



THE MAINLINE

OCTOBER 2017

Greetings,

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

EARLY-BIRD REGISTRATION IS KICKIN'!

2018 World Convention Update

We just wanted to write a quick note and let everyone know what we've been up to out here in Portland! Early registration is going great. Fellow heroin addicts from as far away as Ohio and Pennsylvania have registered! We've been tearing up a bit ;-)

The folks on the registration subcommittee have put together an incredibly seamless, online registration portal. Super fast to snag your \$35 registration, but also plenty of additional options for banquet and entertainment add-ons. If you plan on attending but are not yet sure about dropping the big bucks on the "Baller Package", we'd love it if you still grabbed your basic \$35 registration. Simply come back later, login to your created account and upgrade when your next payday hits! Visit www.hawc18.com and follow the links.

On another note, we've started putting together designs for the t-shirts and other convention swag. What we could use your help with is picking speakers! If you, or a heroin addict you know is interested in being one of the main speakers, please get in touch with us at haconvention@gmail.com. They'll get back to you with some steps for capturing and sending a sample meeting-share for the committee's consideration.

PROBLEM SOLVED

Meeting Spotlight – Rochester, NY

In Rochester, New York, the number of deaths due to heroin overdoses is at an all time high, particularly among younger addicts. It has become routine to hear of several deaths within one week. After the

death of someone particularly close to many people in the recovery community, a handful of us who got sober through another 12-step program got together to discuss what we could do. We knew

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something had to be done. Heroin addiction has never been "safe", but it has recently evolved into an even more deadly epidemic.

This group of about eight of us met at the house I share with my husband and sat in our living room for a long talk. A few months prior, the first HA meeting in Monroe County, named *Bangin' Recovery*, had opened its doors. We talked about starting a meeting in Rochester, as it was clear there was a need. We contacted HAWS, reached out to the folks who started *Bangin' Recovery*, and brainstormed amongst ourselves. Within a few weeks, the first HA meeting in Rochester began. We named it the *Problem Solved Group*.

Our hearts overflowed with God's grace when we ran out of chairs to seat over 100 heroin addicts who showed up at the first meeting. It was clear that God had a plan for Rochester HA, and that we were on the right path. A local recovery workout facility houses our meeting at 1035 Dewey Ave, Rochester, NY on Tuesdays at 7:30pm. We made flyers, placed an ad in the paper, printed business cards, and created a hotline. It didn't take long for treatment centers and halfway houses to hear the word and send us even more suffering heroin addicts in search of the solution. Our meeting consists of a speaker for 30 minutes followed by a topic discussion. We have several service positions such as meeting secretary, group conscience secretary, literature rep, treasurer, coffee makers, membership chair, sponsorship chairs, set up, clean up and greeters.

Our group is growing, and currently consists of roughly 30 home group members with 80-100 attendees at the weekly meeting. Many of us have some time in sobriety and have been through the 12 steps out of the AA big book, but we still need more sponsors to reach the massive influx of newcomers. We found a way out of our suffering from heroin addiction and it is our primary purpose in life to be able to carry a message of hope to the heroin addicts who still haven't found an answer. Between our speakers telling their stories of experience, strength and hope, and our sponsorship chairs linking up newcomers with sponsors to get them started on their journey with the steps, people are beginning to feel hope. You can feel it as people start to get excited about recovery, and think maybe this thing can work for them when nothing else has. I love Heroin Anonymous and owe my life to the 12 steps, and I am so grateful HA has come to our community.

Bangin' Recovery has moved from Geneseo to Rochester on Mondays, and a third HA meeting, *Hope Fiends*, has begun on Wednesdays. A few of us are in the process of forming a local intergroup and getting involved in public information work. I am very excited to see what the future holds for HA in central New York. "But for the grace of God, there would have been thousands more convincing demonstrations. So many want to stop but cannot. There is a solution." –Big Book pg. 25

- Nicole P.

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OUT OF IDEAS

Personal Story: Larry L. – Crownsville, MD

My name is Larry L. I am a recovered heroin addict. My first experience with recovery was in 1980. I was 19, and given two options: prison, or a long-term therapeutic community. I chose the community. I spent 18 months with about 40 others under the “break ‘em down and build ‘em back up” psychological treatment plan. With 4 years over my head if I didn't complete the program, I went home on a weekend pass. The compulsion to drink hit me and I was defenseless. I don't remember anything about that night.

You see, in this community, there was no mention of the 12 steps, God or powerlessness. The person who went in was the same person who left, more or less. After that slip, I went into a deep depression. I just didn't know what was wrong with me. I soon ran into an old friend who introduced me to the solution to my misery. King Heroin. I had arrived.

I went into my new addiction with complete abandon. Everything we do to maintain our habit, I did, every day. I was a slave to the drug. Several years later I had exhausted my options again and checked into another long-term treatment program. Here is where God got my attention. I now believed in a Higher Power.

It took two years to complete that program. After graduation night I went home to my mother's to spend the weekend and visit. The next morning I borrowed her car, went into Washington D.C., and bought some heroin. The compulsion to use hit me

again and I was defenseless. In those two years at that treatment program, the 12 steps of recovery and the disease model was never mentioned. We were solely focused on the spiritual. I had no clue what I had set off by using again. It took over 2 years of using for me to hit that place of loneliness and demoralization until I walked into my first 12-step meeting.

In November 1989, a friend took me to a meeting in another fellowship, where I encountered two friends I had used with in the past. They had each been sober almost two years. A light bulb went off in my head, a prayer was answered; finally, I was where I needed to be. My 12-step journey had begun.

I was amazed at how good I felt. For the first time in my life, I was clean and sober without being locked away somewhere. Like it says in our book, I found the fellowship I craved. Unfortunately, that's about all I found. There was no talk of step work, spirituality or God. Sponsorship was simply someone to call who gave you advice. Over the next 25 years, I would get anywhere from 3 to 5 years sober by using my willpower, the fellowship, and service work. Inevitably, something like a surgery or injury of some sort would happen, and I found myself once again defenseless against pain medicine. I simply had no power. Being the kind of addict I was, these instances all led to relapses which lasted anywhere from six to nine months at a time. I would find myself in that familiar lonely,

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demoralized state of being after each relapse. I would tell myself I needed to stop feeling sorry for myself; that I needed to get to meetings and get back to what I had done before because I saw it working for others.

Finally, in June 2016, I reached that low place again, but this time it was different. I had run out of ideas. I was at a place of absolute surrender. As I detoxed at home, I reached out to a new sponsor. I chose someone who used the Big Book with his sponsees. I picked up a Big Book, which I hadn't picked up in over 20 years. I began reading it from the beginning. I can only tell you that sometime in the next 30 days I experienced a complete psychic change, a spiritual experience like I never felt before. I was reborn. My entire attitude changed concerning recovery. I quickly did a fourth and fifth step. The things in my mind that had been blocking me had to go. I started attending different meetings and listening to recordings of speakers doing workshops on 12-step work. I always remember the old saying that if you didn't like the meeting you were in, go start a new one. That wasn't my plan going in, but that is what happened. I sent away for a starter kit to HA in April 2017, and received it a week later.

There were no Heroin Anonymous meetings in the area I live. This is a completely new fellowship here in Crownsville. Just about everyone in recovery

is firmly entrenched in another fellowship. Our meeting started July 8th, 2017, and we are called the *Deadly Serious Group* of Heroin Anonymous. We meet on Saturday nights at 6:30 at SSRC in Crownsville, Maryland. We are a big book study group, and we read through the first one hundred sixty-four pages. On the first Saturday of the month we acknowledge anniversaries and we have a speaker. We average about 12 to 14 people per meeting. Most of our members are not new. They are people looking for something more out of their recovery because they find it lacking just as I did for those many years. Around here the open discussion meeting dominates. We are sparking people's interest in the Big Book.

I'm sad to say we have met some resistance, often from people with 30 or more years. They say things like, "Heroin Anonymous is awfully exclusive, isn't it?" This is just like any other fellowship, however. Our primary purpose is to carry the message to addicts who suffered the same way we did, in terms that are relatable to them. I need and strive for a fresh experience. I can't live off what happened 30 years ago or 30 days for that matter. Today I am thankful that I was able to hear God lead me in your direction.

- Larry L.

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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