



# 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.



# NOVEMBER **2023** ISSUE



*Photo by: [Kevin Graham](#)*

## **Greetings from Heroin Anonymous!**

Here is some information to help you stay up to date with all things Heroin Anonymous. For those of you Mainline subscribers that are new, the HAWS board is compiled primarily of H.A. members who meet monthly to tend to H.A. business throughout the year.

**2023 HAWS Conference:** The official 2023 Heroin Anonymous World Service Conference was held in July in Phoenix, AZ and was a beautiful collection of H.A. members representing 23 areas in 20 states. World Service Conferences are a time for H.A. members with different experiences and perspectives to come together to make changes to H.A. at the world level with the goal of improving H.A. as a fellowship.

For highlights of the conference, check out our previous Mainline issues or email [HawsOutreach@HeroinAnonymous.org](mailto:HawsOutreach@HeroinAnonymous.org) to learn more. Make sure that your area is represented at the next world conference in Buffalo, NY in July 2024! Speaking of..

**2024 HAWS Conference and Convention:** Want to celebrate Heroin Anonymous's 20th birthday? Want to get in on the action at the next conference or attend the huge H.A. World Party (Convention) in July 2024? Head to [heroinanonymous.org/convention/](https://heroinanonymous.org/convention/) for more info and begin to book travel to Buffalo, NY. Woohoo!

**Bookmarks/Merchandise/Art Request:** H.A. World Services has produced its first ever H.A. World merchandise... bookmarks! These limited-edition designs are available now at \$3 per bookmark. Head to [heroinanonymous.org/order](https://heroinanonymous.org/order) to snag some! We have a request for creative or artistic H.A. Members: please send any merchandise ideas or designs to [Merchandise@HeroinAnonymous.org](mailto:Merchandise@HeroinAnonymous.org).

**Virtual Meetings:** *Do you want to attend an H.A. meeting 1,000 miles away from your very own couch? Do you find it interesting to hear heroin addicts from another region share their experience, strength, and hope?* We have close to 30 active Zoom meetings in 10 different states. Go to our world website, click meetings, and click the link for online meetings. Make sure to convert the time zone! Email [HawsWebmaster@HeroinAnonymous.org](mailto:HawsWebmaster@HeroinAnonymous.org) if you notice any inaccuracies or want to add a meeting.

**HAWS Positions:** Looking for more involvement with H.A.? Then service with the HAWS board may be right for YOU! Our nominations committee is continuing to screen applications, interview, and recommend candidates to join the board. If you are interested in the following positions, please send service resumes, references, and inquiries to: [HawsSecretary@HeroinAnonymous.org](mailto:HawsSecretary@HeroinAnonymous.org).

- **Vice-Treasurer:** This position serves to support the Treasurer in all HAWS financial matters including budgeting, tax filing, supervising bank accounts, and assessing the financial status of this fellowship.
- **Non-Addict Advisor:** This is someone who is not a member of H.A. They may be an expert in recovery fellowships, non-profits, or possess various business skills that they wish to volunteer for the good of H.A.
- **Heroin Addict Advisor:** This is someone who is a member of H.A. This person will utilize their experience with H.A. and 12 Step service to advise the board.
- **Public Information Chair:** This position is for a member of H.A. who will work with public information at the world level. The efforts of Public Information can be best summarized as taking actions to increase the general population's awareness and accessibility of Heroin Anonymous.
- **3x At-large Voting Members:** This position is for new members to the board; its sole function is to show up and help us discuss and vote on decisions. Eventually, these members join other committees and may be asked to fill other roles. For example, for one of these spots, we are looking for someone with experience in intellectual property or literature writing.

In loving service,  
Anna A., HAWS Outreach Chair  
[HawsOutreach@HeroinAnonymous.org](mailto:HawsOutreach@HeroinAnonymous.org)

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## THE THREE PARTS

### Personal Story: Karissa C. Spiritual Gangsters Group, Green Bay, WI

Coming into the rooms of Heroin Anonymous was an interesting experience. Not only was I a very hard headed and stubborn person, but it also took a while for me to finally understand all of the Twelve Steps, not just the first eleven.

There had come a time in my recovery where I had felt like I was at a standstill. This was a little after I had reached the one year mark. I was brainstorming what could possibly be the problem. On paper it seemed I was doing everything right - working full-time, going back to school, chairing meetings, and meeting with my sponsor regularly. I had even gotten a new sponsor thinking that would solve the problem!

Looking back, I guess it did because one of the first times we met she asked me, "How many women are you sponsoring?" I told her, "None." Her reply was as blunt as it could be and she flat out told me I was being

selfish for not sharing what was so freely given to me. Turns out I had only been living in two parts of the triangle, and life was starting to become shaky. Unity (the fellowship), recovery (the twelve steps), and service (carrying the message) are the three areas that I need to stay consistent with in order to be whole. Since then I have sponsored multiple women, and it truly is the foundation stone of my recovery today, just like the book says.

By continuously paying it forward, carrying this message, and practicing these principles in all of my affairs, that seems to be the only right thing to do from here on out. I have a new perspective on life today, which is all due to the lineage of people that came before me in Heroin Anonymous and God.

-Karissa C.

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# MY PARACHUTE

## Personal Story: Justine E. Green Bay, WI.

Starting at the beginning, I had a rough childhood. My parents divorced when I was about four and my mother immediately jumped from one toxic relationship to the next. I was emotionally, verbally, physically, psychologically, and eventually

sexually abused by boyfriends of hers. One of them introduced me to drugs and alcohol when I was about 13. I fell in love with the ability to escape my reality. When I was 16, my mother introduced me to my first opiate after I sustained an injury. It was a prescription painkiller that neither of us had been prescribed and I abused those for over a year, selling myself to my dealer in exchange for them. Then I found out I was pregnant with my first child and settled down for a couple years. The little addict in me was waiting patiently for the chance to resurface.

I stayed mostly sober from the time I was 18 in 2012. I had three children, got married, and was "normal," going on random sprees of drinking and light drugging until 2020. After a series of unfortunate events like the end of my marriage, the loss of my apartment, moving out of my hometown away from family, and then the loss of my kids to their fathers due to my own naivety and fear. I still pushed through for a little while drowning my sorrows in alcohol but trying to get on my feet. I was working, I had a boyfriend, finally had a place to live, and got myself a car. I thought I was doing good, so what's the harm in having a little fun? Well, the little addict in me saw its opportunity. And in six months time I lost everything, including myself. I lost my job, I wound up

homeless again living in my car, and got arrested.

Any of these events would have made a normal person stop, but I'm not normal, I'm an addict, so I just got worse. Before long I didn't even have the car. My heroin dealer stole it. I knew something had to change, so I moved states and went back home. But the problem was never where I was or even who I was around. It was always me. I wound up worse back home and almost died a few times, but I still didn't get it. Why couldn't I just stop? I tried for my kids, I tried for my family, I tried for my friends. No matter what I tried to do, I couldn't leave the needle alone.

I went to rehab and for a while afterward thought I had it figured out. I was going to H.A. meetings, I had a place to live again, had a job, and got another car - all these outward material things that I thought would keep me sober. I even started seeing my kids again, but before long I thought I was doing well and I deserved to have a little fun. The mental obsession took over and I reignited the craving. I disappeared from the rooms for about a month and almost died again. So, tail tucked, I walked back into the rooms of H.A., but this time I started listening, and I heard things like, "Drugs weren't my problem, they were my solution." I didn't get it at first until I relapsed again. This time, it almost killed my best friend.

Enough was enough. If I was going to do this, I had to be willing to do whatever it took, so I returned to the rooms and started taking the suggestions. I got a sponsor, I

worked my steps twice, continued working Steps 10-12, and began the journey of fixing my problem, which was always me — my emotions, my unhealed traumas. I was mentally, emotionally, and spiritually bankrupt. I couldn't fix myself, alone. I needed to let go and let God guide me and help me heal. And I'm still working on it every day.

This isn't a thing that happens overnight. This is something I'll be doing the rest of my life. I found a fellowship and family in H.A. I got reconnected to my higher power through the steps, and I sponsor women and do what I can to be of service to others. I'm finally in therapy to help me process past trauma and help me deal with anything that may come up in my day to day life. My soberversary is June 16, 2022, and I've come an incredibly

long way in the last year. I never thought I'd make it, but here I am. And none of it would have ever been possible if it wasn't for Heroin Anonymous, the Steps, and my higher power. I don't know what God has planned for me, but I do know that thanks to this program, I'll be around to see it.

I don't have to free fall through life anymore waiting to hit the pavement. I took the suggestions and pulled the cord for my parachute. Now, as long as I don't cut the strings, God will guide me safely to where I'm going.

-Justine E.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MESSAGE, **NOT OUR MEMBERS**

### **Tradition Twist: Edrik F.**

The 11th Tradition reads, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

My perspective on anonymity has shifted as I've grown in sobriety. In my first year sober, I wanted to tell the world I was a recovering heroin addict, whether they wanted to know or not. I told my coworkers, my bosses, my classmates, even my mailman! I was proud and excited, yet naively inconsiderate.

I would go around collecting all the keytags from all the fellowships, and lining them down my belt loops. Soon afterwards, my friends started calling me "tails," as I whipped around my key tags when I walked.

One day I was asked to do the lead at a big H.A. meeting, and naturally I chose "humility" because I felt there was just so much others needed to hear about my experience with that principle. After the meeting was over, a more experienced member came up to me and said, "If you're so humble, then why do you need all those keytags to show off your sobriety?" Well, I sure got defensive, but as many 12 Step folks before me have said, "If you need to defend, justify, rationalize, or argue anything, then you're the one who's wrong."

He was right. For a long time, I thought I was an H.A. crusader by displaying my courageous keytags like a badge of honor. Even though it was out of good intent, I later found

that I had been discomforting others needlessly, breaking the anonymity of others without their consent, and even using my identity as a heroin addict to boost my pride and image... using H.A. for my own personal gain. Instead of allowing H.A. to speak for itself solely through the principles I practiced (attraction), I had been using H.A. to speak for my achievements while showing off my newfound love of the fellowship and telling people my opinions about it (promotion). I'm happy to say you will never see me wearing a "tail" today.

Since then, I've come to hold anonymity as a vital tool in carrying the message of Heroin Anonymous to the heroin addict who still suffers. In practicing anonymity, I can get myself out of the way so the message of H.A. can be heard more clearly. At the public level, it removes the possibility of using H.A. for personal ambition. It stops me from distorting the image of H.A. and allows the fellowship to carry its own message. At the personal level, it removes the wedge between me and you - supporting unity and connection.

As other 12 Step fellowships have found before us, public relations can be a challenging responsibility. With so many people in our fellowship (and so many opinions), not everyone in H.A. sees things the same way. If you're like me, then you love H.A. and it's hard to see it any other way. But what about people who have had no experience with us? We may be the only H.A. member someone ever meets. If the fellowship's public image was poor, how many potential members would be turned away and keep suffering? Our relations with the public must remain in good standing if we are to be effective in carrying the message to the heroin addict who still suffers - our primary purpose. One way I like to look at this is the way most people build reputations - not out of what they say about

themselves, but out of their actions and the praise of their friends. A good word from my girlfriend, family, and friends says more about me than any brag I might make. The same works for our fellowship at the public level. What the media, doctors, politicians, correctional officers, and community members say about us will carry our message further than an individual member would by becoming a spokesperson, a dangerous precedent. There are thousands of H.A. members who surely wouldn't agree with what a spokesperson would say, thus causing disunity.

In order to keep the message of H.A. clear and visible, I think that we must always keep the spotlight on our message - not our members.

Although I don't hold myself to be more important than anyone else or charismatic in the slightest, there have been times where I have been asked to do interviews while doing service work tending H.A. tables at community events. In order to make sure H.A. is put on that pedestal and not me, I've learned to never give my full name and ask not to have my face recorded by the media. If interviewed, I usually focus on what H.A. has to offer and suggest they point any cameras towards H.A. literature, something that carries the message for us. I consider my social media profiles to be a very public form of communication as well, and keep any ties to H.A. private and quiet.

Within the fellowship, I think that my practice of anonymity looks different than outside of the fellowship. My home group members know my name, they know my phone number, and they know how to get a hold of me. I think it would be foolish to be so anonymous that I can't share an experience or carry any message of recovery, or that people are kept at a distance and can't connect with me. If I am to be of real service to others then I am

to build real connections with them. I have found that I cannot be so mysterious that I block off the power of God working in the lives of us all. I have found a degree of vulnerability and trust is necessary within our H.A. community.

And that's exactly what led me to come to H.A. in the first place, attraction. Like a magnet, our primary means of public relations is allowing the program and the

fellowship of H.A. to attract folks, rather than us trying to promote it. All that's required of me is to get out of the way and shine the light on the life-saving program of Heroin Anonymous, which works if we work it!

-Edrik F.

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Upstate New York Area of Heroin Anonymous Presents



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H.A.W.S. Convention  
Buffalo, NY  
2024

**Contact The Mainline Bulletin:**

All correspondence will be filtered by our H.A. bulletin committee at: [haworldbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:haworldbulletin@gmail.com).  
We can also be contacted through our website at: [www.heroinanonymous.org](http://www.heroinanonymous.org)

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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](mailto:haworldbulletin@gmail.com).

Thank you!

The Folks at The HAWS Mainline

