



# THE MAINLINE

AUGUST 2017

*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.*

## HAWC18 UPDATE: HOTEL SECURED, REGISTRATION OPEN!

It was another exciting month in planning for the Heroin Anonymous World Convention! The hotel contract for the convention has been finalized, and registration is now open for attendees. The figurative golden shovel has been thrust into ground for the convention, which will take place at the Holiday Inn Airport - Portland!

The contract includes a 150-room block for guests and meeting rooms for workshops or speakers. Registration is now open for the convention, the price for a room in the block is \$100 and a convention pass is \$35. You can register for a room or pass by visiting [www.HAWC18.com](http://www.HAWC18.com) (or the Convention tab of the HAWs site). Be advised, the Holiday Inn website cannot let rooms be booked more than a year in advance, so the link won't recognize our discounted room rate until September 2nd.

Members of the steering committee set up a booth at the Arizona Area HA Convention and brought back to Portland the experience, strength and hope of prior world convention planners. The world convention continues to move forward and it is a wonderful opportunity to be of service. More developments will come to pass in the months ahead, so stay on the edge of your seat, the world convention is coming and it will be amazing!

- Scott H., Treasurer – HAWC18

## I KNEW I HAD TO GO

Meeting Spotlight: Hope Dealers – Vancouver, WA

I wasn't quite sure what to expect the first time I walked into a room of Heroin Anonymous. I had gotten clean in the rooms

of a different 12-step fellowship and that helped me put together about a year and a half. I first heard about the Hope Dealers

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meeting of Heroin Anonymous through some friends on a recovery-based support page on social media. I was glad to see that finally, HA had come to Vancouver. I knew I had to go.

Hope Dealers started with the support of our friendly neighbors to the south, the HA fellowship in Portland, OR. The first couple of meetings boasted more Oregonians than Washingtonians, but that trend quickly reversed as word of HA in Vancouver spread. For the first 4 or 5 months we met once a week, every Thursday night. Soon there was enough local support to add a second night. We now meet Mondays and Thursdays at 3400 Main St. at 7pm.

During the first couple of months, attendance fluctuated between 6 and almost 30. People from many different 12 step programs began to make Hope Dealers a regular stop. We started to build a real home group...the building block of the fellowship. In the early days when the meeting was over, everyone would take off and go their separate ways. The only conversations were had on the way to the parking lot. Now we have members showing up early and hanging out after the meetings

to talk about life outside of recovery. We have a friendship that grows stronger each week.

On June 2, 2017, Hope Dealers celebrated its 1 year anniversary. In that time we have hosted people of all ages and walks of life. Most of us came from different fellowships, but for some, this is their first exposure to a 12 step program. One thing that binds us together is the knowledge that we've all been through the same strife. The names and faces may change, but the struggle is the same. Hope Dealers has lost a few members along the way, but not all were to relapse. We were lucky enough to be a part of one man's recovery who had spent the first 66 years of his life loaded, but the last 3 months of that life clean and sober.

Hope Dealers is a great meeting that just keeps getting better. We look forward to seeing this fellowship grow and are glad to be a part of it. We hope to be an inspiration for others to start more Heroin Anonymous meetings in Vancouver and around the State. If you're in the area, stop by and see us!

- Tim S.

## ARE YOU DONE?

Personal Story: An HA Member – Phoenix, AZ

I remember the first time I tried an opiate. It was OxyContin. I recall thinking to myself, "I want to feel like this all of the time." I couldn't have possibly imagined where that thought would eventually bring me. The drug filled the lonely void in my heart. Periodically, OxyContin was unavailable and I learned what it meant to

be physically reliant upon an opiate. Eventually, OxyContin simply got too expensive and too scarce. I heard that heroin was basically the same as OxyContin except cheaper and more readily available, but to get it I would have to put myself in some potentially dangerous environments. I did so without hesitation.

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Shortly thereafter, buying heroin became a daily occurrence. I turned to shooting it with syringes and began to steal to support my addiction. I manipulated those around me and condemned them when they separated themselves from me.

For the next few years, my life revolved around collecting money to buy heroin in the most sordid neighborhoods of Baltimore, MD, Washington, DC, and Richmond, VA. Sometimes I was able to pull together a few hundred dollars but that was rare. Typically, each day was a struggle to obtain just 20 dollars. By that time, I was not really getting high. I was simply trying to avoid withdrawal, an endeavor that seemed nearly impossible. I was physically emaciated and mentally crippled.

I often contemplated and took steps toward quitting. Here are some things I tried in order to stop, none of which worked: I tried only smoking pot. I tried only using stimulants. I tried only drinking. I visited therapists and psychiatrists. I took antidepressants, antipsychotics, and anti-anxiety medications. I joined the military and endured a year-long deployment in a combat zone. I attended a six-month rehabilitation center, graduating with commendations from the staff and the offer for me to return as an employee. Eventually, though, I would up being overtaken by that empty feeling in my soul. It drove me back to using no matter what I did.

Eventually my luck ran out and I was arrested again. While in jail, I swore I would never use heroin again. When I got out, I had a devastating experience. I had convinced a friend to let me sleep on their couch. Although I knew they used drugs, I simply didn't have another place to go. I asked for them to provide me a sober place

to stay and, to the best of my knowledge, they did. When I arrived, I sat down on their couch and unexpectedly said, "Let's go get high". Inside, I was dumbfounded. I didn't want to use. My mind raced with, "Stop, stop, stop, turn around, just leave", but my body did not oblige. This was the first time I had ever used heroin while my mind was entirely against it. That was the moment I realized that I had a death-sentence. It did not matter whether I wanted to use or not use. The fact was that I was going to get high. There was no saving me.

About a week later, I got a call from a distant relative in Arizona. They asked if I would like to come live there and I rudely hung up the phone on them. My mother called me a short time later, whom I had not spoken to in some time, and told me she had purchased me a one-way plane ticket to Phoenix. When I asked what was in Phoenix, she told me that there was a free rehab there but it was "kind of for homeless people". When I asked why she was doing this for me, she said, "Because I know you are going to die and I need you to be on the other side of the country when that happens". She had given up on me just like I had given up on myself.

I knew, deep down, that I would use again, but I also knew that I had to build up some resources to do so. It wasn't that I necessarily wanted to use. That didn't matter anymore. I was going to use regardless. I had lost the power of choice in the matter.

I accepted the offer and flew to Phoenix. My distant relative drove delivered me to the rehab. I did as the rehab told me. I flew under the radar best I could. During my stay, I was introduced to 12-step fellowships. The people shared familiar

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stories about drug use, but they always concluded with the exclamation that they followed a set of instructions out of a book, called Alcoholics Anonymous, and they were able to stop using and be happy at the same time. I knew then that they were different than me. Not only was I unable to stop, but I certainly could not find happiness without heroin.

The rehab required me to find one of them to be my sponsor. When I did so, the individual asked, "Are you done?" "I have no idea", was my reply. I thought that this was, perhaps, the wrong answer. In the past I had always said, "Yes!" whether it was the truth or not. He gave me a cigarette and told me that he was going to read the book Alcoholics Anonymous with me. My sponsor assigned some reading and writing tasks to me on a weekly basis. I completed them because the rehab called him periodically to make sure I was following his guidance, otherwise they would punish or expel me.

One day, I was sitting in a common room, just before bed, and realized that I felt fine. "Fine" – perhaps the most mundane, unexciting state of being. I imagine that for most of the population of this planet, feeling "fine" is entirely insignificant. For me, however, this was a revelation. I didn't want to kill myself or anyone else. I wasn't sad, angry, depressed, or lonely. I was *fine*. I

couldn't help but think about the message I heard in the 12-step meetings, that these drug addicts simply performed a set of actions outlined by their basic text, and their lives miraculously got better. Perhaps it was the work I had done in the program that caused this contentedness.

That was the day I realized that heroin could be replaced by recovery. It was about 10 years ago and I continue to put forth effort in Heroin Anonymous to maintain my peace, serenity, and sanity. The steps I took, and continue to take, are nicely described in the book Alcoholics Anonymous. I pray, meditate, inventory my thoughts and actions, and sponsor others. As a result of making these efforts a priority, I have achieved far more than I ever expected.

Today, I can be a good employee, partner, son, brother, grandson, mentor, and much more. The requirement, however, is that I put my recovery first. Everything else falls in line as my higher power's plan unfolds. I am grateful to those who have had similar experiences and work in the fellowship beside me. I hope that my story is a testament to the existence of a higher power in itself. It certainly is for me.

-A member of HA in Phoenix, AZ.

*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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