



October 2020

# Expressions of Unity

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

www.overeaters.org

## NEWS & NOTEWORTHY

### REGION 4 ASSEMBLY

Fri, Oct. 2, 7:00 pm CST –  
Sat, Oct. 3, 5:00 pm CST  
Join us on Zoom!  
[Register online](#)

### OA QUICK STEPS 2-Part Zoom Workshop

Saturdays, Oct. 3 & 17  
9:00 am–12:30 pm CST  
To register, contact:  
[unityquicksteps@gmail.com](mailto:unityquicksteps@gmail.com)

### INTERGROUP MEETING

Saturday, Oct. 10  
12:30–2:00 pm  
Join us on [Zoom](#)

### VIRTUAL EVENTS

Check out OA [Virtual Region](#) to find workshops, meetings, phone marathons, and more

### NEW UNITY ADDRESS

Unity Intergroup  
5115 Excelsior Blvd. # 325  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416



### This month's topic:

## “How service helps your recovery”

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**November:** Share a favorite line or passage from our literature and describe why it inspires you

**December:** Staying abstinent throughout the holidays

Short, long, anonymous or not, we love your articles!!

Email your reflections to:

[ExpressionsofUnity2020@gmail.com](mailto:ExpressionsofUnity2020@gmail.com)

## OA MEETINGS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

[Unity Intergroup Phone & Online Meetings](#)

[OA Phone Meetings](#)

[OA-HOW Online/Phone Meetings](#)

[OA Speaker Recordings](#)

“A Vision For You” Big Book Phone Meetings

Ph: 712-432-5210, Code: 876148#

Monday–Friday

6–7 am CT (recorded)

7–8 am CT (not recorded)

9–10 am CT (recorded)

Sunday Special Edition

7:30-9:00 am CT (recorded)

*Note: if your group has resumed in-person meetings, please send information (day, time, meeting #, contact) to [cathyunityig@gmail.com](mailto:cathyunityig@gmail.com).*

## UNITY INTERGROUP BOARD

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## EAT YOUR VEGETABLES

“Service is slimming.” We used to hear that in OA. It was meant to encourage everyone to take on service positions. After all, this program is a gift from God that we must steward; what program or recovery would there be if *no one* did service?

We all pitch in at the meeting level in some capacity. Someone with shaky abstinence can still help set up, clean up, and welcome others. It connects us with the group and it definitely ups our recovery, so why wouldn't we do that? With abstinence, we can sponsor, speak, be treasurer, etc. Again, it lifts us all up! All service lifts all of us. Do what you can, when you can.

After sustained periods of recovery and thousands of meetings, it might feel worn out. If that is your experience, I recommend service above the meeting level. From the outside, Intergroup, Region and World Service don't look particularly lively. Retreats and conventions are fun and exciting because they're for my personal recovery! By contrast, taking care of business, budgets, and bylaws sounds dry and dull. But hold on—because here is what I've found:

I first served beyond the group because there was a need, and I'm motivated to keep OA and myself alive. Plus, everyone there insisted growth happens when we get involved. It's true! Service beyond the group level is like Miracle Grow! God has used it to expand my network of people with strong recovery, sharpen my program, and reveal areas for growth.

The interesting thing is that growth is already happening by the time I start to see the need! In contrast, when I'm working my own program, I am choosing

to grow in certain areas as I see the need. When I do service, God leads me to the changes, shapes me to be fit for the character assets He wants to bless me with, and surprises me with the joy and satisfaction I long for. I never expected it would be found at things like a Region Business Assembly!

I am always filled up when I spend time with recovered OAers. Service positions bring that at regular intervals. In Unity Intergroup we have the added bonus of paid travel expenses, so those costs need not hinder anyone from signing up.

Serving in the business positions of OA is like eating vegetables. At first, we don't get as excited about them as we would about dessert, and yet they are much more filling, nutritious, and satisfying. In fact, we cannot have a balanced diet or vibrant health without them. So too, our recovery program.



Try service beyond the meeting. You will notice a real improvement in your vitality, and you will be amazed how much you like it!

~ Roxanne

## WHY REGION?

Please hear my passion about Region 4. It has been such a blessing to me!

My first understanding of Overeaters Anonymous was my little group. Later, I came to see that our Wednesday 1 pm meeting in Crystal, MN was one of nearly 60 other groups that comprise Unity Intergroup. More importantly, I saw that the intergroup provides services for the groups that would be difficult, if not impossible for any one group to provide – services such as newsletters, meeting lists, and recovery events. I saw that intergroup supports its groups.

But then, I was introduced to Region, primarily via my sponsor who was also involved in Region. My HP eventually got through to me and I allowed myself to be elected as a Region Representative (Region Rep) for our intergroup. My view of OA shifted yet again. Just as I had learned that each OA group is unique, I learned that the things intergroups do varies considerably. I discovered a group of abstinent members focused on how to best carry the message by serving our intergroups. At the time, there was not much recovery in my little group, so going to assembly was like manna for my soul.

At first glance, it doesn't appear that Region does much besides have assemblies and conventions. But that is only the part that is most easily seen – much like an island. Below the surface, Region is so much more.

- Region is a link between World Service and our intergroups, or as we like to think of it, Region 4 is the hub of activities, support, and communication between Region, our intergroups (and groups), and World Service.

- Region provides funding assistance for a variety of things which our smaller intergroups would not be able to provide, including professional outreach projects, purchase of literature for new groups, and sending Region reps to Assembly where those reps can bring back new ideas and grow their own recovery.
- Region is a place to share the good things that are happening in our intergroups, hear new ideas, and get support for those intergroups that are struggling.
- Region provides workshops presented by the Region 4 board members designed to help our intergroups.

Region 4 is comprised of intergroups that have just two meeting all the way up to Unity Intergroup with 61 meetings. At Region, we discover ways in which we all help each other. The larger intergroups support the smaller ones and surprisingly, vice versa! For me Region provided a place to make new friends and to find more meaning in “Together we can do what we could never do alone.”

Unity Intergroup could probably function for quite a while on its own, but there are smaller intergroups that probably can't. Unity Intergroup can help support the smaller intergroups and meetings via financial contributions, workshops, and more importantly, by sharing their experience, strength and hope. Lately we have been blessed by the increased use of Zoom and other such platforms that allow all intergroups to share workshops with one another. Unity Intergroup has been particularly good in sharing its events with the rest of the Region.

The business of Region 4 is done at our two, yearly Assemblies (April and October). While “business” may sound dull, it is really isn’t. At Assembly, we have opportunities to make new friends from other intergroups, share ideas and learn more about Region and world service.

Our three committees meet to determine goals and make plans to meet them. There is room for everyone in one of our committees. If like event planning, Convention Committee is for you. If you are interested in finance, Ways & Means/Finance is for you. If you are passionate about carrying the message and how Region 4 intergroups can work together, Outreach is the committee for you.

Our Fall Assembly Oct. 2–4 is a virtual event. With no expenses for our intergroups, we’ve encouraged all Region reps to attend. Region 4 requires six months of current back-to back-abstinence. (Unity Intergroup requires one year of back-to back-abstinence and attendance at three intergroup meetings.) This will be a great opportunity for more reps to attend assembly and take part in the business of Region 4 while also having fun.

Region Assemblies typically look like this: On Friday, we meet for an early dinner (unless we’re virtual). At 7:00 pm, there is an icebreaker and time for individual intergroups to share what’s going on in their area and ask for support from other intergroups if needed.

Saturday morning, we take care of the business of OA business and meet with our committees. In the afternoon, we have committee reports; elect officers, committee chairs, and coordinators; and address any motions that have been put forward. This is remarkably interesting

because we get to hear varying perspectives which often inspire lively debates.

As of October 4, 2020, I will be stepping down as Region 4 Chair to give other Region reps the opportunity to serve at this level.

I am incredibly grateful to have served as Region 4 Chair and for the opportunities Region has provided me.



The growth I have experienced is phenomenal! I have made a plethora of friends and traveled across the Midwest to attend Assemblies. I have come to understand the vastness and diversity of our worldwide OA community.

Please consider serving as a Region rep—it’s an experience you must not miss!

~ Annette P-R  
Outgoing Region 4 Chair  
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## ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF RECOVERY

While I was in the clutches of the disease of compulsive overeating, I isolated myself from the world. Food was the only way I knew how to cope—it was my escape hatch into oblivion. I desperately wanted to fit in and be a part of life, but I was way too afraid to engage with others. Compulsive overeating shrunk my world into a tiny self-centered fearful space.

I had always thought I was a nice and giving person when in fact, I was a major people-pleaser. When I did do something for someone, I always expected something in return. More times than not it was to be validated, accepted, or liked. Needless to say, I was always disappointed not to get any of that in return. I would end up feeling used and resentful. Yuk.

I feel service is the backbone of our program. Carrying the message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers is the most fundamental form of service. We help each other on this road of recovery.

The fellows who went before me gave freely of themselves. I could never have recovered on my own. They taught me how to pick up the phone and reach out to others. They taught me that when I am nervous about speaking in front of the group, it isn't about me, it is about carrying the message. They taught me the deep joy in helping others and doing service without expecting something in return. Service without an agenda!

Giving service in OA gave me the gift of getting out of my self centered fearful little tiny space and blew open the doors to the world. Today I can give back freely.

~ In gratitude, Julie BH

## LEARNING FROM SERVICE

Service supports my recovery by helping me learn about anonymity and being one among others. It helps me learn about loving and nurturing OA so others and I have opportunities to heal physically, emotionally and spiritually from the disease of compulsive overeating.

Seeing and hearing others do service gives me awareness and appreciation for others and humility knowing others are doing service work that I can't do.

Service teaches me about balancing care for personal and collective recovery. If I don't tend to abstinence and my emotional, physical and spiritual recovery, I get depleted and can't offer happy, joyous service to others.

Service shows me that I have (thank you, HP!) something to offer others that is life supporting.

Service from others in the form of sponsorship, outreach calls, honest sharing, creative ideas for improving conscious contact with higher power and maintaining abstinence and empathy is an elixir for loneliness, self centeredness, selfishness and resentment. It gets me out of stinking thinking.

Service is a way to refocus when I'm emotionally squirrely and off balance. It keeps me connected to our program principles and gives me hope for the present and future and, particularly during COVID-19, out of isolation.

Thank you HP and OA for helping me learn about sharing and receiving through the OA tool of service.

~ Anonymous

## ROAD TRIP REFLECTIONS

“The promises have begun to materialize for me, and there’s still so much work to do.” *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 327

I mentioned to my husband on a recent road trip that I would be writing about the Promises. That started us talking about specific ones we remembered and how recovery has changed certain aspects of our lives.



“Self seeking will slip away.” He talked about the ease with which he can now walk into a room full of people and strike up a conversation with anyone. I agreed. I also realized how much I used to self-promote and turn people off.

“We will not regret the past.” We laughed about how we look at road courtesy so differently now. In the past, I just wanted to get from A to Z in the shortest amount of time while my husband was always in a competitive race. He shared how embarrassing some of his old behaviors were, like tailgating, but it’s part of his story and he accepts it.

“We will know peace.” I think of how well I’m doing today with all the health issues going on with my husband and my aging father. I admit my son is my Achilles heel. He is the one that I can let snatch my serenity, but I know the way back.

Even though I can’t recite the Promises from memory, I am living them. Grateful!

~ Anonymous

## IN PRAISE OF SERVICE

Service has been a huge gift to me. It has grown my program tremendously.

Helping at meetings made me feel a part, and when people applauded, it touched my heart.

I learned many things whenever I served, whether at meetings or intergroup or region or world.

Not everyone I meet is fun to know. There are those that annoy me so.

But these are my teachers with lessons to share. They give me a chance to practice principles in all my affairs.

I was a meek one, putting most thoughts on a shelf, saying only a little because I doubted myself.

I learn new skills and find new strength as long as I am willing to go to any length.

I have gained in wisdom, strengthened my connection with HP, and I gotta tell you, that’s a great place to be.

Now I have self-esteem and confidence to spare, which I put to use whenever I share.

And I have a secret I want you to know. HP keeps me growing through service – wherever I go.

~ Anonymous

## JUMPING INTO OA

I came into my first OA meeting the week of Thanksgiving 2004. I had stumbled into an OA HOW format meeting and didn't know anything about OA, OA HOW or the 12 Steps, but I was completely miserable.

I had spent the majority of my life as an active compulsive overeater, sometimes obese, sometimes dieting, but always completely insane. Food ruled my every waking moment: how much of this or that, who would see me, how would I get rid of it, on and on for 30+ years. I was done. I had come to the jumping off point and luckily I jumped right into OA. I didn't know what a life I would come to know because of this amazing and miraculous program.

That first meeting I couldn't even make eye contact with these beautiful, radiant, and thin ladies, all of whom I assumed had always been that way. But during the sponsor line I heard that some had lost hundreds of pounds, some had issues with under eating and restricting. I was on both ends of the spectrum—morbidly obese and a dieter/restrictor/over-exerciser.

The speaker that night shared her experience as a compulsive overeater. I identified closely since I had been living in the disease for so long. I heard sponsors pitch on tools. I heard, "Any service, no matter how small, helps the next compulsive overeater." They said putting away chairs, making coffee and setting up the room were important.

Eyes on the floor at the close of the meeting, I quickly started putting away chairs and taking materials back to storage at the church.



A sponsor approached me and asked if I wanted to do a test drive with weighing and measuring my food for a week. Thanksgiving week. I said yes. She said to call her at 7:00 am tomorrow with what I planned to eat. I said yes. And I did. Everyday that week, including Thanksgiving. I can't claim abstinence that first week, because I was basically weighing and measuring non-abstinent foods, but I ate what I said I was going to eat in the amounts I said I was going to eat them.

For the first time in 30-odd years, my head was quiet. After I committed my food, the tug was gone. The next week I started the program. I will always be indebted to those ladies at the meeting, especially my first sponsor. I always think of her when I extend my hand to the newcomer and encourage them to help put away chairs. Those simple acts of service kept me coming back.

~ Sue L, Rochester

## CORNERSTONE OF MY RECOVERY

I love writing about service. Service has been an important part of my life for a long time. I got sober in another fellowship 30 years ago. I feel very fortunate that I found a sponsor and an extensive group of friends and fellow members who were active in service. As a result, the concept of being of service was ingrained in me from the beginning. I heard early on that the program is not a self-help program – it's actually a help-others program! Reminders like that really stuck with me.

Our entire program is rooted in one person helping another. Bill W. carried the message of sobriety to a lot of drunks, but it wasn't until he shared his message with Dr. Bob, and Dr. Bob stayed sober that the 12<sup>th</sup> Step program had its beginning. Our most basic form of service happens when one compulsive eater shares our message of hope with another. I joined this program because a friend of mine shared her message of hope with me. She shared it quietly through her actions over a number of years and then she shared it openly when I asked for help.

But there is a lot more to service. The other aspects of service that are just as important often take place behind the scenes. They are often thankless deeds that make 12<sup>th</sup> Step work possible. Here are a few examples:

The meeting setup person helps a group provide an attractive meeting place for newcomers when they arrive. The individuals who pitch on a tool or share some aspect of recovery provide hope for the compulsive eater who might not have any. Carrying the message of our program to the professionals in our lives can provide a great service to those they might come into contact with. My doctor knows that I found a solution to

compulsive eating through OA and she has seen my physical recovery. If she ever has a patient (or even a friend or family member) with this disease she might be more inclined to send him or her to us. Getting involved at Intergroup or World Service provides a communication link between groups regarding other opportunities to be of service. It is also how we make decisions about literature and other things that can be helpful for attracting new people.

I believe service is the backbone of our recovery. I will always be grateful for the many benefits I get from service and I hope I always do my part to preserve this amazing fellowship for the next person who might need us. Service adds meaning and purpose to my life and it continues to give me a happy, contented abstinence.

~ Anonymous



## HEARD AT A MEETING

*"Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels."*

*"It's not how much you eat, it's what eating does to you."*

*"One bite is too many and a thousand is not enough."*

*"Resentments are like drinking poison and hoping the other person will die."*

*"There is no end to better!"*



## DOES SERVICE REALLY HELP MY RECOVERY?

This week I feel completely overwhelmed and would just like to crawl in bed and sleep it all away. I have been working as a nurse for 23 years and the last nine have been the best years of my career. I love my current job. I was recently told that in order to keep my job, which I was planning on working until I retire, I need to have this new specialized training because our department is changing the way we run the unit and take care of patients. My supervisors told me that if I didn't get the training I would need to find another nursing job because this is going to be the new standard of care.

You see, I am in my mid 50s and this is a whole different type of nursing that I have been asked to learn. My mind doesn't pick up things as quickly as it once did, and I have to study a lot longer and harder to remember new information. I am also being trained in by nurses who are a lot younger more energetic than I. So, to be told that I need to learn a higher level of skills, which I don't particularly want to, was disappointing. Why can't I just keep doing what's been working well for me these past nine years?

"If I am unable to change the present state of affairs, am I willing to take the measures necessary to shape my life to conditions as they are?" *AA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions*, p. 52

I have been working my OA program abstinely for over 19 years now and, one day at a time, I hope to continue for many more years. One morning after reading my writing assignment to my sponsor, she commented, "Well, looks like your job here is to be of maximum service to your patients and co-workers." Without

a doubt, my pre-program response would have been, "But that's not fair! What about me and my needs?"

"For my serenity I need the courage to turn it over to my Higher Power, asking for the strength to do what I cannot do myself." *Voices of Recovery*, p. 269

Over the years, this program has taught me that I can do things I am uncomfortable doing and don't really want to do—like getting training in a new area of work. In the act of doing so, I might actually become useful and helpful to those about me. And I know without a shadow of doubt that when I get out of myself and think of others, my day and my life take a whole different turn for the better. An added bonus: I might actually have fun and learn a lot!



I am so very grateful for the way my life has been transformed by working this program one day at a time. The key to this transformation has been to not take that first compulsive bite so I can be useful and helpful to others. The more I am of service to others, the easier it is for me to stay abstinent. Truly a win-win way of life.

~ Anonymous