



THE MAINLINE

OCTOBER 2019

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.

PRE-REGISTER FOR THE WORLD CONVENTION

HA World Convention Update (August 28-30, 2020 in Atlanta, GA)

The 3rd ever HA world convention is set for August 28-30, 2020 in Atlanta, Georgia!

If you take some time to pre-register now, you will save yourself \$10! The registration link can be accessed here: <https://heroinanonymous.regfox.com/heroin-anonymous-world-service-convention>

We are looking forward to having you here!

POSITION OPENING: START-UP KITS CHAIRPERSON

HA World Service Office Board Update

The Chips and Literature committee of HAWs is seeking resumes for the "Start-up Kits" chair.

This position includes a sobriety time suggestion of 2 years. The responsibilities for the Start-Up Kits Chairperson are as follows:

1. Responsible for checking and maintaining communication with the hastartupkits@gmail.com account at least once a week.
2. Maintains a prudent inventory of start-up kits for distribution at the request of those seeking to start a new meeting.
3. Creates and maintains data of new meetings started using the "HA New Meeting Start-up Form."
4. Reach out to new meetings 3 months after their creation to provide continued support to the groups.

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5. Responsible for packing and shipping the start-up kits to their respective destinations on a weekly basis (Approximately 4-6 start up kits a week, however this is slowly increasing with the growth of our fellowship)
6. Works with the chips and literature committee through attending monthly business meetings.

Added bonus if candidates have a computer and printer. Interested parties should submit their service resume to h.a.w.s.literature@gmail.com by November 21st.

Thanks for your service,

HAWS Chips & Literature Committee

DYING TO LIVE

Personal Story: Kaitlin H. – Acworth, GA

I'll never forget the first time I used heroin. I was sitting in an apartment with a friend of mine who used it, and I was overwhelmed with curiosity. I had seen people use heroin and knew a lot of my friends that had fallen victim to the trap it set, but I had never wanted to try it until that day.

Suddenly the pain pills I had been addicted to for years were harder and harder to find. I tried to substitute the high I loved with a mass of other substances, none of which filled the hole that pain killers did. That night, I made a choice that would change my entire life. I remember asking if I "could try it just once, and I'll never ask again."

He was hesitant to give me any, but I pushed and pushed until he gave in. He laid a line out on the table for me and ran to the store, almost in a shameful way. It's like he knew what the future held for me and that my first experience would soon become the love of my life, as it was for him.

I saw it and was excited, not a hint of nervousness or contemplation. I rolled up a dollar bill, placed myself into a comfortable position, and leaned in to snort my first line of relief. I was overcome by the feeling it gave me. I knew at that moment "this is it."

This WAS it. This was what I had been searching for with each high before it. I was finally empty. This was only the beginning for me though. I woke up the next morning and immediately begged my friend for just a little more. He told me no, over and over again, but that was okay... because I knew where to get more.

It's hard to describe how slippery the slope was after that. My entire life was engulfed into a giant snowball effect, and I tumbled downhill to the blackness at the bottom more quickly than I ever expected.

Daily use happened for me almost immediately. At first it looked like I was able

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to get high and still manage to do everything in life that I needed to.

One day, I was low on money and decided that I wouldn't buy heroin that day - big mistake. This was the first time I got sick. It felt like my body was attacking itself without the drug. I became violently ill; I was throwing up anything I tried to consume. The pain in my abdomen had me curled up in the floor. My entire body ached with every shiver. I couldn't sleep. I felt like I could barely breathe. The worst part: it lasted for days.

I felt like I was dying and I couldn't understand why. I ended up in the hospital due to the pain and dehydration. That's when the doctors hooked me up to an IV bag with saline and then...Dilaudid. I had instant relief again and was ready to leave. This is the cycle I became stuck in. Get high, get sick, visit hospital to get better, repeat.

Amidst all of this, my life was crumbling. I wasn't taking care of my daughter or paying my bills. My house was a wreck. My job was hanging by a thread. My mental health was rapidly declining, but I couldn't stop. At one point, I tried to kill myself. I wanted to escape the pain box I had trapped myself in, but I could never find the latch to get out.

For two years, this was my "life."

My family tried to send me to treatment for the first time in August of 2015. The day after my daughter's third birthday party. *The DAY after my daughter's birthday party!* I was consumed that entire day with packing, trying to find a way out of going, and of

course, obsessing about how to get high. I ended up dragging my innocent daughter to stay with me in a treatment program for women with children. The pain I was causing her was not enough to make me change; after two weeks, I left, pulling her from a place of safety to go get high again.

I kept on and on, until I finally decided to do the first right thing I had in a long time. I sent my daughter to her father's on February 7, 2016. I told myself I couldn't drag her to treatment, but I needed to get help. I convinced myself and those around me that that was what I had to do to get the help I needed. I was so very wrong. My use continued escalating, and the only thing I had left to be responsible for and my reason for living, I sent away.

On February 28, 2016, it all changed. This night, I did too much. I did too much, and I stopped breathing. The people I was with called 911 and gave me CPR until the paramedics arrived. I was hit with Narcan twice, but it wasn't working. I went into cardiac arrest. They cut off my shirt and shocked me until I came back. I woke up in a hospital with my clothes in a plastic bag. I was recovering from a drug overdose and hypothermia. After a few days in cardiac ICU, I was sent to Summit Ridge Psychiatric Facility for ten days and from there to rehab for six months.

Finally, something was changing. I was introduced to an Anonymous 12-step program that has so gracefully saved my life. I found hope again. A new snowball effect took over, Recovery. I had cravings from time to time, heavily in my first year of being

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clean and sober. The fellowship and the program guided me as I learned how to live again.

My craving for the emptiness heroin gave me was replaced with hope and gratitude.

Today, my life looks very different. I'm over three years clean and sober. I'm the director of a drug and alcohol treatment facility for women in Georgia. I'm a volunteer distributor for Georgia Overdose Prevention. I'm the treasurer of a nonprofit organization missioned to help women with substance use disorder, and I'm months away from obtaining my Certification in Addiction Counseling. I'm also married with a baby on the way, and buying a house!

I still attend meetings almost daily and work to be of service to other addicts like me. My life is full today. The hole has been filled, and I can genuinely experience happiness.

I share this because, for a junkie like me, I would never have dreamed a life like this would be possible. For a long time, I didn't want it. I thought the world would be better off without me, and I couldn't stand to live in my own skin. I still battle parts of my disease, and I don't ever expect that to fade. The difference today is that I have a solution to my problems.

I didn't have a goal of becoming a heroin addict. I didn't intend on causing so much harm and pain to myself and those around me. I didn't picture my journey in life being the one it has been, but I'm grateful this is the life I've gotten to live. I'm grateful for my heroin addiction because it's a part of who I am, and who I am today is something I can be proud of.

- Kaitlin H.

CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE

Conference Experience: Eric O. – Phoenix, AZ

The second ever Heroin Anonymous World Conference opened with that time-honored tradition, a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. Our trusted methods of the process were presented: Robert's Rules of Order, The Traditions, and The Concepts.

Just like the first day of junior year in high school, the energy in the room was palpable. Just like the first year, but now all in attendance had a strong idea of why they were there. Each committee had been

working all year to develop the material they would come to present as the motions that would shape the future of HA.

The conference was made up of 48 delegates representing areas from all over the country. The areas in attendance were Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin. Heroin Anonymous had grown up; the days of Paul F. sitting in the Hope House in Phoenix with a

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couple of people trying to will HA into existence were long gone. The power of a worldwide fellowship had come into play, and the loving power of a Creative Intelligence was now speaking through the Heroin Anonymous World Conference.

This year, we formally voted in a "Parliamentarian", a great guy named Tom with 31 years of practice in the formalities of committee and conference work, to help guide us in the parliamentary process. He was deeply moved, as we all were, with how all the present conference members carried themselves through some very tough deliberation and hard decisions.

Each committee presented its best work and HA was reshaped by the motions made, discussions had, and motions passed.

Here are some of the highlights:

- The Mainline is growing and currently looking for more volunteers.
- Chips and Literature has seen significant growth and the addition of the 18-month chip.
- Prudent reserves were fairly steady this year over last.
- We paid and filed with a patent lawyer for the HAWS logo, which is now awaiting approval.
- We were granted permission from AA to modify and use their preamble.
- We passed our first conference approved pamphlets which were:
 - "Sponsorship"
 - "Higher Power"
 - "Who is a Heroin Addict?"
 - "Home Group"

It is with great relief to many that the Singleness of Purpose has been settled at the world level. As most know, this topic has rocked HA since its earliest days and has grown more tumultuous over the years as fentanyl, Medication-Assisted Treatment, and other issues have become ever more relevant. After many hours of passionate discussion, the vote went to a Singleness of Purpose more similar to AA. It leaves out the harsh wording from HA's original dialogue around the topic and goes the way of old wisdom, protecting the sanctity of HA while toning down seemingly hostile language that seemed to underlie the past literature on the subject.

What about the future? There were many exciting topics on the table for next year and the years to come. This year the conference voted to begin the process of creating a Board of Trustees for Heroin Anonymous, the earliest framework of this to be brought to next year's conference. There was discussion on a wide variety of topics on the future of HA, including potentially creating a Central Office for Heroin Anonymous someday. We're looking forward to seeing where God will take us in the years to come. *God will reveal more to you and to us if we stay close and perform the work well.*

The next HA World Convention will be in Atlanta, and the host committee there is putting in the work to throw one hell of a party. It's hard to touch the enthusiasm of the HA members in Georgia. Book your hotel and register soon! This is something you must not miss!

- Eric O.

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THE STRENGTH OF A FELLOWSHIP

Conference Experience: Melissa H. – Bend, OR

Being part of the second annual Heroin Anonymous World Conference was the most amazing experience I have had in my two years of sobriety. Coming from a town where there is only one H.A. meeting, my intentions were to learn a lot, observe, and take what I saw back to my homegroup, with the hopes of strengthening H.A. in Bend, Oregon.

However, that quickly changed, and a Group Conscience was taken among the delegates to allow me to participate and vote, since there was no one else present to represent the state of Oregon. Being able to contribute to the future of a very young, but rapidly growing fellowship was incredibly spiritual.

Knowing only a little and having never attended a conference before, I had no idea what to expect. Sober heroin addicts from all over the United States came together to take an informed Group Conscience on how H.A. can proceed to best carry the message to suffering heroin addicts. Delegates came equipped with the Group Consciences from their area and represented their area in a way that I felt made every voice heard. I got to see

firsthand how the top-down triangle service structure works.

We then divided into committees. The committees presented everything they had been working on during the year. I was absolutely amazed at some of the creative ideas that these heroin addicts came up with. I joined the Public Information Committee with the hopes of gaining experience in how to do PI work around Bend. I was surrounded by the “best and brightest” members of Heroin Anonymous, and I have never felt more at home.

After participating in the conference and experiencing firsthand what identification means, as explained in traditions three and five, I made the decision to step down from my involvement in another twelve-step fellowship and focus on contributing to the growth of H.A.. My heart is with Heroin Anonymous, and after witnessing how strong the fellowship is in other areas and the passion for this fellowship, I hope that suffering heroin addicts in Bend can one day feel at home in this fellowship like I do.

- Melissa H.

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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