naivety of the nature of some pharmaceuticals. This was the beginning of a run that lasted twelve years and cost me everything but my life. Being a scientist, I thought that science had the answer and I took Subutex for over two years. Still, I felt as though I wore shackles. I quit the high dose of Subutex "cold-turkey" and detoxed for about thirty days. This was the worst experience of my life and I thought that was normal for a detox. I swore I would never go

through that again and that I did it through willpower alone, knowing nothing of 12-step programs. Seven months later my ego caused me to relapse. I attended an annual camping trip and a voice in the back of my mind told me, "one time won't cause me to be physically addicted", so I began using again and, sure enough, I was fine the next day. I thought I had figured it out! What I did not know was that once I made that first excuse, more were sure to follow. Rationalization, justification and masturbation are the three ways we screw ourselves and I was a professional. I went on a relapse that lasted twice as long as my original run because the memory of those dreaded thirty days were unbearable. I think that sometimes we addicts don't realize we hurt more than just ourselves. We use people's love for us as a weapon against them.

The greatest crime one can commit against themselves is not growing to their full

potential. Finally, I admitted that if I was ever going to do something with my life, I had to change. I had a first step experience years before I began 12-step programs but I did not know anything about step two. I moved to Prescott, AZ, without knowing it was a Mecca of recovery, and I entered treatment. If I am not living in God's will then I haven't really surrendered. I reached out for my Higher Power's help and he answered by granting me a scholarship by the treatment center I was sleeping behind. I had to learn that patience was an act of faith. While having a safe place to learn what has worked for so many others, I was too afraid not to do my steps. The steps are like explaining how heroin feels to a non-drug-addict. You can't understand unless you actually do it. Though many fail, daunting statistics are not my problem. Only I was able to decide whether or not to stay sober.

- Ian F, an H.A. member in Prescott, AZ.

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H.A AGNOSTICA

Our Step 2 offers two prescriptions: that we express only a willingness to believe in a God of our understanding and that we lay aside prejudice (Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 46). I have grown to understand the latter to mean that we lay aside prejudice against spiritual terminology, prejudice that might otherwise handicap our development in recovery. Instead of resenting one person's use of the word God or another's reference to the Divine, we should "be quick to see where religious people are right," and even "make use of what they offer" (Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 87). After all, one alcoholic recounted in his personal story that he had to ask himself, "Who was I to say

there is no God?" (Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 56).

Of course, this kind of reasoning can also undo itself. Although I agreed with the above alcoholic when I first began my recovery from heroin 16 years ago, in time I eventually found myself reversing the question: "Who am I to insist that there is a God?" I soon had to exercise the prescriptions of Step 2 here, as well, and ask myself to lay aside prejudice against those who had no spiritual terminology at all, who had no spiritual beliefs, and who relied on no Higher Power. They had as much a desire to stop drinking and using mind-altering substances as I therefore, according to Tradition 3, they had the same right to membership among my fellows as anyone else had.

Who was I to say that they were wrong?

I grew to see the profound—if unintended—humility behind the Second Step. Expressing a willingness to believe was how I got my start in recovery, but exercising a willingness to let go of that belief when changes in my spiritual outlook demanded that I do so, this was how, at around 10 years sober, I entered the phase I call long-term sobriety. For me, discerning and applying the underlying principles in this way does not take the Big Book out of context, but it expands that context. Even more so, it is that very underlying principle of humility that it protects.

- Bruce C, an H.A.
member in Shanghai, China.

If you would like your meeting featured in our meeting spotlight, or have any other content you would like to submit, please feel free to contact us at the email listed. Thank you!

- Heroin Anonymous World Services Board

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