



H.A.W.S. **MAINLINE**

Heroin Anonymous World Services
Monthly Bulletin

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This informational bulletin's purpose is to
increase communication between the groups of
Heroin Anonymous throughout the world.



JANUARY **2021** ISSUE



Photo by *CURTIS HYSTAD*

WE NEED YOUR **UPDATED MEETING INFO**

HAWS Announcement

To the fellowship of Heroin Anonymous,

The HA World Service Office Board just wanted to extend a friendly hello and wish everyone a happy new year! As 2021 kicks off we are excited to watch the continued growth and perseverance of our fellowship. As we continue to watch the health and safety guidelines, the World Convention Committee has steadily continued to put together

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this event scheduled for August of this year. Be sure to check the <http://heroinanonymous.org/> website for additional information.

With the rapid transition of many meetings from in person to online and back to in person, there is a growing number of meetings that have inaccurate information on the website. Homegroup members can reach out to the webmaster at hawswebmaster@gmail.com with updated meeting information. This allows us to keep our online meetings updated and helps those who need a meeting to find a meeting. Accurate information on the website is paramount.

Lastly, there are still open positions on the WSOB. If you are interested in hearing about the positions please email hawssecretary@gmail.com for more information. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing many of you in Atlanta later this year.

Sincerely,

Adam D.
HAWSOB Secretary

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ATL CONVENTION MERCH **IS HERE**

World Convention Announcement

The Heroin Anonymous World Convention occurs every two years. The original 2020 World Convention was scheduled to be held in August of last year in Atlanta. However due to COVID-19 the convention was postponed for a year and is going to occur in August of 2021. The underlying benefit of a World Convention is to help unite Heroin Anonymous throughout the United States. Individual members and

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Homegroups travel from across the nation and come together in a weekend long event that promotes Unity throughout the fellowship. The total cost of putting on a world wide event is \$55,000.

In order to generate the financial funding needed to put on the World Convention, the fellowship has done several things:

- pre-registration and registration fees
- selling merchandise
- selling tickets to the buffet
- contributions from various groups and areas

The "A Way Out" group in Alabama celebrated their one year anniversary with a special event that resulted in them being able to contribute just under \$1,000 to contribute towards the funding for the 2021 World Convention! Amidst all the COVID-19 restrictions, their group was one of the first in their area to be allowed to meet back in person.

The primary purpose of the event was to unite H.A. members in the area however with the convention committee in need of money for the World Convention, they planned a carnival themed event to help raise money.

Three hours before their homegroup meeting they invited HA members to come and play games and eat food. The group made white t-shirts and tie-dyed them. They sold these before and at the event, and had a booth where people could ty-dye their t-shirt themselves for ten dollars. They had several games such as a cake walk, cornhole, pie in the face, and balloon pop. Of course there was good food too.

Throughout the night they were accepting contributions for the convention. They ended the event with an amazing speaker, Brooklyn G. from "Smack Talk," in Alabama. Overall they collected \$500 from T-shirt sales alone and \$300 from games and individual member contributions.

The Heroin Anonymous World Convention committee is currently selling merchandise with the proceeds going to fund the World Convention. They have sweatshirts and tank tops.

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If you are interested in purchasing one you can contact:

- **Drew: 770-940-9258**
- **Chris: 205-215-9841**

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SURRENDER

Personal Story: Tori S. – Birmingham, AL

I'm Tori, and I'm an addict of all things addictive: heroin, cocaine, pills, alcohol, food, men... anything I could get my hands on to change the way I felt. From early childhood, I felt like something was off about me. I never felt like I fit in anywhere, not even in my own family, and I hated myself. Experiences I endured as a child led me to believe my worth came from my body and what it could do. Isolation and escape became my ultimate goal in life.

As soon as I hit middle school, my drug and alcohol addiction took off. It was the only thing I felt like I was good at, so there was a sort of pride in it. I was 17, angry, and unwilling when I was first sent to treatment. I didn't understand how anyone could have the audacity to take away the one thing I'm good at, my only coping skill. Needless to say, it didn't stick. When I found heroin, I realized I didn't need anything or anyone else anymore. Heroin was my lover, and anything else just got in the way. I thought life was good. For a long time I was the master of disguise, and from an outsider's perspective, my life looked pretty normal. I even became a nurse. I paid my bills. I rescued dogs.

We all know that facade never lasts. It wasn't long before I lost total control of my life. I was no longer paying my bills. I lost my job. My apartment looked like a tornado had run through it, and I eventually lost my nursing license. Three treatment centers later (and multiple relapses), I was introduced to HA. I'll be honest, I did not feel "at home" when I first started going. My self-esteem was in the trash. I was still angry and unwilling, and I didn't think I was capable of being sober. I thought, "What's the point? Nobody shot dope like me." I only looked at the differences between me and everyone there. I sat in the back and played on my phone, didn't talk to anyone, and left immediately after. I stopped going. My last relapse ended with a failed suicide attempt (my second attempt). I felt like a failure because I couldn't even be successful at killing myself.

After that, something woke up in me. I started to realize that maybe I wasn't meant to die yet. Something was keeping me here. I went back to HA with a new perspective. These were my people. They endured the same horrors that I had. I was so tired. I finally realized that sobriety was something I could have too.

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In two weeks, I will have one year sober. I've graduated sober living for the first time, and I'm working on getting my nursing license back. I actively participate in my life today instead of just existing. Through working the steps, connecting with a higher power, and for the first time connecting with people, my self worth has grown. I

let people get close to me today. I have actual relationships for the first time in my life. None of this would be possible without the fellowship. My experience has taught me that anything is possible. And I am worthy of it. We are all worthy of it.

- Tori S.

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IT'S NOT ABOUT ME

Personal Story: Buddy – Birmingham, AL

I'm Buddy, and I'm a heroin addict. I'll sum up my childhood really fast. I was born in Tampa Bay. My dad split, and my mom ended up behind bars until I was 10. I never felt like I was truly a part of any family unit, and I was a perpetual victim to my day-to-day life from a young age. I was always looking for something external to try and change the way I felt, whether that be food, video games, soda, whatever. I always had chaos in my head. I think the first time I got put on a psychiatric hold was in 5th grade.

I graduated a drug abstinence program in 5th grade, and smoked weed the first day of 6th grade. Shocker. I liked how it made me feel

different, so I drank in 7th grade. I liked how that made me feel, so I did an opiate for the first time in 8th grade.

That first time I did an opiate, it was like a huge sigh of relief. All of the chaos, the feeling like I didn't belong, the self-hatred, the hatred of the world, the feeling like a victim, ALL of it disappeared with one massive release of dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin. And I knew I never wanted to NOT feel like that for the rest of my life.

I was a couch-hopper at best after high school. I ended up meeting with an old high school drug buddy, and

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he introduced me to shooting dilaudid. In less than a week, I was shooting heroin. I would slowly fail upwards in restaurant jobs, getting fired from one, just to get a higher paying one. I got a job that paid enough for me to rent an "efficiency" hostel in downtown St. Petersburg. The toilet was in the same room as my bed. I was making about a grand a week, and scraping change to make my \$90/week rent.

When I failed to pay rent two weeks in a row, my "landlord" evicted me. I only had a backpack full of clothes to my name and healthcare from my family, so I went to rehab for the first time. That was a joke. I dicked around the whole time and didn't take it seriously. I was high the day I got out and got fired from my job for getting high in the bathroom.

At that point, I was back on the couch hop. I gradually started doing worse and worse things to get a fix. In the throes of my addiction, no opportunity was forbidden, and that continued to spiral for the next three years. I eventually got to the point where I was sleeping outside, looking over my shoulder for police constantly, and I couldn't even give plasma because I was diagnosed with HIV after getting a life-threatening kidney infection.

The opportunity came to move out of state, and I took it. I was miserable, but I still wasn't done. After moving to Alabama, I had a good six months of screwing around to do, but then I had my first step experience.

The last time I got high, I had all of the ideas in my head that I was done and never wanted to do it again. Though I put myself in the position to be around it, the second it was in front of me all of those ideas went out the window. I couldn't help myself. When I woke up the next morning, I really didn't have anything in the way of consequences, but I had a cliché moment when I looked at myself in the mirror. I realized that there was nothing I was going to be able to do on my own to quit shooting dope. No matter what, my thinking and my actions were so unmanageable that they would drive me back to it every single time. I finally gave in; I was done.

My second step came through other people I saw working the program and watching their lives change. I knew that they did what I did, and this thing worked for them. I saw tangible results, and believed that if I worked this thing, I would at least get SOME results. My third step helped me let go of my expectations. I have no idea where I'm going to end up, what trials will come my way through life, or what love I will find, but if I let the reigns go to the "unfolding" of life and work the steps, no matter what happens, I will come out on the other side with my feet on the ground.

My fourth step helped me open my mind to the past. I had strong ideas and misconceptions that drove my actions for a long time, and until forced to lay them out on paper, never considered any other

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perceptions. It helped me accept things I had never even paid mind to. In my fifth step, I learned how vitally important it is to be absolutely transparent with the people I my network. Even still today, that transparency and open-mindedness keeps me from making mistakes and helps me learn from the mistakes I still make today.

The sixth step helped me become ready to let go of the fears that drive me, and the seventh step taught me humility in two very important ways. For one, I can't get rid of these fears on my own. I need help. The second is that I WILL act on out them, but the important thing for me to keep in mind, for myself, is every mistake is an opportunity to learn. If I learn from my mistakes, I can accept them without justifying them.

In eight and nine, I faced some of the harms I caused with action. I never realized how much my own harms held me back until I started facing them and doing what I could to make them right. It helped me accept who I was then and understand who I am today.

Step ten gives me step-by-step instructions on how to deal with fear, resentment, selfishness and dishonesty on the spot. I don't do this perfectly, but the more effort I put in, the better I get. Step 11 gives me a daily routine, at night and in the morning. In my experience, routine really helps bring normalcy into my life, and the more often I incorporate that

routine, the more entrenched it becomes in my life. The more often I skip my routine, the less effect it has on my day-to-day life when I do practice it.

Step 12 has been the most impactful on my life. I try to practice these principles, and I try to carry the message to the still sick and suffering heroin addict. I sponsor men in the program that say they are willing to go to any lengths to change their lives. Although sponsoring has been a powerful experience for me, service work has proven to be a much more effective means of carrying the message. I got involved with service early. It immediately expanded my network and gave me new work to focus on. It put me in contact with people who understood the traditions, and could teach me the different levels of service structure, paving the way to me getting involved with service on a World level.

Service work is fun for me. It keeps me involved, and I've met awesome people from all over the country who help me stay sober. They teach me how to go about carrying the message properly and how to apply these principles in my day-to-day life. Without those people, I wouldn't be sober today. I only have the program, the higher power 1, and the people in my network to thank.

Thanks for letting me share.

- Buddy

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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 haworldbulletin@gmail.com.

Thank you!
The Folks at The HAWS Mainline



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