

REACHING OUT

VOLUME I

NUMBER 2

Welcome

This is the second issue of the bimonthly H&I newsletter. The response letters and articles generated by the first issue have been somewhat slow in arriving. It is hoped that the Fellowship and the institutionalized addicts who have received the first issue will begin to send in the type of responsive input that will be helpful in better carrying the message of recovery into hospitals and institutions.

We hope the open invitation to participate in the WSC-H&I newsletter will give all of us the opportunity to share about the areas of responsibility which have been the most difficult in carrying the message of recovery into various institutionalized settings. The Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous is growing at a very rapid pace, due in part to the combined efforts of H&I committees throughout the world. Many of our Fellowship's H&I committees have initiated outreaches to jails, prisons, hospitals, detoxes, treatment centers and resource development centers that serve addicts. There have been many situational problems that have occurred and been resolved at all these levels of outreach activity. Your input will be helpful in sharing your experiences with the Fellowship. As the addict who suffers is reached, we must be prepared to make the Narcotics Anonymous message of recovery available. Learning from our mistakes, resolving our common problems, sharing our common successes and experiences will enhance the quality of recovery for us all.

In the first issue of this newsletter, we had a section dedicated to the request for input. Since this newsletter is a new concept of sharing, we felt that we should repeat the input section with the hope that everyone who is active in H&I activities will feel free to send in input. It does not matter whether you are seeking recovery, recovering in an institutionalized setting (hospital, treatment center, jail, detox or drug program). The bottom line is that we need your responses and input to help this newsletter successfully carry the N.A. message of recovery from the disease of addiction. We do recover and we would like to assist others in finding a new way of life—drug free!

Suggestions for Input

From active H&I committees, groups or persons: What sort of problems have you encountered while carrying the message of recovery into hospitals and/or institutions? How did you solve these problems? What do you feel is necessary to better assist you in your H&I activities? What sort of growth are you experiencing? Any new developments? What would you like to hear about in future newsletters?

From the institutionalized addict: What do you feel will help your institutional N.A. meeting? If you do not have an N.A. meeting in your institution, how can we help you establish one? Do you have outside support for your meeting from the N.A. Fellowship? If you do not have support from the outside, how can we assist you in getting outside speakers, support, etc? What would you like to hear about in future newsletters?

Excerpts from actual letters, when depicting a thought or experience relevant to recovery, whether by an inmate/patient or H&I committee member, may also be used in the newsletter. We hope to publish this newsletter once every two months, but that is solely dependent upon what sort of response we receive from you, the H&I community.

New "Meetings within the Walls":

CALIFORNIA	Orange Co. Jail (men & women at honor farm)
NEW YORK	Wyoming Correctional Institution
OKLAHOMA	Mable Bassett Correctional Institution (women)
SO. CAROLINA	(So. Carolina Dept. of Corrections has cleared the way so that N.A. groups can be established in all 17 facilities.)
TENNESSEE	Tennessee Prison for Women
TEXAS	Huntsville Penitentiary

Institutions Inquiring about Starting Meetings:

FLORIDA	F.C.I. for Women
KANSAS	Leavenworth (military & state)
KENTUCKY	Lexington
WYOMING	Riverton Wyoming Honor Farm

Excerpts from Letters:

From Oklahoma:

Dear Sirs,

We are going to start an N.A. meeting group here on the mental health unit (I.M.H.U.) at Joseph Harp Correctional Center. We need some material, especially a handbook for H&I meetings. I received some help to start the meeting, and I've written to the N.A. group in Oklahoma City. We had a big need for the Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text. This is what I've been needing for the past ten years of my life. Thank you, God, for leading me to N.A. Please send us the handbook on H&I meetings and more N.A. material so we can have a successful first meeting.

Thank you,
G.C., Oklahoma

From Texas:

Dear Sirs,

My name is W.H. I am an addict and presently a member of Narcotics Anonymous and attend meetings at the Federal Correctional Institution here in Bastrop, Texas, where I'm serving a twelve-year sentence for bank robbery.

My purpose in writing is to inquire if you could be of assistance to me in obtaining a sponsor. I have reached the point in my program of recovery where, in order to make further progress spiritually through pursuing completion of the Twelve Steps, I need the support and guidance that a sponsor can provide.

Any form of assistance you can offer will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Most of all, thanks for being there. Hoping for your continued success in recovery, with kindest regards, I am,

W.H.,
Texas

Note: We have contacted someone in the Fellowship there in Texas who was willing to respond to this request for sponsorship.

From California:

Hello, My name is D.N. and I'm an inmate in San Quentin. I've been attending N.A. meetings here since the start of N.A. in S.Q. (approx. 5 weeks). I really appreciate the meetings and the concern and dedication of all our outside guests. They're doing a fantastic job here and should be commended for their efforts.

I'm writing in hopes of obtaining a sponsor. I should be going to work fulltime in approximately two months, and paroling in mid-July. I'm in need of help and want it, if anyone who cares would like to assist me by being a sponsor. If possible, please see who would be interested in the Sacramento area. Thank you for your concern in this matter.

Respectfully,

D.N.
California

Note: We have forwarded this request for assistance to the H&I committee within the Sacramento area.

From Texas:

Dear Sirs,

I want to thank you very much for your prompt reply to my letter. I would also like to thank you for the N.A. literature. On behalf of our N.A. group here at Huntsville, we would like to say thanks. I will try to stay in contact to let you know how we are getting along here with our group. how it's progressing and any other activity. You should be hearing from our counselor soon, within the near future. We are getting a few outside speakers in and would like to get more.

Thanks again,

W.B.,
Texas

From England:

To all on the H&I newsletter,

It's good to read and hear this, for myself being on the H&I committee now for over four years and seeing it grow. This part of service is so rewarding in my own growth and gratitude and helps me in my own spiritual side to life. I don't think I ever did anything in life without an angle to it, and all I want today is for others to have the choice of freedom from addiction. The old lie is gone; addicts do recover. I know for myself that I and most of the members who are involved in prison and hospital meetings feel and see the rewards of recovery. At times it seems I have a reputation of being a hardhead, maybe so, but I'm a recovering addict and grateful for that and I never forget where I came from before I found these rooms of N.A. To be able to not live in fear and have faith instead. It feels good to have the message and whatever it involves to be a part of the human race, so that's my bit, now down to some info. . . In England we have three (3) areas. We are a small country but big enough to split up into areas. There are the groups here in London, Manchester which is Northern England and Scotland, and those in Southwest England and Wales. We have seven (7) prison meetings. Scrubs, Reading Gaol, Pentaville, Ford, Style Women's Prison, Bristol, Dublin and at least twenty (20) hospital and detox unit meetings; so as you can see we are growing. Please keep in touch, we need each other.

In service to the Fellowship,

J.H.
England

From Nevada:

Dear Sir,

Tonight I was able to read my first issue of the *Reaching Out* newsletter, and I want to thank you and your staff for its existence. I am serving time at the Nevada Women's Correctional Center and am active in the N.A. Program we have here. Ms. Judy B. was once an inmate here, and because of the great supportive N.A. committee we have here, she is now an active H&I sponsor for us. Because of the other H&I members the women here really do see how N.A. works from the members involved, and are learning to do positive things in their lives.

We want to thank all H&I sponsors. Thank God for N.A. and N.A. for God.

What do we need to do to get the newsletter here at our prison?

Sincerely,

K.L.S.J.,
Nevada Women's Correctional Center

From Kansas:

Dear Sir,

We are writing from Parallax, which is a long term treatment center. We are a group of addicts who share our experience, strength and hope. We have an H&I meeting every Thursday night here at Parallax. It involves other addicts coming from the outside to share with us the experiences and trials they encounter, and to demonstrate how they work the Twelve Steps in their everyday lives. Special emphasis is placed on having a

close working relationship with our Higher Power and turning situations over to His care, allowing Him to live in our everyday lives, with the understanding that we are powerless over our addiction—that with His help and the Twelve Steps we can live a drug-free life.

We would like to thank you for letting us get involved in the H&I newsletter suggestions. We would be happy to answer letters seeking information in regards to our recovery and N.A.

Sincerely,

Clients of Parallax

P.S. We are open to any suggestions concerning our H&I group.

From New Jersey:

Dear Friends,

I received a copy of the *Reaching Out* Newsletter and I think it is a great idea. I hope it works because we really need something like this. I sponsor an H&I meeting in a prison and a few inmates have asked about writing other inmates in other prisons who are in N.A. I know that some prisons do not allow this, but this newsletter may be a common ground on which all institutionalized members may share with each other. I myself have never been in an institution, but I know how important it is to have someone to identify with. Staying clean in jail is a lot different than staying clean on the outside. I made a few copies of *Reaching Out* to give to some of the inmates I know and I'm sending a copy to each ASC-H&I Committee Chairperson in our region (six areas). I'll be in touch and I hope others, in and out of institutions, will send you input. God bless and keep you always.

In loving service,

J.D.
New Jersey

From California:

Dear Sir,

I received your packet today. It was so good to be able to tell non-believers that the people of N.A. really do care. Thank you ever so much. B.B. is a much loved person in our Sierra group. It is a mighty fine meeting we have here, and one of the people we owe a deep debt of gratitude to is the inmate chairperson, D.R., for all he has done. Well, I just wanted to write and thank you folks for your assistance. My prayers go out to all you wonderful people. Thank you for your correspondence and support.

Thank you for being there,

G.C.
California

From Idaho:

Hi from Boise, Idaho,

I received your most welcomed newsletter, *Reaching Out*, on March 18th, and it put my clean, clear mind into gear that maybe I could be of help to someone else, to get a group started or help by sharing how I got the group here at the Idaho Correctional Institution started. My name is D.S., I'm an inmate here at the Idaho State Correctional Institution (I.S.C.I.)

in Boise, Idaho, and have been involved in the N.A. Program on and off over the past ten (10) years, the last three of which have been totally clean and free from drugs. With the help of the H&I Chairperson from Boise, I was able to get an N.A. group started here at the institution on August 8, 1984, and that group now has a membership of 25. I was elected the spokesperson of that group. I would be very happy to help someone or some institution get a group started with any information that I may have that they may be able to use. I will look forward to receiving the H&I newsletter, *Reaching Out*, in the years to come, as I am sure it will help the group and me to stay clean.

Yours in service and fellowship, D.S., Boise, Idaho

From California:

Dear Sirs,

I'm now in confinement at the San Diego Brig. I just got transferred from the Pearl Harbor Brig in Hawaii, and I go to the N.A. meeting here. I hope to get a parole in May of 1985, and I would like to continue to go to N.A. on the outside, but I need a list of meetings or people I can get in contact with in the Salem, Oregon area. I'd also like to know if there is some way to get an N.A. meeting to the Pearl Harbor Brig. Many of the people incarcerated there are there for drugs. If you could, please see what you can do to help make this happen. I would certainly like to see my old buddies get to N.A. meetings so they can begin to recover, one day at a time like I have. It's a very good program and it works!

Thank you and God bless you, R.H., San Diego

P.S. I'll keep coming back 'cause I know it works!!

Note: Xeroxed copies of the meetings in the Oregon area were sent out, and someone active in H&I in the Hawaii area was contacted to see if a H&I panel could be brought into the Pearl Harbor Naval Brig.

From Minnesota:

Dear Sir,

Please pardon the delay in getting this reply off to you. At any rate, thank you for your correspondence and particularly for the starter kit. The Basic Text is beautiful! I'd never seen a copy before and it certainly will provide a wealth of information for our new group. Thank you for the H&I newsletter, too. I had gone through a period of lethargy on the group project, but the newsletter re-inspired me. When I saw Duluth under your "new meetings," category I knew it was time to dig out the signs. So anyway, we've had two meetings thus far and although they've been modest in size, the feeling has been very good, high on enthusiasm. I have a good working relationship with our inside sponsor and his support for the group has been gratifying. I thought his goal might be instant success as far as numbers go, but so far he endorses our slow growth philosophy. I'm grateful to the program for what it is giving me at this point in time. It's a special privilege and blessing to be able to share this way. I know that the more I give, the more I receive. Thanks again for your support.

Sincerely,

D.T., Duluth, MN

From New York:

Dear Sirs,

I received your reply to my letter today and the information will help me to establish an N.A. group here at Wyoming Correctional. This is a new facility, and has no kind of program at all for a suffering addict like myself. It will not be an easy task getting a program started here, which brings me to the purpose of this letter. I have never attempted something as complicated as starting a meeting such as N.A. and I would appreciate any help and suggestions you could give me.

I will also write to the New York Regional Service Office and see what kind of assistance I can receive from them. Thank you for your time, and any further materials and support you can give us here would be welcome.

Yours truly,

G.H., New York

Note: The request for assistance and all of our contact correspondence was forwarded to the New York H&I Committee.

From Tennessee:

To whom it may concern,

My name is K.S., a recovering addict. I am currently doing time in the Tennessee Prison for Women. I had escaped from this prison in 1982. While on escape I ran into Narcotics Anonymous (by mistake I might add) and now this program is giving me a new outlook on life. I have 16 months of clean time now. I turned myself back in to this prison on January 7, 1985, to finish my sentence. When I got to the Ninth Step I chose to work that step rather than get loaded, and things are working out great, thank God. When I got back here, there was no N.A. meeting, so along with a few inmates and myself we're trying to start one. We only have one N.A. book. I'm writing in hopes that you will help us out. Could you send us a starter kit for our meeting? We've tried to get some outside help here in Nashville, but no luck yet. For the first time in the history of the prison it has allowed us inmates to start our own group, and we thank God for that. But we need some help **please**, if you can.

With love and N.A. understanding,

K.S., Tennessee

Note: We sent out the requested materials and the starter kit to them on March 15, 1985. On March 25, 1985, we received a return reply from K.S. stating that the materials had been received and that their group there at the Tennessee Prison for Women had been formed. In a second response of April 4, 1985, we were informed that the group there has held its third meeting, and that 15 inmates had shown up for that meeting. They are growing by two or three women at each meeting. They are receiving support from the Fellowship in the Nashville area of Narcotics Anonymous. The Regional H&I Chairperson for the Volunteer Region was contacted, and when last spoken to was preparing to go down to the prison. It should be noted that K.S. gave thanks in her last letter to the people in the Galveston, Texas area of N.A. for their support, as it was there that the message was first heard and recognized. The closing note is an excerpt from the last letter we received:

When I first came back to this prison to make amends for escaping and found there was no N.A. meeting to go to, I thought at first that I'd never make it. But the second thought was "why not start one?" There seems to be a lot of red tape to go through in getting N.A. meetings going in an institution. So for anyone who is trying to start a meeting in prison, don't give up. Turn it over to your Higher Power (which I choose to call God) and do the footwork. This is what I did here at T.P.W. and I've seen many miracles happen. The N.A. Program has given me a new life, a life of clean time that I truly enjoy today and I'll go to any length to keep it.

Love and N.A. understanding,

K.S.

T.P.W., Tennessee

Note from the Editor: We will close this issue of the newsletter on that positive note. We still need support and input in order to make this newsletter be the type of vital recovery tool that can assist more recovering addicts in finding direction and inspiration in their personal programs. We also want to be able to have the forum of discussion available and open for the H&I committees throughout the Fellowship so that our common problems and dilemmas can be openly shared. In that way what we are able to share on the pages of this newsletter can be of assistance in helping new H&I committees avoid similar pitfalls. Along the same lines we can also share in our collective successes in carrying the message of recovery to as many confined addicts as we can reach.