

Sharing Hope.

The Los Angeles Hospitals & Institutions Newsletter

Oct 2014 Issue

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An Article on Service

By Andy V

A.A. isn't governed like an organization, but it does rely on the combined expertise and volunteerism of individuals in local groups, the local intergroup or central office, institution committees, and general service.

Remember back to when you first started going to meetings, how confused and a little afraid you were? What you were really afraid of was what you didn't know – how A.A. worked and what was expected of you. Then, someone came forward and invited you in and suddenly this meeting place didn't seem quite so intimidating after all.

Part of helping out in your local A.A. meeting is as easy as greeting newcomers and helping to put them at ease with a smile, a hearty handshake, and a few gentle words of welcome.

Becoming active in your local group could also involve volunteering to set out the chairs, ensure the coffee is brewed and hot, that the cups are all arranged. By the same token, after the meeting is over, there's the breakdown of chairs, cleaning the coffee pot, disposing of the cups, taking out the trash, and other duties. Someone has to do this and even if there's a person who regularly does it, you can offer to help to speed things along.

What do such simple tasks have to do with being of service? Actually, a lot. What happens is that you begin to incorporate being of service in how you live your life every day. Maybe it's a small thing to help out at a meeting, but it's certainly a start. From there, many other instances of being of service can grow.

Ask Your Sponsor

By the time you arrive at the Twelfth Step, you'll probably have many discussions with your sponsor under your belt about any number of points related to the Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts of Service. But, if you haven't touched on being of service to any great extent, now is certainly the time to ask your sponsor about how you can get involved.

Chances are pretty good that your sponsor will encourage you to become active in service early on. In fact, some long-time fellowship members refer to A.A. as a kind of 36-point program: 12 steps, 12 traditions, and 12 concepts.

There's really no mystery about service work. In fact, your sponsor is doing service work when he takes you under his wing and tries to make you aware of what A.A. is as a whole. Think about the things you and your sponsor talk about. It's very likely that he has made an effort to interest you in service work beyond the group.

Read the Literature

Want to start out as soon as possible? Other long-time A.A. members, sponsors, and those involved in service work advise that you read the *Big Book* and *A.A. Comes of Age*. Not only will you "find yourself," but you'll also think of many ways that you can start being of service.

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Does your meeting have an H&I can?

Help get literature to AA's who are locked up and cannot get to meetings. Bring a can to your regular meeting and take up a collection. The money you collect pays for AA literature handed out on panels. Ask for an H&I LABEL at the "Cans" table at H&I. Your meeting can donate a portion of its 7th Tradition, or members can make personal donations. However you choose to participate, donations are gratefully appreciated. Thank you!

Have you ever wanted to write about a moving experience in sobriety?!

We are currently reviewing articles & other writing submissions for the H&I Newsletter!
Please send us your writing!

hnnewsletter@gmail.com

News from the www.LAHIC.org

Did you know that you can get this newsletter online?!

- You can access this same exact informative newsletter on the LAHIC website at: www.lahic.org/newsletter.php,
- Have each month's newsletter emailed directly to you by joining the list serve!
- You can also download court cards from the website!
- Print out your panel sign-up sheets too!
- Unsubscribing at any time is just as easy!

Calendar of Southern California AA Events

October 2014:

1. Santa Clarita Valley Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous October 17, 18, 19, 2014
www.scvaconvention.org
2. Gold Country Roundup – Annual AA event with Al-anon and Alateen participation, 28th Annual. October 17, 18, 19, 2014. Saint Sava Mission. 600 Mission Blvd. Jackson, Amador County, California
3. Inland Empire AA Convention. 27th Annual. October 17, 18, 19, 2014. Hilton San Bernadino Hotel. 285 East Hospitality Lane. San Bernadino County, CA.
4. Southern California Young People in AA Convergence - Annual AA event with Al-anon and Alateen participation. SOCALYPAA. 6th Annual. October 30, 31, Nov 1 & 2, 2014. Sheraton Fairplex Hotel & Conference Center: Reservations. 601 West McKinley, Ave. Pomona, LA County, CA.

November 2014:

1. We Agnostics and Free Thinkers International AA Convention. Annual AA Event with Al-anon participation. *Facebook*. November 6, 7, 8, 2014. Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica. 1260 18th Street. Santa Monica, CA
2. Yosemite Summit Conference Annual AA Event with Al-anon and Alateen participation. November 21, 22, 23, 2014. Curry Village, Yosemite National Park, Mariposa CA.

For More Information and Events: <http://usrecovery.info/AA/Events/index.htm>

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There's also *The A.A. Service Manual Combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service* (<http://www.aa.org/lang/en/catalog.cfm?origpage=101&product=100>), also by Bill W. The manual begins with a history of A.A. services and then goes on to explain the Conference structure and the importance of its year-round work. There's also the Conference Charter and General Service Board By-Laws, if you want to get in-depth into that. But most important is the section on The Concepts, as set forth by Bill W. These are the principles of service that have grown out of A.A.'s accomplishments – and its mistakes – from the beginning. If nothing else, reading this publication will prove eye-opening – and inspiring.

Be Active to Stay Sober

There certainly is no requirement that you have to go into service. But many in recovery relate that they felt they were only able to remain sober because they became active in service to others.

How can this be? The truth is that being abstinent takes hard work. You can't just sit back and say to yourself that you're doing okay so far, maybe you can skip meetings and still get by. You know where that gets you – a quick slip or major relapse can't be far off. You know you have to actively work the 12 steps, and you can't take sobriety for granted. When you do, something will happen that will rock your stability and you'll be ill-prepared to handle the challenge. You may have heard the stories yourself, or read about them in the A.A. literature. One member says that he doubted he'd have been able to stay sober for 26 years without being in service. Another proclaims that service is a part of who he is.

Good Intentions are a Good Start

Don't worry about the right way to do something. Start off by just trying to help – the aforementioned greeting newcomers with a smile, being of assistance wherever and whenever you can. While some may question whether it's because they want to be liked, need recognition and approval from others, or just because they like A.A. and being in the group, as long as your intention and motivation is good, you will be okay. In other words, don't rack your brain looking or waiting for a pure motive. Just get going and start doing.

General Service May Not Be For Everyone

For many in recovery, general service is perhaps going a bit too far. Rest easy on this one. General service may not be for everyone. You don't need to feel forced or pressured into working on committees or going into intergroup and area institutions – and no one in A.A. will try to push such an agenda on you if you're not interested or ready.

Sure, they may suggest it, even encourage it. You'd expect that, since Dr. Bob himself once said (more or less in these words) that if we fail to acquire a spirit of service, we will have missed out on the greatest gift A.A. has to offer – the ability to give our sobriety away and so keep it.

For information on the service structure of A.A. in the United States and Canada – including a description of all the elements linking individual members and groups with the General Service Conference, see *Inside A.A.: Understanding the Fellowship and its Service Agencies* (<http://www.aa.org/lang/en/catalog.cfm?origpage=185&product=43>).

Service is actually the Third Legacy of A. A. – following behind Recovery, the First Legacy, and Unity, the Second Legacy. As the pamphlet states: "Service to others and to the Fellowship reminds us that we owe our sobriety to the work of earlier members, and that our continued sobriety may depend on the hundreds of thousands who still need to learn of A.A."

And helping some of these many newcomers may be part of your future.

That's it, in a nutshell. Simple and uncomplicated, giving of yourself and being of service to others in recovery is one of the best ways to strengthen your own recovery. In essence, you give and you receive.

Twice blessed.

We need your **HELP!**

**H&I Monthly Business Meeting: 2nd Monday of each month: Veterans Memorial Complex, 4153 Overland Ave.
@ Culver Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230 Orientation for New Members: 7:00pm. General Business Meeting:
8:00pm**

The Los Angeles Hospitals & Institutions Committee organizes over 500 panels of AAs each month to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to those confined in hospitals and institutions. It's easy to become a member of H&I! Just come to the monthly H&I meeting, and sign up to speak on a panel. There are many opportunities for service: panel leader, chairperson positions, one time speaker. Six months of continuous sobriety is suggested for hospitals. For correctional facilities, a year or more is required, and, depending on the facility, a background check and/or clearance is also necessary. See Noeh, Director of Hospitals for information on hospital panels, and Greg B., Director of the Correctional side to apply for jail clearance.