



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.



MARCH **2021** ISSUE

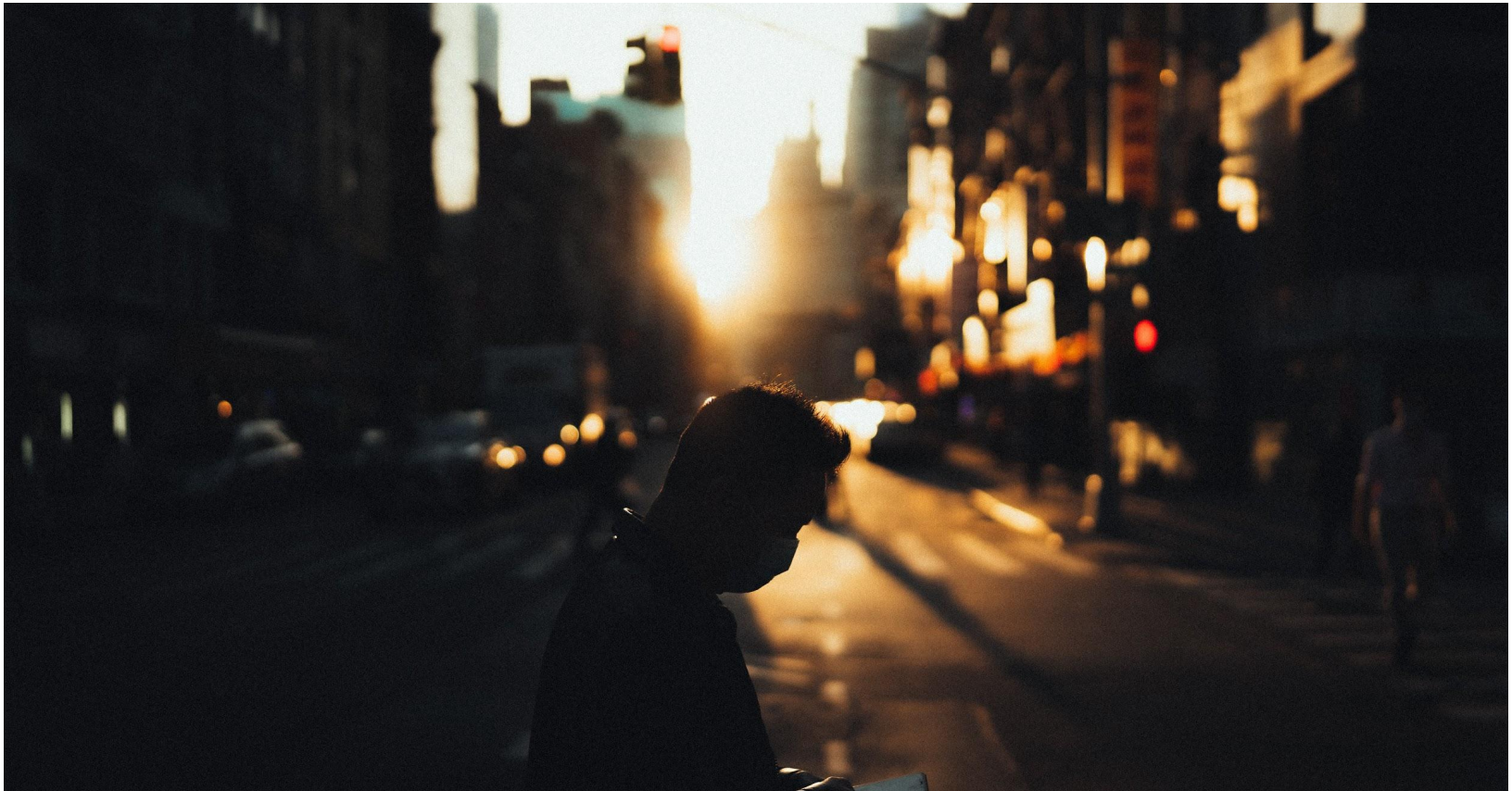


Photo by Lerone Pieters

NEWLY FILLED & **OPEN BOARD POSITIONS**

HAWSOB Update

Greetings from HAWSOB!

We have had many exciting changes recently with new advisors, Adam D. being elected Chair and Pat B. taking on secretary. We look forward to meeting all of you in Atlanta this August. If you are interested or know of any qualified people that would like to join the HAWS board we are currently looking for:

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- (2) At-large Voting Members
- Non-Addict Advisor
- Vice-Treasurer

Please send service resumes and inquiries to: hawssecretary@gmail.com

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WE BUILT IT, **AND THEY ARE COMING!**

Mainline Trend: Multiple Requests for H.A. by Public Community Databases

We have exciting news:

Over the past month municipalities have reached out to Heroin Anonymous, completely independent of one another, asking for information to add to their respective public community resource databases.

One one occasion, "2-1-1 United Way Community Database", a 100 year old community resource database serving Toledo, Ohio, reached out and requested up-to-date information on local contact info for Heroin Anonymous that they could make searchable within their platform.

On another, we were informed of a new effort being undertaken by the Arizona Department of Corrections of Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR), in partnership with the Inside Out Network (ION), to establish a free, online, multi-user platform re-entry resource for ex-offenders. Heroin Anonymous was encouraged to consider joining.

Both of these platforms indicate not only a strong need for Heroin Anonymous as voiced by the public, but also **a clear sign that our philosophy of "attraction rather than promotion", as dictated by our 11th Tradition, is WORKING!**

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For those of you involved in the CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community) efforts of Heroin Anonymous worldwide, you know well how difficult it is for a young fellowship to make inroads with public institutions. The lack of visibility (because we don't promote), the lack of credentials (because we are non-professional), and the lack of affiliation (because we are not endorsed and do not endorse) preclude 12-step organizations from leveraging traditional public relations techniques.

We really only have one strategy: do good work for the still suffering heroin addict...and hope word spreads.

And today dear fellows, I am ecstatic to report that the good work has begat a trickle of unsolicited public demand. Far from a surging flood, of course, but a big win all the same.

So, back-pats all around friends! Take a deep breath and know it's working; we are helping, we are making a difference, and we are being seen. It is true: spectacular achievement is often preceded by unspectacular preparation.

But our work is not done!

Let this small snippet inspire and educate. There are many more community resource platforms like these *right in your backyard!* Connecting and inquiring about their community's needs is what attraction is all about. Being easily discoverable for a time when the need arises is our aim.

Hit 'em up!

Good luck and godspeed,

Aiden F.
Mainline Chair

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SOBRIETY: THE FRUIT OF MY SUFFERING

Personal Story: Dalton L. – Birmingham, AL

As the child of an alcoholic mother, I've been familiar with the disease of addiction my entire life. Even as a child, I can recall the strong urge for my mind to be quieted. My first attempt to make that happen was around the age of 14 when I started cutting myself. I've always considered self-harm my first drug of choice. While it wasn't a substance, it changed the way I felt for a brief moment, and that was enough for a while.

I started drinking when I was around 15, getting black out drunk the very first time I drank. Depression and anxiety were in my face on a daily basis at this point, as I was without a solution and certainly without any form of community. Therefore, my solution became drinking as often as I could, and my community became a group of friends who wanted to stay as fucked up as I did. We would go camping where we could drink and smoke weed without consequence just about every weekend. Psychedelics and pills found their way into the picture, and I was having the time of my life. Then came the crown jewel, a line of heroin combined with some benzos. I was a senior in high school the first time I tried it and quickly chose this combination over any other aspect of my life. Any ambitions I had, any ideas I had about my future were quickly

steamrolled by the chase. I failed my senior year due to the fact I was only going to class one or two days a week.

By the age of 18, I had convinced a doctor I was suffering from panic attacks and was met with a bottle of 90 valium on a monthly basis. I would take several valium, do some heroin, and the intense desire to kill myself would subside for a couple hours. This way of life, of course, brought about a series of consequences. Anyone who I considered a friend wanted nothing to do with me at this point. The only people I saw were those with whom I would share my drugs.

After selling weed to support my habit, I was arrested at my home. At the age of 19, I spent a couple days in jail and experienced my first intense detox. My father bailed me out, and I went to treatment for the first time. I wasn't ready to quit and was overwhelmed by that same intense desire to escape my reality. I didn't stay sober for very long, ultimately relapsing with a girl I met in outpatient treatment. I had one beer at a party, which turned into 15 beers. I stayed drunk for the next four days and quickly returned to smoking weed again. I bought two roxies, and to my surprise, didn't get as high as I

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wanted to, so I bought some heroin too. For the next year and a half, I did heroin everyday. Snorting wasn't working anymore, so I started shooting it instead. I began having seizures after my dealer would run dry on his xanax scripts, placing me in the hospital a total of 4 times. I was so tired of being awake, being a human being.

On August 9th, 2017 at 20 years old, I decided enough was enough. I took some klonopin and shot as much heroin as I could afford in an attempt to end my life. I successfully overdosed, but my plan failed. I woke up to the bone chilling sensation of narcan, met with both of my parents standing over me in a hospital bed for the 5th time. I was asked to go to treatment and something inside of me was inspired to try something else. I went to a 90-day program that allowed patients to go to outside meetings. My eyes lit up when I saw "Heroin Anonymous" on the meeting list, and I went out of my way to attend as often as I could. I would sit in on the Thursday night book study fascinated by the literature being discussed. I got a copy of the Twelve and Twelve and was enthralled by the new path that had been laid out before me. I found a man whose life resembled structure and freedom and asked him to be my sponsor. He met with me weekly as we embarked on a beautiful journey that would ultimately lead me to a relationship with a higher power. I was given freedom from a deadly

obsession that asked me to discard any semblance of my morals.

Today, I have the opportunity to be of real use to the people around me through sponsorship, service, and H&I. I feel a real sense of purpose and direction in my life now that I have a relationship with something greater than myself. For the first time in my life, sobriety has allowed me to be part of a community of men and women who show me compassion and love on a daily basis. I cannot claim that this way of life has freed me from pain, but I can say that today, I have a practical and realistic solution to every problem I'm faced with. And when I'm not strong enough to handle that pain alone, I have a strong network of friends to whom I can turn for the strength to overcome any challenge. I have a daily practice of prayer and meditation that allows me to be present and show up for life. I can forgive myself when I fall short of my own ideals and humbly reconcile my actions with amends. I'm astonished that life has continued to become more enjoyable as time goes by. The 12 Steps do not ask a whole lot of me to maintain my sobriety and freedom. On a daily basis, I simply try to talk to my network, strengthen my relationship with my higher power, and be useful to another person in some capacity. This program has never asked me to do what my addiction asked me to do to stay high.

- Dalton L

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UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Personal Story: Zach A. – Rochester, NY

I often hear people say, "I never wanted to be addicted to heroin and homeless." Well I wasn't like them. I felt like such a loser growing up that the idea of continuing my simple, boring, monotonous life seemed a waste. I saw something attractive in the role of the outcast, degenerate, drug addict. The idea was exciting to me. Most of my life, I have considered myself a guy with pretty good ideas, so when I look back on this, I see a person bordering on insanity.

With that being said, my name is Zach, and yes, I became a homeless, hopeless, dope fiend. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. For a long time, I did not get on board with the idea that I was a "heroin addict." At least not by the definition I received from people in 12-step programs. Sure, I may have been using more than I ought to, money was tight, all my employers had been unjust, and life was just kicking me in the nads, but that was all circumstantial. Clearly, I had been making poor decisions. It didn't mean I was as bad as you guys.

I loved going to meetings for a time at the beginning (and by beginning, I'm referring to a time when I was interested in changing my circumstances, not changing myself). I smoked free cigarettes. They made

coffee way too strong (just the way I like it), and I could justify why my life wasn't so bad. I came to compare. Whether I knew that at the time, I highly doubt it. I wasn't like you, I would say to myself. "Clearly you are incapable of surmounting obstacles that life presents you. You are weak. You're a quitter. You shoot dope, I only sniff it. You've overdosed, I haven't. You're worse than me in these ways, so I'm not a heroin addict, I'm a heroin connoisseur. I may have problems, but I can solve them. I am creative, vigilant, determined."

As my drug use progressed and my circumstances became worse, I exerted myself more. "I am a man! I will find a way to make this work. There must have been a domino out of place. I'll set them up correctly this time, and these things will get better." I said these things and rightly felt I had done my best. Still, my circumstances got worse. I picked myself up, dusted myself off and created a new plan. And I fell again, and things still got worse. It truly is amazing how strong my will for success over my difficulties was. I don't think I believed there was another way. I made countless attempts. Combining various methods of treatment I had prescribed for myself: Mental health treatment, detox centers, inpatient,

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short-term, long-term, outpatient, moving away, changing my phone number, burning my bridges, quitting my job. And sure, those things did make it difficult to get heroin, but they were never enough to keep me stopped.

I got to a point where the idea of being a "regular person" again had been accepted as something as unrealistic as the tooth fairy. In fact, I had more belief in the tooth fairy than any form of normal life for myself. I would continue getting worse. I would build up my life in the few months I was occasionally able to put it together, then tear it down with the inevitable relapse. I was living in relationships with people who once cared about me and witnessing their complete loss of faith in me. I felt like the walking-dead. There was no saving me. The only cure was a shot through the brain. I was an empty shell of a person. My will to surmount my obstacles had dwindled to a nearly nonexistent level. Hope was gone.

It's amazing that despite my belief that nothing could help me, I made it to a meeting of Heroin Anonymous my first day out of jail. Maybe it was just for the coffee and cigarettes. I had experienced some serenity in the past from what was likely a spiritual experience as a result of working the steps, so at

the meeting I asked three consecutive gentlemen if they would sponsor me. These actions I took felt so mindless. I took them with no expectation of staying sober. My sponsor told me to do something, and I did it. All resistance was gone.

We worked the steps in a matter of a couple months, and there were many suggestions I found myself taking. I didn't judge how they may help me or why; I just did them. Things were getting better in my life, and I had made very few decisions for myself. I made it to a point where it was clear that my decisions got me high, not always right away, which made it difficult to spot. The credit for my continued sobriety was not mine to be proud of. I was under new management, taking direction from those more qualified than me. What a concept. Surrender to win. Allow a god I don't believe in, but that I am willing to believe in, direct my life. My opinions, as the soundness of the plan that this program offered, became irrelevant. My experience had provided a solid testimony to what is possible through the steps. Despite having come to scoff, I'm grateful for this solution and that I remained to pray.

- Zach A.

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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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