

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup December 2008

Carrying the Message

News from Unity Intergroup

Has Your Group Been Asked to Carry Insurance?

Groups can work together to purchase a certificated policy to provide certificates of insurance for all meeting locations requiring one. Cost may be based on the number of locations requiring certificates. If your group would like to consider a certificate of insurance due to a request by the building you hold your meeting in, please contact Marian at (651-257-6045; email marian2008@frontiernet.net).

New meeting

There is a new Tuesday evening OA meeting in Minneapolis! Consider visiting if you are in need of another meeting to help in your recovery, or would like to carry the message to newcomers. The focus of the meeting will be on The Big Book and working the Steps with the Big Book.

Mount Zion Lutheran Church
5645 Chicago Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55417

The meeting is from 7:15 to 8:15PM on Tuesdays in room 13 in the lower level (basement). This meeting is handicap accessible. Questions? Call Mary H. at 612-724-9506 or email mamajake17@usfamily.net Hope to see you Tuesday!

A word from our Intergroup Chair

My two year term as Region Representative has come to an end and as I reflect back on this position I have feelings of purpose, connection and a broader exposure to our program as a whole. Of course I am going to add that service is "abstinence insurance" for me. It keeps me out of the food and focusing on reaching the still suffering compulsive overeater.

Discussing ideas with other Intergroups in our region is very grounding and inspiring. We are all together for a common problem and solution that crosses the lines of the states that separate us. We have utilized some of the ideas we have heard other Intergroups' doing – that is where Octobers' "Super Saturday" and clothing exchange ideas came from.

Unity sending group reps to our Region furthers our relationship with the fellowship as a whole. We have an opportunity to participate in the planning and execution of the Region Convention, reaching people who may not have access to a convention otherwise. In addition, I believe this builds the quality of OA right here in our area. The Region Reps who served with me and before me attend meetings with you and I. They bring their experiences to the group level.

Please join me in congratulating the following people who's term as Region Rep has ended, but they have moved into service positions at the Region level with a two year commitment:

Catherine W. – Region Vice Chair
Becky T. – Region Treasurer
Michele M. – Region Office Manager
Joan S. – Region Assembly Planner

I hope seeing how many Region Reps chose to stay involved after their term is over is a testament to you that service is not a chore – it is actually a pleasure. It has been fun to travel and build relationships! The next step is to keep moving forward with another available position, building on the experiences we have had in our service positions.

THAT is one of the many ways to carry the message!

Peace,
Becky T.
Unity Chair 2006-08

Step Twelve: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Thank God for the 12th Step!

I was watching the morning news one morning in 1982 and I heard a woman with an electronically altered voice talking about using laxatives to lose weight. I went into the living room and sat down. The woman was speaking anonymously from behind a semi-sheer curtain.

She was telling my story. She used laxatives when she binged on food. It was something she could not stop doing and, until she went through treatment, she could not stop. She had a newly diagnosed addiction called bulimia. I was shocked! I immediately decided that I had to stop my pattern of using laxatives when I over ate. She did this at least once a day. Since I only did this two to three times a week—I figured it would be simple.

I was shocked when I found out that I could not stop. My disbelief was so deep that it took almost a year before I tried to find a treatment program. There weren't any in my city and few people had even heard of bulimia. Finally, I found a clinic that had conducted a recovery program for 'eating disorders' but they had stopped because not enough people used this service. It was with enormous relief that I found a therapist who understood my dilemma. I did not understand it—but it was enough that she did and could help me. She led me through therapy and to OA and to recovery from bulimia.

I went to OA for about 10 years and then I drifted into other spiritual programs that were nurturing. Over the next 20 years I drifted away from spiritual programs and into old patterns of thinking and living. While I did not slide back into bulimic behaviors, I was sliding increasingly into over eating and over working to numb my feelings.

Once again, the media came to the rescue as I read an article about OA on the front page of the Variety section. I realized how important the 12 steps were to me in maintaining consistent recovery and peace of mind. I shopped around for meetings and, after attending six groups, found one that gave me a feeling of coming home. I have been going to OA meetings regularly since July of 1985. I am deeply grateful for the way to peace and joy that the twelve steps offers addicts like me.

Thank you to those brave people who explain the OA program to those in the media. They have given me a quality of life that is beyond my dreams and, as I continue to work this wonderful program, it is easy to see that there is more good to come.

~Judi R

The twelve step campfire

The twelfth step begins with an acknowledgement and ends with two actions steps. It does not ask us to go about the work of a spiritual awakening, it begins with the affirmation that this awakening has already occurred. *Having had a spiritual awakening* There is no mention of when, but the how is very clear. *As a result of practicing these steps!* Does it happen as we complete step 11? Is it a light switch being flipped on, illuminating the darker rooms of our lives? For some it may have happened as quickly as the flip of a switch, though my experience was much different. This spiritual awakening was more like a well tended campfire that started with a single match. This match was touched to delicate, even fragile, kindling. It was then my responsibility to tend to the fire, feed it and shelter it against a strong wind or rain. This spiritual awakening, this fire that provides both warmth and light, can not be left unattended or it will go out. If left unattended, the embers may still glow, but the fire can not be seen from a distance. The first action step addresses why it's so important that our fire burns bright enough to be seen. *We tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters.* We have to let our light shine bright, because ours is a program of attraction, not promotion. It is the responsibility of the still suffering to walk towards this warmth and light, wanting the same for themselves. It is our job to tend our own fire, keeping it strong enough to be seen from a distance. Lastly, step 12 asks us to practice these principles in all of our affairs. Principals? There has been no specific mention of principals in the previous 11 steps, so what are these principals? The literature explains (in order of step); honesty, hope, faith, courage, integrity, willingness, humility, discipline, forgiveness, acceptance, awareness. When we strive to live by these principals every day, in and out of program we are able to maintain our abstinence one day at a time. When we put the food down long enough we are better able to acknowledge and live by these principals. This is the wonderful circular nature of our program, and our recovery.

~Julie C

The joy of living

Writing this article gave me a “good reason” to pull out my 12 & 12, and re-visit its comforting pages. Dipping into the book, I read, “The joy of living is the theme of AA’s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word...Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety.” (p. 106) Two simple sentences give me a lot of instruction and guidance. The text tells me that the whole purpose of this program, the whole point of being in recovery, is to be happy. If I am at a healthy weight, but am miserable, so what? I can hardly consider myself “recovered”. Conversely, if I am not at a healthy weight, I truly doubt I will be very happy. I need to have three-fold recovery – physical, emotional, and spiritual – if I am to have a true message to share. For me, the physical recovery was relatively easy; finding the true, sincere joy in living was the hard part. However, the text tells me that action is the key word; and this has absolutely been my experience. By completing Steps One through Eleven to the best of my ability, by *doing* the actions required (not just reading them or talking about them), my opinions shifted, my attitudes changed, my thoughts and feelings transformed. I am no longer the same person I was 18 months ago; I have a “new state of consciousness and being” (p. 107), and it is incredible; it allows me to be sincerely happy living life.

Now, the true challenge comes in maintaining that joy outside of the rooms of OA. It is usually pretty simple for me to be peaceful in a meeting, it is relatively easy for me to be patient on a phone call with a fellow OA, and I can do a great job of being kind to a newcomer; but it is often difficult for me to extend that same patience (and tolerance, and understanding, and compassion...) with a challenging co-worker, or a dangerous driver on the freeway, or – God forbid – a close family member. And yet, this is the true testament to my recovery. If I can only maintain a joyful life in the sequestered rooms of an OA meeting or event, I have to wonder how much emotional/spiritual growth I have really experienced. To be blunt, talk is cheap; what do my *actions* look like outside the rooms of OA? I am happy to state that most days; I can smile at the co-worker, pray for the driver, and honestly love the family member. *Most* days.

Of course I am not perfect; of course I have interactions with people where I do not treat them with the patience/tolerance/understanding I would like; of course I have moments (minutes, hours,

sometimes even days) where I feel distress and anxiety instead of peace. Mercifully, this is all part of the experience of being human. It doesn’t mean I’m “bad”, or that my program is “weak”; it just means that I’m fallible – and that just means that I have a reason to continue working my program, to take the next right action, and to keep coming back. Fortunately, today the good days outnumber the bad, and peace and joy are the dominant emotions in my life. I came to this program sick, broken, and hopeless; and through the Twelve Steps and the support, honesty, and love of the individuals in this fellowship, I am living a life that truly *is* happy, joyous, and free. I am the message; and I love being able to carry it.

~Stef



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Saturday, December 20	Newcomer Meeting
Saturday, January 10	Intergroup Meeting
Thursday, January 15	Newcomer Open House in Rochester
Saturday, January 17	Newcomer Meeting
Friday-Sunday April 3-5	Buffalo Retreat

Newcomer Informational Open House
Zumbro Lutheran Church, 624 3rd Ave SW,
Rochester, MN
Thursday, January 15, 2009 – 7 to 8 PM.
Enter thru chapel door - NE corner
Contact Rebecca V with Questions
507-206-4178

Links

List of Local Meetings	www.overeaters.org
Region 4 Web Site	www.oaregion4.org
World Service Web Site	www.aa.org

Language of Unity. In January 2007, a motion was considered and passed by Unity Intergroup supporting our belief while meeting formats may differ, there is but one Overeaters Anonymous. We have included the original published explanation and language that first appeared in the February 2007 Society Pages with these Talking Points. Please take a moment to review this commitment with members at your meetings.

The Language of Unity (originally published in Society Pages, February, 2007)

Over the last few months, Unity Intergroup has been discussing “The Language of Unity”. We agreed that what we call ourselves and each other can serve to unite or divide us.

One of OA’s strongest assets is that there is not just one way or one right way to work the program. What works for one person may not work for another. As a result, there is a need for (and room for) many different meeting formats under the OA umbrella. We are all part of OA, joined by the desires to stop eating compulsively and to carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering compulsive overeater. Meeting formats and the ways people work their programs may change. The steps, tool, traditions, and concepts of OA, however, do not change.

Unity Intergroup wants to make sure that it sends the message clearly – **we are all part of Overeaters Anonymous and none of us is modifying OA.** Sending this message is especially important in our publications and communications. We may attend meetings with different formats, agreed upon by the individual groups’ conscience. We do not, however, belong to different types of OA, nor do we wish to or need to. The framework of OA is broad enough for us all. Therefore, in our language we do not want to directly or inadvertently give the impression that any of us are modifying OA.

It is with this intent that the following motion was considered and passed at the January 2007 Unity Intergroup meeting:

“There are not different kinds of OA. There are, however, different meeting formats such as HOW meetings, Step meetings, BB Study meetings, Traditions meetings and Literature Discussion meetings. In Unity Intergroup publications and communications, OA will always be referred to as OA. If distinctions are wanted or needed they should refer to meeting descriptors or meeting formats. Meetings descriptors would be the day,

time, location or group name. For example, a meeting could be referred to as the Tuesday morning HOW format meeting, or the Tuesday Minneapolis Meeting.”

This motion was passed in order to provide guidelines for OA’s to differentiate groups within our fellowship, should the need or want arise. The template is very simple – day of week, time of day, location, meeting format. (For example, the Thursday 7:30pm Minnetonka Big Book Study meeting or the Tuesday 9:30am Minneapolis HOW meeting (using the word format is not essential).) This motion’s goal is to provide a framework so that we do not end up implying, by using terms such as Traditional OA, OA-HOW, and the Regular OA in Unity Intergroup publications and communications, that we modify OA. After all, “our...personal recovery depends upon OA unity.” (Tradition One, OA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.)



January Society Pages

The January Society Pages will focus on Step 1: “We admitted we were powerless over food-that our lives had become unmanageable.” Although one meeting generally sponsors each newsletter, we welcome articles from anyone. Please indicate if it is OK to print your name with your article and e-mail your contributions to Amanda at corter_0506@hotmail.com with the subject “Society Pages” by noon on Wednesday December 24th.

Intergroup Board

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