

WSC-H & I Newsletter

# REACHING OUT

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*World Service Office, Box 9999, Van Nuys, CA 91409*

## Welcome

*We would like to welcome all of you to the WSC-H&I Newsletter. We hope that what this simple newsletter contains can assist you in your recovery or H&I efforts throughout the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.*

## STARTING ALL OVER AGAIN

When I was out in the world using drugs and getting locked up time after time the pressure of life, society and myself brought me to a point in my life where I didn't feel it was worth living. But deep inside myself, in my heart, my Higher Power would speak to me about leaving and doing something about my situation. I knew all I had to do was stop using and turn my life over to my Higher Power, as I knew him, and seek help.

My confinement this time in the Newport News City Jail was the beginning of my recovery. I was put into a cell where I went over my life, and this time I was experiencing the withdrawal from the drugs. I was sitting on the chair in the cell block when an officer came around with some papers asking if anyone wanted to sign up for a program that was starting here at Newport News City Jail. I didn't want any kind of program--I knew what I wanted and needed. So I asked him what kind of program it was and he said, "N.A."

So I asked him what "N.A." was, and he told me Narcotics Anonymous. I knew I needed it because I have a problem with drugs, but I didn't know if it would address my alcohol problem too. It didn't occur to me that alcohol was a drug. So I went to the meetings and I liked what I heard, and that's where I met Mr. K----. He read and told us about N.A.

Since then I've been going to every N.A. meeting feeling good physically and mentally. I am going to be released soon I knew I had some money on the books and this money would be given to me on my release. A strong desire came over me to use again. I knew right then what I was going to say to the dealer and how much I was going to get it for. So at the N.A. meeting I told Mr. K---- about the battle of my using again. When I was released we talked about it which was a great help to me and that I knew right then my battle with drug using was not over, and I was and would be still recovering when I came back into society. I would be starting all over again, so I asked Mr. K---- to meet me upon my release, so I could go to an N.A. meeting. With the help of God, N.A. and myself I will recover.

A.W.B.

### THE TIES THAT BIND US TOGETHER

The first time I was introduced to the Narcotics Anonymous Program, I didn't have a drug problem. I just had a problem with doing eight years with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

Obviously I wasn't coming for myself. Upon release I immediately set out to as they say, "do a little more research" on active addiction. After a few unsuccessful bouts with my parole officers I found myself in treatment. I knew for a long time that I was tired of just surviving. That's when I decided to give myself a break and give this program a fair shot at me. I saw something in these people that I wanted. I didn't know what it was they had, but they sure seemed happy, and I sure was tired of being miserable.

My way had failed for so long that I decided to try what some of the others who had been down the road ahead of me suggested. Like 90 meetings in 90 days, they said, "get yourself a sponsor," and I did. Is he ever a good one! My sponsor; being the service junkie that he is, suggested I get involved in the Fellowship. I started out making coffee for my home group. A couple of months later I was elected as a representative to the Tulsa Central Service Office Board of Trustees.

A couple of months later Oklahoma formed its own region, and I was elected Vice-Chair of the Eastern Area of the Oklahoma Regional H&I Subcommittee.

We grow spiritually when we work the steps, talk to our sponsors and other members of the Fellowship, and when we pray and meditate with our Higher Power. It wasn't until I found myself reaching out helping the still-suffering addict housed in treatment centers and correctional facilities that I realized any of this spiritual growth.

Today I feel a part of something. Always before I felt apart from everything. Through practicing the twenty-four spiritual principles of this program, I know that no matter where my service work takes me I'll always be able to help the still-suffering addict. That is because we share a common disorder--the disease of addiction. Those are just some of the ties that bind us together..

Another way in which this program works, and the ties that bind us together, is the coordinated effort of the Eastern Area of the Oklahoma Region H&I Subcommittee and some very loving and caring members of the Fellowship in San Diego. We were able to help someone here in treatment make the right contacts. From the time he left treatment in McAlister, Oklahoma, got on an airplane in Tulsa, got off the plane in San Diego, and was met at the airport by a member of the Fellowship, he knew that the love, compassion and concern for his well being was with him all through his flight. Just another way to prove that this program does work, and the ties that bind us together are stronger than those that would tear us apart.

In loving service,  
G.L., Oklahoma

### FREE AT LAST

I'm C.J. and I'm an addict. I am free from my addiction just for today, with the help of N.A.

I spent my share of time in jails and institutions. I remember becoming aware of the crazy rat race I was caught up in with my addiction upon each release. Chasing my addiction only to wake up the next day to the same misery of doing it all over again. I still felt imprisoned by my addiction, that monkey was on my back and went with me wherever I went, and I could feel it.

I knew in the back of my mind I would only be out for a while, only until I had to go back in and do more time.

When I was out I called it my vacation. When I was back in I called it R&R (rest & recuperation). There was no end to it. I could find freedom nowhere. I was trapped in the vicious cycle of my addiction.

I had known and heard about N.A. for years. But I was determined to make things better in life my way. I kept trying to do just that by switching addictions, trying new scams, and changing towns and states, always waiting for that "big break"--Only to end up back doing more time.

I felt hopeless, and sick and tired of it all towards the end. I just couldn't seem to find any way out. Sometimes when I was sick, busted and disgusted, I wondered if I wasn't better off in jail.

Upon my last release I went into a treatment center that had N.A. meetings. I began asking for help from the N.A. members who came into our H&I meetings. When I looked at them I knew they were staying clean and they seemed to have what I wanted. They talked about how their lives had gotten better, and about all the positive aspects of their new lives in recovery. They looked happier than me, and I felt miserable inside.

When I left treatment I came into an N.A. meeting the first night. That has made all the difference in my life today. I decided to try it the N.A. way. I did what the N.A. people told me to do this time. I finally surrendered. I followed suggestions, I didn't use, came to 90 meetings in 90 days, got phone numbers, got a sponsor, worked the steps, and got involved with the Fellowship.

As a result, my life has become meaningful and rewarding. I have plenty of friends around me today, a decent job, and a purpose--to spread the message of recovery. This makes me feel good about my life today, I feel special.

I hope to receive my professional barber's license next month. A career I only dreamed about in prison.

Today there are a lot of things that make my life a pleasure to live--all a result of the N.A. Program and working the Twelve Steps. If there would be one thing I could leave with you to think about is: *Work the Twelve Steps.*

The steps separate the men from the boys. If you want a chance to live the kind of life you *really* always wanted...See if you have the guts to work the steps and change. This program offers no easy times, but neither does addiction.

Give yourself a break and try the N.A. way. If I can do it, I know you can. We all deserve to live.

Free at last,  
C.J., my house, Florida

# INSTITUTIONS INQUIRING ABOUT STARTING MEETINGS

ALABAMA	St. Clair Correctional Facility Odenville, AL
ARIZONA	Northern Arizona Methadone Maintenance & Detox Clinic Flagstaff, AZ
DELAWARE	Sussex Correctional Facility Georgetown, DE
COLORADO	Buena Vista Prison Buena Vista, CO
CONNECTICUT	Montville Correctional Center Uncasville, CT
KENTUCKY	Federal Correctional Institution Lexington, KY
MICHIGAN	Lakeland Correctional Facility Coldwater, MI
MINNESOTA	Mooselake Treatment Center Mooselake, MN Federal Medical Facility Rochester, MN
MONTANA	Women's Correctional Center Warm Springs, MT
NEW YORK	Collins Correctional Facility Helmuth, NY
OKLAHOMA	Talking Leaves Job Corp Center Tahlequah, OK Great Plains Hospital Lawton, OK
PENNSYLVANIA	Lewisburg Correctional Facility Lewisburg, PA

**NEW MEETINGS HELD IN INSTITUTIONS**

CALIFORNIA	Lompoc Federal Correctional Institution Lompoc, CA
ENGLAND	Ashdown Bexley Hospital London, England
FLORIDA	Florida State Prison Starke, FL
ILLINOIS	Menard Correctional Center Menard, IL
KANSAS	Winfield Pre-Release Center Winfield, KS Fort Scott Work Release Center Fort Scott, KS
LOUISIANA	Dixon Correctional Institution Jackson, LA Washington Correctional Institution Angie, LA
MINNESOTA	Minnesota Correctional Facility Stillwater, MN
PENNSYLVANIA	The Meadows Psychiatric Hospital Centre Hall, PA Red Rock Job Corps Lopez, PA
WYOMING	Wyoming State Penitentiary Rawlins, WY

**LETTERS AND/OR EXCERPTS OF LETTERS**

Dear *Reaching Out*,

If you remember, I sent you a letter from Tennessee Prison for Women here in Nashville in September. At that time, I was trying to get another meeting going here during the week. Our weekly Saturday a.m. meeting is an inconvenience for those who wish to sleep in.

As for myself, I am overjoyed to get up early for this, because N.A. has become a part of my way of life and thinking. I do not mind rising earlier than usual to complete my work as janitor here in my dorm, nor missing breakfast at 10:00. That is our scheduled time for the only meeting we have now.

I spoke to the warden regarding starting another meeting during the week, possibly Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. At this time it is not official, as we must get this okayed through proper channels.

I feel confident that by the first of the year this will be done, and we will be having regular Wednesday night meetings. We need more N.A. within our confines.

I can only speak for myself, but I know that I choose to live completely drug-free, and I, *only I*, have that choice. Through the fellowship I share with other recovering addicts, I have found peace and tranquility in my life. For this, I am eternally grateful to my H.P. and the program.

I had a problem with discipline and acceptance when I first got here. From August to October '85 I received numerous disciplinary actions because of my rebellious nature. It wasn't until I decided to "let go and let God, one day at a time," that my life became easier. The rest of my time here at T.P.W. will surely benefit me, as I now have courage, time and endurance I need to complete my Fourth Step!!

I pray that my Higher Power will continue to work miracles in my life. I thank Him daily for the peace I have found through N.A.

In fellowship,  
C.V., T.P.W.

Dear *Reaching Out*,

Hi, my name is M---- and I am a recovering addict. I just read your newsletter and felt that maybe I have something to offer.

At this stage in my recovery I feel very grateful for many things. Most of all I thank God daily for the N.A. Program. You people have shown me how to live again. I got the message in a Manhattan, NY hospital known as Gracie Square, and for me, that was the day that life began.

You people told me about life after drugs; you simply told me that If I didn't pick up I couldn't get high. You people showed me how to have working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. You told me that if I took

suggestions and worked the program that my life would get better; and by the grace of God this is what's happening.

I've been coming around for a short time as compared to many others. But it's okay, because *a day at a time* I have life. A day at a time I am being restored to sanity. This has been the best eight months of my life, and I'm 24 years old at this time.

I sometimes think that I have wasted so many tears; and I sometimes think that I have wasted so many years. But you know what, I've learned that it's not where I've been that counts but where I'm going. This to me is what's important today.

Getting involved with H&I brings me a lot of happiness. I'm just not the same person that I used to be. I'm no longer selfish or inconsiderate of others. Today I carry the message of N.A. to others who (like I once was) are suffering and don't know where to turn.

Seeing people respond is also very gratifying to me. It just reminds me of how well this program of recovery can work--if you work it.

In closing, I'd just like to share with you why I am grateful to this program most of all. It has placed me in conscious contact with God, which lets me know that it's all about change.

Lots of gratitude,  
M---, New York

Dear *Reaching Out*,

I'm sitting on a London Tube, heading out to a hospital meeting that I am lucky enough to be involved with on a regular biweekly basis. I feel very grateful to be able to live without drugs, as a direct result of the N.A. Fellowship, and as someone in the Number six issue of *Reaching Out* said, "we only keep what we have by giving it away."

I know this to be true from my own experience, that life today is better than it has ever been. One of the reasons for that is my involvement in the Northwestern London H&I Committee that has been functioning now for just two months. We still have a fairly small committee, but I am sure that as time passes we will grow in size and experience in carrying the message into hospitals and institutions. Laughter was some long-lost pleasure when I first found the N.A. rooms. But now, thankfully, when I am not taking myself too seriously, I can share some of my sense of fun with suffering addicts who may or may not want recovery and or may or

may not want to stop using drugs. I can only carry my experience, strength and hope, which I'm very grateful to have, thanks to you all and the addicts still to come.

Yours in loving  
service and fellowship,  
S----

I'm M---, an addict,

I've been involved in H&I work for about five or six months, and at times my rewards were so real, that it touched me very deeply. I've had some difficulty in finding an available sponsor. I really believe God put this service work as a temporary substitute. Anyway *it works*. I've been taking the meetings in the juvenile hall and the men's correctional facility (by myself a lot of times.) A few times no one showed up at the men's meeting, but that only made me more determined. Two meetings ago I brought a cassette tape, recorded at the 8th Annual Northern California Convention (Mac M. Santa Rosa, CA, Saturday night), and it was dynamite! This last meeting, I had twelve show up, and they were hungry for the message. I don't do anything special, I just believe that at least one wants a way out as bad as I did, and that's all the motivation I need.

In closing, I'd like to share a special prayer from a special lady, who is also in H&I service.

Addicts Prayer

God, I'm not what I want to be,  
God, I'm not what I ought to be,  
But Thank You God, I'm not what I used to be!

Anonymous,  
M---, Ukiah, CA

To all in H&I and *Reaching Out*,

My name is R--- and I am a grateful recovering addict. I am involved in H&I work here in England. I find this the most important part of my service to the Fellowship. I know what it's like to be locked up. My eyes were the bars to my cell for over twenty years. Self obsession my crime, paranoia my life.

I have to first share a resentment. There is no mention of Ashdown, Bexley Hospital in the latest newsletter. This meeting has been going since early November.

Ashdown Ward Bexley Hospital is the largest National Health Detox in Britain. Twenty-two beds. It might not seem

much in American terms, but faced with the entrenched attitudes locally, we here in England feel it is a notable victory. This meeting is held on a weekly basis and might even become part of the treatment program.

I find my H&I work extremely rewarding. The feeling to being let out of a locked ward, where I have been a patient on two occasions, is unbelievable. I feel for the first time that I have a purpose to carry the message of recovery. Let's keep in touch. A day at a time with God's help miracles happen. I am clean, amazingly.

"The full fruits of a labour of love lives in the harvest, and that always comes in its right season."

Gratefully yours,  
R---, England

Dear Editor,

I want to thank you and WSC for continuing to mail me *Reaching Out*. Between issues I wait anxiously for my copy, at times wondering "Have they stopped, or do they figure that I've been released? I haven't been yet, and I really hope they remember me," and you have! I feel so much better when I come in from work and I have mail: *Reaching Out*.

The stories I read are a lot like my own; I enjoy reading this, knowing that just for today I am not alone, and that recovery works for me too. The experiences of others who recover in detox are slightly different than mine, but when I read about others I feel good and happy that others recover too.

Thanks again for reminding me.

Your Friend,  
W---, Chillicothe, OH

Dear *Reaching Out*,

I'm slowly becoming accustomed to how rich and diverse my life is today. It wasn't always like this. When I wasn't using on the street or in the bars, I was sitting in a room with a doctor or a psychologist telling me something I already knew. I had a problem.

I spend a lot of time in jails and institutions in my recovery, and I quite often ask why. It's really simple--God answers all of our prayers, and I've always asked that I never forget where I came from. And yet I was never locked up for

more than three days and I have yet to spend time in a treatment center.

I found N.A. while registered--a meeting was started in the clinic where I was receiving "help with the management of my opiate dependence." I remember sitting in this group of well dressed, softly spoken people. As they shared around the room I thought, "No, I didn't do that, she's too young, I'm too old, I don't have that problem," and pretty soon I'd disqualified myself. I could only see the differences so how could I be an addict? And, anyway, I couldn't talk to them.

A member drove me home from that first meeting, saying, "Phone me in the morning." It was five months before I made that phone call. Oh, I went to a meeting a week for a whole five weeks. I didn't know how to listen and I didn't know how to share. I only had one question and I didn't know how to ask it--"How does it work?"

When I finally made that phone call I was met and taken to a member's flat. Three and a half hours later I'd run out of reservations and small print. I found out how to stop using--all I had to do was not pick up that first drug, to use the phone and go to meetings every day. There are no coincidences--I haven't had to use since then, and that man became (and still is) my sponsor.

I'm involved in H&I because I know how it feels to sit at the back of the room, busted and disgusted, confused and unable to describe the chaos and despair, too alienated to be able to say "I need help." Wanting what they had and thinking they'll ask me to leave like everyone else if I said anything. The day I sat down and said all that was the first day of my recovery.

I'm grateful to have that weekly opportunity to sit in a room and hear someone say "But how..." and to be able to share my experience of the miracle of living clean. I have such a feeling of hope on the way to work each morning when I go by my local prison where we have a meeting. And for those times when there's a short supply of hope, thanks so much to all those involved in *Reaching Out*. I always forget that other members have doubts as well as real feelings of caring and sharing.

Love,  
C.P., London, England



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: We would appreciate any input for the next issue of the *Reaching Out* by mid-August. We will be putting together the September/October issue at that time. We are beginning to accumulate input from throughout the Fellowship, but we still need you or your committee to contribute articles. By helping the addict who cannot attend a regular meeting, you will be giving back what has been freely given to you.

If you are a recovering addict who is housed in a correctional or treatment setting, let us hear how Narcotics Anonymous has helped you in your life. If you are a member of an H&I committee, let others hear how you or your committee have carried the N.A. message of recovery. We would like to thank all of the members who have sent in articles and other written contributions to the newsletter. We all have a responsibility to the suffering addict, and to ourselves as recovering addicts, to do our best in carrying the N.A. message of recovery--to participate by sharing with others what we have been freely given.

GET INVOLVED AND HELP US CARRY OUT OUR  
FELLOWSHIP'S PRIMARY PURPOSE!!



MY GRATITUDE SPEAKS  
WHEN I CARE  
AND WHEN I SHARE  
WITH OTHERS  
THE N.A. WAY

