



THE MAINLINE

MAY 2016

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.

A MESSAGE FROM THE HAWWS CONVENTION LIAISON

As we move closer to the second half of 2017, it appears Portland is fired up for the 2018 World Convention! The steering committee has organized and created subcommittees, which are currently hard at work mapping out the nuts and bolts of the Convention juggernaut. The first of a series of events geared toward raising funds for the convention will be held on April 29, a high stakes bingo game bookended by a speaker meeting and raffle. Artwork and a theme for the Convention will soon be finalized. Check back next month for more about the turning of the wheel and the spinning of the web--same addict time, same addict channel.

ONE HEROIN ADDICT'S STORY

Michael L. – Taylorville Correctional Center

My name is Michael L. and I am a grateful recovering addict. I am the Secretary for the 'Healing from Heroin Addiction' group of Heroin Anonymous at the Taylorville Correctional Center in Taylorville, Illinois. I became the secretary just after H.A. meetings started here in July 2016.

Although heroin is not my drug of choice, I have personally struggled with other opiates. My experience with 12-step programs started

when I was very young. When I was seven or eight, my aunt would let me help set-up 12-step meetings and I would get a donut or a cookie for helping. I come from a family where both my parents were addicts and alcoholics. Coming from that background, when I was taken in by my aunts as a child I was taught about the twelve steps and the danger of drugs and alcohol.

I did not first use drugs or alcohol until I was in my early

twenties. For me, social acceptance and the need to feel included was my motivation to start. I made it almost to thirty before my addictive behavior got me in trouble with the law. Although drugs and alcohol are not the cause of my incarceration, I can say with absolute certainty that I would be a free man if I had taken my family's advice and addressed my addictive thinking and behaviors before they became a major problem for me.

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I am just under 2.5 years into an 8.5 year sentence. I am very fortunate to have been granted a transfer to Taylorville minimum security facility, after only 20 months in a medium security prison. The last facility I was at did not have a thriving 12-step program.

Because heroin is so stigmatized, even in prison, we did not have many open and outspoken heroin addicts in our 12-step meetings. Because of this

fact, and because of my good organizational skills and experience with other opiates, I was asked to serve as secretary of our H.A. group. I was fortunate to be brought into the 12-step family here by Curtis L. He is our GSR and coordinates our 12-step programs.

Since we started H.A. here we have had a great response from the inmate population. Many men have started to open up about their struggles with heroin

addiction. I firmly believe we are providing members with the skills, acceptance and support they need to stay alive. Everyone I know here knows at least one man who has died from an overdose of heroin within hours of his release from prison. Like all H.A. groups, we serve so that no one has to die from this monstrous epidemic.

- Michael L., Taylorville Correctional Center

ONE HEROIN ADDICT'S STORY

Curtis L. – Taylorville Correctional Center

My name is Curtis L, and I am an inmate at the Taylorville Correctional Center in Illinois. I am serving a 10.5 year sentence for making meth. I have 8 years in and 2.5 years left to serve.

I am an alcoholic and addict who first found recovery through another 12-step fellowship. I attended my first meeting in prison on 3/20/2010. That is my recovery birthday, although I have been clean since my arrest on 1/30/2009. This is my sixth prison sentence. Every time I get arrested it is

because of drugs and alcohol, either directly or indirectly. I know the only way I can stay out of prison is to remain clean and sober. This is what lead me to recovery.

I transferred to Taylorville C.C. on 11/14/2012 and I was happy to hear there were 12-step meetings here every week. Since I had almost 2 years of 12-step experience from the other prison, I was asked to chair a month of meetings. This was my first experience doing service work. I enjoyed reaching out

to the addict that still suffered. I also learned that addicts and alcoholics had a lot in common. I became the secretary of our group right after chairing meetings. In 2014, I was able to get another meeting started. The agreement I made with the Chaplain was that I would be the chairman for that meeting for the first year. After the year was up, I became the secretary for both meetings.

Knowing what a big help meetings were to the addicts here in prison, I wanted to

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expand our meetings to include Heroin Anonymous. In July of 2016, we had our first H.A. meeting. This meeting is held the third Monday of each month from 6:30-8:30 PM. Our first meeting had about 20 inmates attend. I chaired the first couple of meetings, until I found someone to take over the chairman and secretary positions. I have always taken care of all correspondence for the 12-step groups here as the GSR, so I started writing to HAWS for materials and meeting format information.

The thing I kept hearing from heroin addicts was how so many of their friends had died from overdoses at such young ages. Many said that they had not been arrested but rather rescued from their addiction. Being locked up long enough to gain some clean time we could never have gotten in the free world gave us the opportunity to start life over in recovery.

I have 7 years of recovery clean time as of March 20. This date is also my oldest daughter's birthday. We haven't had contact since my incarceration began over 8 years ago. Just recently, my

mother was able to get permission to send me my daughter's address so that I could write her for the first time in 8 years. I am awaiting her response now.

In the 7 years I have been in recovery, I have become very active in service work. Although I am in prison, I am able to help newcomers find recovery through the meetings available here. I attend orientation meetings for new inmates, let them know about our meetings, and share how 12-step programs saved my life. I know that our Heroin Anonymous meetings are saving lives, because heroin addicts face death daily in active addiction.

I have no idea how many lives I have touched through my service work, but I do know how much damage I did through my life of addiction. I am glad to be a part of the solution and not a part of the destruction I caused in the lives of everyone who loved me or called me a friend. Doing service work makes me feel useful again, like my life has purpose and meaning even here in prison.

So many of our members have such sad stories to tell when talking about their past lives, but to hear the hope that comes from finding recovery and a new way of living makes all the service work worthwhile. Almost every heroin addict can list the names of people they know who have died from heroin. Still they're unable to quit using, even though they know the next hit might kill them. That is when you know that you are in the grips of a disease that kills the same as cancer or a heart attack. No one voluntarily signs up for cancer, yet addicts will take the next high that might kill them.

Our meetings are open meetings, so anyone can attend. We encourage all members to work the 12 steps, and we have a certificate program to reward those members who complete each step. We also give certificates for perfect attendance and have clean time certificates because we are not allowed coins, chips, or key tags in prison. This has been very successful in attracting and retaining new members.

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We never know when someone will hear the message that will save their life, so it doesn't really matter what brought them into the program, like a certificate, as long as they come and listen to what is being said in our groups. I attended my first 12-step meeting in prison so I could visit with my nephew who was in another part of the prison. Seven years later, I

am still in recovery. I am learning how to live life clean and sober without ever having to use again. There is a saying I like, "When the pain of remaining the same becomes greater than the fear of change, surely we'll let go."

I am proud to be a part of Heroin Anonymous meetings here at the Taylorville

Correctional Center. Just knowing that we could be the first prison to hold H.A. meetings was humbling. To be a part of the history of H.A. and its efforts to reach out to addicts everywhere is an honor.

Grateful in recovery,

- Curtis L, Taylorville
Correctional Center.

ONE HEROIN ADDICT'S STORY

Ty C. – Taylorville Correctional Center

My name is Ty C., and I am a recovering heroin addict. I am 25 years old and have been using heroin since I was fifteen. I am currently serving a 3 ½ year sentence in the Illinois Department of Corrections. I have 30 months left. I have been attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings here, and I am the chairperson for the in-house Heroin Anonymous meetings.

I have been incarcerated numerous times. Each time I was released, I went right back to using again. The first time I was in DOC, I did not have an option of attending meetings of any kind, so my mindset never really changed. I told myself that I would not use upon release, but I never took any action to

further my recovery. As a result, when I got out I went right back to it.

After a year of heavy using, I was back in jail on a serious robbery charge. After I was sentenced, I was sent to Taylorville Correctional Center in Illinois. I will spend the next 4 years of my life here as a consequence of my heroin addiction. After being at this camp for about six months, another inmate convinced me to attend an NA meeting. I knew that they held these meetings here, but I just kept blowing it off.

The first couple of meetings I attended, I fell back and listened to everyone's stories. That's when I realized that these people were just like

me. Everyone in those meetings was a great person. They were just enslaved by their addiction, which caused them to do things they wouldn't normally do. Just like me.

After attending a few meetings, I had a brief stint in segregation and was moved to another side of the camp. This is where I met Curtis L., another person who fell victim to his addiction, but he was actually doing something about it. He is the G.S.R. and the 12-step Coordinator here at Taylorville C.C.

I told Curtis my story and he suggested that I be the Chairperson for the new H.A. meetings at Taylorville. He also suggested that I start working

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the 12 steps from step working guides. I thought it was a great idea, so I started working the steps and chaired my first meeting. After the meeting, I felt something I haven't felt in a long time: a sense of purpose. I felt like I was finally doing something to

help others who were just like me.

I realize that without these meetings and without these steps I will fail in my recovery. I will continue to work these steps and continue to do service work. I will not be who I was as an addict. I would like

to bring H.A. to my hometown and the surrounding areas, because if I can help save just one person's life and put a dent in the heroin epidemic, then my struggle was worth it.

- Ty C., Taylorville
Correctional Center.

FIRST EVER HEROIN ANONYMOUS WORLD CONFERENCE

Dear members of Heroin Anonymous,

We are happy to announce the first ever Heroin Anonymous World Conference, to be held in Phoenix, AZ at the annual Heroin Anonymous Area Convention, August 11-13. In contrast with a convention, where the main purpose is to raise funds and create unity within the fellowship, the goal will be getting a true group conscience from the fellowship as a whole.

The conferences in other fellowships have focused on topics such as the creation of new literature, upcoming conventions, PSAs available to the fellowship as a whole, recognizing new areas/districts, readings and traditions. The new Heroin Anonymous World Service Manual, guidelines for recognizing Areas, and singleness of purpose are but a few examples of potential topics of discussion at the H.A. Conference. In addition to the vast wealth of information to be disseminated, this conference will serve as a platform to set up for the first face-to-face conference in Portland in 2018.

This is the first time Heroin Anonymous will gather the necessary input from groups around the world to form a true group conscience. We are calling on all Areas to participate in this important event. We will be recognizing individual states as areas, whether they have hundreds of meetings or just one, so any members of the fellowship are encouraged to call in regardless of what state you are from. A designated representative is not required for each to state to be recognized as an area, though your participation is desired if your state has the structure in place to do so. Without you, a true group conscience may not be possible. Come be a part of securing the integrity and stability of Heroin Anonymous for years to come so we may continue to grow and carry the message to the still suffering heroin addict.

If you would like more details please email Sharmyn T. at hawsconferencechair@gmail.com.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

In Love and Service,

Sharmyn T.

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H.A. CHIP COST INCREASE

Attention, fellow heroin addicts! We have some good news, and some (relatively) bad news. We'll spare you the decision-making process and lead with the good news: Heroin Anonymous is experiencing a renaissance, and growing exponentially. One meeting starts in a city, and the recovery is just so good, it spreads from the city to the suburbs to rural areas, and a single star becomes a constellation. Visitors from other cities like it so much, they bring our brand of recovery home with them, and these constellations

begin to make up a whole solar system. Beautiful, no?

H.A. World Services plays a pivotal role in this growth, sending out start-up packets to any new meeting that makes a request, free of charge.

These packets include key tags and IPs, which provide newcomers with motivation to keep coming back, as well as the information that will help them stay. Heroin Anonymous has been growing so fast, however, and our night sky is lighting up so quickly, that it can be difficult to keep supply on par with demand.

This is where the (relatively) bad news comes in. As of April 2, 2017, our **chip cost is increasing from \$.30 per chip to \$.40 apiece**. With the additional funds generated, we can continue to reach the suffering addict in ever darker corners of the universe. For less than the price of a cup of coffee, just pennies a day, we can improve the lives of heroin addicts all over the world. Cue up the Sarah McLachlan, buy a key tag, and you too can sponsor someone's recovery!

Donations from groups directly to HAWS are vital to the growth of H.A. With your contribution, HAWS can continue providing startup kits to new meetings all over the world completely free of charge. If you're reading this bulletin on an electronic device, click <http://heroinanonymous.org/donate-and-finances/> to be directed to the donation portal. No contribution is too small! Heroin Anonymous World Services Board.

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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