

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup November 2008

Carrying the Message

Service Opportunities

Society Pages

We Need You! The Society Pages needs a Group to Sponsor the December 2008 issue and beyond. Volunteer your group to share through short personal stories, and members' experience, strength and hope. Contact Amanda A. at 763-639-7224 or corter_0506@hotmail.com for details. Steps match the months (i.e. January = Step 1, etc.). We truly cannot do this without you!

Newcomers Meeting Chairs

The current chair people for the monthly Newcomers Meeting will be stepping down in November. Please consider becoming a co-chair. They have 5 chairs now- sharing the responsibility - contact Sarah D. 612-227-3854.

The Language of Unity What Does It Really Mean and How Does It Tie In To Service?

The Language of Unity has been printed in every addition of our Society Pages consistently for the last 5 months. If you have come across it, you may have thought this made great sense to you. You may have brought it up at business meetings or perhaps led a meeting on it. That is a service; a way of contributing to the health of your home group. On the other hand, you may have wondered what those words really mean and how in the world does it apply to you? Understandably so...

Basically, it explains that HOW is a meeting format. In addition, it means that Unity won't print "OA HOW" or "HOW OA" in any of its publications or special event programs, etc. This is in an attempt to further promote the unity amongst our members in our specific area. We don't want to give the impression that HOW stands alone from OA. OA has room for

every possible approach to abstinence that is needed as long as the meeting is affiliated with Overeaters Anonymous following our traditions and steps - uniting us for one common purpose under one fellowship.

This is a significant accomplishment! We need to thank our HP's for leading us in this positive and healthy direction. Having said that, I think we are ready for the next step now. It is time to think about the language we use with each other and in the rooms of our meetings. What would happen if we stopped identifying ourselves to each other as HOW or traditional OA? We ask, "Are you in HOW or traditional OA?" Our thought process (in my opinion) has been that we are **either** HOW or OA.

I wonder if this puts a wedge between us and perhaps contradicts what we are trying to accomplish through the Language of Unity? When I hear us making that distinction I feel it divides rather than unites. We are all in the program of Overeaters Anonymous. We all work the same steps and traditions. All who are abstinent abstain from being compulsive with food.

My point is to describe ourselves as members of the same fellowship, respecting all formats and processes of achieving abstinence is a service we do for each other that unites us under the umbrella of Overeaters Anonymous. Tell others about your food plan, pass on what works for you and definitely share if you attend a meeting with a format that saved your life!

Compulsive overeaters, under eaters, critical level food addicts, sugar addicts, anorexics, bulimics, 100 pound losers, those who have needed to gain to be healthy and everyone in between – **UNITE! :)**
Respectfully and in the spirit of the program,

~Becky T. Unity Intergroup Chair

Step Eleven: “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out”

In the present

I am very grateful to be an abstinent compulsive overeater. The Twelfth Step encourages me not to just simply carry the message BUT be the message! Service work is my opportunity to give away what I have been so generously given by my higher power, from those who walked this recovery program before me, the friendships and shared recovery I've gained from other compulsive overeaters at meetings, and conventions. God has given me special talents, gifts and abilities to share. I am able to use those talents, gifts and abilities to do service work which is diffidently more satisfying than to be intoxicated with sugar and excess foods! Now that I'm eating less I am able to work in the present and be in the present for those around me that I love and love me – my family, friends and other suffering compulsive overeaters. I began my service work by walking through the doors of OA into a loving environment with people who understood me. I then journeyed on to literature person within a few short months and then onto the biggest service I felt I could share (at that time) with the assistance of another we started a meeting! Since then I have ventured into other group service opportunities from leading the meeting, topic speaker, secretary, treasurer and many other services. As I grow in my program emotionally and spiritually, I am receiving the physical rewards! The biggest service to me today is maintaining my abstinence. By maintaining my abstinence it gives me opportunity to provide quality service! Service also helps me abstain from compulsive overeating, and allows me to radiate the joy, excitement, love, understanding, and the beauty of the OA program. I am a work in progress! My HP is leading me into new service opportunities and I am truly amazed where God is leading me! But I'm more amazed at the transformation in me – the radiating glow, the positive attitude, and the ability to handle life better than before! My wish for you today is to listen to your HP, may he lead you into a rewarding service opportunity that radiates your self and will attract that still suffering compulsive overeater into an amazing world of hope, love and understanding - beyond our wildest dreams!

~Your trusted servant, Sheri O

Willingness

“As we look into the future, we clearly see that an ever greater willingness will certainly be the key to that progress which God intends for us as we move toward his appointed destiny.”

The Language of the Heart. Bill W.

For me willingness is the key to my personal recovery from food addiction thru the program of OA. I had to be willing to see my destructive eating patterns. At first it was hard but as my weight climbed and my health failed it became easier for me to accept I was in trouble. Then I prayed for a solution to be shown to me. A few years after I asked God to help me with my food problem, a friend led me to a solution in OA. Who would have thought I needed spiritual help for my food problem? Then I had to pick up the tools I was given in OA: a food plan approved by a nutritionist, a home meeting to support me, a sponsor to guide me, contact with other overeaters via the phone, literature that explains my disease and the solution, and.... service. Service is another commitment to willingness.

Abstinence is my greatest service. If I am in the food I am not able to be present for my life. I am not always happy to be early to the meeting to help set up and greet. But after the meeting I am filled up - I am able to be present and be a part of. In my disease I felt apart from. I make and take phone calls. I know people all over the country who are on this journey with me. I know I am not alone in my disease and I am not alone in my recovery. I have a sponsor and I sponsor. This service helps me to grow. I grow spiritually and personally. Sponsorship is a forum in which I can learn how to have relationships without the edge of food to dim the emotions. I love the literature – here I learn what is wrong with me and what I can do about it. I identify with others in the literature.

I have been willing to do service at the intergroup level. In Unity Intergroup I have had the privilege of seeing compulsive eaters work together for the good of each member. I have had the privilege of seeing real leadership in meeting the common goal of carrying the message of recovery from food addition to the still suffering compulsive eater. That is the only goal of Unity Intergroup leadership. I have not seen personal goals interfere with the goal. What a gift to me personally - a gift given to me because I was willing to do service.

I have been given the privilege of serving as a Unity Intergroup Region IV Representative. At the end of

October, the members of Unity Intergroup will send me and three other elected representatives to Winnipeg Canada to serve Unity Intergroup, Region IV and OA as a whole. Again, the focus will be how to serve the still suffering compulsive eater. I grow knowing more about the organization that has given me freedom from food addiction.

My ability to serve is based on willingness - willingness to give a little time and willingness to learn and grow. As I do service my abstinence becomes more and more solidified. I learn more and more that I am a compulsive eater, I am not alone, and I am surrounded by people and a service structure that supports me. More and more I see how blessed I am to be on this journey of recovery with other members of OA. I am grateful for my willingness.

~Joan S.
Rochester, Minnesota

Service-Keeps us coming back

I walked into my first OA meeting knowing it would be my last weight loss attempt. Every other diet program I had tried failed, and secretly I knew this one would too, but I was desperate enough to check it out. I picked up the pamphlet discussing the eight tools of recovery and quickly decided that the tool of service had entirely too much commitment associated with it. I would never volunteer to hold a service position. I had never been on a diet for more than six weeks so volunteering for a service position, even for three months, meant I was committed to coming back and that was a concept I was unable to comprehend. That was over four years ago, and I am gratefully still coming back.

I am not sure if service is slimming, but service does keep you coming back. My first year in OA was full of ups and downs, but I took the meeting room key each week because I knew that key was probably the only thing that would guarantee me returning the following week. That meeting key on the red heart key chain saved my life and filled my own heart with hope that this solution would last more than six weeks. Those first months in program I opened the door more for myself than anyone else.

My first official service position was becoming a Unity Intergroup Representative for my home meeting. When I first heard that people actually volunteered to go to Minneapolis once a month for an OA business meeting, I thought they were nuts, but unfortunately when the service position book was handed to me, Intergroup Rep. was the only position that had not been filled. I reluctantly signed

my name that evening never expecting the wonderful experience that followed. I have expanded my support network to include recovering compulsive overeaters all over our region and have made many dear friends in the process. I now even hold a position within Intergroup and am on the 2008 Convention Committee, all of this from a girl who had never been on a diet over six weeks.

Since that day I walked into my first OA meeting in August of 2004, my life has changed in ways I never imagined because I committed to taking that key. I no longer obsess about what clothes will fit today, I sit on my husband's lap when I want to snuggle, I have a sponsor that I actually have let inside my hard outer shell, I have a relationship with my son that is incredible, and I happily commit to performing OA service. My fear of regaining the 108 pounds I returned to my Higher Power is slowly lifting because I know that as long as I am doing service I won't need to pick up the food for today. All of this because I took the meeting key.

~Anonymous

Pass it on

Service has been the anchor of my recovery of that there is no doubt. Someone reached out a hand to me. She took my call without knowing anything about me and she listened. She explained what she did to get and stay abstinent and more than that she told me I could do the same. She saved my life. Really. Spiritually, I had been the walking dead and I had attempted suicide. The grinding pain of obsession about food, weight and feelings of failure had demolished all the beauty in my life.

Today I see people suffering. I see the pain in their faces. Who am I to live and allow them to fall? Who am I to say *not me* when some else said **yes** to me? I have a miracle in my life and the **ONLY** way to prevent becoming restless, irritable and discontent again- is to pass the miracle on. I have to do service. I find great JOY in giving service.

We are dying; **WE** are dying from anorexia, bulimia and obesity-related diseases.

WE are in this together. **WE** make it happen with the grace of our Higher Power.

We are dying and **WE ARE the solution. Let's pass it on together!**

~Anonymous

NOONE has to do it alone

I have always been a “numbers” person, so when I was nominated to be Treasurer of Unity Intergroup in January 2007 I agreed. It’s just balancing checkbooks and preparing spreadsheets, right? No problem.

What I didn’t realize is how much I would get from this service that was not at all related to numbers! I may appear to be an outgoing person to those of you who know me, but inside I am the Master of Isolation! And there is one thing I could not do when involved with Intergroup. And that is to isolate! And I thank my HP for that!

I won’t exaggerate and tell you that being at this service level is always easy and fun. It is MOST of the time, but there are times it can be very stressful. However, the most important thing I learned is that I AM NOT ALONE. I have three other board members, many Intergroup Reps, over 50 meetings full of Compulsive Overeaters, Region IV, and WSO to help me. And they have helped me many, many times!

During my term, I had given myself the goal of getting Unity’s tax situation straightened out. At one time Unity Intergroup was set up as a non-profit and had tax-exempt status within Minnesota, but things were not kept up to date, tax laws changed, and we had to start the process over again. Also, because of our recent income numbers, it was time for us to start filing tax returns.

Well, I’m happy to report that we filed our first tax return for the 06-07 tax year (our year-end date is 6/30) and as of last month, Unity Intergroup has officially become a 501(c)(3) (again)! I am still awaiting response from the state on making us tax exempt, but hope to get that completed before my term is up in January 2009.

I am so thankful that I was able to use my knowledge to help Unity achieve these things. So, what are YOUR skills that could help your meeting, Unity Intergroup, Region IV, or WSO and therefore ultimately the still suffering compulsive overeater?

Are you an organizer? An idea person? Do you like to carry out duties but don’t have the ideas? Do you have experience with Access, Excel, or websites? Are you open to trying something new but don’t know what is needed?

Read the Society Pages, come to Unity Intergroup, or just call a Board Member...Find out what positions are available and where you can help. We are all volunteers, and thank goodness NOONE has to do this alone.

Get involved...help spread the word of Overeaters Anonymous to the still suffering compulsive overeater!

~Amy D

Freedom through Service

I am astonished and inspired by the dedication, love, tolerance and energy of the people that have gone before me in Overeater’s Anonymous. I am lucky to live in Minnesota because I live in a pocket of enthusiasm for recovery and service that is nationally recognized.

I have been going to Unity Intergroup for the past four years. Two years as an Intergroup Representative, one year as the Co-Chair of the Minnesota State Convention and one year as the State Convention Chair. The quality of recovery and the amount of service I see being done person to person, at meetings, Intergroup and World Service levels is phenomenal.

There is a paradox in this program, “That we have to give it away to keep it.” I know the more I give the more I receive. I have been taught that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the still suffering compulsive overeater. Taking this action has given me freedom from the cunning, baffling, powerful and patient disease of compulsive overeating. At a Buffalo Retreat I heard a speaker say, “If I want self esteem I need to do esteemable acts.” Service helps me do esteemable acts and frees me from the bondage of self. Hooray for service!

~Linda N.

Links

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

Convention Corner

WELCOME

The convention planning committee would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 35th Minnesota Convention of Overeaters Anonymous. After months of planning, much negotiation, monthly meetings, and countless telephone calls and emails, the time has finally arrived—and we are now here to celebrate with this year's slogan being: "Living in the Sunlight of the Spirit : Abstinence, Serenity and Service".

The convention planning committee is comprised of fifteen distinct sub-committees led by more than 30 abstinent OA members who dedicate their time to coordinating this event. In addition to the committee members, it takes more than 250 on-site volunteers to run the convention successfully. On-site volunteers perform in a variety of positions—as greeters, room managers, time keepers, speakers, hospitality room managers, registration table and literature table staffers, recovery slideshow equipment managers, and many more. All service positions are equally important to the mission of the convention...spreading the message to those who still suffer.

For more than 35 years, OA members have traveled from near and far to celebrate recovery and share their experience, strength, and hope. This year, based on registrations as of 10/1/08, we welcome OA members from several states. The steering committee has taken great care in planning every single convention detail with you in mind. There will be 2 dynamic keynote speakers, more than twenty-five abstinent OA speakers, two OA meetings, entertainment, and abstinent meals. Take the time to enjoy special features: Recovery Slideshow, Virtual Meetings Reception, and Getting Started Workshop for the Newcomer. Enjoy the fellowship in the Hospitality Suite and be sure to visit the Gopher State Tape Library. We know that you will have a great time as we "Live in the Sunlight of Spirit with Abstinence, Serenity and Service".

Registration funds in excess of convention costs support the Unity Intergroup in carrying the message of recovery.

We look forward to enjoying your fellowship at the convention as we experience together the reminder of hope that "There is a Solution."

Linda N
2008 OA Convention Chair

Two National Speakers Share Experience, Strength and Hope

The Minnesota State OA Convention will feature 2 National Keynote speakers on November 14 & 15 at 7:00pm.

Speaker # 1 is a male from Cape Canaveral, Florida. His cholesterol has dropped from 415 to 145. He has dropped 30 pounds and no longer feels over-full from eating too much of the wrong foods.

He says: "Strong sponsorship and deep sponsor involvement in the structure of my food plan are as necessary to my recovery as food is to my life. I eat clean, guilt-free food. It is the source of my freedom."

"To me food is fuel it is not an event. I fuel my body with the right amount of correct fuel. I would not put diesel fuel in my car's gas tank. It would not run correctly, if at all. Similarly I cannot put sugar or flour into my body. It will not run correctly."

"Real (12 Step) recovery cannot take place while a person is still compulsively eating."

"I do what I can to strengthen OA and my own way of life."

Speaker #2 – Our female keynote speaker is from Ottumwa, Iowa and has been abstinent since 1992.

She says: "By God's grace, I have maintained a 40 pound weight loss for 17 years. I was on a direct path for severe obesity, but God stopped me in my bingeing tracks and sent me to OA. My food plan is 3 meals a day with 2 planned snacks, one day at a time. I am caffeine free and my whole goal in life is to abstain from compulsive eating with God's help."

"I was pulled from the nightmare of bingeing and loathing myself by the 12 steps. I now have peace and serenity and self-worth by finding and seeking my Higher Power. I give all that I can to this program because I was given the precious gifts of recovery and abstinence. By giving it away, I am allowed to keep it. Am I blessed or what?"

Convention Corner

Members share what convention means to them.....

From MN: "The Convention was exciting and really boosted my recovery. Being surrounded by 400 people that understand me and live in recovery was life changing. So many great ideas were shared. I made new friends. Sharing the gift of recovery was a great experience. The speakers were terrific!"

From MO: "A convention is a great way to see the 12 Steps in action. And you can take it with you when you go. I have bought the tapes and listened to them 4 or 5 times. They help remind me of the program, whenever I need a boost."

From NE: "The past two conventions I have attended have provided me with unique opportunities to meet and form friendships with people from all over the Region. I always get to hear great speakers, and the opportunities for fellowship abound."

From MN: "Each convention gives my program a great boost. It is really awesome to meet people from all over who are recovering from this disease, just as I am, one day at a time."

Convention Corner

Highlights of the 2008 Program...Previews of Coming Recovery Attractions.....

Friday, November 14, 2008

- 7:35pm – Keynote Speaker Her Story
- 8:10pm – Keynote Speaker His Story
- 8:45pm – Social/ Sing-a-Long

Saturday, November 15, 2008

- 8:45am – Sponsorship Panel
- 9:20am–4:30pm Steps 1-11
- 10:30am - OA Meeting (Traditional format)
- 10:30am–4:30pm–Traditions 1-12
- 10:30 am – Gastric Bypass
- 11:00am – 100 lb Loser
- 11:30am – Anorexia/Bulimia
- 12:00 noon - Surviving Relapse
- 1:45pm – OA Entertainment
- 2:00 pm – Reaching Maintenance
- 2:00 pm – OA Meeting (HOW format)
- 2:30pm – Long Term Abstinence
- 3:00pm – Men’s Issues
- 3:30pm – Atheist/Agnostic
- 3:50pm – OA Entertainment
- 4:00pm – Living in the Solution
- 4:00pm – Getting Started/Newcomers

Saturday Evening, November 15,

- 7:15pm – Keynote speaker
- 8:15pm – Abstinence Count Down
- 8:45pm – Entertainment

Sunday, November 16, 2008

- 9:15am – Step 12
- 10:00am – Re-Entry Speaker
- 10:45am Keynote speaker

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 1 Steps and 12 Traditions.)

December Society Pages

The December Society Pages will focus on Step 12: "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" and we are still in need of a group to volunteer to write articles and to assemble the issue. 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 Monday, September 22nd.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

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| Saturday, November 8 | Intergroup Meeting |
| Saturday, November 15 | Newcomer Meeting |
| Friday-Sunday November 14-16 | OA Convention |
| Saturday, December 13 | Intergroup Meeting |
| Saturday, December 20 | Newcomer Meeting |
| Friday-Sunday April 3-5 | Buffalo Retreat |
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Intergroup Board

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
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| Amy D., Treasurer | 952-270-0098 |
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