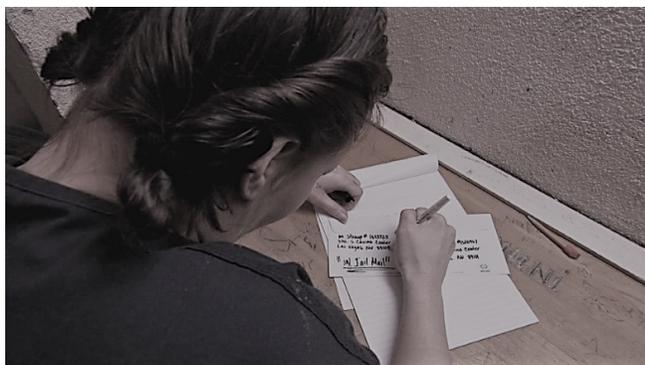


Sober Times

September 2018

AA Corrections Correspondence

Corresponding with inmate that is working a program of recovery is an incredibly rewarding experience. You may not be interested in making coffee for your home group, or becoming a GSO representative, but being of service by sharing your experience, strength and hope with someone in prison is an excellent way to fulfill the AA primary purpose... "To stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety". Here are some suggestions to help you to get started with the process:



When you make a correspondence request to the Corrections Desk of the General Service in N.Y, you will receive a reply that includes the name & address of an AA member (or members) in a jail or prison. You will also receive the current edition of the "Sharing from Behind the Walls" newsletter and detailed instructions and recommendations on how to begin. The GSO will assign an inmate whose gender matches yours and is in a geographic region beyond your own.

Introduce yourself by briefly qualifying. Explain that writing (sharing) helps you as much it will your correspondent, as well. Explain that your writer need not have to feel alone. Share sobriety only and avoid emotional or dramatic language. Having sobriety is a prerequisite to participating in the Corrections Correspondents program – but prior prison experience is not. In the spirit of the "Twelfth Tradition", we respect the anonymity of our correspondents. If you send a gift for a special occasion make it an AA book, a piece of AA literature or Grapevine material, but confirm first that the facility will allow it.

**Williamsburg Corrections
Box 617
Williamsburg, VA 23187**

You must use your last name on the envelope when writing to the inmate. Rather than using your home as your return address, you may use the Williamsburg AA Corrections P.O. Box. Members of the Correction Committee will check the box twice a week. Please notify a committee member that you are writing to an inmate. This will make it easier to get your letter in the P.O. box to you.

Do not become discouraged if the inmate does not reply, or ceases corresponding after a few letters. You may receive a "Return to Sender" response if the inmate is transferred, or he/she may simply stop corresponding. That happens from time to time. We recommend you then contact the GSO to ask for another alcoholic and start again.

Circles of Love and Service Workshop

Saturday, September 22, 2018

4:00pm – 6:00pm

*St. Stephens Lutheran Church
612 Jamestown Rd. Williamsburg*

First hour

Speaker: Dick P. Gloucester VA

Second hour

dedicated to Service Focus groups.

*Coffee and drinks will be provided.
We ask you bring a dessert or snack
to share with others. Any questions
please contact aawilliamsburg.org.*

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Speaking with GSRs:

Room To Grow: Nathin T.

This being a program of attraction and not promotion, what initially found you at the meeting and what kept you coming back?

When I was about two or three months sober, one night at a meeting in town I was sharing about how I was sober once before and when I was truly working the program I got some of the gifts that came with sobriety and this time around I was missing them. I also shared that, I didn't have a sponsor and that I wanted to start working the steps with one. After the meeting a person in the program came up to me and started talking to me about the importance of a home group and a sponsor. The person told me about a group that he was in and how they could use my help. This made me feel wanted, and that I could actually be useful. He then gave me directions to the meeting and instructed me to arrive early to help set up and get to know the other group members. The following Saturday I arrived an hour early as instructed and was taught how to setup the meeting, make the coffee, and I was even trusted with the key code to the church. I met the other members and that is how I first started going to my home group. I kept going to this group because the guy that would usually set up the meeting was in the Army and he had to leave for training for a few weeks and they needed someone to setup and chair the meeting.

I helped set up and chair the meeting every Saturday and it became part of my routine. I would even look forward to it. There were times when I really didn't want to set it up, but it was my responsibility, I did it anyway. Some of the things that I wanted to do instead of setting up the meeting never made me truly happy, joyous or free before, so why not try something new? Having that responsibility kept me from doing some things that I thought would make me happy; I have to remember that what I think, feel, and believe cannot be trusted and I should talk with my sponsor and other people in the program. I now have a sense of purpose and I am reminded that I am doing this not for myself but for the Alcoholics that come to the meeting; I'm being of service. Now, I enjoy setting up the meeting, and I'm helping others learn how to setup and chair the meeting. It fills me with joy and happiness. That group has been my homegroup for over a year now.

What made you decide to become GSR?

There was me and two other homegroup members at the time. I was asked and one was leaving, so I said yes.

What is your group like currently (format)?

Big Book Study and Open Discussion. Our meeting starts

at 2pm on Saturday. We start off with reading the preamble, the 12 Steps, and 12 Traditions. Then we read about 3 pages of the Big Book picking up from where we left off last time and if we finished a chapter last week we read an entire story from the back of the book chosen by the chairperson. If there is a newcomer the topic is the first step and we read about the first step, and the chair person has two choices about what to read. After the reading we take a short break for the 7th Tradition basket, Coffee, and AA related Announcements. Then we go around the circle and everyone has a chance to share or pass. At the end of the meeting there are two different choices for the last reading chosen by the chairperson. Then we give out marbles to mark our progress in sobriety and to show the newcomer that Alcoholics Anonymous works. We read the 9th step promises. The meeting is closed seated with the Serenity Prayer.

What does your group have to offer Williamsburg AA?

We will be offering child care soon. We are right in the middle of the day on Saturday just when the weekend can get a little bonkers. We offer a place where alcoholics can read and discuss the Big Book a few pages at a time or share about something related to Alcoholism.

Cooperation with the

Become a C.P.C. Committee Member

- Service positions available
- Learn about the Adopt-a-Rack Program
- Create and implement outreach programs
- Provide information to the non-alcoholic community

C.P.C. Committee Meetings

4th Wednesday of each month
Intergroup Office
4925 Centerville Road
6:00 p.m.

Service opportunities!

- ⇒ Administrative
- ⇒ Community outreach



Professional Community

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Latecomers: Clark F.

I initially found myself at the Latecomers Group back when it met at the Methodist Church off of Jamestown Road. At the time, I knew a couple of people who belonged to the home group, including my first sponsor, and I found it's laid back and welcoming atmosphere to be very attractive. I felt comfortable and at home, and it quickly became the highlight of my week as I traversed the rocky roads of early sobriety.

Eventually, I was asked if I would be willing to be our GSR, and, though lacking some confidence that I would be able to do a good job, took the position as a means of giving back to the folks who were so welcoming to me when I arrived, and also out of a sense of responsibility to keep our group connected to AA as a whole.

Our group currently meets in the Unitarian Church off of Ironbound Road at 8:05 PM on Monday nights, and is a closed discussion meeting. We recently decided that the last meeting of the month would be available for anyone celebrating an anniversary, and that they could pick a speaker for that particular meeting. Our meeting has a very vibrant and somewhat laid back atmosphere, and attracts a lot of folks who are newer to sobriety as well as those who are not. Also, as a bonus, we usually have cupcakes!



Early Bird Meeting: Denny W.

What got me to my first meeting was a DUI and the courts. The Virginia Program of ASAP was a way to keep my license so I went there and in those days it was at least one meeting a week and I went on Saturday night since my counselor was in the program and I went then, so he could see that I was making the one meeting a week.

I wasn't a daily drinker, but had blackouts when I was a teenager, so when I took the testing I was 'group four' which indicated alcoholism. That very first meeting I identified with a person that shared and, deep down inside, I knew I was in the right place so kept coming back - even though it took quite some time to accept this gift.

After being in the program for some years I felt I wanted to know more about the structure of AA. I was a business owner and was used to a fixed structure about how to do things - it kind of blew my mind how the upside down triangle organization of AA worked. At that time, my home group was the Wednesday Night Step Meeting. The position of GSR came up and no one stepped up. I thought this was my chance to be a part of that structure; to learn, experience, and especially to give back, not only to my home group but the chance to go to conferences and assemblies and actually be a part of how AA works. I am currently GSR for my now home group the Saturday morning Early Bird meeting.

I had one of my sponsors going to Saturday morning Early Bird meeting, other friends that went there, and I liked that it was a meeting open to anyone, opened with the Serenity Prayer and then closed the same way. I liked that the meeting was very spiritually oriented and was a very diverse group of people. At my age I was tending not to go to as many night meetings. Because of that, and so many conflicts with Wednesday night, especially since I had four daughters, and I wanted to spend more time with their evening activities. Often times the younger ones were in bed before I got home from that meeting. This was some years after I became GSR for the Wednesday night meeting.

The Saturday morning is special to me and my AA program. I love the diversity of members and attendees; the spirituality touches my heart, my feeling of belonging, the openness of the sharing of honest feelings, and the camaraderie of men in that meeting. We as a small group go to Manhattan Bagel after the meeting to share in a 'meeting after the meeting.'

To support my home group I am currently GSR for the group, wanting to make sure they get the information from district meetings, and what's happening in the voting of issues at the state level. Then I take the group conscience of issues we have voted on, and represent them at assemblies. I am still amazed that AA is run from the bottom up, and I can represent my home groups conscience at the state level which even affects decisions at the national level. I have quite a few 24 hours now and feel I am blessed by this gift I have been given.

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A Letter From the Editor

Fall is fast approaching; if you are like me that gives me cause to want to hibernate and isolate. When drinking, fall gave me an excuse to settle into depression and isolate with a drink in hand. Even today, after a while

sober, I remind my sponsor (as well as others privy to my alcoholism) to call me to the carpet if I display certain behaviors. If I get offended by people calling me out, I have to take pause and realize, usually it is done out of love and care. If it is not, I need not get offended, for I cannot control others' actions and it is my choice as to whether or not I let them affect me.

I truly love the fall; it is the season of my birth, sweater and boot weather, hot drinks, Halloween, and harvests. Truth be told, fall is my FAVORITE season. However, for the alcoholic, it is also: football and beer season, seasonal depression and solo drinking time and an excuse for isolation and sitting on the proverbial "pity-pot". Meeting attendance often decreases in the fall and winter months. AA members seem to go into hibernation mode and to loathe stepping out of their comfortable cocoons to go to meetings. The saying goes: When you do not want to attend a meeting is when you actually need it the most. I encourage all of you to not slow down your meeting schedule, but rather increase it, encouraging others to do the same.

In a nutshell; I find it helpful to ask my loved ones to keep an objective eye on me and watch for uncharacteristic behaviors, increase meeting attendance, increase physical activity, and practice positive self-talk. All of these things are useful; as well as COMPLETELY immersing yourself in the program! No practicing half measures; so-so practice yields so-so results. To truly gain a grasp on recovery, I have found it necessary to put my all into recovery. Truly, if I devoted my entire being and my resources to alcohol; several hours and a few dollars a week are nothing! I am often cold and tired in the fall; I want to sleep and get warm. I get in the habit of getting ready for a meeting at 6:30 or 7:30! Practice!

Habits become ingrained behavior. In closing, don't use fall as an excuse to slack on your program. Rather, it can be used as a reason for you ramp up your program!

Arlyn S.

Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, September 22nd

Circles of Love and Service Workshop
St Stephens Lutheran Church
612 Jamestown Rd.
4 to 6 pm.

Monday, November 12th

Gratitude Dinner
Williamsburg United Methodist Church
500 Jamestown Rd.
Greetings 530pm Dinner 6pm

Thursday, November 22nd

Thanksgiving Alcoltho
Wesley Foundation
526 Jamestown Rd.
8am to 8pm

Christmas Day & New Year's Day

Holiday Alcolthons
Wesley Foundation
526 Jamestown Rd.
8am to 8pm



Sober Times is a publication made possible by the Williamsburg Area Intergroup in District 38. Opinions expressed are strictly those of the authors and do not reflect those of AA as a whole. Contributions, suggestions, and comments are welcomed. So is help. Write to

newsletter@aawilliamsburg.org

Intergroup meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 630PM at 4925 Centerville Rd. For more info go to www.aawilliamsburg.org or call (757) 253-1234