

Greetings from the Greater Philadelphia Region

The Greater Philadelphia Region consists of sixteen Areas that cover the five counties within the metropolitan Philadelphia area along with the Pocono region and parts of the states of New Jersey and Delaware. There are over six hundred meetings in the Greater Philadelphia Region, supported by over five hundred home groups. We have a regional phoneline that covers the five county metropolitan area, and is supported by six Area phonelines. Our Regional Helpline number is 215-440-8400, for meeting information only the number is 215-509-7831.

We have a Regional website at www.gprsona.org that supports and maintains space for all sixteen

areas, along with all regional committees. We also maintain a service office located in Philadelphia that not only serves the sixteen Areas in our region, but also the tri-state area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. The diversity of our region covers both rural and urban areas, upper class and poor neighborhoods and communities that consist of all ethnic groups. We are witnessing the growth of a large and vibrant Latino community within our region that now supports its own meetings and participates in the service structure on both the area and regional level. We are a region of many flavors. Our Regional Committee meets the first weekend of the even numbered month of the year at our service office in the Roxborough section of Philadelphia.

Subcommittees meet on the Saturday and the Regional committee meets on the following Sunday

at 10:00 am. We hold our Regional Convention, Easter weekend of every year, along with four area conventions that take place on a yearly basis.

Our regional convention this year will be held the last weekend of March (3/29-31) at the Radisson in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Last year's convention was a success in both the areas of finance and recovery. We have locked into a two year contract with this hotel we will be holding our Regional Convention there through Easter 2004. Our Hospitals and Institutions committees currently serve over 125 facilities within our region in addition to most of the county prison facilities. We are consistently receiving requests for more panels to go into facilities. Our policy committee is in the process of presenting new regional policy that reflects inclusion of the guide to service and the twelve concepts. We have also reconfigured our Regional Meeting format to help facilitate a smoother and productive meeting that is not bogged down in reports, but rather presentation of problems and their solutions. Along the lines of policy we established an Ad-Hoc committee that created a comprehensive theft policy that was conscientized and approved by our region.

Our regional phoneline has expanded its online number of volunteers from sixty to ninety with no increase in cost of monthly charges or setup charges. Our phoneline is able to connect the suffering addict with a recovering addict that is geographically close to them. It also supports a meeting list by phone and events listing that is updated on a regular basis. We are still in need

of volunteers for the daytime hours, however our response time is within acceptable limits. We are considering changing our helpline number to 215-NA-WORKS. However, until we can secure the NA-WORKS for all exchanges involved in our helpline, we are holding off. We have set our meeting list database up in a Microsoft access format which has helped us in cutting production costs and made it easier to update and make changes. However, we are struggling in finding a chairperson for the committee. Currently the meeting list has become the responsibility of the service office and doing fine under their direction. Our literature review committee has conducted workshops with regard to the sponsorship project and has submitted some input to World Services. We have also workshopped sponsorship literature development and other projects at our regional convention and other events. The regional public information committee participated with NAWS at the American Correctional Association Convention held in Philadelphia during 2001. We have rewritten the bylaws for our service corporation to give greater control of the corporation to our service committee and have made our RCMs the board directors of the corporation. The Bylaws were rewritten to give greater control over our convention and to allow the fellowship to have greater input in the decision making process. We have also included a theft policy and a comprehensive grievance policy into this document. Our service office has made a great deal of changes to cut costs and provide better services. We have renegotiated our office lease to a saving of \$8,200.00 per year. We have also eliminated service contracts that were costly and provided no services. We have consolidated our mailings that have saved the region in mailing costs and copying charges. The service office is operating in a healthy manner, but has taken a major hit due to the reduction of the discounts to service offices. It has been forced to raise the cost of literature to areas and groups within and without the region. Our service office does not only supply literature to the local fellowship, but also serves as service center that gives logistical support to all areas within our region and the groups and areas that are in geographical proximity. It houses our helpline, serves as a meeting place for several area service meetings, provide space for groups that lose their facilities, provides copying and mailing services to our fellowship, maintains the regional meeting list, and lastly serves as a point

of stability for our local fellowship in times of inconsistent area and regional services. Not only does it serve as a clearinghouse for information for the public and professionals in the substance abuse field, but also the office has taken the slack in times of trouble. When the churches were demanding that a large amount of meeting had to move out due to lack of insurance, it was the service office that found affordable insurance that covers all meetings in the meeting list with regard to liability. It has been able help the local fellowship with regard to legal matters when it comes to contracts and theft of funds.

The Greater Philadelphia Region has submitted two motions to the conference agenda report regarding the NAWS sales policy. These motions are not meant to divide the fellowship but to help local fellowships that are served by service offices survive. We maintain contact with most service offices on the East Coast and most have taken a large hit since the change in the discount policy. The large decrease in discounts given to service offices coupled with the latest

increase in cost of literature has forced some service offices to increase the cost of literature to the local fellowship and in some cases has placed service offices in direct competition with NAWS for local seventh tradition funds. Also, we believe that the sales policies are uneven and the fact that there are four different sales policies shows there are inequities. This is our literature also and the literature that we commit to purchase helps support the fellowship as a whole. However, we have areas and groups within our local fellowship that are also economically deprived and find it difficult to purchase adequate amounts of literature and support themselves. We have been forced in some instances to threaten and in other cases withhold or limit literature purchases to some areas and fellowships. We support our fellowship through both donations through areas and groups. In some cases there have been direct contributions to the service office by groups to help the cause. Also, donations are up in our region, but this is not enough to offset the hit taken by the changes made in the discount policy. We have been able to get those areas that were purchasing literature from NAWS to commit to purchasing that literature from us. We have instituted a marketing plan to gather more business from facilities, but this puts us again in competition with NAWS. However, we cannot afford advertising in trade journals. With the addition of the online shopping cart at NAWS Webster in the future this will serve as only another area of competition. We currently allow for literature orders to be sent to the office online at our website and we will have to consider e-commerce in order to maintain a balance. Also, we would like to respond to the help given to us by NAWS, there has been some, however we feel that there could be more and the one time increase given to us was only a stop gap measure and was not and is not the solution to a problem that in fact may affect all service offices. To be honest we feel that there is an agenda to be rid of or centralize service offices under one umbrella. In a final note prior to the change in sales policy, our service office and region maintained an operating reserve of \$40,000.00 to \$44,000.00 to currently under \$5,000.00.

This is indicative of the effect of the changes, coupled with doing business in the real world. We feel in Philadelphia and in other places that have the benefit of service offices that they serve a valuable commitment on the frontlines of recovery. Bottom line, it is our literature and we hold a stake in it also.

Our region has other concerns in the area of the Spanish Basic Text no longer being available in hardcover. We would like to see it printed once again in hardcover, in that we have constant requests from our Latino fellowship for the hardcover edition. We are also concerned that the revised Guide to Public Information was not included in this year's conference agenda. We felt that we had a commitment from NAWS to present this work for approval.

In loving Service
The Greater Philadelphia Region