



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.



DECEMBER **2023** ISSUE



Photo by: [Monicore](#)

Happy Holidays 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 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/ 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 www.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.

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 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.

- **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 to 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

BEAUTY IN THE PAIN

Personal Story: Jenna M. Marinette, WI

I can't recall a time when I felt comfortable in my own skin. I spent many years praying that I would wake up as someone else. From a very early age, I felt different than everyone else and so I had trouble fitting in. I felt as if I was a loner and didn't have a place in this world. My parents divorced when I was 8 years old and that is when things completely changed for my sisters and me. I began to make up stories in my head of what happened during the divorce and lived in those delusions until I found out the truth in my early twenties. Looking back now, I think that my 8-year-old brain made up stories to keep myself safe in the midst of a traumatic event.

When I was 14, I lost my dad. I don't think I ever truly processed or grieved his death until I found God. I started drinking a lot and smoking pot, which only led to harder drugs. At 19 I shot up for the first time. Every ounce of sadness and pain melted away from my

body. It didn't take long for my drug use to turn into a full-blown heroin addiction. I completely spiraled out of control. The next 12 years of my life were filled with darkness and despair. I was hopeless and desperate for change.

In order to address my addiction, I had to understand that it ran much deeper than the drugs I used. When I finally got clean, I was abstinent from drugs and alcohol, but I was still left with this spiritual void inside of me; this emptiness that seemed to overpower everything.

Until I came to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity, that emptiness would never go away. I had to become willing to turn my life and my will over to the care of God as I understood Him. My recovery is all about turning my ideas, my attitudes, my behaviors, my thinking patterns, my self doubt, my hatred, my depression, my anxiety, and my resentments over to the care of God. If I'm not doing anything to combat these things then I will

surely run back to the familiar ways of my addiction.

Through the program of H.A. and help from my Higher Power, I am now 15 months clean and sober of all mind-altering substances. Going through the 12 Steps was probably one of the hardest things I've done in this program, but it has given me so much freedom and peace in my life. I was truly able to let go of the resentments that kept me sick for so long! I am getting ready to close a chapter in my life and enter into a

new season of working with others. Finding hope around the tables and expanding my recovery network is what I live for today. For the first time in the 34 years I've been alive, I finally feel like I found where I belong. There is so much beauty in the pain that I went through because, without it, I wouldn't be where I am today.

-Jenna M.

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GRATEFUL RECOVERY JOURNEY

Personal Story: Bruce H. Milwaukee, WI.

I am a recovering heroin addict of 11 years. I joined H.A. 18 months ago as a regular member and have a home group in Milwaukee. I've been in other recovery fellowships and have had three different sponsors. My first sponsor saved my life, along with God. I was dropped off at his apartment by a member of an A.A. group I attended the week before - this was prior to discovering H.A.

I was taken in by my sponsor to be, who allowed me to live with him until he died eight years later. The day before he took me in, I was still actively using. I was wandering the east side of Milwaukee looking for houses and people I could con by trying to act innocent enough for them to trust me. I would ask to use their bathroom to urinate, as I was far from my own house. Mostly elderly women let me in and in their bathrooms I would ravage their medicine cabinets,

swallowing whole bottles of pills, even though I didn't know what I was taking. I didn't care. I was on another suicide attempt, after four intentional overdoses within six months. I wanted to die, as I had had enough of life since I first began using at 13 years old.

I was convinced I was a hopeless addict. I was very lost and had little will to stay alive. All four overdoses from sedatives and heroin had landed me in a Milwaukee hospital. After getting my stomach pumped, tubes down my throat, I awoke from unconsciousness, with my family standing around my bed looking at me. After the fourth overdose, I vividly remember asking my family for a priest to say my last rites. I looked out the window when I was alone that day, the sun was shining so bright, and I broke down to God and begged, "God I need your help to stop using, I really don't want to die! Please help me! I don't know how to stop!"

After the hospital, I was court ordered to attend a 30-day treatment center, as I had recently been arrested for forging a prescription for narcotics. I didn't stay clean after the treatment. I wandered the streets looking for more drugs to kill myself. In March of that year, I stumbled into a gay A.A. meeting, which I knew I wanted to attend, because I thought being gay was my problem – I didn't want to be.

Since I was a pre-teen, I thought that being gay was the worst thing a guy could be, and I chose to escape this reality by using hard drugs starting at 13 years old. I became physically addicted to barbiturates that I stole from my grandmother. Heroin became my drug of choice after my grandmother died, and I was about 19 when I found heroin.

As I tell my story here, there is one thing I do not want to dwell on – my using!

My using was a complete nightmare. I thought I would never recover or even stay alive, nor did I want to. The gay issue was a huge problem for me. As a teen I was terrified of anyone finding out; I was traumatized by family members, neighbors, school kids, church members, and bullies, and I became very self-destructive and felt I deserved to punish myself for being a sinner that God hated. I tried desperately to be heterosexual, but thank God, recovery happened in March of that year, when I was dropped off at my sponsor's house. He took me in, through my withdrawals and hallucinations. I promised my sponsor that four days after I arrived I would get clean and stay clean.

I did!

I was desperate, as I look back. I knew I would die within the next two weeks, as I couldn't stop myself from swallowing whole bottles of pills. One of those attempts would be fatal. So I thank God today that I am alive. I thank God for my sponsor, who had 36 years sober in A.A. when he died.

He taught me the 12 Steps right away, and I began to work Step 1. Then Step 2 and 3. I found that it was important to have faith in a God that loved me.

The first week I was staying at his place, my sponsor told me "that in order for me to stay sober I had to accept myself as being gay." If I don't accept myself, he said I would not be able to stay clean.

My sponsor said, "God wants me to accept myself, because otherwise you will not stay clean and you will never be happy. God wants me to be happy here on earth and if I am to be happy, I cannot be in conflict with myself. If I am in conflict with myself, I will never reach happiness. Therefore, God wants me to accept myself, as I was made this way for a reason. I may not know the reason, but the point is if I am in conflict, I will never be happy. So I had to accept myself for who I am." This made sense to me, so I began to try.

I had always believed that I am less than others. Not equal, not better, but worse than. I was full of self-will. In my first two years of recovery, even though I worked the Steps, I just kept thinking if I can get my own way, I will be happy. I kept experiencing frustration, anxiety, and depression every time I tried to manipulate reality to work out my way, and it never produced happiness, only misery. So I decided to do another 4th and 5th Step with my sponsor, which helped me see honestly where my defects were still active. I was acting out on self-will, self-pity, and self-centeredness. I was brutally honest with myself.

My 4th Step inventory also included assets about myself, which helped me discover I am a worthwhile human being. I wrote down these assets: That I have the ability to be honest with myself, that I have empathy for others, that I try to be an

understanding friend.

Step 4 helped me see who I am and how I think, but Step 5 helped me even more, in that I was able to accept that I have good things about myself as well as character flaws. At five years clean, I did four 4th and 5th Steps. Every time I reached plateaus in my recovery process, I felt the need to do another inventory, each more honest than the last. The most wonderful thing happened: After the last 5th Step, at five years clean, I decided to wake up every morning and choose to think positive thoughts.

This was a spiritual awakening for me! A miracle! That I could choose to think positive thoughts on a daily basis was completely foreign to me.

There are times in my recovery when I enjoy misery, and I have to force myself to be grateful for my blessings, which in turn, lead me to working Steps 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, and 11. I'm so grateful today that I have a choice in how I think and have the willingness to be responsible for my own recovery. These 12 Steps work in every area of my life. I no longer have any excuses to relapse. I work

the steps every day and be careful "not to rest on my laurels," as my first sponsor would always say. He would tell us continuously that "we have to live these steps." From my own experience, it takes practice to work these steps every day, but I am discovering that as I live them, they become part of my daily routine.

Lastly, I want to speak about why I love the Fellowship of H.A. I have found from attending H.A. meetings that H.A. is fulfilling its primary purpose, as stated in Tradition 5: To carry the message of recovery to the heroin addict that still suffers. This is why I am excited about being a member of H.A. I am a heroin addict and I am being exposed to real recovery in the groups I attend. I love H.A! I am grateful for the Fellowship of H.A., and I am very grateful to be a member.

-Bruce H.

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FREEDOM FROM DARK

Homegroup Spotlight: Grace

Hello Mainline!

My name is Grace and I am a heroin addict. In May 2021 I took the shot that finally killed me. Waking up on the floor of an abandoned building somewhere in Alabama, surrounded by

countless figures, I asked, "Who are you?" Plainly, they responded, "We're paramedics. You just overdosed and got hit with a bunch of Narcan." A kindly EMT carried me down the stairs, and into my brand new life.

In my van, I journeyed across the country to Oregon. I had a plan. There was family I could stay with, there was recovery, there was treatment - there was an

acknowledgment that I had no idea what I had been doing, and unless I submitted, earnestly admitted that I could not keep going on my own, and accepted without reservation the help of something greater, I was going to die for good.

I put my feet down running in Grants Pass, Oregon. I walked into an intensive outpatient treatment center, and there on the counter I saw a brochure for Heroin Anonymous. There just so happened to be a meeting in this new town that was specially tailored for an addict like me. So, I went. There I found a Fellowship greater than any human connection I had ever felt. In that room, I found God. I found a new way to live. I found freedom from the darkness and suffering that I had been living in. I had arrived. And then things began to get difficult for my home group, Freedom From Dark. Meeting attendance dropped, home group members left, so little people showed up that we lost our meeting space and went from hybrid to completely online. Freedom From Dark is special in that we made sure to keep the lights on online. We've been able to reach heroin

addicts from here in Oregon to Canada, to Texas, and beyond.

So, Mainline, here is why I am writing. My group is dying and we need help. We need folks to show up, join us in studying the literature, and be a part of this greater something. It is so imperative that we keep the lights on online and in Oregon so that the addict like me will have a place, tailor made just for them, where they can discover a Power greater, a new way to live, a Fellowship beyond their wildest dreams, and Freedom from Darkness.

If you are interested in being a part of, our group meets each Sunday at 5 p.m. PST (7 p.m. CST, 8 p.m. EST).

We use this Zoom Code: 839 631 2811.

Heroin Anonymous, I love you - you kept me alive, please help me keep our group alive.

-Grace.

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Upstate New York Area of Heroin Anonymous Presents



A SCORE OF HA

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.
We can also be contacted through our website at: 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.

Thank you!
The Folks at The HAWS Mainline

